University of Idaho
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2014-2015 Meeting #10, Tuesday, October 28, 2014

Present: Aiken (w/o vote), Boschetti, Brandt, Caplan, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Earl, Folwell, Foster, Frey, Godfrey, Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Jeffery, Karsky, Kennelly, Mahoney, Miller, Murphy, Nyavor, Qualls, Safaï, Smith, Stauffer, Stoll, Teal, Ytreberg Absent: Chung, Lowe, Perret, Wolf Guests: 7

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:31. A motion (Smith/Folwell) to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Chair’s Report: Next week the Athletic Director Rob Spear will be at the Senate. We will also review the annual report from the Ombuds office. Two weeks from now the entire meeting will be devoted to a brainstorming session of benefits and non-monetary forms of compensation. Chair Ytreberg encouraged Senators to contact their constituents for any ideas they might have related to this issue.

This Thursday (October 30) at 7:00 p.m. in the Law School Courtroom the Robert B. and Floretta F. Austin Distinguished Lecture in Science will be presented by Dr. Richard A. Feely from the NOAA Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory. The title of Dr. Feely’s lecture will be “Ocean Acidification: A Global Problem with Local Impacts.”

Also, this Friday (October 31) is the deadline for Sabbatical Applications.

Provost Report: Provost Aiken also called our attention to the Austin Lecture mentioned above. It is a good opportunity to pursue the type of interdisciplinary connections we encourage. Scientists as well as non-scientists will benefit from the lecture.

She also reiterated her comments from last week regarding the importance of the start of student advising. There is nothing more important to retaining our students and insuring their success than having a genuine advising session that is attentive to their academic progress.

Finally, President Staben will be having a Halloween party at 6 p.m. at the President’s house (or at least what we used to call the President’s House). So come, wear a costume and have fun.

Larry Stauffer, the Dean of the College of Engineering, reminded all of the monthly faculty reception that is also this Friday. The gathering will start at 3:30 here in the Brink Hall Faculty-Staff Lounge.

FS-15-005 (UCC-15-014): Science - New Bioinformatics and Computation Biology. This proposal involves a graduate level certificate. Senator Foster stated that this certificate was recommended by the external advisory board and has been enthusiastically received. There was a question as to whether this was on the five year plan. It isn’t, but the Provost noted that given the Focus for the Future there has been a temporary hiatus to the State Board Five Year Plan and this program can easily be added as a result of the prioritization process. The Certificate was approved unanimously.

FS-15-006 (UCC-15-015): Law - Concurrent JD and MBA Program with Boise State University. Senator Brandt speaking for the Law School stated that the program fits the business focus of the Law Schools program in Boise. It will allow students to finish both a JD and a MBA in four years by cross-counting credits. This was approved unanimously.
FS-15-014 (UCC-15-027): CLASS - Theatre Art name changes: This proposal involves a name change in two minors in Theatre Arts. The Chair of Theatre Arts Dean Panttaja explained that the previous “technical theatre” minor will change to Theatre Design and Technology Minor and the “theatre arts” minor will now be called the Theatre Performance Minor. These changes will make the minors more focused and the titles will more clearly express the content of the minors. This proposal also was unanimously approved.

FS-15-015 (UCC-15-028): CLASS - Jazz Studies minor. Professor Leonard Garrison from the Lionel Hampton School of Music (LHSOM) explained that the proposed minor was designed to allow those with an interest in Jazz to have it reflected on their transcripts which was not currently the case. The LHSOM does not have a major in Jazz and the existing emphasis did not meet state requirements for a minor and as such was not reflected on a student’s transcript. A Senator wondered about majoring and minoring in the same program. It was stated that there is a precedent for this in music. Another question was directed at the number of credits required (26) for this minor. Since some of the courses required for the major are included in the minor than the size of the Jazz Minor isn’t really that large. Since this is already something a lot of music students are already doing it will not be that much extra work for them. This new minor was approved unanimously.

Human Resource Policies and Practices: The Chair introduced Greg Walters the Executive Director of Human Resources. He has been invited to discuss HR practices & policies. Mr. Walters did not make any opening comments but indicated that he would be happy to answer questions.

- Last year a senator noted he served on a committee with the HR Director working on internal hiring and promotion policies. What is the status of that committee and will that process get started again? Walters stated that the process had stalled. He suggested that he was hesitant to reinvigorate this inquiry since the University Leadership team was working on compensation issues. He felt they should have time to formulate their ideas before going much further with formalizing policies related to staff hiring and promotion. He did note that the idea of having just internal postings for some positions is something that could be carved out and acted upon. Chair Ytreberg pointed out that there was a group, headed by Ron Smith, being created to look at streamlining internal searches as well as looking at possible longevity increases. It was requested that the documentation from last year’s staff group that discussed these issues be made available to the Senate Chair so he would have a better sense of where they had gotten to and why the discussions had stalled. Mr. Walters stated that he did have the most recent version and would provide that to the Chair.

- What percentage of UI employees are at grade 1 or 2 and below $20,000. At the end of the classification study there weren’t many employees in grade 1 and they were moved up to grade 2. There is a minimum threshold for hiring regular staff at $10.75. This would be around $22,000 annually. While noting that the numbers might not be exact he believed that there were less than ninety employee’s earning less than $12.00 an hour.

- Perhaps we should eliminate grade 1 since nobody is now in it and it potentially has a negative effect on morale? Mr. Walters suggested that while it made sense to start counting at 1 that this probably could be done. They were being careful to not hire anyone below the $10.75 an hour rate. A Senator suggested that there may be reasons to keep the degree of skills required for grade 1 as long as the salary range for grade 1 was adjusted upward to reflect the actual compensation.

- A slightly different issue was raised related to streamlining the HR process. We seem to be losing staff at twice the rate of our peers which puts us in a position of filling positions on short notice. The current hiring process makes it almost impossible to hire talented people in key positions.
Greg Walters responded that the current staff turnover rate is around 14-15% and that organizations seek to be under 10%. He believed that the biggest reason for this high turnover rate related to compensation levels.

- **Current policy is that we cannot offer someone above one-third of the salary range for that grade level although sometimes special permission is given to hire at one-half of the salary range. How were these decisions made?** These decisions are made at the Provost and Vice President level.

- **In some cases it was nearly impossible to hire a person of the necessary caliber at the current classification and pay range. Is there any process to re-evaluate a classification when someone leaves?** Mr. Walters stated that generally open positions are not reclassified although there have been a couple of situations that have sparked a reclassification. This has occurred when we have been unable to attract qualified applicants despite going through at least two rounds of advertising. One position remained unfilled for over a year.

- **A couple of Senators suggested that it shouldn’t be necessary to wait a year to know whether it is necessary to raise the compensation level in order to attract a qualified candidate.** Walters responded that the larger question regarding compensation levels should be directed to the President and Vice Presidents. There are many situations where the pay ranges are very low and it will be difficult to hire a qualified person.

- **Going a long period of time without being able to hire someone led to a loss of productivity and added significant stress to the department.** Walters stated that departments can request a reclassification and HR has streamlined their response time to reclassification requests.

- **There were situations where someone had been asked to take on responsibilities of another classification level for people who were out on leave but the added compensation level for the additional responsibility was limited to 5%. This he noted was unfair and led to people leaving their position.**

- **A similar complaint was raised about specialist positions. A person went to a lower responsibility job at a neighboring institution for a significant pay increase while we would not be able to find a qualified person for this position under current policies.**

- **Has anyone inquired into how much last year’s reclassification exercise cost the University in terms of lost employee’s, declining morale, and a belief that the University did not respect its employees?** Mr. Walters responded that HR does routinely hear from supervisors detailing the reasons people have left the University. There is a very high number who leave for higher paying jobs. Some people have mentioned the classification study but talk about compensation levels, lack of opportunity for advancement are more often mentioned. More generally Walters noted that in his time at the University leadership changes, lack of pay increases, and increased workloads, have all played a role in providing employees motivation to look elsewhere. He agreed that there was certainly a high cost to the number of people that we are losing.

- **Have the problems classifying certain scientific support staff made it completely through the appeals process?** There have been workgroups that have looked at these research related classifications. A final decision has not been made regarding the appropriate classifications but when the review is complete employees will still have the opportunity to appeal if they are not satisfied with the classification.

- **In cases where the supervisor might have been part of the problem why an employee leaves, does the University have a good system for determining this?** Walters noted that HR does take concerns about supervisors seriously and has been willing to use the Ombuds office to facilitate communication when appropriate.

- **How has the reclassification process affected people moving from one job to another within the University?** When a person moves to another job that is within the same classification their pay
will stay the same. The Chair noted that this decision should be revisited and is inconsistent with the plan to open up positions for internal hires.

- **Is there a possibility of bonuses?** Mr. Walters said there was a mechanism in policy but it was rarely used.

- **Is there training and development programs available for staff?** Walters noted that HR does have professional development programs and interested people should go to their website to see what is available at: [http://www.uidaho.edu/pdl_portal](http://www.uidaho.edu/pdl_portal). The emphasis recently has been on compliance related training like the new online program on sexual harassment prevention. There are other training programs available ranging from performance management, evaluations, hiring, and affirmative action.

- **What of the viability of the current evaluation process?** Mr. Walters noted that a lot of organizations have not done a good job of tailoring their performance evaluations to meet their needs. There is a desire to improve our performance management system in the coming years.

- Several Senators commented on frustration with our current evaluation system and the Chair noted that there is a Senate Committee working on evaluations and this issue will be back to us in the near future.

- **During the reclassification process, what percentage of HR employees versus other university staff received a mandatory raise because they were not at the minimum in their classification level?** Mr. Walters responded that he did not have these numbers. However, he noted that he provided this information last year to Trish Hartzell at her request.

**Adjournment:** On that note the Chair accepted a motion (Miller/Mahoney) to adjourn at 4:44 p.m. which passed unanimously.

Don Crowley, Secretary to Faculty Senate
Faculty Secretary/Policy Coordinator