University of Idaho  
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes  
2015-2016 Meeting #9, Tuesday, October 27, 2015

Present: Anderson, Brown, Caplan, Chung, Couture (Boise), Crowley (w/o vote), Flores, Folwell, Godfrey (Coeur d’Alene), Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Hrdlicka, Jeffery, LaPrath, Latrell, Mahoney, Murphy, Nicotra, Royer, St. Claire, Stoll, Teal, Wiencek (w/o vote), **Absent:** Adams, Barbour, Boschetti, Brewick, Foster, Perret, Wolf. **Guests:** 5.

The Chair called meeting #9 of the Faculty Senate to order at 3:31 p.m. A motion (Stoll/Folwell) to approve the minutes for the October 20, 2015 meeting of the Faculty Senate passed without objection.

Chair’s Report: Chair Teal announced that members should expect an email from the Faculty Secretary’s Office in the near future seeking volunteers for the task force on compliance with conflict of interest policies. He also asked for a person to serve as the Senate’s representative to the classroom work group. This committee meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 3:45 p.m. A former member of this committee noted that some of the issues dealt with by this committee required someone interested in interior design, but other issues dealt with pedagogical questions and the use of technology in the classroom. No one volunteered. Anyone interested should contact Senate Leadership.

Provost’s Report: Before turning to his retrospective report on Focus for the Future, Provost Wiencek wanted to call everyone’s attention to the use of “Yellow Dig” and “Sli.Do” which will be used during the strategic planning process. We will be piloting “Yellow Dig” for a year. It can be used for classroom discussion and it will be integrated with Blackboard. He also noted that there is a link off of his web page which allows faculty to look up the salary of those in their discipline at peer institutions. This will allow faculty to know how their salary compares to market.

The rest of his report focused on Focus for the Future. In part he was replying to a request made last summer by Faculty Senate Leadership to show what savings had resulted from the process and how those funds were reallocated. He also wanted to emphasize that there is a whole new leadership team at the University who were not here during the process. This summary reflects his “outsider” attempt to piece together what occurred during the FFF process.

The Provost began by noting that the FFF process is now over and there will not be an attempt to reach back and redo any of that data and analysis. The SBOE does expect the University to have an ongoing program prioritization process and our future efforts will play a significant part in future budget decisions. The FFF process began after Governor Otter mandated that state agencies justify all their spending before making future budget requests (generally known as zero based budgeting). In response the SBOE requested that state universities engage in a process of program prioritization. The Board expected each institution to specify a set of outcomes that they wished to prioritize along with the specific reallocation of resources to be used in support of those outcomes.

Provost Wiencek suggested that perhaps we (the UI) had not framed our process as carefully as we might have and thus what we were trying to accomplish became rather murky. He did feel that we have learned a great deal from the process and will be able to improve how we respond to the SBOE’s requests in the future.

The process we followed involved self-assessment of programs as well as the extensive accumulation of quantitative data. As summarized by then President Burnett “our process did not produce a quintile
ranking of programs; however, it did identify programs that were strong, those in need of improvement in order to be sustained, and those to be closed or consolidated.” The Board wanted programs placed into quintiles, while our original attempt did not sort programs into five equal groups. In response, Provost Aiken spent considerable effort trying to sort programs into quintiles, although Provost Wiencek wasn’t sure exactly how this had been done. The SBOE never asked to see the actual rankings of programs. However, the Provost noted that when making proposals for new investments the Board will want to know that these requests are for high priority programs.

The FFF process resulted in moving or restructuring six programs, changing or consolidating five programs, and discontinuing nineteen programs. This resulted in a savings of $460,000. These savings were reallocated to a variety of programs. The specific list of where these funds were spent can be found in the packet for today’s Senate meeting.

In summarizing his general observations Provost Wiencek noted that:

- There was a lot of narrative although it wasn’t always clear how these narratives factored into the overall result.
- The process involves a lot of effort and isn’t the type of process we can afford to engage in on a continuing basis.
- The process isn’t sustainable in its current form.
- He believes that we fulfilled what the Board wanted, despite the fact that there were some misunderstandings along the way.
- The measurements of non-academic programs were uneven and will have to be changed in the future. Some administrative offices were not assessed.
- The Board will expect future budget requests to be directed at high priority programs.
- The Board expects program prioritization to be incorporated into the universities annual budgeting and program review process.
- We need to create a more automated process in some areas, although he acknowledged that some things can’t be automated.
- Quality is a hard thing to assess and we must make sure that there is appropriate space for qualitative analysis.

Provost Wiencek emphasized the need for a fresh start. In particular we need to develop a clearer understanding of why we are engaging in program prioritization and what the likely effects are. While we will be investing in our top priority programs, we need to build into the process a method to allow programs in the lowest quintile to move to the center. Program prioritization folds into our accreditation process although there does need to be a better alignment between the two. He noted that NWCCU stated that program prioritization was a useful assessment tool, but was “not a holistic process designed to assess mission fulfillment.” We can’t fulfill our mission by continually cutting.

Looking forward the Provost stated that we needed to align this process with our goals to increase enrollment. We need to attract out-of-state students who want to come here because we are excellent in something. He noted that we do a lot of things well, but we don’t have a nationally ranked # 1 program. Nationally ranked programs create a “halo effect” which helps to make the whole system thrive. To do this we will need to be innovative and look for places where we can be excellent. He see’s growing the institution as consistent with developing quality programs of distinction. Integrated planning will be an important part of our success. We will need to think about vacant lines and moving funds into high priority areas. He is proposing a new “Program Prioritization Executive Committee” that he will Chair. He expects this committee to be broadly representative of the university. This committee will define how results of
future prioritization processes will be used. The scoring or rankings of these future results should be available for all to see.

The Provost was asked what the other state universities did that seemed to receive a better reception from the SBOE. The Provost suggested that both ISU and BSU had a clearer “dashboard” that seemed to be more cut and dried by showing whether particular programs were profitable. Our process did not yield similar results since we didn’t rely totally on quantitative data. The reality is that now both ISU and BSU are having problems knowing what to do with their data and how to deal with low quintile programs. Another Senator asked about the difficulty of assessing non-academic programs and whether the same criteria can be used. The Provost acknowledged that we can’t use a “one-size fits all approach.”

The Provost ended his review by asking if the quintile results of the previous FFF process should be published realizing that we weren’t going to be using these rankings in the future. The quintiles had not previously been shared although he had just made the results available to the Deans. There were various responses to this question.

- Several Senators stated that the results of the previously flawed process should not be published. That labeling programs could be very destructive and we already had reasons to suspect the integrity of some of the data.
- Programs should be able to know where they ranked, but broader publication might create other problems especially since there was no intent to use these rankings.
- What we did wasn’t really a prioritization process, but more of an assessment process. Some programs might be poorly ranked, but should be a high priority because universities need those programs.
- Concerns were raised about circular results. Those units with resources that looked better would then use their relatively higher ranking to request more resources.
- Some Senators stated that they struggled with this question because the results were part of our collective history and those in lower ranked programs needed to know so they could react accordingly.
- There was also the concern that the past results might drive future decisions.

The Provost responded to some of these concerns by stating that he understood that some programs that were ranked lower were central to the university and this is why we need to be sensitive to various non-quantitative considerations. He also stated that the programs that were in the lowest quintile already knew that they were. He had already shared the results with the Deans and they could decide what information to share with the units in their college. He understood that all programs wanted to be treated fairly and wanted to be evaluated in a transparent way. He felt that at times the prior process had struggled with this.

Various Senators expressed their pleasure with the straight-forward and honest presentation and thanked the Provost for providing this clear overview. They felt that the changes he had outlined were positive and that we shouldn’t get too bogged down in a retroactive analysis of what happened in the past. It can be very damaging and time consuming to continually have to go through these processes.

**Adjournment:** With time getting short Chair Teal thanked the Provost for his presentation and requested a motion (Stoll/Mahoney) to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 5:01 p.m.

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary and Secretary to the Faculty Senate