University of Idaho
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
2016-2017 Meeting #8, Tuesday, October 11, 2016

Present: Adekanmbi, Anderson (Mike), Anderson (Miranda), Barbour, Boschetti, Brandt, Brewick, Brown, Cannon (Boise), Caplan, Chung, Crowley (w/o vote), Fisher, Folwell, Foster, Godfrey (Coeur d’Alene), Hiromoto (Idaho Falls), Hrdlicka, Morrison, Nicotra, Panttaja, Payant, Pregitzer, Stegner, Vella, Wiencek (w/o vote), Wolf. Absent: Donohoe, Markuson, Sixtos. Guests: 9

The Chair called meeting #8 to order at 3:30. A motion (Panttaja/Foster) to approve the minutes for the October 4th meeting passed without objection.

Chair’s Report: Chair Brandt announced that mid-term grades are due on Monday, October 17th. She also called attention to the fact that the list of new faculty and administrators is now on the Provost website.

FS-17-008rev: FSH 3320 Annual Evaluation (pilot form) minor edit. Chair Brandt noted that Senate Leadership had put the Annual Evaluation Pilot Form back on the agenda to make a minor change. The error is in the policy fix for FSH 3320 that Senate passed last week. In the section termed “Approach during Pilot Study” the proposal referred to section C-1, but it should have referred to “C”. Senate Leadership thought this was a minor edit, but it was important to refer people to the right section. A motion (Nicotra/Folwell) to approve the suggested change passed unanimously.

Chair Brandt also commented on the recently passed position description form. We have previously discussed that faculty should be encouraged to use the new form. However, the Provost and the Senate Leadership have agreed that it might be a good idea to ask the President to approve the new form as an emergency policy. An emergency policy allows the provision to go into effect for 180 days until the policy can be approved at a UFM. Such an action would also allow the Faculty Secretary to remove the old form off the website and help to avoid confusion.

Provost’s Report: Provost Wiencek announced that after discussions with his team, he has decided to move directly into a search for the new Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives without having a search for an interim person to fill this role. Vice Provost for Strategic and Enrollment Management Dean Kahler will arrive on campus soon and in conjunction with Vice Provost Jeanne Stevenson the responsibilities of the Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives could be covered until the national search is completed. Those people who had been asked to serve on the interim search committee will be asked to be part of the new search committee for the permanent position. This committee will be chaired by Tom Gorman. There will be a welcome party for Dean Kahler next week. The Provost stated that he is happy that Vice Provost Kahler will be here soon and will be able to focus on the vital issue of enrollment management.

Provost Wiencek commented briefly on two items that have been in the news. A fraternity has been suspended. There was no attempt to keep this a secret but it is an active investigation and it is sometimes easier to get people to cooperate when the issue is not in the news. The Provost believed that a recent editorial from the local newspaper had not accurately covered the enrollment situation. The final totals for this semester are not yet available and he expressed optimism that our enrollment was headed in the right direction.

FLSA Regulation Changes: Chair Brandt welcomed back Executive Director of Human Resources Wes Matthews to discuss changes to the Fair Labor Standards Act. The most recent changes to the FLSA involve how employees are classified. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime under the FLSA. The new
regulations establish a new salary test for determining exempt employees. The new salary threshold is $47,476 on an annual basis. Teachers are not covered by this regulation.

The University currently has around 140 employees who are classified as exempt, but do not meet the new salary test. Many of these employees are post-docs. The UI has to determine whether it would be best to raise an exempt employee to the needed salary level or to move the person to a classified (non-exempt) status.

Determining the market rate of the position is one of the factors being used to help determine whether to raise the employee’s salary or change them to non-exempt status. Changing to a non-exempt status can affect benefit packages as well as requiring the physical tracking of hours worked. Changing from exempt to non-exempt status also can create complications with state regulations over how leave is accrued. The University is working with the employees affected by this change to resolve these issues. The effective date of the new regulation is December 1st, although there is a possibility that this could be extended. A Senate member asked if a person making lower than the threshold might make more by working overtime. Mr. Matthews stated that this was a possibility and was another factor that should be considered in determining whether to raise the salary.

Report on Student Evaluation of Teaching Study. Chair Brandt introduced Dale Pietzrak, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation to discuss the recent changes to the student evaluation of teaching forms. Mr. Pietzrak noted that the attempts to change this form started well before he arrived. President Staben had expressed a concern that the adoption of new forms might lead to results that weren’t consistent with previous results. Thus they are studying the results from the new forms and seeking to determine if the results are consistent. If they can validate the results from the new forms, we will be able to transition to the new forms on a permanent basis. This validation study will be conducted both fall and spring semesters of this year. At this time Mr. Pietzrak doesn’t anticipate any issues. A Senator asked about online courses and whether some of the questions on the new form were applicable to online courses. Mr. Pietzrak stated that this was part of what was considered last year. He noted that historically there hasn’t been a significant difference between response patterns of those taking online courses and face-to-face courses.

Chronicle of Higher Education Survey. Mr. Pietzrak and Provost Wiencek both reported on the recently released results of the Chronicle survey of UI employees. Mr. Pietzrak briefly discussed the differences between the HERI study and the Chronicle survey called “Great Colleges to Work For”. The HERI study is conducted of faculty every three years. The Chronicle survey was conducted last year and includes administrators, faculty and staff. It is intended to provide a more global and holistic study of satisfaction in the workplace. This survey allows the UI to compare the attitudes of its employee’s to other universities. The Chronicle survey went out to 600 UI employees and obtained a 24.2% response rate. The results are in the Senate packet and can be viewed on the Provost website. Mr. Pietzrak noted that overall, the UI fell in the fair/moderate area although we were weakest in faculty, administration and staff relations and shared governance.

Provost Wiencek noted that as the strategic plan was being developed last year it was clear that workplace environment was an issue that needed to be addressed. He felt that using this survey would be desirable. In the future, we could do some oversampling which might allow us to look more closely at individual colleges. One of the advantages of this survey is it allows us to get a glimpse of what different types of employees think. The Provost noted that while administrators seemed to think things are great, the faculty did not and the staff was somewhere in between. We want to use this as a tool to change our own behavior and to address our shortcomings. We should see this as a baseline and our goal is to get up to
“good” in our average score. The Provost outlined a plan we might use to begin to address the issues raised by the survey. He has already begun to address issues regarding the teaching environment by moving towards a Center for Teaching Excellence. Compensation and Human Resource policies are also being addressed. At the recent leadership retreat, administrators have looked at problems identified by the survey and suggest actions that should be taken. Provost Wiencek suggested that groups representing faculty, exempt and classified staff might try a similar exercise. He felt that Faculty Senate and Staff Council should take the lead to organize groups to conduct such a similar exercise. The goal should be to produce a “white paper” suggesting the most important initiatives to be undertaken. Ultimately, these initiatives should be reflected in cascading plans and the UBFC process.

A Senator wondered how many faculty should be in the groups and whether this might be done within departments. The Provost felt it was up to the Senate how large the groups were, but he did not believe that doing this by departments was a good idea and would be better to do this with groups that cut across colleges and departments. Another Senator asked if there was any way to tell whether the survey captured differences between those who had been here a long time and those who haven’t. The survey does not make this distinction. Dale Pietrzak noted that the Chronicle does not let anyone see the raw data from which the surveys are created. In the same vein, it was noted that the questions are standardized and we don’t get to choose. We could get college by college information, if we paid more and increased the sample size in order to get adequate samples from the colleges. A guest noted that the 2012 HERI survey produced similar results. There are consistent patterns that we should look at and address.

In response to a question, the Provost stated that we would probably be doing this survey yearly although we may skip the years when the HERI survey is done. A Senator suggested that we might get different results this year, since the point at which this survey was conducted, faculty and staff morale was particularly low and administrators had excessively rosy glasses. There were various comments about the need for including experts in qualitative research, the possible role played by the time of year the survey was conducted, and ended with the observation that faculty responded more positively to “job satisfaction” which suggests that faculty want to love their job. Chair Brandt brought the discussion to a close by suggesting that we should try to use our existing committee structure in developing working groups to respond to this survey.

**FS-17-011: FSH 1640.22 - DFA Changes.** This proposed change to the composition of the Campus Planning Advisory Committee addressed changes in administrative roles and titles. Thus instead of the Vice President for Finance and Administration being on the committee this was changed to the Vice President for Infrastructure. Patrick Hrdlikca, Senate Vice Chair and Chair of Committee on Committees noted that this administrative change also impacted other policies as noted on the coversheet. This change passed unanimously.

**Adjournment:** Perhaps in order to take advantage of the nice weather before being afflicted with “seasonal affective disorder”, the Chair entertained a motion (Wolf/Brewick) to adjourn at 4:37.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Crowley, Faculty Secretary & Secretary to the Faculty Senate