Present: Adams, Anderson, Boschetti, Brandt, Brewick, Brown, Caplan, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Flores, Folwell, Godfrey (Coeur d’Alene), Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Hrdlicka, Jeffery, LaPrath, Latrell, Murphy, Nicotra, Royer, St. Claire, Stoll, Teal, Wienczek (w/o vote), Wolf. Absent: Chung, Foster, Mahoney, Perret. Guests: 4

Chair Teal called meeting #11 to order at 3:32. A motion (Murphy/Latrell) to approve the minutes for the November 3, 2015 meeting of the Faculty Senate passed without objection.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal announced that faculty could get a free lunch by volunteering to be on a food service committee which will provide feedback on the varieties of food service on campus. They will meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 11:30. No one immediately volunteered. We will send an email out which can be shared with anyone interested. The Chair also announced that the 3rd interdisciplinary faculty gathering will be this Friday (the 13th) at 4:00 in the Brink Hall Faculty-Staff Lounge.

The Chair recognized Senator Latrell to make an announcement regarding Toys-for-Tots. Toys-for-Tots is a national non-profit program and he is heading the local area campaign seeking to expand participation. He hopes to challenge the various colleges in a campus-wide friendly competition to collect these toys for the holidays. Those interested in establishing drop boxes should contact him. Toys should be new, unwrapped and intended for kids up to the age of 14.

Provost’s Report: The Provost announced that the website for the Strategic Plan should go live this week. The key activity for this week is Enroll Idaho which starts tonight. This initiative is designed to encourage Idaho high school students to go to college. The purpose of tonight’s event is to answer key questions about how students can apply, how to get financial aid, and where students can get advising. This is an important initiative aimed at serving the interests of Idaho citizens.

University Promotions Committee: The Chair emphasized the need for Senators from each college to nominate faculty to serve on the University Promotions Committee. These are due in the Provost’s Office by this Friday the 13th. The appropriate forms and a page of FAQ’s are included in this week’s packet. A Senator inquired as to whether colleges should have set procedures to make these nominations. The Faculty Secretary suggested that the Senators from each college determined how they wanted to go about determining who to nominate. There really aren’t any rules other than considerations about ensuring balance and representation across the college. Vice Chair Brandt noted that some colleges may have this addressed in their by-laws. There was a short discussion about whether Senators needed to know who the hold-over members are in order to make the nominations.

Consolidated Fringe. The Chair introduced Vice Presidents Jack McIver and Brian Foisy along with Trina Mahoney from the Budget Office to discuss the implementation of the new consolidated fringe rate. Essentially, this involves developing a new methodology for charging employee benefits across all budgets, including grants and contracts. Brian Foisy explained that the need for a “consolidated fringe” rate arose from the difficulties of calculating benefits across the University when circumstances might change at any time, e.g. new child, marriage, etc. Determining these benefits also created particular problems for those writing grants. To create administrative efficiencies and reliability three basic rates were established. The faculty rate for this year was set at 31.6%, staff at 39.2% and students at 2.5%. This would create a central pool of money from which all benefits will be paid.
Acknowledging that in general this sounds like a good policy, a Senator asked if there were any programs that might be disadvantaged by this. Mr. Foisy stated that there were potentially some unintended consequences. The place this was most likely to occur was with temporary employees. He stated they were working with dean’s to offset any negative impact from this policy and that in future years they would look at creating a 4th rate category of temporary employees to deal with this.

Mr. Foisy emphasized that this policy did not affect employee eligibility for benefits. It did establish basic rates that would be charged to departments as a cost allocation mechanism. A question was asked about health benefits for RA’s and TA’s. It was pointed out that we would be having a discussion on TA’s/RA’s as well as other contingent faculty and their benefit eligibility in the future.

**Basic Overview of TA/RA Positions:** The Chair invited Jerry McMurtry, Interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, to discuss the stipends provided to TA’s and RA’s. Dean McMurtry provided some documents which showed the number of TA’s and RA’s across colleges and also compared our compensation levels to national averages based on the Oklahoma State survey. The UI currently employs 319 research assistants and 343 teaching assistants. They differ as to hours worked although a fulltime TA/RA is expected to work 20 hours a week. The average hourly rate for RA’s is higher than the average hourly rate for TA’s. When we compare our rates with the Oklahoma State study of our peer institutions, we pay 91% of the average hourly rate for RA’s and only 65% of the TA rate. We also have differences across the colleges on campus. All of the institutions in the Oklahoma State study provide out-of-state tuition waivers. Many provide full tuition waivers. The College of Graduate Studies waives in-state tuition for only 107 of the 342 TA’s on campus.

A Senator emphasized that our low compensation levels made it very difficult to recruit qualified TA’s and RA’s especially if we don’t provide full tuition waivers. Another Senator wondered whether we have a plan to deal with our current inability to compete with our peer institutions. Dean McMurtry acknowledged that the bottom line number ($1,780,958) of what would be necessary to provide a full tuition waiver for all TA’s was not something that we could resolve easily. He stated that this was an institutional issue. He was having conversations with the Provost about developing strategies to address this problem. Other questions raised included:

- **Would it help to have a more centralized system of determining the number of TA’s and their compensation levels?** It might help to have a more centralized system but that wouldn’t automatically solve the lack of funding. The Provost pointed out that people like certainty and having a more centralized system of distribution might cause problems for programs that are disfavored in any particular year.

- **Why have our peer institutions been able to provide higher levels of funding?** Dean McMurtry noted that COGS has made this their number one priority in the last couple of years.

- **How does a college get on the list to have COGS fund a tuition waiver?** Dean McMurtry noted colleges already do apply to COGS to obtain these tuition waivers. The College of Science and CLASS get the most due to the load they carry in providing general education courses. COGS does have a formula to help determine the number of waivers each college receives. Dean McMurtry stated he would be happy to share this formula.

- **There was a question raised as to how proposed changes in the Fair Labor Standards Act might affect TA’s and RA’s.** There is a specific exemption for teachers but there are questions of exactly how RA’s fit into this discussion. If RA’s are not included in the teaching exemption then they would be eligible for overtime.

- **RA stipends differ from TA’s because they are tied to grants.** Jack McIver noted that we didn’t always charge grants with the highest stipend allowed by agencies. Some agencies have caps on
what can be charged. The PI must include tuition waivers and stipends in their proposals and we
don’t always take full advantage of what can be charged to a grant. There seemed to be some
disagreement as to what was the best strategy to employ.

It was generally agreed that a discussion of stipends for RA’s and TA’s was an important discussion for
the University to have. The effort to develop a new system for budget requests might provide an
opportunity for COGS (and others) to pursue this as a priority.

**Adjournment:** As the discussion came to a close the Chair entertained a motion (Stoll/St. Claire) to
adjourn. This passed unanimously at 4:41.

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary and
Secretary to the Faculty Senate