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. Smelser welcomed the council back from the Thanksgiving break.

Minutes. Following the correction of a name, the council accepted the minutes of the November 13, 2001, meeting as distributed and corrected.

Chair's Report. Chair Smelser reported on the following items from the SBOE/Regents meeting in Lewiston:

- university/college presidents were given leeway and flexibility in managing the mandated holdbacks, particularly in the offering of voluntary severance packages
- the board will “entertain” student fee increases of 12% for next year and up to 10% for the following fiscal year – ISU’s president noted that in good budget years the fee increases have been 10%, now in a really bad budget year the increase will only be 12% - LCSC’s president noted that higher education may not only be limiting access by price, but also limiting access by not having programs available for students
- the board’s concern over achieving financial equity between institutions of higher education will probably slowly “go away” – the budget crisis has made any equity adjustments a moot issue for now

Approval of Candidates for Degrees. The Office of the Registrar provided the Faculty Council with a list of degree candidates for Summer and Fall 2001. As called for in Faculty-Staff Handbook Section 4910, “degrees are granted in the name of the regents upon recommendation of the university faculty (the Faculty Council acts for the university faculty in recommending candidates for earned degrees; . . .).” Therefore, it was moved and seconded (Thompson, McCaffrey) to approve the list of candidates for degrees (Summer and Fall 2001) as submitted by the Office of the Registrar. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote. The list of candidates is available for review at the Faculty Secretary’s office.

ASUI Election Report. A memorandum from the Associated Students of the University of Idaho (ASUI), showing the results of the most recent ASUI elections, was distributed at the meeting. Twenty-two percent of eligible students voted in the election, which was held over a three-day period at polling locations and via the internet. Kasey Cole Swisher was elected ASUI President and Bob Uebelher was elected ASUI Vice President. Six ASUI Senators were also elected by the voters, as well as a new undergraduate student representative to the Faculty Council (Mike Netzer).

AAHE Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. Chair Smelser reported that two faculty members had indicated an interest in attending the American Association for Higher Education Conference (AAHE) to be held in January. Their names have been submitted to the provost for approval.

Policy Change to the “Rule of 80” Benefit for Newly Hired Employees. Chair Smelser distributed an announcement from the office of Human Resource Services of a change in the retirement benefit package for new employees. All employees hired on or after January 1, 2002, and current employees who have a break in service after that date will not be eligible for employer-paid health insurance following retirement. A “break in service” does not apply to employees on leave (sabbatical, disability, administrative and leave without pay). It does apply to those people who are laid off and then hired back at a later date.
This announcement generated a considerable amount of discussion and comment. **Concerns centered around the following issues:**

- previous attempts by the administration to implement this change
- justification of the change being based on the U of Idaho being one of only a few universities offering this benefit to its employees – that may be misleading – a college/university may not provide the benefits, but a state government might provide the benefit for all state employees
- the negative effect of this policy change on recruitment of new faculty and staff members – people may not consider U of Idaho employment offers without this kind of benefit
- the problem of retaining employees hired after January 1, 2002 – retirement income for U of Idaho employees is based on an already acknowledged low income – losing the retirement medical benefit could become a detriment in hiring and retaining employees
- the possibility that this policy change would lead to gradually implementing the same policy change for current employees
- employees who are released during the current budget crisis and then rehired at a later date would lose the medical retirement benefit they previously held
- the process for reviewing and approving this important policy change – the committees, councils, and individuals that look at, review, and approve the U of Idaho retirement benefit policy – including the input of faculty and staff

**Chair Smelser said that he would talk to the provost about this policy change** and have a report ready for the council at its next meeting.

**Human Resources Task Force Report.** The Human Resources Task Force is due to make a report to the Faculty Council at its next meeting, December 4, 2001. Councilor McCaffrey (the council representative on the task force) asked council members to email him any special concerns or issues that the council would like to discuss with the representatives of the task force at that meeting.

**Campus Mail.** Many councilors and the Faculty Secretary’s office have noticed changes in Campus Mail policies. Regular letter and larger size envelopes can no longer be used for campus mail. Envelopes for campus mail must be of a design approved for campus mail use. That design incorporates holes for “viewing” the contents of the envelope. Concern was also expressed over the apparent inability of the Campus Mail system to deliver “express” mail in the timely manner in which it was intended to arrive at its destination. Finally, there appears to be a concerted effort to enforce the U of Idaho policies regarding personal or non-business (and some would question the identification process) mail. [Section 80.03, C-1 of the Administrative Procedures Manual states that “Campus mail is to be used for official UI purposes only. Personal mail should not be sent through the campus mail system.”] Campus mail personnel are currently giving notification to faculty and staff that personal mail will no longer be picked up from or delivered to campus offices. **Chair Smelser said that he would invite the appropriate personnel from Campus Mail to attend a council meeting early next semester to discuss these issues.**

**Legislative Luncheon.** Chair Smelser announced that the annual Idaho Legislative Luncheon would be held on January 9, 2002, in Boise. He asked council members who were interested in attending and talking with state legislators about higher education issues to contact him soon.

**Post-Tenure Review and Development Report.** The chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee was ill and, thus, the expected report from this committee concerning post-tenure review and development was postponed until the next council meeting.

**Adjournment.** It was moved and seconded (Thompson, Lillard) to adjourn. Chair Smelser adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart  
Secretary of the Faculty Council