University of Idaho

FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2001-2002 Meeting #5, Tuesday, October 09, 2001

Present: Smelser (chair), Bitterwolf (vice-chair), Chandler, Chun, Dickinson, Fairchild, Goodwin, Guenthner, Haggart (w/o vote), Hong, Kraut, Lillard, McClure, Murray, Nelson, Nielsen, Norby, Olson, Pikowsky, Christiansen for Pitcher (w/o vote), Wagner Absent: McCaffrey, Meier, Thompson Observers: 2

Call to Order. A quorum being present, Faculty Council Chair, Professor Ronald Smelser, called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge.

Minutes. The council accepted the minutes of the September 25, 2001, meeting as distributed.

Chair’s Report. Chair Smelser reported:

- U of Idaho’s Facilities Management will be participating in an external assessment review to evaluate tools, programs, and services against “best practices” standards in the field of facilities management – Facilities Management will be seeking input from its campus constituencies on how they can better serve the U of Idaho – an open forum will be held to hear faculty concerns (classrooms, labs, offices, etc.) from 1-3 p.m. on October 30th in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge
- the Idaho Council of Higher Education Faculty (ICHEF) leadership group met with the governor and Bill Ruud from his staff and review and discussed the following items:
  - budget holdbacks are permanent – next year’s budget will probably be 95% to 98% of this year’s budget
  - concern that despite the fact that school officials say the current holdback will create havoc, most public school districts have large cash reserves – this may have an impact on the future funding of education programs at all grade levels, including higher education
  - consideration is being given to linking funding increases to productivity – the state of Montana is a model
  - concern about professional fees – other higher education institutions are not in favor of professional fees (except for the ones they already have in place) – there is some feeling that this fee structure carries the implication that charging a special fee automatically makes the academic program “special” and more attractive to students – it is not clear where the governor stands on this issue; however, everyone recognizes that as state funding for higher education becomes more scarce, professional and differential fees become an acceptable alternative
  - differential fees also need further discussion, especially to distinguish them from professional fees
  - governor was reminded that all fees are an administrative initiative/function not a faculty one
  - university participation and cooperation with state agencies – particular attention is being called to the work of higher education with state correctional facilities – Bill Ruud asked for a list of all cooperative efforts that can be regularly updated – this information can be of value in any number of applications
  - an initiative is coming from the governor’s office and the superintendent of public schools for a summer math academy for middle school teachers – U of Idaho needs to keep abreast of this and be ready to participate
  - an “education summit” to be held in the spring of 2002 – details will be forthcoming

Smelser concluded his remarks by noting that Governor Kempthorne was very appreciative of the efforts that the faculty leadership made to say “thank you” for all of his support of higher education programs and salaries. The governor said that he would like to meet with faculty leadership more often.

Associated Students of the University of Idaho (ASUI) Report. ASUI Senator Kelsey Nuñez reported to the council that the ASUI had set the following goals at their recent retreat:

- to create a more “community oriented” atmosphere on the campus – giving students good reasons to make the campus their “home” and a stronger sense in being a member of a university community
- to be more sensitive to environmental concerns/issues – paying particular attention to supporting local and state environmental organizations like Idaho’s “Gem Stars”
- to change state law that prevents the university from issuing student debit cards for use throughout the community – similar to the “Cougar Cash” program used by Washington State University
- to support the new Student Recreation Center – making sure that students are fully involved in policy making decisions
- to work hard on public relations concerning student government and student recruitment
Faculty/Staff Recognition at Athletic Events. The council continued last week’s discussion concerning the most efficient way to identify faculty and staff members for recognition at athletic events.

The general consensus of the council was that a list should be generated by retrospectively looking at past award winners (for several years) of university level awards in teaching, research, and service – recognition that involved peer review. Added to that list would be faculty/staff who receive a major honor during the current year – a more instant response. Also, a retrospective list of staff award winners would be used. Other lists could be generated from individual college awards, but that might lead to too many awards and thus reduce the significance of the recognition by the Athletic Department.

There was some concern expressed about the projected number of athletic events at which people would be recognized. The council felt that the number of events should be reduced to a workable and reasonable level. It was suggested that it should be done at each home football game and at selected men’s and women’s basketball games. The council was reminded that this program is a “recognition of achievement” – not an “award.”

To provide oversight to this recognition program, it was moved and seconded (Kraut, Lillard) that Councilor James Nelson be named chair of and Councilor Joseph Guenthner and a member from the Staff Affairs Committee be added as members of an ad hoc faculty/staff recognition committee responsible for selecting staff and faculty members to be recognized at selected athletic events. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Regulation M – Excused Absences. Councilor Chandler outlined his concern over what appeared to him to be excessive excused absences for athletes. His central concern was that these student-athletes were simply missing too much class time. Councilor Guenthner said that this was a particular problem for students participating in golf, soccer, and volleyball. The council directed Chair Smelser to invite the Athletic Director to attend a future meeting of the council to specifically address the topic of excused absences for student-athletes. That discussion could lead to the framing of the issue/problem to be sent to a council committee for further discussion and possible policy revisions.

FC-02-002 – Course/Instructor Evaluation Form. Chair Smelser outlined for the council a plan to get the approved on-line evaluation system up and running. He said that the task force would like to conduct another pilot study during the fall semester and then broaden the pilot group to include an entire college in the spring of 2002. If the on-line system survived these “tests,” he suggested that the switch from paper to electronic evaluations could begin for all courses the summer of 2002. The form would need formal approval by the general faculty at a special meeting early in the spring of 2002. Councilor Nielsen noted that the pilot study was not so much to test the form as much as it was to test the computer programming.

Councilor Nelson wondered about the “cultural bias” that might be introduced by using a single college in the spring pilot study. Councilor Nielsen responded that using a single college provided a degree of uniformity for that college as they applied the evaluation results to annual review, promotion, and tenure considerations for their faculty members.

Councilor Nielsen reminded the council that upon the recommendation of his task force, questions three and four (instructional environment and technical support) would not be a part of the form. That information can be gathered in other ways (described in the minutes of the last meeting). Thus, the council would be voting only on the use of questions one and two (instructor and course rating) and the menu of items that the faculty member can select for inclusion in the electronic form. It was moved and seconded (Nielsen, Wagner) that FC-02-002 (minus questions three and four) be adopted by the council. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Next Faculty Council Meeting. Chair Smelser announced that there would be no council meeting next week. The next meeting of the Faculty Council will be October 23, 2001.

Adjournment. It was moved and seconded (Lillard, Guenthner) to adjourn. Chair Smelser adjourned the meeting at 4:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council