Present: Stevenson for Aiken (w/o vote), Boschetti, Brandt, Caplan, Chung, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Earl, Folwell, Foster, Frey, Godfrey (Coeur d'Alene), Hiromoto, Jeffery, Lowe, Miller, Murphy, Nyavor, Qualls, Smith, Stoll, Teal, Ytreberg
Absent: Aiken (w/o vote), Karsky, Mahoney, Perret, Safaai, Stauffer, Wolf
Guests: 6

A quorum being present the Chair called the meeting to order at 3:35.

It was moved and seconded (Folwell/Brandt) to approve the minutes of the 2014/2015 Faculty Senate Meeting #4 September 16, 2014. The minutes were approved with no dissents and one abstention.

Chair Report: The Chair announced the list of upcoming guests. Emily Tuschhoff will be at the Senate on September 30th to discuss the Tobacco Free Campus campaign. Vice President of Research and Economic Development Jack McIver and Executive Director for Planning and Budget Keith Ickes have been invited to discuss F&A distribution on October 7th. Chair Ytreberg commented that our guests have been given the flexibility to discuss issues they feel are important but that Senators should not feel limited by that and should come prepared with questions and thoughts that they wish to explore. He announced that nominations are open for next year’s Common Read. The Chair also noted that the sub-committee on the Academic Freedom language has agreed on a proposal and will soon bring it to the Senate for discussion.

Provost Report: Vice Provost Stevenson reminded the Senate that the site visit of the NWCCU accreditation team will be April 20-22. She also announced that there are four candidates for the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students position visiting campus in the near future. The first candidate will be here this week. We should check the Provost’s website URL: http://www.uidaho.edu/provost/deansearches for complete information about this important search. She also announced that the evening of October 17th (homecoming weekend) has been chosen for Bruce Pitman’s reception.

Faculty/Staff Compensation: The Chair invited Executive Director for Planning and Budget, Keith Ickes and Professor Norman Pendegraft, Chair of University Budget and Finance Committee (UBFC) to lead a discussion of faculty/staff compensation issues. Ickes began by discussing this year’s request to the state for a 4% fully funded salary increase. This is the UI’s highest priority request to the state legislature. The other institutions in the state have joined in this request. Ickes commented that the UI has been falling behind our peer institutions. In 2008 we were at 92% of our peers in faculty compensation but since then we have fallen to 84%. Even last year’s 2% increase did not keep up with our peer institutions.

Compensation for staff members reflects a similar decline. A regional survey of the market two years ago put our staff salaries at 85% of the regional market and we are
certainly lower than that now. In some technical fields we are not competitive and we are losing our best staff to WSU and local businesses on a regular basis.

Last year the state funded a 1% permanent increase to base salaries with an extra one year temporary increase for fiscal year 2015. Instead, the UI fully funded a 2% increase in base salaries. When the State provides a 1% increase the cost to the UI for fully funding that is $1.1 million (salary plus benefits) but the State provides a little over $600,000. Thus the University must find the funds to cover the gap between what the State provides and the true cost to the institution. Doing so would not have been possible without the tuition increase supported by student leaders. A 1% tuition increase (on average) generates about $600,000. In addition to salaries, there are mandatory budget increases every year. It takes about a 2% increase in tuition every year to cover mandatory budget increases unless the State provides the unrestricted funds to cover these increases.

The University hopes that the State will make last year’s one-time 1% increase permanent. We think that is likely and if it occurs the UI will do at least another 1% permanent increase in base salary.

A senator asked if the philosophy of treating faculty and staff increases together was justified given that in some cases staff might be considered in worse shape than faculty. Mr. Ickes noted that last year the UBFC had made a proposal advocating larger raises for staff members who were below a living wage. He suggested that in a year where there was only 2% available, after several years of no increases, it was difficult to begin to make these adjustments. If we had a year where the State provided a full 4% or more we would have the flexibility to explore a broader range of opportunities. Mr. Ickes suggested that this year the UBFC might consider what types of options are available for providing compensation that takes these issues into consideration.

A senator raised the issue of other types of compensation apart from salary. For instance, tuition benefit for children, parking, even housing, might be part of a total compensation. He asked how we compared with our peers with regard to total compensation. Mr. Ickes responded that most peer comparisons focused on defined compensation which typically includes medical and retirement plans but not other types of benefits. The present UI compensation package is about 34% of salary. A number of our peers are substantially below that. He noted that Colorado State does not pay Social Security and only contributes to an employee retirement system while the UI pays both Social Security and contributes to an employee retirement system. This is a 7% difference per employee right there. He also noted that the cost of medical plans can vary tremendously. The UI exists in a relatively non-competitive health care market and our costs are somewhat higher. We do self-fund our health care system and provide an HSA plan which BSU and ISU do not provide. We also provide a partial tuition waiver for dependents of employees while some state universities do not. In conclusion he conceded that it is difficult to compare the compensation plans of universities. Mr. Ickes stated that we really aren’t actively considering non-salary compensation. Chair Ytreberg suggested that perhaps we should be taking a more active look at non-salary benefits because they can compensate for a lower salary.
The discussion that followed ranged across the fairly low compensation for TA’s and the relative difficulty of defining equity across faculty and staff. It was apparent that we would have to return to these issues in the coming months. The Chair thanked Mr. Ickes for coming to the Senate.

Alcohol & Other Drug Program: Our next guest was Brian Dulin who was invited to the Senate to talk about the Alcohol and Other Drug Program. Mr. Dulin discussed the new program at the UI to address these issues. He reported on data about alcohol and drug usage among students and noted some promising trends which showed an increase in students who have not used alcohol (see slides provided in packet). The survey also showed a gap between perceived usage (higher) and self-reported usage (lower) for both drinking and marijuana use.

There was a short discussion about the effect of new marijuana retail outlets eight miles away. There has not yet been any clear impact from the change in Washington’s marijuana laws. A senator questioned how these issues were being framed and suggested we should avoid phrases like the vast majority don’t use since this makes it sound like there isn’t a problem while there is still a substantial number of students who continue to engage in these behaviors. Another senator asked if the survey showed whether a small number of students were engaged in multiple risky behaviors or whether there were separate categories of students engaged in different types of risky behavior. Mr. Dulin stated that they haven’t engaged in that depth of an analysis at this point.

FS-15-004: Teaching Minor (teaching endorsement) in Online Education: The Senate considered a seconded motion from UCC regarding a College of Education proposal to create a K-12 online teaching endorsement. The proposal was approved with no dissents and one abstention.

Adjournment: Given that it was now after 5 the Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. It was moved (Folwell) and seconded (Foster) to adjourn. This motion passed unanimously and the Senate adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

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