Chair Teal called meeting #16 to order at 3:32. A motion (Stoll/Folwell) to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2016 meeting passed without objections.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal announced that we have extended the deadline to January 29th to receive applications to serve on University-level committees. Returned forms are down from last year so it would be helpful if Senators contacted their constituents to encourage faculty to return the forms to Ann Thompson at annat@uidaho.edu.

Chair Teal also announced that on Friday and Saturday night (7:30) at the Kenworthy, there will be a dramatic reading of the Tony Award winning play “Red”. This is part of a fundraising event for the Prichard Art Gallery.

The Chair engaged in a short discussion of training modules that people have been asked to complete. He noted that Senate Leadership had met with Brian Foisy regarding concerns about the modules and the way they were delivered. An email from Vice President Foisy’s office will be forthcoming and he will be at the Senate in the next couple of weeks to discuss ways to streamline the process.

Chair Teal concluded his remarks by noting that Dan Ewart is on the agenda for next week and Senators should consider what questions they have regarding IT issues on campus.

Provost’s Report: Vice Provost Jeanne Stevenson stated that a draft of the strategic plan will be available early next week. It should be available through Yellow Dig and the Provost website. She encouraged everyone to peruse the plan and provide feedback. The goal is to present the plan to be finalized in March and be presented to the SBOE at its April meeting. She hopes that identical core themes and metrics for the accrediting bodies and the strategic plan will be developed.

The next UFM will be on February 9th and the University Promotions Committee will meet on February 13th.

Professional Development Committee. Senator Katie Brown who serves on the Professional Development Committee was introduced to report on the committee’s activities. Professor Brown noted that the committee has met once since she joined the committee. She reported that there has been an increase in participation in the online training modules. The committee did discuss various technical difficulties with the new training modules. There are plans for new modules for the fall. The committee does not appear to be in support of test-out options for the modules.

Several Senators asked whether the committee had received feedback on the modules. Senator Brown stated that the committee was interested in feedback, but probably would not take this feedback into account until after this round. A Senator pointed out that there was a group of thirty or more pre-testers who took the training modules before they were rolled out to the rest of the campus. He stated that it didn’t appear that feedback concerns were taken into account. Chair Teal stated that he thought HR had
appreciated the feedback but had been unable to implement changes. In the discussion that followed many Senators raised concerns about the modules. These focused on:

- The time it takes to complete them.
- Many modules seemed inappropriate for everyone.
- Specific sections (like rules for P-Cards) should be bypassed if a person doesn’t need that training.
- The manner in which they were introduced lacked elegance.
- Too much information was presented on the slides that easily could have been condensed.
- Information necessary for compliance should be separated from training.
- Should be possible to take a compliance test (like FERPA) without going through several hours of training.
- Perhaps we need a compliance day so everyone can complete the modules.

**FS-16-018 - FSH 3710 - Leave Policy:** Chair Teal introduced Faculty Secretary Crowley to discuss the most recent proposed changes to University leave policies. These changes come to the Senate from the Faculty Affairs Committee. Crowley explained that the proposed changes were mainly an attempt to clear up differing interpretations and ambiguities in FSH 3710 that were passed last year. Some of proposed changes were in response to the President’s veto of particular provisions passed by the faculty last year. Other changes reflect concerns raised by HR’s interpretations of the policy. Current FSH policy (3710 L-2 or M-2 as revised last year) allows parents taking family medical leave to choose whether to exhaust annual leave or go on unpaid leave. When that option was repeated in last year’s revisions (see proposed E-3 from last year) the President vetoed E-3. However, M-2 stating that parents have this option still remains in the FSH and was not a proposed change.

Crowley also pointed out that last year’s revisions were designed to meet the University’s obligation under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), but in some cases University policy exceeded what was required by this federal act. Ambiguity resulted from the language in E-1 stating that “All Parenting Leave allowed under Section E-3 is considered Family Medical Leave.” HR’s interpretation of this seemed to be that since FMLA eligibility requirements didn’t start until after a person has been employed for a year, then the University’s policy didn’t apply to newly arrived employees. Upon reflection, the Faculty Affairs Committee sought to clarify that all employees were eligible for Family Medical Leave. Thus the proposed addition of C-7 f. “All employees are entitled to use sick leave for parenting/adoption and follow the same leave use and benefits as described under E. Parenting Leave regardless of meeting FMLA eligibility requirements.” The proposed changes also includes M-3 stating that “All benefit-eligible employees qualify for FMLA benefits from the first day of employment.” The other proposed changes were aimed at removing redundancies or clarifying ambiguities. After the Faculty Secretary explained the various complicated changes, there were many comments and questions.

There was a discussion about whether some parts of this might be vetoed and whether appropriate discussions had taken place over some of these changes. It was explained that there have been attempts to have a conversation about some of these changes and not much progress towards clarity had been achieved.

With regard to the issue of whether employees must use all annual leave before going on unpaid leave, it was explained that attempts have been made to resolve the ambiguities left after last year. It was unclear exactly what the objection to allowing employees to retain some annual leave before going on unpaid leave might be. The stated objection was that it went against long standing University policy, but M-2 (the previous L-2) has been in the FSH since the 1990’s.
On the proposed changes to when an employee becomes benefit eligible, Vice-Chair Brandt argued that there were reasons to believe that we might succeed on this point because there are real gender recruitment reasons at stake and the chances of manipulation were low. Clarification was asked of Faculty Affair’s intent. Did the changes in eligibility apply to just parenting, or to all other family medical leave benefits? Senators who responded seemed in full agreement that the change should apply to all family medical leave benefits. Several Senators wondered why we would even think about not including all family medical leave benefits.

Chair Teal suggested that he would like to have the opportunity to get more clarity on what the points of disagreement with the administration are, and in what areas we might reach a consensus. Several Senators suggested that we go ahead and vote to pass these changes. One Senator commented that the veto’s from last year left the impression that we weren’t a family friendly university. If we passed these changes by next week, they could be on the UFM agenda for February 9th. If there was opposition to the changes, there would still be time to make further amendments that might resolve the differences.

There was also a discussion about how HR had been applying the leave policy. There were comments suggesting that employees had been told they had to use all annual leave before going on unpaid leave. Several Senators suggested that at least part of the problem was HR’s interpretation and not the policy as written. Another Senator noted that even under these proposed changes RA’s and TA’s were not covered.

After a variety of suggestions for edits, most of which were accepted as friendly amendments, it was agreed that the leave policy would be back on the agenda for next week.

Adjournment: A motion (Stoll/Foster) to adjourn passed unanimously at 4:46.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Crowley
Secretary to the Faculty Senate and Faculty Secretary