Call to Order and Minutes. The chair called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

A motion to approve the minutes (Vella/Dezzani) passed unanimously.

Chair’s Report:

1. The chair inquired whether senators have experienced any difficulties in circulating the Faculty Senate Talking Points to faculty and staff in their college. He encourages Senators to circulate the minutes broadly and let him know if you need assistance.

2. Senators are encouraged to attend the first University Faculty Meeting of the 2018-19 academic year on Wednesday, September 5, at 3:00 pm PDT/4:00 p.m. MDT. Changes in administrative roles, faculty who received promotion and/or tenure during late spring 2018, and new faculty will be recognized.

3. There will be no senate meeting on September 25. Instead, President Staben will give the State of the University address at 3:00 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Pitman Center in Moscow. Locations at other campuses will be announced.

4. There may be a special faculty senate meeting related to the presidential search. The search firm assisting the SBOE with the search will be conducting a listening tour and will visit several university locations. Senate Leadership is working to schedule a time for the firm representatives to meet with faculty senate.

5. The chair reminded senators that last week the Provost expressed interest in getting faculty perspectives on the question of college mergers. Senate Leadership will be sending a Qualtrics survey to senators to gather this information. He encouraged senators to participate in the survey. Results will be shared with senate and the Provost’s Office.

6. Senate Leadership has postponed the presentation of the University Budget and Finance Committee (UBFC) report until September 18 in order to allow sufficient time for the discussion of recruitment and enrollment.

Provost Report:

1. The Judith M. Runstad Lecture will be held on Monday, September 10, 7:00 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Pitman Center. Tara Westover, the author of Educated, this year’s common read, will give the lecture.

2. The university has hired an Interim Center Executive Director in Idaho Falls, Lee Ostrom. The search for a permanent center director will begin soon.

Senate Meeting Time. The chair announced that Senate Leadership is exploring the possibility of changing the time for faculty senate meetings to better accommodate our colleagues in southern Idaho so they do not have to stay until 6 p.m. on Tuesdays. He reminded senators that a poll regarding this issue was sent out on May 3, 2018 to 2018-19 senators. [N.B. 5 – no (teach/standing meeting); 19 – yes; 3 – no response.] He asked senators what impediments or challenges would arise if the time is moved to 2:30-4:00 pm PST.

A senator asked whether the proposed change would be implemented this semester or spring semester. Johnson replied that the earliest the change could be implemented is January, 2019 and it may not be implemented until fall 2019. A senator suggested that even a 30 minute change in the start time for senate to
3:00 PST/4:00 MDT would make a significant difference for faculty and staff in southern Idaho. A senator pointed out that some disciplines have regularly scheduled studio time until 3:00 p.m. PST. Vice Provost Torrey Lawrence asked whether senate leadership had evaluated how significant the class conflict would be if the start time for senate is earlier. The faculty secretary indicated that she would contact the registrar’s office to gather information about class conflicts.

**Recruitment and Enrollment.** Vice Provost of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Dean Kahler spoke to senate about strategic plans for recruitment and enrollment. Kahler indicated that the plan is currently being developed by a committee consisting of a broad range of members including faculty, staff and alumni. SEM has undertaken a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis as part of the planning process. The committee has identified six goals:

1. Implement a strong well-defined brand awareness campaign.
2. Foster accessible, high quality academic programs.
3. Strengthen effectiveness of student recruitment programs.
4. Enhance student recruitment success.
5. Leverage alumni support to reach goals.
6. Foster continuous evaluation and improvement of the plan.

The committee is currently identifying Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each goal.

Several recruitment initiatives are moving forward as the strategic plan is finalized.

SEM has been “tweaking” the organization and location of the recruitment staff. Most recruiters live in the market for which they are recruiting. This allows them to develop familiarity with the market and also helps the university limit travel costs. The university has recruiters in place in Seattle, Portland, Northern and Southern California, Idaho Falls, Twin Falls, Boise, Moscow, and Coeur d’Alene/Spokane. We also have one international recruiter in Dehli, India. These recruiters come to campus on a regular basis. When here, they are able to engage in face-to-face training and visit academic programs. They will be on campus next January.

SEM is focusing on strategies to enhance our systems of student enrollment and make them more user-friendly. For example, UI has had a policy that a transfer student has to be admitted before the university officially evaluates the student’s transcript. This forces students to commit to UI before knowing which of their credits from other institutions will transfer to UI. We are working to change this approach to provide earlier evaluation of transcripts.

Recruiters had increased their visits to community colleges and are working to continue building relationships with such colleges. One way these relationships are being built is by establishing joint admissions and enrollment programs. One such relationship is with the College of Eastern Idaho. These joint relationships provide an opportunity to partner with the community colleges and market the students. Having that joint program means students don’t have to stop at the community college and start up at UI. The joint enrollment agreements support dual enrollment in both the community college and the UI, even though the students don’t come here full time until they complete their associate’s degree. Not only does joint enrollment provide a smoother transition for students, it also enables them to take advantage of other UI opportunities such as study abroad.

SEM is experimenting with the use of predictive modelling techniques to assist with recruitment. These techniques will help the university analyze and evaluate the yield rate (the rate of admitted students who enroll at UI). Predictive modelling categorizes students based on their likelihood of enrolling at UI. This will enable SEM to target their recruitment efforts on undecided applicants who are the most likely to attend UI. For example, one of the factors identified by SEM is the breakpoint between financial aid and enrollment -- when about 1/3 of an applicant’s financial need is covered at UI, the likelihood the applicant will actually enroll...
increases dramatically. Based on this analysis, SEM has conducted a test this past fall to adjust student financial aid amounts. As soon as final enrollment numbers are available, SEM will evaluate its strategy.

Kahler also indicated that SEM is working to reach out earlier in a student’s enrollment cycle in order to move prospective students towards the UI. They are now reaching out to high school sophomores, for example.

SEM is working to strengthening the UI brand message. SEM met with convocation speaker and alumna, Michelle Aragon, who evaluated and gave advice regarding the university’s brand. UI is seeking to develop a compelling brand that is very differentiated from competitors and assists prospective students in answering the questions why UI over other schools, what does UI offer students and why should a student come here.

Communication is another theme for SEM. They are working on ways to ensure that more timely and effective messages go out to prospective students. This includes the possibility of changing the institution’s CRM (Critical Relationship Management) provider. They are also working to refine the institution’s messaging. It is trying to communicate a message that the university is focused on students and how an individual student would fit in at the UI. This means SEM communications are often focused on the student’s needs and not on describing the institution’s characteristics. However, SEM is working to emphasize the message that UI programs are of high academic quality. There are approximately 19 campaigns (identifiable groups of communications) that go out to various students. Within each campaign – specific materials are developed to communicate to prospective students. As a result, a high school student who makes contact with UI might receive 21 contacts from UI.

Kahler stated that UI must develop a stronger onboarding process for admitted students. The university started UIdaho Bound with two events two years ago. Now the university sponsors six UIdaho Bound events. These begin in March and continue through the spring and summer. At these events students meet their advisor, register, get their student ID, financial aid, and get housing. These are effective events. In addition to facilitating enrollment, the UIdaho Bound events are recruitment oriented because they reach students at a time when some are still deciding on their college.

This year, the university is introducing a travelling UIdaho Bound event that will reach out to admitted students who cannot travel to Moscow. A few colleges successfully utilized this approach last year so the program is going to be expanded. Key UI personnel will travel to Idaho Falls and Twin Falls to conduct these events

SEM is also focusing on parent involvement and communication where information about parents is available.

Kahler indicated that SEM is working to develop better empirical information by which to evaluate its efforts. Currently, the university has anecdotal information on why students choose to come if they are admitted. To provide empirical information SEM has developed an admitted student questionnaires. The questionnaire targets both students who enrolled at UI and students who did not enroll. Participants will be asked questions about the reasons for their decisions. This process is being handled by an independent contractor and results should be available soon.

The university also is examining how it packages financial aid awards. Over $25 million in financial aid is awarded. However, Kahler believes this an area we can improve. SEM will be studying how to refocus financial aid to provide more leverage in the area of enrollment. He is also working with the Vice President for Advancement Mary Kay McFadden to improve our need-based scholarship program.

Finally, Kahler stressed that he needs faculty support – it takes every person on campus to recruit students. He encouraged faculty to engage with prospective students and assist SEM in effectively following them. He encouraged faculty to attend recruitment events where possible noting that it helps highlight the work we do and piques students’ interest. After current students, faculty are the next most important contact prospective students can make. He also encouraged faculty to “wear the brand.” He called senators’ attention to
information provided through Ann Thompson earlier in the day. The information highlights examples of how faculty can assist in recruitment.

Chair Johnson asked Kahler whether the enrollment management strategic plan and goals were ready to circulate. Kahler responded that he originally wanted to circulate the draft plan by now but has been unable to do so. He expects to circulate a draft plan soon. The provost clarified that it would be helpful to have a written copy of the plan goals to circulate.

A senator commented that there are several very successful activities on campus that have infrastructure that extends to other states. Examples include Washington, Wyoming, Alaska Montana, Idaho (WWAMI) medical program and the Idaho IDeA Network of Biological Research Excellence (INBRE) Program. He pointed out that INBRE has undergraduate fellowships and training programs that we can tap. These sorts of programs provide a mechanism for the UI to highlight undergraduate research and to collaborate across state lines. He also asked who had major responsibility for recruitment of graduate students? Kahler responded that he works with the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, Jerry McMurtry, who has primary responsibility for graduate student recruitment. Kahler also pointed out that several of the SEM planning goals focus on all students, not just undergraduate students.

Another senator expressed support for the efforts of SEM to base their efforts on research. He asked whether, in focusing on the students most likely to enroll at the university, were we recruiting only the “lowest hanging fruit”? He suggested that we can offer benefits not enjoyed by many other campuses such as a safe campus, pleasant climate, cultural activities and unique outdoor opportunities. Such benefits might impact parents in particular. He suggested that we aim at students further away from Idaho such as in Eastern Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Kansas. Vice Provost Kahler underscored that the university’s recruitment resources are limited. He emphasized that SEM markets our campus across the country. At present, the university’s resources support locating recruiters in the states that participate in the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE). Expanding beyond this region is a possibility for the future. For now, resources to recruitment in mid-western and eastern states would have to be diverted from our current efforts. For this reason, expansions must be strategic and incremental. SEM is considering expanding to locate a recruiter in Denver as a next step.

The chair followed up with several additional questions. He asked how SEM is segmenting the market for high school juniors and seniors – geography, interest level, aptitude. He asked how the university identifies the groups we will focus on. Kahler responded that SEM does focus on a number of market stratifications such as diversity and high academic achievers. We also target other groups such as military students/veterans. The chair followed up asking what the reasoning is for expanding our recruitment efforts into Denver. Kahler responded that market research indicates there are a large number of students in the Denver area looking to go to college elsewhere. The university already has established relationships with some counselors in the area. Also, the area has a large enough target population to justify the expenditure of resources on expanded recruiting efforts. He pointed out that state university tuition in Montana and Wyoming is close enough to Idaho’s tuition that we do not compare favorably for students from those states. In contrast, our tuition is attractive for students in Washington and Colorado. One of the challenges the university faces is the capacity of students to pay above and beyond any scholarships we award. With all the financial aid we offer, there is still a $2,000 gap between our cost and a student’s ability to pay. This is the reason we need to offer expanded need-based scholarships. The chair asked whether the university is considering approaches such as freezing tuition. The provost responded that if the university were to freeze tuition and the legislature approved a 3% Change in Employee Compensation (CEC), the university would have to identify the resources to meet the increase without increasing tuition. This would lead to budget cuts. The university doesn’t have the endowment or the deep pockets to absorb such financial pressures.

Kahler stated that the risk of expanding recruitment in the mid-west and east is high. The university would have to gain more in recruitment from those regions than it loses by diverting resources from existing
recruitment markets. A university of our size doesn’t normally do this because of the risk. After doing a cost benefit analysis, the university reduced its recruiting efforts in Alaska. Instead, SEM is expanding recruitment efforts incrementally as illustrated by the possible expansion to Colorado.

Kahler also pointed out that SEM is constantly making adjustments to our recruitment efforts. Recently one recruitment position was moved from Washington to California. After considering the pros and cons, it was determined that one recruiter could cover the Seattle area. California is a growing market. Kahler pointed out that much of the growth in out-of-state students at Boise State University is attributable to California students.

Kahler pointed out that the university did not begin experiencing decreased enrollment overnight and is not going to be able to turn the enrollment trends around overnight.

Chair Johnson responded that he had heard concerns regarding the timing of communications and communications that send mixed and possibly confusing messages. For example a communication piece aimed at students in various stages of commitment to UI was sent to all students. It led enrolled students to think that their registration had been dropped or was lost. Another mailing went out with the salutation “Dear Travis” to an entire mailing group. How are we doing on addressing these glitches? Kahler responded that he believed we are addressing these issues. He acknowledged that when mistakes are made, the consequences can be magnified by the powerful digital communication tools used by SEM. He encouraged faculty and staff to continue to report issues to SEM so they can be addressed. Kahler also stated that the CRM program the university has been using poses some challenges. He believes the new CRM product will be helpful.

A senator thanked Kahler for his presentation and asked when the strategic enrollment plan will be finalized. Kahler responded that the timing depends on how quickly the committee is able to complete its work. She expressed concern that the plan was not complete. She commented that she believes we should place greatest effort into recruitment as our retention rates are strong. She asked whether the plan would emphasize recruitment over retention. Kahler responded that the plan is a mix of recruitment and retention. These efforts are inter-related. Right now, the university’s retention rate is high. Yet we are still losing 275 freshmen every year and only half our student graduate in 6 years.

The chair asked how the UI’s retention rate compares to our competitors? Kahler responded that the national average retention rate is 72% and the UI rate was 82% last year. The provost added that the university’s retention rate is closer to the average, if we look at only similar small residential universities. He also commented that the retention rate only measures student progress from freshman to sophomore years. The progression rate measures student progress beyond the sophomore year to graduation. He commented that the UI’s progression rate is not good. Finally, he indicated that the UI’s graduation rate is solid. The SBOE is moving toward a funding system based on outcomes and will be considering graduation rates as it moves away from the Enrollment Workload Adjustment (EWA). Retention, progression and graduation will be increasingly important to the university’s funding.

A senator asked how our dual credit students are counted for recruitment and retention purposes. She commented that she has talked to many dual credit students who have not received any recruitment outreach from the university. Kahler answered that dual credit students are part of the recruitment effort aimed at high school seniors and should receive recruitment campaign materials. He asked the senator to follow up with SEM when she knows of dual credit students who are not receiving recruitment materials so the omission can be corrected. Kahler also commented that dual credit students pose interesting recruitment challenges. Although they are taking a university class, their primary instructor is usually a high school teacher. This teacher may create a mixed impression with the student about what UI will be like. For this reason, a different marketing approach and more attention may be needed.

Chair Johnson and another senator asked about how the recruitment staff in SEM integrates with college recruitment efforts. He specifically asked how college ambassador programs are included in the recruitment
process. Kahler responded that integration happens in a number of different ways. SEM sponsors recruitment forum where college and SEM staff discuss collaboration. Since each college ambassador program is different, SEM tries to integrate in different ways that fit the particular program. For example. A prospective student may participate in a tour by a Vandal Rep (SEM sponsored guides). A student may begin a tour with a Vandal Rep who then assists the prospective student in contacting a college ambassador who may take the tour over. The Vandal Rep or SEM staff might write personal notes to facilitate contact. Kahler underscored that current students are the most effective recruiters.

The vice chair referenced the enrollment funnel document provided to senators prior to the meeting. He asked what the university’s experience and outcomes have been across the funnel. Is the university effectively advancing students through each stage of the recruitment process, or are there bottlenecks that should be addressed. Kahler responded that one of the areas we need to improve on is our yield of admitted to enrolled students. It is important to improve the percentage of admitted students who register. Our “melt rate” (the percentage of students who do not attend even after registering for classes) is more typical. Kahler noted that SEM is focusing on improving conversion rates by 1% at each stage of the process, which would result in measurable increases in enrollment. For example, the UIdaho Bound program has been successful, but we still need to improve the program to ensure that more students enroll and, then, actually attend.

A senator asked about the process used by SEM to identify prospective students. Kahler responded that the UI buys prospect lists. SEM is conscious of ensuring that the Return on Investment (ROI) on such purchases is good. In recent years, the university has identified approximately 50,000 prospects. Once a prospect is identified, that student may receive one mailing from the university. If we do not hear back, we generally do not pursue future contacts. Once students respond in some way or contact the university in some way, SEM treats the contact as an inquiry and has a more intensive communication strategy directed toward those students. Kahler indicated while it would be great to get more prospects, it can be expensive. SEM is focusing on improving conversion rates without buying more names.

The vice chair commented that many of our admits are Idaho high school students who automatically get admitted. He asked whether this boosts our admission rates. He observed that many of these students may never have made an inquiry to the university, effectively skipping the steps between being a prospect and an admitted student. He noted that typically the goal for higher levels of the funnel is to raise awareness and the goal for middle levels of the funnel is to increase engagement, and wondered how this was addressed in recruiting these students. Kahler indicated that such students are referred to as “stealth applicants” in SEM parlance. The strategy for recruiting them is different. Generally, SEM works to raise awareness to get prospects into the university’s recruitment funnel, increase engagement to move students to the middle of the funnel, and build excitement to convert applicants to enrolled students with stealth applicants, SEM must use a mix of all of these tactics because it is never clear where these students are in the process of deciding to attend the university. The provost commented that SEM has developed an admitted student “catch-up” campaign aimed specifically at these stealth applicants. The program is new so SEM does not have good information on the effectiveness of the strategies they have employed.

Provost Wiencek noted students who are directly admitted may be behind on our information and we are hitting them with information directed at others who have lots of information. We have a catch-up campaign aimed at the stealth campaign. Bottleneck is at the admit level. The provost added that the university has recruitment challenges at a couple of stages in our process. We need to improve our conversion rates at the inquiry to admission stage as well as at the admission to enrollment stage. Our melt rate from registration to actual attendance is another area where the university has an opportunity for improvement.

The Chair commented that across the country, some universities have experienced enrollment growth, while others have not. Washington State University just enrolled the largest freshman class ever. He asked, in light of Kahler’s experience over the past year, what were the impediments to growth at UI? Kahler responded that there is no single impediment. He believes the university has experienced many small issues that add up over
time. These run the gamut from prospective students coming to campus on Monday morning and experiencing the leftovers from a big party weekend, to sending out communications to many students all addressed to Travis. It includes issues with the way we package financial aid. The institution’s enrollment has been declining since 2008.

Another senator asked that if Kahler could identify three factors that have impacted the university’s enrollment, what would they be? Kahler responded stating that the university must improve need-based scholarships, hire more recruiters, and increase resources to get prospective students to campus. On the last point, Kahler stated that the university is utilizing targeted options such as hiring a bus to bring students to campus.

A senator asked about the degree to which parents are involved in students’ decisions to attend UI. He asked whether SEM has looked at what influences parental decision-making. Kahler responded that the university does not have a parent survey at this time. However, SEM is evaluating research regarding the parental role in college decision-making. The current generation of prospective students appears to be quite parent-driven. SEM is also carrying out a campaign aimed at counsellors.

A senator asked of the 8,000 admitted students, what percentage attend. Kahler responded that 1,600-1,700 freshman and 500 transfer students attended the university. The senator followed up and asked whether the open admission program has helped our enrollment? The provost responded that last year was the first time the state had free, online admissions program with a common application. In prior years, each institution had separate applications. SEM will evaluate the impact of the program as it gets final numbers for enrollment this fall.

A senator commented that the factors that influenced him included price, relevant programs and whether he felt comfortable with the faculty in the program, the availability of a Greek community and whether campus felt like “home.” He urged the university to focus on the basics (cost, programs and our fantastic campus) in our recruitment plan.

The time for the meeting having expired a motion (Foster/Morgan) passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Liz Brandt, Faculty Secretary &
Secretary to the Faculty Senate