Present: Stevenson for Aiken (w/o vote), Boschetti, Brandt, Caplan, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Earl, Flores, Foster, Godfrey (Coeur d’Alene), Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Jeffery, Karsky, Kennelly, Lowe, Mahoney, Miller, Nyavor, Perret, Qualls, Safaii, Stauffer, Stoll, Teal, Wolf, Ytreberg Absent: Aiken (w/o vote), Chung, Folwell, Frey, Murphy, Stauffer, Guests: 9.

Chair Ytreberg called the meeting to order at 3:34. A few minutes were spent sorting out the new system of connecting with off campus sites. Neither the visual nor the audio quality is what we would hope for.

A motion to approve the minutes (Wolf, Lowe) for meeting #15, December 9th, 2014 was approved without objection and three abstentions.

Chair’s Report: We had a great turnout at the UFM on January 15th. All Senate proposals from the fall semester were passed. Next week Norm Pendegraft and Keith Ickes from UBFC (University Budget and Finance Committee) will present their thoughts to the Senate. This will be the only agenda item for next week which should leave a lot of time for discussion. Trish Hartzell will be back to discuss student evaluations in two weeks. The 5th Woman’s Leadership Conference will be at the UI on March 25th. Those who have ideas about workshops should submit them by February 2nd.

The Chair noted that Mark Miller current Senate member and longtime Associate Director of the Idaho Commons & Student Union is retiring. A retirement celebration will be held tomorrow at 3:30 in the Panorama Room of the Commons.

Provost Report: Jeanne Stevenson (sitting in for Provost Aiken) discussed President Staben’s presentation to JFAC. She noted that the UI proposed that if the state legislature fully funds a 3% change in CEC (change in compensation) than we will not seek a tuition increase. Last week in Boise the UI celebrated the conclusion of its fundraising campaign. The campaign exceeded its initial target. Vice Provost Stevenson encouraged Senators to attend open forums for the various ongoing searches. The Chamber Auditorium Series featuring the Jupiter String Quartet is this Thursday at 7:30. The nomination deadline for various excellence awards is at end of this week.

Tobacco Compromise Group: The Chair invited representatives from the Tobacco Compromise Group to present their ideas to the Senate. Professor Steve Peterson and students Joseph Cook and Erin Phipps came forward to present their plan for a compromise on the question of whether the UI campus should be tobacco free by next year. Mr. Cook noted the various activities his group had engaged in to help inform the campus community on the issue. He suggested that many people still did not realize that this change was coming. His group is proposing that instead of a “tobacco free” campus we should seek a compromise involving designated smoking areas. The group believes their desired compromise has not received enough attention as an option to either no change or a complete ban.

Professor Steve Peterson suggested that if given an open choice on campus the designated smoking area would prevail but that option has been taken off the table from the very beginning. He argued that pursuing a complete ban had too many parallels to the “war on drugs” which has generated a great deal of negative consequences in the United States. Professor Peterson also suggested that there has been a lot of misinformation on campus about their proposed compromise as well as the likely consequences of a complete tobacco ban. He stated that there is no evidence that a failure to enact a ban will lead to a
loss of research dollars. A ban will not have a positive effect on student enrollment and their proposal for designated areas will not cost a lot of money. He also suggested a ban would have a discriminatory effect on UI classified staff who would have a far more difficult time getting off campus than faculty. His assertion that a person would have to go 1-2 miles to get off campus was disputed by various Senators.

Generally Professor Peterson doubted that campus tobacco bans would work and suggested that exposure to outdoor smoke was more of a nuisance than a serious health risk. The tobacco compromise group would like to see a ballot involving faculty, students, and staff to decide among the various options. If this occurred they believe that the designated smoking areas would prevail. Several Senators indicated general support for a poll or ballot measure testing support for the possible options although one Senator doubted that a vote was the best way to arrive at a finely tailored policy that respected the needs of the variety of groups on campus while also promoting a healthy campus.

A Senator inquired as to the current status of the tobacco ban proposal. Chair Ytreberg responded that in his view there has not been an official plan endorsed by the President. President Staben has made comments that suggest support for a tobacco free campus but that he wanted the University community to decide.

Asked if there weren’t already designated smoking areas on campus Professor Peterson suggested that there currently isn’t an effective policy and many of the smoking areas were too close to buildings. He acknowledged that any policy would have enforcement problems but that under their plan smokers would have incentive to make it work to avoid a complete ban.

Several Senators were highly critical of aspects of the presentation of the tobacco compromise group. Some suggested that the group was engaging in exaggeration and scare tactics and the analogy to the “war on drugs” was disingenuous and embarrassing. Professor Peterson defended his use of the “war on drugs” analogy saying he hoped to communicate that such prohibitions don’t work and have unintended consequences.

A Senator suggested that she was less interested in the discussion of enforcement and more interested in the University modeling desirable behavior for future generations. The University has a responsibility to consider the culture of our campus and what behaviors we want to model. The compromise group suggested that a ban would not decrease smoking for future generations while a member of the Tobacco Task Force suggested that there was research indicating that individuals faced with a ban would be more likely to make an attempt to quit. Another Senator noted that tobacco is a carcinogen and exposing people to second hand smoke is dangerous. As the conversation came to a close the status of tobacco on campus remained cloudy.

**Facilities.** The Chair invited Brian Johnson (Assistant Vice President, Facilities) to discuss the status of facilities on campus. Mr. Johnson presented a number of slides regarding investment in facilities and building maintenance. A Canadian consulting firm (Sightlines) recently visited campus and pointed to an alarming increase in unmet capital renewal needs. Sightlines did state that we were spending our resources on the right things. There is around a billion dollars in facilities on campus and it is thought to be desirable to reinvest 3% a year in keeping everything functional. That would mean around 30 million a year for the UI. This is an idealized target which we clearly don’t meet. The UI remains below the level that our peers are able to reinvest in building maintenance and housing struggles at an even lower rate.
Mr. Johnson also discussed the current University priorities which include: the IRIC, the Education Building, Northern Idaho Collaborative Education Facility, Research and Classroom Facility, the Aquaculture Research Lab, and the Idaho Law and Justice Learning Center in Boise.

When asked how faculty can help Mr. Johnson noted that apart from being able to make a major contribution that faculty can help by getting rid of unwanted items and report anything that is broken.

A Senator asked about the benefits of investing in the President’s House.  Mr. Johnson noted that when President Nellis left it appeared to be a good time to look at the house with the hope that a new house would serve as a recruiting tool.  Some donors who wanted to fix the badly outdated President’s House were found although that process has taken a while.

Another Senator asked about the condition of sidewalks after the last snowstorm.  Mr. Johnson acknowledged that the condition of the sidewalks after the last snow/ice storm was bad.  In general he commended our crew for doing a good job dealing with snow and making the campus a lot better than other areas in town.

There was a short discussion of housing and the aging dorm facilities and their possible effect on the UI’s goal to increase student enrollment. While noting that he was not the housing expert which is handled by another office on campus, University Housing, he mentioned Housing must generate their own funds. The only way to do this is to charge students but that alone does not support Housing’s needs. Housing has some very tough challenges and are in a different situation than Facilities.

Mr. Johnson was asked several questions dealing with the difficulty of addressing the deferred maintenance problem which now is over $220 million.  Mr. Johnson pointed out that we had received one time funding to deal with some problems but that we struggled to obtain funds to deal with the ongoing problem.  The State does not always provide occupancy costs and it is frequently easier to focus on immediate problems than deal with long term maintenance.  In a similar vein donors are usually less interested in providing funds for ongoing maintenance than in providing funds for new facilities.

**Adjournment:**  The Chair thanked Brian for the discussion and entertained a motion (Foster/Teal) to adjourn at 5:07.  The motion passed unanimously.

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary and Secretary to Faculty Senate