Present: Adams, Anderson, Barbour, Bird (for Murphy w/o vote), Brandt, Brewick, Brown, Caplan, Chung, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Flores, Folwell, Foster, Godfrey (Coeur d’Alene), Hrdlicka, Jeffery, Latrell, Mahoney, Nicotra, Royer, St. Claire, Stoll, Teal, Wiencek (w/o vote), Wolf. Absent: Boschetti, Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Perret. Guests: 9.

Chair Teal called the meeting to order at 3:30. Two Senators asked for additions to the minutes of September 8, 2015, as follows:

Enrollment: “A Senator suggested that we need a clearer strategic vision for the University in order to make decisions about tradeoffs necessary when growing enrollment. For example, the market value of degrees might be less important than support for the liberal arts. And our status as the residential campus of choice in Idaho might trump expansion of online program delivery.”

Vandal Strategic Loan Fund: “Another Senator asked whether the payback period could be extended to 5 years? Charles Buck responded indicating that it was a possibility as exceptions had been made in the past and he would look into the possibility of having this part of the fund policy revised.”

Both were accepted as friendly amendments by the faculty secretary. A motion (Stoll/Folwell) to accept the minutes as amended passed with no objections and 3 abstentions.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal reported on the President’s Retreat last Thursday. He thought it provided a good start to developing the new strategic plan. Professor Teal noted that Charles Buck, who discussed the Vandal Strategic Loan Fund with the Senate last week, was looking for a volunteer to be on the fund board. This would probably involve 5 (or less) hours a year. The fund board considers applications and reviews potential policy or operational changes. Senator Adams indicated that he would be interested. Chair Teal also announced that a website for distinguished scholarships has been created, contact person for this is Holly Lahann at hlahann@uidaho.edu.

Provost Report: After noting the Vandals exciting win in last Saturday’s football game Provost Wiencek reported on the progress of the CALS dean search. The campus visits have concluded and he is in conversations with one of the candidates. He hopes to be able to make an announcement in the next two weeks. While all the faculty that were invited to be on the Spread Pay task force accepted, one administrator declined to serve so that group has been temporarily delayed.

Provost Wiencek then turned to a discussion of the retreat. The retreat tried out a new technology which allowed participants to communicate and register their preferences via laptops and smart phones. The purpose of the retreat was to begin discussion on the development of a new strategic plan. The old plan has expired and the SBOE expects a significant refresh every 5 years. The day progressed smoothly and a lot was accomplished. They have put together some slides that summarize the discussion. He will send those slides to the faculty secretary’s office to post [posted to Faculty Senate home page under informational items].

The Provost noted that the President wants a plan that will be in place until 2025. This will be an evolving or living plan. At the retreat he proposed developing a framework for the plan but wanted to avoid getting into tactics. There will be a process for people to propose tactics through a shared governance model. We have had strategic plans that did not result in tangible results. Provost Wiencek noted that one of the questions floating around the room during the retreat was how will this plan be different. He emphasized that he hoped to make this a living document that would be integrated into our budget and evaluation processes and ultimately be built into everything we do. He hopes that the strategic planning process will be an opportunity for everyone to be engaged and concerned with what we are doing and how we move forward as a team.

The first session of the retreat focused on the vision of the University. This is an attempt to get us back to our land grant mission. Themes that resonated at the retreat were becoming a purpose driven institution that provides an
opportunity for all prepared students to be part of a University that engages in scholarship that makes a difference in Idaho and the world. Past strategic plans tended to emphasize four themes (teaching, scholarship, outreach, and culture & climate). There was discussion as to whether we should keep those themes or significantly revise them.

The next session at the retreat focused on aligning the strategic plan with the budgetary process. The new budget model should be done in a collaborative fashion and be one that provides incentives for desired behavior but doesn’t result in “us v. them”. It should also avoid unintended consequences.

The final session discussed what kind of advice to give to the committee creating the strategic plan. What types of things are we looking for in the process? Was the process transparent and were there plenty of opportunities to provide input?

The last question of the day dealt with whether there were “elephants in the room”? The main concern expressed related to obtaining faculty/staff support. This plan needs to be something we can all embrace. This is an opportunity to change the conversation and the way we do things. There was concern expressed about the timeline which seems pretty tight but the timeline is set by the Board. They are expecting delivery by April.

The Provost will be chairing the strategic planning committee. The committee will have a member from the Faculty Senate and invitations will be sent out seeking nominations for other members. There will also be 2 members from external constituencies. He intends to have an electronic platform which is accessible to all and allows people to post ideas and lets others to see these ideas. People can look at some of the ideas expressed at the retreat by obtaining the free app Sli.Do. The event code can be accessed by entering VandalPlans.

Teaching and Advising Committee – Student Evaluations FSH 2700. The Chair introduced Professor Jennifer Johnson-Leung who is this year’s Chair of the Teaching and Advising Committee. Professor Johnson-Leung provided an overview of where the committee is at regarding student evaluations of teaching after the President’s veto of last year’s proposal. One of the things that the committee has focused on is that the student evaluations of teaching don’t correlate very well with student learning or provide a complete picture of the quality of teaching. Their goal is to improve the forms as a formative assessment tool. What kind of information can we get from students that will help to improve the quality of teaching? Another problem involves the misuse of the summary evaluation scores that appear on the current form.

Professor Johnson-Leung stated that she sent an email to President Staben seeking more information on why he rejected last year’s changes. He suggested that the committee work with Provost Wiencek and Director of Institutional Research Dale Pietrzak in thinking about how to best design the forms. She thought that the main objection to last year’s changes revolved around removing, or at least altering the language of, the two summary questions at the end. Since there seems to be agreement that the current forms don’t measure good teaching there is an important question as to what to do next. She believes that we need to develop assessment tools that provide an opportunity to grow and the University needs to provide some formative resources for those seeking to become excellent instructors. One proposal might be to form a center for teaching and learning. This center needs to come out of the needs of the faculty and support the needs of the faculty.

In three weeks the committee will have a brainstorming session [Tuesday, October 13th, 1:45 p.m. Doceo Center, Bruce Pitman Center] to discuss various ideas on how to improve our assessment of teaching. Responding to a discussion of the summary questions, Provost Wiencek commented that these summative questions were part of our evaluation system and used in a variety of ways. Changing them without careful understanding of why we are changing them could have important ripple effects. Professor Johnson-Leung indicated that the committee would probably be restoring the summary questions.

A Senator noted that we do have people on campus who are experts on pedagogy who should be consulted. The faculty secretary observed that when this issue was discussed last year there was a deliberate choice to remove the summary questions even though it was widely acknowledged that a summary score could be generated from the revised questions. Professor Johnson-Leung noted that she hadn’t fully appreciated the many different ways the evaluative scores were used and their importance to the legal defense of the institution. In response the faculty secretary noted that last year’s Provost never indicated that there was a problem getting rid of the
summary numbers. Senate Chair Teal wondered whether we can decouple the summary questions from other questions on the form that might help obtain feedback from the students on what worked and what didn’t work in the class. The faculty secretary also noted that the return rates of the evaluations were significantly lower with the online forms than the old forms that were handed out in class. Return rates of 35% make the summary scores of questionable value and should give us significant doubts about our reliance on them.

Professor Johnson-Leung’s concluding comments on this complex topic emphasized that whatever assessment tools we create can be misused. We need to use a more holistic approach towards evaluation of faculty teaching and we should also provide narratives that put any summary numbers in context.

**Computing and Informatics Task Force.** Chair Teal invited Larry Stauffer, the Dean of Engineering (and former Faculty Senator), to provide an update on the computing and informatics task force. Dean Stauffer explained that this task force was created to address difficult questions regarding how the University is organized in dealing with the “big data” and computing information needs of the 21st Century. The task force has focused on three ideas:

- Explore the need for additional undergraduate degree programs in data science and data analytics.
- Develop a formal interdisciplinary collaboration of faculty and staff to conduct research and education in the area of computing and information.
- Plan for the future by considering the reorganization of existing programs.

Professor Stauffer asked the Senate to consider how disruptive our plans in this area ought to be? Not surprisingly Senator’s didn’t rush to answer this question, although one Senator turned the question around and inquired if the task force had considered various scenario’s representing different degrees of disruption.

Professor Stauffer indicated that one idea that would be fairly disruptive would be to organize a new school of computing and information systems by comparing parts of existing colleges.

There seemed to be widespread agreement in the Senate that looking into these questions is essential, but how bold we should be wasn’t clear. One Senator suggested we should start small but quickly, while another suggested we pay careful attention to what niche we could serve in the educational market. Several people pointed out that while we were pretty disaggregated, we had significant sources of expertise across campus. Another Senator noted that we ran significant risks of having people with such expertise move on to other places because of the lack of resources here.

The Chair introduced Phillip Scruggs from Movement Sciences to discuss two items approved by UCC.

**FS-16-003 (UCC-16-001a)—Education-Discontinue Sport Science and Coaching Minors.** This proposal is to discontinue the minors in Sport Science and Coaching. There was no discussion and the proposal passed unanimously.

**FS-16-005 (UCC-16-001c)—Education-Separation of Joint Minors.** This proposal separates two joint minors currently held by the College of Education with the College of Natural Resources. This proposal makes Movement Sciences the sole administrator of the minors in Outdoor Recreation Leadership as well as the minor in Sustainable Tourism and Leisure Enterprises. There was no discussion of these items and the proposal passed unanimously.

**Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn (Latrell/Brewick) passed without objection at 4:51.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary
and Secretary to the Faculty Senate