FACULTY COUNCIL MINUTES

2001-2002 Meeting #9, Tuesday, November 13, 2001

Present: Smelser (chair), Bitterwolf (vice-chair), Chandler, Chun, Dickinson, Fairchild, Goodwin, Haggart (w/o vote), Kraut, Lillard, McCaffrey, McClure, Meier, Murray, Nelson, Nielsen, Norby, Pitcher (w/o vote), Wagner Absent: Guenthner, Hong, Olson, Pikowsky, Thompson Observers: 1

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 secretary acknowledged the praise of a council member for his ability to record the council discussion in a succinct manner. The council then accepted the minutes of the November 6, 2001, meeting as distributed.

Chair’s Report. Professor Smelser told the council that he met with the directors and members of the University of Idaho Foundation and reported on the activities of the Faculty Council. Smelser reported that as a part of the university’s response to the budgetary crisis the Provost had activated the Fiscal Emergency Committee. In connection with that activation, the council needed to add two members to that committee to meet its compositional requirements [see FSH Section 1640.47]. It was moved and seconded (Meier, Nelson) that the Faculty Council recommend to the Provost the addition of Tom Fairchild (representing the College of Education) and Debra Olson (representing the Budget Liaison Committee) as members of the Fiscal Emergency Committee. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote. Smelser noted that the committee had met for the first time today (11/13/01) to review the budget situation and the approach that the university will take in meeting the expected financial crisis.

Chair Smelser relayed to the council a communication from the provost and the vice president for finance and administration asking the council to select a faculty representative to serve on the Human Resources Steering Group. The purpose of this group is to review Human Resource Services policies and work processes, recommend improvements and enhancements, and advise the assistant vice president for human resources on implementation strategies. It was moved and seconded (McClure, Kraut) that Councilor Joseph McCaffrey be appointed to the Human Resources Steering Group as a representative of the U of Idaho faculty. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Provost’s Report. Provost Brian Pitcher reported to the council on the following items:

- the SBOE/Regents will hold its regular monthly meeting in Lewiston this week – significant issues are:
  - guidelines for percentage increases in matriculation fees – whether the standard of no more than a 10% increase in any given year will be waived in view of the impending budget crisis
  - permission for the U of Idaho to propose a differential fee for the junior/senior level program for majors in the College of Business and Economics
  - the ongoing debate concerning equity funding for institutions of higher education – although this is probably a moot point in light of the budget outlook
  - proposed changes in workload credits – allowing a differential in the weighting of Master’s and Ph.D. level credits
- the governor announced today another 1% hold back in the budget for the current year – added to the previous 2% hold back
- the administration has been taking the following steps/actions relative to the budget crisis:
  - upper level administrators, down to the deans level, have been asked to prepare 5%, 10%, and 15% budget reduction plans – those plans will be presented to the president, provost, and the Fiscal Emergency Committee December 10th & 11th
  - work groups are looking at ways of reducing administration, realigning, minimizing duplication, and allowing employees to work across administrative unit, academic department, and college boundaries in the following areas:
    - life sciences – now offered by three colleges
    - all other science areas
    - engineering – now offered by three colleges
    - state-wide educational programs
    - teacher preparation/education programs
    - fine arts and social sciences
    - four professional colleges (law, business, education, and art and architecture)
    - student affairs and academic affairs
    - central administration, ITS, advancement, and athletic department
    - student affairs and academic affairs – reduce the administration

Provost Pitcher said that the goal of these exercises was to reduce the number of responsibility centers, executive administrators, and support staff in all these areas. He said that we need to look at all feasible options to simplify our structure. The administration is also looking to the SBOE/Regents to give them clear directions. Pitcher said that the university is also engaged in conversations with the SBOE/Regents, the governor’s office, and PERSI trustees to encourage them to look at ways to provide incentives for early retirement.
In response to a question (McCaffrey) about how Boise State University and Idaho State University were proposing to handle the anticipated budget cuts, Provost Pitcher said that he understood that both were looking at simply cutting faculty and staff hired during the last two years to meet their budget shortfall. Pitcher indicated that this would not be the approach used by the U of Idaho. Programs would certainly be affected and he hoped that all personnel losses could be handled by voluntary retirements.

Councilor Dickinson asked whether or not the SBOE/Regents were looking at the realignment, consolidation, or elimination of academic disciplines offered at more than one institution, such as engineering. Pitcher responded that he did not believe that the SBOE/Regents were looking at the budget issues on a state-wide level – just at the local level – even though opportunities may exist in that area for meeting the budget crisis.

U of Idaho Building Progress and Plans. Assistant Vice President for Facilities, Joanne Reece, provided the council with an update on facilities at all of the U of Idaho’s campuses. She began her presentation by reviewing the way that the building plans fit into the U of Idaho’s Strategic and Long Range Development Plans.

Reece also reviewed the needs that drive any capital plan, such as enrollment, research activities, land use, regulatory standards, and an infrastructure to support expansion. She also commented on the sources of capital funding at the U of Idaho, noting that most capital building funds come from gifts, grants, student fees, and bonding – not from state appropriations.

Assistant Vice President Reece reviewed the recently completed building projects, such as the Idaho Commons, the remodeling of the Student Union Building, and the Agricultural Biotechnology Laboratory. The Idaho Commons has now become the “heart” of the campus for a great variety of activities that involve the whole campus community. The Student Union Building has become a “blended” customer oriented “one-stop-shopping” center for student services such as financial aid, registration, and new student services. The Agricultural Biotechnology Laboratory is just the beginning of many projects that will help make the U of Idaho globally competitive in research. Reece said that plans are now underway to meet the chilled water needs of all campus buildings. She also noted the infrastructure improvements that have been made to Phinney & Brink Halls. Councilors commended Reece for the way in which the new Phinney and Brink Hall elevators were designed and built to blend seamlessly into the existing structures.

Reece then provided the council with a look at building projects that were still in the construction phase, such as the Student Recreation Center and the J. A. Albertson College of Business and Economics. Both are scheduled for completion in 2002. In response to a question, it was pointed out that the cost of operating new facilities has been born, in part, by state appropriations. However, this will most likely not be the case in the future, given the current budget problems. Reece also provided design and site information on future building projects, such as the Lionel Hampton Center, which will provide a multi-use facility for teaching, research, and performance.

Assistant Vice President Reece concluded her formal presentation by providing detailed information about building projects that were taking place off campus at U of Idaho teaching and research facilities in Coeur d’Alene, Post Falls, Idaho Falls, and Boise. The most highly visible and significant project will be the “Idaho Place” complex in Boise. The facility will become an integral part of the downtown Boise core and will be used in a truly cooperative educational venture that will provide “flexible” teaching and research facilities that can readily adapt to ever-changing education and research needs.

Council questions centered around the problems of providing adequate classroom space when the University Classroom Center is being remodeled into the Teaching and Learning Center, the loss of clear corridors to the west side of the campus created by new construction, the poor image created by the buildings facing sixth street, and the plans for new dormitory space.

Classroom space problems will be partially met with the completion of the Albertson building. The rest will involve the utilization of every available space on the campus that can be used as a classroom. The anticipated use of temporary classrooms – mobile home style – has been rejected by the planners in favor of adding those funds to the remodeling project. The loss of a distinct corridor to the College of Law is lamented, but cannot be fixed. The poor “image” of the U of Idaho created by the building facades facing sixth street are caused by utilitarian demands, such as access for service vehicles. However, when people walk through the campus the reaction is always positive. The U of Idaho campus is a very attractive place to visit and live and work. U of Idaho dormitory plans call for a new complex close to the Student Recreation Center that will house 600 students in modern apartment-style rooms within a modular four-story building that will not “feel” like a dormitory.

Councilor Wagner pointed out that when our campus has a lot of construction going on it gives the appearance that we are “rich” and there is no budget crisis. The reply was that the proper response is to point out to people that those buildings and other projects are being financed by one time capital funds from resources that, for the most part, do not involve state appropriated tax dollars. Where tax dollars are being used – such as the renovation of the University Classroom Center – they are one-time appropriations that can only be used for that project. Those funds cannot be diverted to meet budget shortfalls in other areas.

Assistant Vice President Reece’s presentation was summed up by a quote on the importance of a good campus facilities plan from U of Idaho President Bob Hoover, referring to it as “…a handshake pact with future generations…that we will preserve and pass along the legacy of beauty and order.”

Adjournment. It was moved and seconded (Lillard, Nelson) to adjourn. Chair Smelser adjourned the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart, Secretary of the Faculty Council