

IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE
MINUTES

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April 28, 2008 **Special Meeting**

4:00 PM

Faculty Senate Conference Room, REND 301

In Attendance: Adler, Bowen, Cellucci, Crews (telecommunication), Curtis, Delehanty, Dye, Edwards, Frantz, Guryan (telecommunication), Kangas, Kantabutra, Kearns, Keeter, Masserini (Chair), McCurry, Moulton, Murphy, Oliphant (telecommunication), Payne, Sieber, Skidmore, Smith, Thomas, Vik,
Non-voting: Attebery, De Jesus, Fullerton, Vailas, Wallace (Recording Secretary)
Excused: Manopoulos, Wilson
Absent: Beard, Campbell, Womack; Brown, Carpenter, Wharton
Guest: James Fletcher, Vice President of Finance & Administration

I. Preliminaries and Announcements

Masserini reminded Senators that the next Senate meeting is next week and will be the last one for the year. He urged them to come to finish up the semester's business, and also said it would be worth their while to show up.

A. Phased Retirement Policy update

Vice President Fletcher sent a memo in response to the Phased Retirement recommendations forwarded by Faculty Senate. He outlined some concerns that need to be addressed before any such policy can be implemented. Masserini and Thom Hasenpflug, the Chair of Faculty Professional Policies Council, were working with David Miller in Human Resources to see what could be done.

De Jesus mentioned there were faculty members who were interested in phased retirement now and asked what their options were. Masserini said this issue would continue to be worked on in the fall. Every faculty member is free to negotiate phased retirement plans with their departments. The Senate is trying to get a university-wide policy in place. Bowen pointed out that departments can realize salary savings by long-term higher paid people phasing out and younger faculty hired to take their place at a lower salary.

B. Tenure & Promotion Task Force update

Delehanty said the task force has reached consensus on their recommendations. He is trying to write it up and get it to Faculty Senate for their review by next week.

II. Senate Leadership Elections

A. Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

When asked whether they would like to be considered for the Executive Committee if not elected Vice Chair, **Brad Curtis** said yes, he would; **Alan Frantz** indicated he would NOT.

Curtis spoke briefly about his background and experiences in the College of Technology and the emphasis on professional or technical expertise. He was honest about not being knowledgeable about tenure since he is not eligible, nor are his colleagues. But that need not be an obstacle, as evidenced by Kay Christensen's being elected Faculty Senate Chair a few years ago.

Frantz spoke about his interest in university governance, his long service and strong ties to ISU.

The candidates answered a few questions from Senators then left the room. Senators spoke on behalf of each of the candidates.

ACTION: The vote was taken by secret ballot. The ballots were counted and **Alan Frantz was elected to be Faculty Senate Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect** for next year.

B. Executive Committee members – elect three

Brad Curtis had already made his case.

Shane Moulton spoke briefly about his educational experience at ISU, his service as an ASISU Senator, and his teaching endeavors.

Beth Guryan talked about her strong connections with the ISU-Boise faculty, the community partnerships she has established, and her belief in faculty governance.

Kara Keeter withdrew from the running.

Cindy Wilson was not in attendance to speak about herself.

Monique Manopoulos' written statements were read by Masserini since she was out of town.

ACTION: The Senators cast secret ballots, each voting for three of the five remaining candidates. The ballots were counted and the results were announced at the end of the meeting.

Brad Curtis, Beth Guryan and Cindy Wilson were elected to serve on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee next year.

President Vailas had arrived. Masserini welcomed him and relinquished the floor to him.

III. Open Forum – President Vailas

A. Proposed FY2008-09 Salary Increase Plan and Budget Process/Operating Budget Disclosures

President Vailas thanked the Senators for the opportunity to discuss his salary proposal. He said ISU was in the process of setting next year's budget based on the recommendations received from Budget Council, the Budget Planning Committee and the Vice Presidents. Unfortunately, the final budget is awaiting the Governor's post-legislative tinkering with the State allocations to agencies. The negotiations with health care providers are still ongoing, so no one knows what insurance options, nor at what co-pay costs, will be available to employees. ISU will keep its employees informed as the information comes in. The other problem facing ISU is that fringe benefits allocations for vacant positions are being recalled back to the State. This means that if a vacant position is filled, there is some question how the state agency is supposed to get the money from the State to cover the benefits. Classified and part-time employee benefits are being adjusted by the State, too. All State agencies, including the universities, are facing this same uncertain outcome affecting their final budgets.

President Vailas commended the shared governance system in developing well-thought-out and realistic budget recommendations. He praised the openness and transparency of ISU's unusual budget process and the accountability it fostered. He said the system worked well and everyone was involved in creating ISU's budget: faculty, staff, and students. His discussion was focused only on the Operations Budget. The student tuition increase was lower than hoped: the State Board cut ISU's requested 7% down to 6%. That translated to \$2.37 million funding from student fees. Another \$2.91 million was allocated for capital improvements, and a little bit toward occupancy costs. ISU was also working to decrease its debt load. There were several underfunded projects that President Vailas inherited from the previous administration, and he is trying to find ways of managing those costs as well. Declining enrollment has slowed from 9% to 0.4%. Although credit hour dollars are down, headcount is actually up. But ISU is still down \$906,000 in student fees.

The university needs \$838,000 for the new ERP computer system. ISU did receive \$2.1 million for capital equipment replacement; it cannot be used for remodeling. The Center for Advanced Energy Studies received \$534,000; the Governor and Legislature promised funding for it every year as an on-going allocation. The Library received an additional \$200,000 this year,

but it needs more ongoing funds to offset rising costs. ISU will work with the State and the other universities to address the issues and difficulties libraries face. The Academic Promotions funding pool was increased by \$129,000. Recruitment and Retention was allotted \$96,000. The Office of Research budget was increased by \$100,000, even though indirect costs have not increased. President Vailas intends to have contracts and grants list all lost indirect costs to show how much investment was made in research. He advocated having shared governance set up some incentive system for funneling money into Colleges, Departments, and Research Centers. ISU also increased Graduate Student pay and insurance. Using graduate students as teaching assistants benefits both the university and the students.

Another \$10,000 was given to the new Faculty Diversity Center. Student Counseling and Alumni Support were also given more money from student fees, with full support from students. ISU's staffing levels are much lower than the other universities', so a new payroll clerk and Human Resources staff were added. ISU received \$100,000 toward the Rendezvous occupancy costs. Another \$80,000 went toward utility cost inflation, which will not go very far. Emergency safety and notification system received an additional \$275,000. Information Technology licenses, maintenance and inflation took another \$50,000. President Vailas also set aside a reserve of \$335,700 for unanticipated expenses. This is in addition to the \$1.5 million currently in reserve, which is only 1% of ISU's assets, compared to the 8% that most universities hold in their reserves.

Salary increases last year were 5%. This year ISU was slated to get a 3% increase, of which 1% was across the board. President Vailas said that last year 88% of the faculty received pay increases, which meant that merit was not rewarded. He had hoped for more ranking and higher salary increases for fewer people. His idea was that each year a new group of people would receive greater merit raises, bringing their salaries closer to their national peers. Over a period of a few years, gradually the entire faculty and staff would attain salary levels comparable to their peers. He described his proposed merit increase plan and how it would work. ISU would pool salary and other savings into a fund to be used to augment the salaries of employees identified by their units as both meritorious and underpaid in an effort to increase everyone's salaries over time. The raises would range from 5% to 10%, depending on the particular employee's salary relative to that of his or her peers.

The Administration followed many of the Budget Planning Committee's recommendations, but made some decisions of its own, too. ISU's internal compensation plan is in addition to any salary increases from the State. President Vailas said a list of the Budget Planning Committee's recommendations, a list of those recommendations the Administration supported, and a list of the Administration's additions will be made available early in the fall semester once the final budget is approved by the State so everyone will know exactly what was done.

Masserini opened the floor for questions.

Delehanty thanked President Vailas for the upper Administration's willingness to open the books and discuss budget matters frankly with faculty. He said that in his conversations with faculty members, many expressed concern that their hard work and efforts to excel will go unrecognized in the proposed merit based increase system. They already perform beyond the level for which they are compensated. If only a few will be rewarded for their efforts while the majority continue to work even harder for no extra compensation, there is no incentive to work hard. The message the majority will receive is that their efforts are not valued even after giving so much for so many years of being underpaid. ISU is losing many of its best associate professors who are leaving for more lucrative positions elsewhere after ISU invested a lot of time, effort and money in recruiting, hiring and training them.

President Vailas countered that several of the faculty members who left had told him that they were unhappy with the inequities in the current merit system. His plan is to build equity into the salary increase system as well as merit. Those who are most underpaid would receive more of an increase than they would on merit alone, specifically to bring their salaries more in line with their peers. President Vailas said that ISU needs to increase its level of scholarship and grant funding

for research because it is underperforming relative to its peer institutions. Enrollment is down, but in several departments enrollment cannot increase because of accreditation restrictions on faculty:student ratios. The State's funding formula does not account for those restrictions.

Adler agreed that ISU has not adequately rewarded genuine excellence; instead, merit has been confused with equity when pay raises were approved. Vice President Fletcher said that the State has mandated that salary increases be merit based. It would take \$10-\$12 million to close the inequity gap between ISU and its sister institutions, and the State is not about to give ISU anywhere near that amount. So, ISU is trying to find ways of closing the gap internally using the limited resources and options available. It will take a few years for the plan to be effective, but Fletcher estimated that inequities would be virtually eliminated in about five years, assuming that enrollments stayed the same.

Kangas concurred with Delehanty's concerns and asked for clarification about the equity portion of the salary increase plan. She said that inflation is outpacing salaries so those who do not get meaningful raises are effectively losing money and become demoralized. Bowen expressed her dissatisfaction with the way the merit is calculated and funded in the plan. So few faculty would benefit from raises. President Vailas clarified that the salary equity pool would be built from internal reallocations of salary savings and funds from units across the university. Fletcher said that over time, as inequities are corrected and more funds are garnered, more people will be included in the merit raises: 10% this year, 15-20% the next, and so on. Delehanty said his constituents suggested increasing the pay raises associated with promotions, since those being promoted have demonstrated excellence in teaching, service and research. President Vailas said one of the problems is that there has been a lot of disparity in promotions and what was counted toward those promotions. He said a time and effort reporting system will be developed over the summer that will be transparent and show how human capital is being used across the campus. The second thing is clarifying what constitutes scholarship within and across colleges and departments.

Dye said workloads have an impact on how much research and scholarship faculty can accomplish. Vailas agreed, and said the institution is working toward fixing the problems and current disparities. Salaries are key in attracting and retaining good faculty and employees. Thomas said that there are some deans and department chairs who are not applying merit criteria fairly in their evaluations. Vailas agreed. Adler said deans and chairs need to be held accountable for their actions and decisions. Vailas said huge changes can be made in the next five years if everyone is willing to work on promotion standards, evaluations, and other performance standards to correct some of the problems inherent in the current system. Over the summer he plans to have each department pick three national peers in their disciplines and evaluate where the departments are now and where they would like to be, and what they need to get there. He wants each department to move toward being competitive on a national level in teaching, research and service. Payne asked how the university can do that given the limited resources available for departments, the library, the computer systems, and other infrastructure requirements. Vailas said that by working together everyone can reach a benchmark for departments, colleges and the university as a whole. Programs can be evaluated by the faculty on their viability and contribution toward the university as a whole instead of chopping haphazardly as positions become vacant, enrollments drop, budgetary problems, and so forth. He said the more the university is transparent in its standards and policies, the more power the faculty has to govern itself and the university, and the institution becomes self-regulating, which is the ideal.

Masserini thanked President Vailas and Vice President Fletcher for coming. He also congratulated the new Faculty Senate Vice Chair and Executive Committee members.

Because of time constraints the meeting adjourned at this point. The remaining agenda items were carried forward to the next meeting.

Adjournment: 6:10 p.m.

The next Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for **May 5, 2008** at 4:00 p.m. in the Faculty Senate conference room.

Dr. John Masserini, Chair

Catherine Wallace,
Administrative Assistant 1

Approved by Faculty Senate: May 4, 2009

Documents:

Salary Increase Plan – information item only