The Chair called meeting #24 of the Faculty Senate to order at 3:33. Some time was spent confirming that all four senators not in Moscow could be seen and heard. While all four senators were present once again we were unable to see all four at the same time.

A motion (K. Wolf/Brandt) to approve the minutes for meeting #23 was approved with one abstention.

Chair’s Report: Chair Ytreberg provided a brief preview of coming attractions. Next week the ad hoc committee on enhancing benefits will present a proposal on dependent tuition. In two weeks we will look at FSH & and APM sections related to the staff classification system. The chair brought up his concern with the name for the Faculty Interdisciplinary Research reception that occurs once a month. He suggested that the name is a turn-off which doesn’t serve to attract new faculty. The point is to create an opportunity to stimulate discussion among faculty. He suggested that senators contemplate a better name and let him know. Finally, the chair reminded senators that they should be organizing elections for the Senate in their college. Please let the Faculty Secretary’s Office know if they can help.

Provost’s Report: Vice Provost Jeanne Stevenson provided five announcements involving upcoming events. (1) The next Vandal Friday program is scheduled for this Thursday and Friday. Please welcome students and their families to campus and help them get where they want to go. (2) Tonight (Tuesday) in the Pitman Center Ballroom speaker Yasmin Garcia Rico from Student Action with Farmworkers for Farmworker Awareness Week. (3) The 15th Annual Pow Wow is this weekend. (4) The Bellwood Lecture is in Boise on Monday and next Tuesday at 2 in the Pitman Center. The title of the Lecture is “Truth, Justice and Democracy post Dictatorship” (Note: this event has been postponed). (5) The Borah Symposium starts Monday. This year’s Borah topic is “Troubled Borders: Sovereignty, Disease, War and Refugees”. The keynote address will be delivered by Thomas P.M. Barnett on Wednesday.

Number of Temporary Faculty: The Chair introduced Norman Pendegraft and Trina Mahoney from University Budge & Finance Committee (UBFC). The chair had asked UBFC to develop a statistical report regarding the number of temporary faculty at the UI. They presented a preliminary report addressing this issue (see senate packet for meeting #24). Ms. Mahoney noted that there are various ways that temporary faculty might be defined. Primarily the report focused on those who were not benefit eligible. For the fall-2014 semester there were 168 such faculty with 101 employed in two colleges (Education and CLASS). The report also noted that 52 individuals had taught 6 or more credits for at least two semesters. They noted that it is difficult to create exact categories to capture the situation of those teaching as temporary faculty.

Temporary Lecturers: The Chair introduced Jeff Jones a lecturer in English to further discuss issues related to temporary faculty. Mr. Jones stated that the temporary lecturers in English preferred the term contingent faculty which indicated the precarious nature of their employment. He noted that he was mainly speaking for the contingent faculty in English because he had not been able to make meaningful connections with others in similar circumstances in other areas. His hope was to start a conversation about contingent faculty and their shared interests with the rest of the UI community. Mr. Jones stated that their primary goals were job security and benefits. The specter of not being renewed
hangs over their heads semester after semester. Lecturers in English do not have medical insurance and do not have access to other types of benefits like retirement funds. The temporary or contingent nature of their jobs undermines their ability to speak up about their working conditions. They provide flexibility to departments and free up tenure-track faculty to teach upper division courses. They teach high enrollment courses but they are continually hired and fired. The contingent nature of their jobs undermines academic freedom and affects the quality of their performance. He believes they are all good and dedicated teachers but this is in spite of their labor conditions. Mr. Jones suggested that this was a national issue and contingent faculty were the “canaries in the coal mine.”

The discussion that followed tended to focus on benefits and what the existing cut-offs were that qualified one for benefits. It was suggested that in the current context it is necessary to be teaching 11 credits a semester to be eligible for medical benefits. It wasn’t clear what combination of hours and length of contract made one eligible for benefits. There was also some discussion of the difference between clinical faculty and the type of temporary faculty being discussed.

A senator thanked Mr. Jones for his presentation and commented that this situation doesn’t speak well about us as an educational community. The senator wondered what we might do to explore these issues. Mr. Jones suggested that the Senate might form a task force to look into creating a more consistent and equitable teaching environment. He felt that there should be a review system that would create more consistency and permanence.

There was further discussion of how we might define the group of people under discussion. It was suggested that some temporary or part-time research faculty should be included in this discussion. It was noted that FSH 1565 does discuss temporary lecturers and that a task force might review this section. The wide-ranging conversation made it clear that it was difficult to define who received benefits and under what conditions. There was also no clear explanation as to why the University cut back on providing benefits to temporary faculty in 2009. It was assumed that this was part of the budget difficulties the University faced at the time.

Eventually a motion (Murphy/Frey) was made to create an ad hoc task force to investigate and make recommendations on this issue. This led to a discussion of the relative merits of using existing Senate committees versus creating ad hoc committees. There was also further discussion of how we were defining the group under discussion. The motion as offered ultimately suggested that a task force be created by the Senate to look at long-term temporary employee’s and determine who might receive benefits and when. The motion passed 22-1.

2015-18 Committee nominees: Committee on Committee’s (ConC) list of nominees for university committees, those in FSH 1640, was placed on the table for a vote. The proposed list passed unanimously.

FS-15-058: FSH 1620 - University Level Committees. This proposal from ConC was to remove the word ‘only’ in FSH 1620 B-2. The current wording stops the creation of committee’s and changes to their structure at the Faculty Senate. It does not require they go to a University Faculty Meeting for the general faculty as other Faculty-Staff Handbook (FSH) changes. The purpose of deleting the word “only” is to ensure any FSH change approved by Faculty Senate go to the general faculty for consideration and vote. This change was not intended to prevent a faculty senate chair from asking a standing committee to investigate an issue within their general jurisdiction. The proposal passed 13-5-2.

FS-15-051: FSH 3710—Leave Policies for All Employees. The Chair introduced Ruth Funabiki as Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee to speak to this proposal. The proposal would be voted on next week.
Professor Funabiki pointed out that leave policies were complicated but that FAC had decided to look specifically at policies relating to childbirth, adoption and foster care and consolidate these policies within FSH 3710 as is the case for other types of leave in FSH 3710, e.g. sick, military leave, jury duty, etc. She also noted that they added language encouraging employees themselves to become familiar with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The FMLA requires that employees be allowed at least 12 weeks of job protected leave for parenting. The major changes suggested by FAC expands upon this requirement by allowing up to 16 weeks of job protected leave which works better in a semester environment. FAC’s proposal would also allow both parents to have access to 16 weeks of leave. Finally, FAC’s proposal would not exclude parents from applying for shared leave as long as they met the criteria as defined in the shared leave section.

University Counsel Kent Nelson commented briefly on the FAC proposal. He noted that currently University policy follows the FMLA. The President’s Cabinet has been looking at making some changes to the parenting policy specifically to remove the restriction on only using ten days of sick leave for parenting. The Cabinet is also in favor of allowing both parents to have access to 12 weeks of leave. He did express some concerns about FAC’s proposed expansion to 16 weeks as well as the possibility of accessing shared leave. Mr. Nelson expressed confidence that some common ground could be found on these policies.

FS-15-049 (UCC-15-071): Graduate Student GPA Requirement for Graduation. This proposal has been approved by UCC and involves a change in how graduate GPA’s are calculated. Currently a graduate student must have a 3.0 GPA based on all grades in their graduate transcripts. This allows a graduate student to bring up their GPA by using classes that are not part of their study plan. The proposed change would require that the graduate student also have a cumulative 3.0 GPA from all courses listed on their study plan. This change passed unanimously.

FS-15-040rev: FSH 1700—College of Graduate Studies Bylaws. At the Faculty Senate meeting of February 24, 2015 the Senate voted to retain representation for faculty who were part of University-Wide Programs. Such a program was defined as “a program with graduate faculty from at least three colleges.” That day the Senate asked the Faculty Secretary to consider some wording changes to Article VI section 2. The proposal today would change the word “select” to “elect” in 2-b and add the words “The faculty member elected to represent this group has a unique role on Graduate Council, which is to provide a voice and vote from the perspective of the university-wide academic programs.” The reason for this change was to clarify that a faculty member would be elected to represent the interests of university-wide programs. A motion (K. Wolf/Brandt) was offered to accept these changes as written. Professor Jie Chen as Dean of the Graduate School asked what was meant by the term elect. The Faculty Secretary stated that it would mean an election from members of university-wide programs and not somebody being selected by the Dean or the Provost. Dean Chen stated Graduate Council was not opposed to an election but asked for a clarification of how this election would be conducted. A senator stated Senate should not try to micro-manage the nature of the election and that Graduate Council should implement this policy following any reasonable election procedure that is consistent with the spirit of the rule. Dean Chen voiced his appreciation of this statement. With that clarification the proposal passed 17-1.

Adjournment: A motion (K. Wolf/Lowe) to adjourn passed unanimously at 5:08.

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary and Secretary to the Faculty Senate