

Idaho State UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
921 South 8th Avenue, Stop 8063 • Pocatello, Idaho 83209-8063

November 11, 2011

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I am writing again to clarify some major issues related to the provision Faculty Senate's draft of the ISU Faculty Constitution. I met with Dr. Delehanty on Wednesday, November 9th, to request that the Senate postpone their "poll of the faculty" (his term) until sometime in December to allow more time for faculty to discuss the draft with colleagues and senators. I also informed Dr. Delehanty that I wanted to schedule a meeting between representatives from Academic Affairs (including the deans) and the provisional Senate Chair and Senate's Constitution subcommittee to discuss some of the text in the draft and hopefully reach a compromise on editorial changes. This is why I asked to postpone a poll of the faculty – I do not believe adequate time has been allotted for thoughtful review by faculty, who are especially busy at this point in the semester.

Following my meeting with Dr. Delehanty at which time he refused to consider my requests to delay polling the faculty and to have a meeting next week to discuss the remaining issues with the Constitution draft, I contacted a reporter at the Idaho State Journal to discuss these issues. Knowing that Dr. Delehanty most likely would contact the newspaper again (see Journal articles from Nov. 3rd, 9th, 11th), I wanted to provide additional information on my reasons for requesting more time for review of the draft Constitution.

I was appalled at the misinformation, misquotes, and disingenuous article that appeared in this morning's Journal. This is why I felt the need to communicate with you today. I did not say nor imply the negative and disrespectful comments attributed to me by the reporter, Michael O'Donnell, in this morning's paper!

Just to bring you up to date on my interaction with the provisional Senate:

- I have attended the Senate meetings this semester, and have met several times with members of the Senate leadership and individual Senators.
- In response to the October 24th draft of the Constitution provided by the provisional Senate, I provided detailed feedback and suggested edits based on Academic Affairs' (including deans) review of the document. Several faculty members also provided feedback to the Senate, all of which is available on the Senate's website.
- The Senate held its "open forum" on November 2nd (4-6 pm) for faculty to discuss the October 24th draft of the Constitution; unfortunately the turnout was extremely low (a maximum of 19 faculty in Pocatello, and less than five in Idaho Falls and in Meridian). This low turnout could be interpreted in a number of ways. However, it is clear faculty have not had sufficient time to discuss this.
- At the November 7th Senate meeting, a final draft, which incorporated some of the feedback from faculty and from Academic Affairs, was approved and made available the following day on the Senate's website. This is the draft that the Senate plans to "poll the faculty" on.
- As you know, I sent a letter to faculty earlier this week to encourage you to review the Nov. 7th draft Constitution and related documents and provide comments back to the Senate or to your Senators.

I do not believe the review process is complete. This is a very important document, the Faculty Constitution, and additional time should be available to fine tune it so that it will be acceptable to both the faculty body and to the President. In speaking with the President of the State Board of Education earlier this week, he indicated

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that the Board is primarily concerned with the process and review, and expects that faculty are engaged in developing a constitution for this institution. He acknowledges that the constitutions of both Boise State and University of Idaho are very different, and expects that whatever constitution the faculty body and the President bring forward will reflect Idaho State University. The Board President indicated that there is no problem with taking additional time, and a constitution may be presented to the Board for its February meeting.

The provisional Senate began with the Boise State University Constitution as a starting place, and did not engage in the open Senate meetings in a discussion of the philosophical issues relevant to development of a Constitution. The key “philosophical” issues that I would like to encourage faculty to discuss are the following:

- By tradition and in the constitutions of many of our peer institutions, and the University of Idaho’s Constitution, the president of the university is acknowledged as being a member of and president of the faculty. My request to the provisional Senate was to include this language in the draft of the Constitution. I am the one suggesting this language.
- Faculty referendums – administration believes there should be a reasonable threshold of criticality for faculty to initiate a referendum to revisit an action or decision made by the President, a vice president, a dean, etc. What that critical threshold should be to initiate a referendum is an unresolved issue and needs further discussion (e.g., what is a reasonable percent of the 650+ faculty that is required to sign a petition for a referendum to be called on an issue that is salient and relevant to the majority of the faculty?).
- Should the Constitution leave open the possibility that additional University-wide, elected and representative faculty committees and councils can be formed? We have University level committees now that don’t report through the Senate - Graduate Council, Animal Welfare Committee, Human Subjects Committee, Radiation Safety Committee, etc. Should the Senate be the ONLY avenue for all faculty deliberations and recommendations to be forwarded to the administration? Should one university-wide elected, representative faculty body (a Senate) have veto power over the recommendations from another university-wide elected, representative faculty body?

I did indicate to Dr. Delehanty that should the provisional Senate carry forward with their plan to poll the faculty on Wednesday, November 16th, that this is not sanctioned by me, as interim Provost. The provisional Senate was charged with development of a draft Constitution, which they have done, and draft bylaws for a faculty governance structure. They have approved a draft Constitution and now the faculty body needs time to review, digest, and discuss among their colleagues in the Colleges/academic units the merits of the draft.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara Adamcik
Interim Provost and Vice President

BAA/cmt