Present: Smelser (chair), Bitterwolf (vice-chair), Chandler, Chun, Dickinson, Fairchild, Guenthner, Haggart (w/o vote), Kraut, Lillard, McCaffrey, McClure, Meier, Murray, Netzer, Nielsen, Olson, Pikowsky, Pitcher (w/o vote), Thompson, Wagner Absent: Butts-Matheson, Goodwin, Hong, Nelson Observers: 6

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 March 26, 2002, meeting as distributed.

Chair's Report. Chair Smelser reported to the council that he had been remiss in naming the Scholarship Definition Task Force that he had announced at the February 5th council meeting. The charge of the task force is to “look at how the statements of scholarship in departments and colleges have changed and how those changes are then reflected in the tenure and promotion packages coming forward to promotion and tenure review committees, and to the provost.” The members of the task force are Thomas Bitterwolf, Sharon Fritz, Terry Grieb, Karen Guilfoyle, Karen Norum, Vickie Parker-Clarke, Robert Pikowsky, and William Voxman. Professor Bitterwolf will chair the task force and report back to the council before the end of the academic year.

Smelser said that he had been contacted by faculty members expressing concern over the way email advising lists were being handled by the Registrar's Office, as well as other offices responsible for student recruitment and retention. He asked the council for some guidance on how to handle these issues. It was moved and seconded (Meier, Lillard) that faculty members be encouraged to email the Registrar with their concerns about the advisee lists. The Registrar will act as a clearing house, and see that those concerns are forwarded to the appropriate university officials for action. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

Provost's Report. Provost Brian Pitcher reported to the council on the following matters:

- Vandal Friday orientation and registration for new students will take place on April 5th
- faculty excellence awards in teaching, research, and outreach will be formally presented this week
- the early retirement offering (VSROP) seems to be meeting its minimum expectation goal – slightly more than 120 employees have indicated that they will take early retirement over the next two years – the final total will be known on April 9th when the contractual letters are signed and returned to the provost
- the make-up of the council and many university standing committees is determined by a prescribed college representation, thus the final college structure is important to know - the final disposition of individual departments within the newly created colleges should be reported by April 10th
- reduction in force guidelines have been established for classified employees – any reduction in force will be through identification of a position/classification, not specific individuals

ASUI Report. Associated Students of the University of Idaho (ASUI) council representative, Kasey Murray, informed the council that the "1st Annual ASUI Slam Against the Spread Softball Tournament" was going to be held on May 4th and 5th to help raise money to provide students with free STD/HIV testing. She invited faculty members to field teams and take part in the fundraising competition. The team application deadline is April 26th.

FC-02-022 – Proposed Elimination of the 20-Credit Limit on Repeated Credits in Regulation E-5. [returned to the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) edited, and then re-submitted] Karen Van Houten, representing the UCC and University Registrar Reta Pikowsky, presented the council with background information on this change to the university catalog. The change was initiated by the Associate Deans and approved by the UCC.

E-5. Replacing Grades.

E-5-a. Some courses are listed in this catalog as "repeatable" (i.e., the credits listed for the courses show a maximum number of credits that may be earned or show "cr arr" or "max arr" indicating that the courses may be repeated for credit without restriction as to a maximum). Other courses show one credit entry for the course (e.g., "1 cr," "2 cr," etc.) and may be taken only once for credit (see procedure for repeating to replace a grade below). Students, however, may repeat such "non-repeatable" courses for zero credit. [See the section entitled "Credit Designations" at the beginning of Part 6 of this catalog for more information.]
E-5-b. Replacing a Grade by Repeating a Course. A student who has received a D or F in a course at UI or elsewhere may repeat the course at the UI in an effort to replace the grade once, provided a more advanced course in the same subject field for which the first course is a prerequisite has not been completed in the meantime. Provided credit has not been earned in a more advanced vertically related course in the same subject area. Although all grades remain on the record, all grades beginning with the first repeat are averaged for grade point purposes. The grade earned the second time in the course will replace the first grade in the student’s institutional GPA. If a course is repeated more than once, all grades beginning with the first repeat are averaged in the student’s institutional GPA. (A student who repeated a course prior to Fall 1998 and earned a final grade of D or F may repeat the same course. The grade earned in this subsequent repeat will replace the previous final grade. However, all grades earned in subsequent repeats of the same course will be averaged into the student’s institutional GPA.) (See the College of Law section in part 4 for the exception to this regulation applicable to students in that college.)

E-5-c. Credit Repeat-to-Replace-Grade Limitation. The number of credits that may be repeated to replace a grade is limited to 20 credits during a student’s undergraduate career at UI. Petitions must be submitted to the Academic Petitions Committee to repeat to replace a grade beyond the 20-credit limit during a student’s undergraduate career at UI.

(('[Note: Since Fall Semester 1998, a student who repeats a course to replace a grade of D or F does so as if he or she is taking the course for the first time. In accordance with E-5-b, if the student repeats the course again, the grade earned by that repeat is the one used in the calculation of the grade-point average. Any repeats to replace D or F grades before the Fall Semester 1998 are not included in the 20 credit maximum stipulated in E-5-c.]

Adoption of the regulation changes would remove any limitation on the number of credits that could be repeated, but would also mean that each grade earned in a repeated course would be used in the calculation of the student’s overall grade point average (g.p.a.). There was a considerable amount of discussion on that point, but the consensus was that the factoring in of repeated course grades into the overall g.p.a. would probably change the “culture” of repeating courses. The grade point penalties would simply be too high to repeat the course over and over. The proposal came as a seconded motion from the UCC and was adopted by the council by unanimous voice vote.

FC-02-025 – Proposed Salary Resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee. Professor Kerry McKeever, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, presented the council with the following resolution:

“The FAC recommends that the proposed 1% salary increase be eliminated and that these funds be available to departments on a discretionary basis, with the following provisions: (1) that said recommendation affects only faculty raises, not staff; (2) does not affect promotion; and (3) any funds needed to cover costs in health benefits would be included.”

Discussion brought out the fact that the resolution had been prepared before U of Idaho President Hoover had announced his plans regarding the disposition of salary money in light of the state budget hold-backs, reductions, and the U of Idaho’s contingency plans. McKeever said that part of the motivation for the resolution was the remembrance of earlier salary raises being eaten up by increased health insurance rates. The council concluded that the resolution was too general and did not take into account recent developments in budget planning. It was moved and seconded (Meier, Dickinson) that the resolution be returned to the Faculty Affairs Committee to be reworked in light of more recent budget developments. The motion was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

FC-02-026 – Proposed Change in Credit Load Limitations, Regulation D-2. Professor Roger Wallins, representing the Graduate College, provided the council with background information on this proposal. The proposal originated in the Graduate Council and was then approved by the University Curriculum Committee (UCC). The proposal removes any reference to graduate assistant appointees from the credit-load limitations in Regulation D-2. The proposal was made in an effort to even the credit limits for both graduate students appointed as graduate assistants and graduate students not holding assistantships.

After a discussion of the possible abuse of this regulation by graduate students and a proposed amendment to the proposal suggesting the addition of advisor approval (later withdrawn), it was decided that perhaps there were enough safe guards already in place. Abuse would only lead to a graduate student taking courses outside of his or her approved study plan, and thus only extend the length of time in earning the advanced degree. The proposed change came as a seconded motion from the UCC and was adopted by a unanimous voice vote.
FC-02-027 – Proposed New Ph.D. Degree in Environmental Science. Professor Margrit von Braun, Director of the Environmental Science Program, provided the council with background information on the proposed degree program. She emphasized that the Ph.D. degree was a “natural evolution” of the largest and most successful Bachelor’s (150 majors) and Master’s (64 majors) interdisciplinary degree program at the U of Idaho. She also noted that the existing program enjoys good scholarship funding, as well as grant funding.

The full proposal for the degree can be examined at the Office of the Faculty Secretary or at the Graduate College and is available for viewing and printing at the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) web site. The proposal came as a seconded motion from the UCC and was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

FC-02-028 [the secretary has decided to present the entire report of the Faculty Affairs Committee under one agenda item number instead of the multiple item numbers reported in the original meeting agenda] Proposed Changes to Faculty-Staff Handbook Sections 3050, 3140, 3320, and their Associated Forms. Faculty Affairs Committee Chair (FAC), Kerry McKeever, provided the council with background information on the proposed handbook revisions. She said that the entire package being presented by the FAC represents the second phase of revisions of the handbook relating to tenure review and development at the U of Idaho. These revisions represent a major change in the methods and instruments used in the evaluation of faculty members annually and periodically, as well as in regard to the awarding and review of tenure. The changes are also reflected in the faculty member’s position description and the forms that are used in all performance reviews. All of these materials, as well as a discussion site, are located at the Faculty Affairs Committee website:

http://www.its.uidaho.edu/fac

One of the goals that the Faculty Affairs Committee wanted to achieve was to create a system in which all of the forms and documentation could be read without any “disconnections” – a seamless presentation of documents and forms involving logical steps in constructing a position description, conducting annual reviews, and conducting periodic reviews associated with tenure. Another goal of the committee was to allow for flexibility in the way each academic area designed its requirements and adjusted the weighting of faculty accomplishments, while at the same time providing uniform reporting language and a uniform evaluation system applicable to all academic units.

FSH section 3140 (Performance Expectations for Faculty) is the key to the whole system. It contains language that says that each department will determine faculty roles and the weighting (value) to be assigned to those roles. A “hot” issue in the proposal is using a four-point rating system instead of the current nine-point system.

McKeever noted that fairness in evaluation can only be accomplished when all unit administrators responsible for conducting evaluations are consistently trained in the “art” of personnel evaluation using a rigorous leadership training program. It is also important that administrators be trained in the correct use of a “narrative” evaluation. Of equal importance in the proposal will be the opportunity for the faculty member being evaluated to comment on and sign off on the final evaluation document.

While the discussion with the council was far ranging, there were a few points that the discussion returned to a number of times:

1. **The rating system used in the evaluation forms.** The proposed changes call for a four-point rating system [exemplary performance (4), professional level performance (3), improvement required (2), and unacceptable (1)], with no plus or minus being allowed above or below the actual numbers. This is a drastic change from the current evaluation numbering which, while only containing three numbers, allows for pluses and minuses, adding up to nine possible rating numbers. Many councilors felt that the change from nine rating numbers to four was too extreme. Some proposed that the council adopt a five-point rating system. Others felt that any short scale left evaluators with little leeway in rating people. McKeever invited the council to look carefully at the documents on the FAC website related to rating systems and then make a recommendation to amend FC-02-028. The Faculty Affairs Committee is convinced that its proposed four-point rating system will work. McKeever also noted that the proposal allowed each department to work out its own weighting of faculty accomplishments in arriving at a final rating that would be applicable to their own unique academic area. McKeever said that the university “mind set” had to change. U of Idaho faculty need to be open to new ways of performance evaluation. It was also noted by the council that the terms used in these ratings should be carefully explained so that everyone understands what is meant by terms like “exemplary performance.”
2. **The use of the word “professional” rather than “satisfactory” in the third performance rating.** Some council members thought that using the word “professional” related to performance might be interpreted in the wrong way. Many faculty members would look at anything below that level as being “unprofessional” and thus find the faculty member not worthy of employment because they were doing things in an unlawful or unethical (unprofessional) manner. That, in turn, could lead to legal problems.

3. **The time frame involved in identifying and dealing with unacceptable performance.** The proposal calls for three consecutive unacceptable overall ratings to warrant a full peer review that could eventually lead to dismissal. Administrators need to be able to act in a timely fashion in exceptional cases. McKeever noted that the first instance of unacceptable performance, in any area of the position description, should immediately lead to a mentoring program where the faculty member can get help. She said that the whole idea of this handbook revision is to change the present system from a “negative reward” to a positive “non-threatening” attitude of helping the faculty member become a better teacher, advisor, researcher, creator, etc. It is not to simply build evidence to eventually make the case for dismissal. However, both Pitcher and McKeever acknowledged that perhaps there needed to be some change in the proposed wording that would allow earlier intervention in extreme and unusual cases of unacceptable performance. The “triggering” wording still needs some “tweaking” to make it more useful for all the parties involved in the evaluation process.

Also noted during the discussion were several **editorial corrections:**
- removal of the lines from the second and third column of “Form 1” opposite the areas of possible scholarship activities
- the placement of the “agree” and “disagree” boxes with the faculty signature, rather than the evaluator’s signature line
- the use of the correct wording in referring to on-campus and off-campus service

At the conclusion of the discussion it was decided that **more time was needed to review** the documents and consult with faculty constituencies on this proposal. To allow more time for review, the original **voting date** was delayed one more week until **April 23**. Time will also be provided at the April 16th meeting for further discussion of the proposal.

The council was unanimous in its **praise for the work that the Faculty Affairs Committee** had done in revising this part of the Faculty-Staff Handbook. Most felt that all of the pieces for an excellent evaluation process existed in the material being prepared by the FAC. However, additional time is necessary to fine tune the proposal before it is voted on for possible presentation to the general faculty on May 8th. Provost Pitcher noted that there had been considerable “give and take” between the committee and the administration on this proposal. He felt that it was a truly “collaborative” effort and that a workable solution to all of these questions and concerns was certainly possible.

Professor McKeever and the Chair Smelser **urged the council to visit the Faculty Affairs Committee website and examine the research documents and the proposed changes in detail.** Councilors were also **urged to visit the discussion website** to see what other faculty members were saying about the proposal and also to leave their own comments for the committee to read.

**Adjournment.** It was **moved and seconded** (Lillard, McClure) to adjourn. The motion was **adopted** by unanimous voice vote, and Chair Smelser adjourned the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

**Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the Faculty Council will be held on **April 16**, 2002, in the Brink Hall Faculty Lounge at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter A. Haggart
Secretary of the Faculty Council