Chair Teal called meeting #13 to order at 3:30 p.m. A motion (Stoll/Chung) to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2015 meeting passed without dissent.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal reminded everyone that the University Faculty Meeting originally scheduled for December 3rd had been canceled. The Faculty Senate will meet next week.

Provost’s Report: Vice Provost Jeanne Stevenson stated that Provost Wiencek could not be at the Senate meeting due to a town hall meeting on the Strategic Action Plan in Coeur d’Alene. We are making significant progress towards its development. These town hall meetings are being scheduled in various times and places to encourage discussion and active participation. There will be a town hall meeting in Moscow on December 4th at 10:30 a.m. in the Commons. There are also meetings scheduled within the next week in Boise and Idaho Falls. She also reminded everyone of the President’s Holiday Reception on December 2nd and the Alumni Awards for Excellence ceremony scheduled for December 11th.

Benefits Advisory Board: The Chair gave the floor to Senator Hrdlicka to provide a report from the Benefits Advisory Board (BAG). He noted that BAG has only met twice so far as they have been waiting to receive the results of a survey that was sent out to the university community. The purpose of the survey is to determine what type of new benefits people might wish to receive and to what extent people are willing to pay for new benefits. The return rate on the survey was, a statistically significant, 31%. Senator Hrdlicka felt that the survey would provide a pretty clear idea of what people want to see in their health care packages. BAG will also be looking at what other organizations of similar size are providing. Early next year BAG will begin to consider possible changes and make recommendations. Several Senators wondered why BAG had not made the results of the survey known. Senator Hrdlicka responded that he wasn’t sure why they haven’t made the results known but he would follow-up on why the results were being treated as confidential. Another Senator asked why BAG had picked particular benefits, as opposed to others that might be considered. Professor Hrdlicka stated that the possible benefits had been chosen based upon various inquiries to BAG and the committee’s sense of what people wanted. The purpose of the survey was to obtain broader information on what benefits the wider community desired.

Classification Task Force: The Chair introduced the Vice President of Finance Brian Foisy. Mr. Foisy explained that his purpose today was to give the Senate advance notice of a communication regarding employee hiring practices that would be released before the end of the year. He provided a set of hypothetical cases that sought to illustrate problems with our current hiring practice. His examples showed that under our current system a person employed by the UI might not be able to get the same salary as somebody from outside who applied for the same job within the UI. This was true despite the fact that the UI employee might have the same or better qualifications and certainly had more experience with the UI. Under our current system the UI employee applying for another UI job at the same classification is restricted from receiving a raise even if the department hiring was capable of paying more. Yet in the case of an external applicant the hiring department could pay up to the one-third salary range. Mr. Foisy noted that this situation demoralizes internal applicants.
Mr. Foisy explained that he is seeking to remove this form of discrimination against internal applicants by telling those hiring to pick the best applicant and negotiate with that person up to the level they can afford to pay. He acknowledged that this proposal would not get rid of internal equity problems, but that the same type of equity problems are being created by hiring in people from outside. He does have other plans for dealing with the internal equity issues. He intends to work with the classification task force to reduce some of these problems. These plans would involve developing an alternative to the current classification system. The real goal is a better compensation system.

In general, the idea would be to set target salaries for positions and to work towards meeting those targets. The targets would be based on determining what the market is for such positions.

Chair Teal reflected the thoughts of the Senate by stating his appreciation for the progress V.P. Foisy is making in this critical area. Various other Senators expressed their appreciation for the presentation, both for its clarity and its attempt to come to terms with the problems created by the current classification and compensation system.

Mr. Foisy’s acknowledgement that the current system was broken and needed to be fixed certainly reflected the concerns raised by the Senate last year and in this year’s Senate retreat.

There were several questions raised about the equity issue.

- **Would giving unit heads greater flexibility to hire up to their funding capacity create (or make worse) existing inequalities on campus between units that have funds and those that don’t?** Mr. Foisy responded by acknowledging that equity across job functions was a continuing problem, which would be difficult to resolve completely. He expressed an employment philosophy which would seek to create compensation targets for people with similar job responsibilities. Units would be responsible for assuring that all employees were brought up to a percentage of the target.

- **Would the currently existing “one-third” rule continue to exist?** Mr. Foisy suggested that as we move towards a different philosophy based upon all employees being within a specified range of the market, the old classification ranges would cease to be a major concern. Mr. Foisy also expressed some trepidation about committing to specific changes in what was clearly a work in progress.

- **What about employee’s attempt to change their job description to qualify for a higher classification?** He suggested that he didn’t feel this was the right approach since reclassification was a tedious and time-consuming process. Tinkering with job descriptions would not be nearly as important in the system he hopes to adopt. He agreed that some jobs were unique but that in general the idea would be to find what someone performing a roughly similar job was being paid in the market. This would become the target.

- **What about funds to finance such a compensation system?** Mr. Foisy noted that the President had announced that salaries were our highest priority. The President’s goal is to get employees to 100% of market during his tenure.

As the discussion came to a close, Mr. Foisy reiterated that much of this conversation is in the early stages of development and he doesn’t wish to get too far out in front of the process.

**Information Technology Committee:** The Chair introduced Professor Celeste Brown from the Information Technology Committee. Professor Brown introduced a report from the committee dealing with problems with videoconferencing within the UI. In particular, the committee had been asked to discuss issues related to Scopia. Scopia is the bridging service being used by the UI. It was adopted because of its cost and reliability after the videoconferencing system was disbanded due to lack of funds. Scopia requires properly engineered rooms and newer video equipment. The committee suggested that many of the problems encountered with Scopia are related to units on campus working
with older technology. Professor Brown stated that Scopia has been very responsive in trying to fix the recording and other problems that have occurred. She noted that some problems have occurred in colleges that do not have the technical support personnel to deal with problems when they arise. IT does provide support at $60 an hour. Beyond technical problems there are larger questions related to how the University decides to deliver distant education.

Several Senators responded by suggesting that this report doesn’t adequately reflect the experience of most colleges with Scopia. The discussion raised many concerns:

- The committee needs to do more information gathering from colleges to better understand the range of problems with Scopia.
- A high percentage of meetings and classes experience disruptions when using Scopia. These failures are seriously undermining the delivery of courses.
- This occurs even with state of the art technology and classrooms and having competent technical support staff.
- The responsibility to support the system too often falls on colleges who do not have the personnel and resources to deal with these problems.
- We aren’t going to be able to find a solution that satisfies both the needs of courses and videoconferencing for meetings.
- There seems to be disharmony between IT and Distance Education. A decision needs to be made with respect to how distant education will be delivered.
- Bandwidth varies dramatically across campus.
- For a live demonstration of the problem the Senator from Boise had to email us to get recognized during the meeting to comment on the problems of Scopia.

University Budget and Finance Committee: Moving from the problems of Scopia to budgets the Chair recognized Vice Chair Brandt to provide a report from UBFC. Professor Brandt presented information regarding the development of a new budget process which will provide a mechanism allowing units to make budget requests for both new, continuing funding, and significant one-time or short term strategic investments. UBFC has distributed a memo describing this process. Funding requests from academic units must be submitted to the college dean. Other areas should submit requests to the vice president in charge of the area. Funding requests are due to the UBFC from the deans and V.P’s by January 15, 2016. Any area desiring new or continuing funding for fiscal year 2018, or desiring one-time/short-term funding in excess of $100,000 for fiscal year 2017 should complete the process outlined in the distributed forms. A Senator suggested that the process be put online and allow the opportunity for text to help explain the request.

FS-16-016 rev: FSH 3320 - Faculty Evaluation: Professor Crowley explained that the faculty secretary’s office had slightly reworded the section in 3320 B-1 in response to concerns raised at the last meeting that the wording seemed overly intrusive. The section (after a friendly amendment) should now read “The unit administrator, in consultation with the faculty member, should address the possible causes of the problem, should suggest appropriate resources and encourage the employee to seek such help.”

A motion (Flores/Brewick) to accept this change, along with the change in 3320 C, was approved without dissent.

Adjournment: A motion (Foster/Folwell) to adjourn passed unanimously at 5:00 p.m.

Don Crowley,
Secretary to Faculty Senate and Faculty Secretary