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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:30. A motion (Brandt/Wolf) to approve the 2014-15 Senate minutes from April 28 meeting #28 was approved without objection. A motion (Foster/Brandt) to approve the 2015-16 Senate minutes for April 28 meeting #1 was also approved without objection.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal noted that today’s report will consist of trying to recruit members to several committees. Jean Kim would like a faculty senator for the Student Life Task force. This task force will look at the first year educational experience of students and will examine the current practice of recruiting first year students for Greek housing. The Professional Development committee also needs volunteers. This committee will be making recommendations regarding professional training for staff and defining and implementing supervisor accountability for this training. The Classification Policy group is also looking for a faculty senator. This is the committee that the Senate approved last year to clarify the process of moving from one classification level to another ensuring policy is consistent and transparent. The last request comes from the President’s office. They are looking for the faculty senate to nominate two faculty members to serve on the committee to fill the Ombuds opening. Edwin Latrell volunteered for the Student Life Task Force. Jodie Nicotra volunteered to be part of the classification study. Yun Chung agreed to be on the Ombuds search committee. Katie Brown agreed to be on the Professional Development task force. There is still an open spot for the Ombuds search committee so if anyone wants to recommend someone please let the Chair know. Thanks to those who volunteered.

 Provost’ Report: Vice Provost Jeanne Stevenson delivered the Provost Report for Provost Wiencek. Provost Weincek extends his apology for missing the meeting today. This afternoon the UI was recognizing a donor who committed $2 million to the University and the Provost needed to be present for that ceremony. He wished to convey his commitment to regularly attend Faculty Senate meetings. Provost Weincek has begun to make appointments for a task force to look at the spread pay issue. He is planning on a ten person committee with five faculty members. This group will look at the legal obligations the University has as well as the concerns raised this summer. There is not a predetermined outcome and he expects this group to make recommendations on how to best deal with the issues. There will also be a major initiative to embark on developing the strategic plan. This will be a broadly based process that includes a wide variety of stakeholders. He expects to have a working draft by the end of the semester.

2014-15 Annual Report from the Faculty Secretary’s Office: Don Crowley noted that the report in today’s packet represents Ann Thompson’s devoted attention to compile a report detailing last year’s activity. He invited questions. A Senator wondered about the status of the joint program between the law school and Boise State’s MBA program. Liz Brandt stated that was still in the process of being implemented. There were some challenges in coordinating the programs.

Summer Graduates: A motion was made (Folwell/Stoll) to approve the list of summer graduates. The motion passed unanimously.
Secretary to the Faculty Senate: A motion (Wolf/Hrdlicka) was made to nominate/elect Don Crowley as Secretary to the Faculty Senate. This passed unanimously.

Elections for Senate Committees:
  Benefits Advisory Group: Patrick Hrdlicka was nominated/elected (Brandt/Foster) unanimously.
  University Budget & Finance Committee: Allan Caplan was nominated/elected (Brandt/Wolf) unanimously.

Retreat Review: A Senator asked for further clarification regarding the Provost’s comment that the State Board was unhappy with our Focus for the Future product. Chair Teal noted that he is seeking clarification. Several people commented that they had understood the Provost’s remark to mean that even though we had cut some programs that either there were no savings or it wasn’t entirely clear where the reallocation had gone. While we had prioritized we had not cut anything with teeth so there were no resources to reallocate to those priorities. Chair Teal added that the Provost had mentioned the ISU “dashboard” which was a more explicit and graphic representation of what they had reallocated.

The conversation moved on to a general discussion of ideas brought up during the retreat.

- **Enrollment Management:** We haven’t heard much discussion of how we intend to attract the best students and keep the best students. How are the best students defined? Chair Teal noted that he is on the enrollment management task force and he would like to see a more rigorous analysis of what aspects of our recruitment/retention process is broken. There were also questions raised about how we might work with enrollment management. A related question dealt with how resources are allocated to react to growth. Is our database adequate in providing us with information about our students and where they are coming from? Jean Kim will be at Senate next week and this should provide an opportunity to explore these topics.

- **Distance Education:** Senators engaged in a discussion of the difficulties of offering online degrees. In particular there was a discussion of the approvals necessary to offer an online degree and whether the University could be more efficient in getting online degrees approved. What are the “best practices” in setting up these degree programs. It was also noted that we should have a discussion as to whether having more online degree programs was a good thing to do.

- **Morale Issues:** A Senator wondered whether the Senate might come up with a strategy for how to deal with morale, salary, and communication issues. A Senator noted that it is very clear that faculty and staff do not feel like they are valued. This led to a discussion as to whether we possessed empirical data showing that. Last year there was information gathered related to the dependent tuition issue which showed low morale and also the number of people leaving the university helps support the point. Faculty/Staff care about salary but they also care about whether they are valued. The Chair stated that Senate Leadership had already sought to make this point to the Provost. There was a short discussion of “exit interviews” and whether that was or wasn’t a good way to get information about why people are leaving. The point was made that losing staff is costly to the University. Last year UBFC made an attempt to quantify the “costs” to the University when it loses employees and has to replace them. A Senator suggested that perhaps we need to participate in a nationally normed “climate survey” that would help to illuminate the morale situation at the UI.

- **HR/People Admin:** Several Senators raised concerns about the inefficiencies in hiring. The time consumed and the amount of approvals necessary to get someone (even TH) hired. A Senator suggested that People Admin was actually a good piece of software but the UI had added to it in a way which has made it less efficient. There should be ways that people can provide feedback
on the problems with People Admin. Concerns were raised about the number of failed searches as well as the costs and time constraints associated with all the background checks. The Chair asked Senators to forward to him comments/concerns about HR and the hiring process and he would take it upon himself to make sure that the Provost is made aware of these concerns.

- **Annual Evaluations**: This issue may be related to morale issues. It is the one time of the year faculty can get meaningful feedback but it doesn’t serve that purpose. The Chair stated that he had brought this up with the Provost and he had asked the Faculty Affairs Committee to look into what can be done to make this process better.

- **Salary and other Budget Issues**: A wide variety of budget related questions were raised. Among these were questions/concerns about the new consolidated fringe, stipends for TA’s and RA’s, and the use of contingent faculty/staff. We have fewer TA’s than our peers and also pay them far less. This makes it difficult to attract good graduate students. It was noted that the previous Dean of Graduate Studies had made a request to raise stipends for TA’s and RA’s but had not been successful. A Senator inquired about the policies related to tuition waivers for TA’s while another Senator wondered about the policies related to advanced undergraduates doing grading.

- **Grade Inflation**: There was a discussion about grade inflation. How bad is it and what might be done about it? Several people noted that this is a national problem and that it isn’t clear what we would do about it and cautioned that attempts at a cure might be worse than the problem. Some Senators wondered about the relationship between grade inflation and teaching evaluations. An inquiry was also made about plus/minus grades which is an issue that has been before past Senate’s several times.

- **Issues related to policies vetoed last year**: The Teaching Assessment committee is looking into what can be done with regards to the student evaluations of teaching forms. FAC will also be dealing with some of the issues related to the leave policies that were vetoed.

A motion (Stoll/Murphy) to adjourn passed unanimously at 4:59.

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary and
Secretary to Faculty Senate