

Idaho State University  
**Council for Teaching and Learning**  
Minutes

Tuesday, September 9, 2008  
4:00 PM  
Faculty Senate Conference Room REND 301

In Attendance: Enos, Groome (Chair), Ford, Knudson, Leung, Neill, Reis, Reynolds (Vice-Chair), Rhoads, Rudd, Smith, Wong  
Absent: Eley, Hill  
Non-voting: Wallace (Recording Secretary)  
Guest: Dr. David Delehanty, Faculty Senate Chair

**1. Introductions**

Groome opened the meeting and asked the members to introduce themselves.

**2. Minutes from April 29, 2008**

*The minutes were not ready for approval; deferred until next time.*

**3. Guest Speaker: Dr. David Delehanty, Faculty Senate Chair**

Dr. Delehanty addressed the council with several points. First, he reminded us that faculty governance has a long tradition in university history and in maintaining a civil, professional, collegial but firm stance on university issues, faculty can work very effectively with the ISU Administration to strengthen and benefit their institution. He told the council that ISU's faculty is rediscovering its voice. Delehanty stated that he has a positive, but conditional, view of the current Administration; so far it appears that they are academicians who understand the value of faculty input and that faculty buy-in is necessary for the institution to thrive.

A handout on ISU's faculty governance was distributed to Council members. Delehanty briefly reviewed the structure and elected membership of the Faculty Senate, structured so that the Councils' membership have faculty and Administrative representatives working together at the ground level on university issues and policy. Delehanty stated his belief in bottom-up policy-making and democratic representation. The nine Councils of the Faculty Senate have purview over much of the business of the campus. Their work is an important part of the running of the university.

Delehanty cited an example where faculty perspective on computerized classroom scheduling illuminated a concern that had not occurred to many of the people involved – that of instilling a sense of community among students and faculty within a department by clustering classes in a centralized location near the faculty offices. This would clearly be a teaching and learning issue and would fall under this Council's purview if further work needs to be done. The Council members thanked Delehanty for his presentation.

**4. Continued Business**

a. Minimum Classroom Standards and Survey report and recommendations.

Reis reported that she has completed the report but was waiting to check it against the minutes from the last meeting to make sure she hadn't missed anything. The report will be ready for the Council's review during the next meeting.

Groome said some of the findings might be relevant to the concern expressed by the English and Philosophy department regarding computerized room assignments that Delehanty

had mentioned. He will send a **copy of the written concern to Council members** for their review and consideration.

**5. New Business – possible topics to work on this year, Jim Groome, chair**

- a. Advising – getting students linked to academic advisors earlier and with major advisors earlier or more productively

Ford said this issue was critical for student retention. The entire university as a whole needs to find ways of increasing enrollment and retention in areas where it has capacity to grow. **Connecting students early in their academic career to a particular department and faculty members therein will help give the students a sense of belonging and ownership**, thereby increasing retention rates. Historically it has been left to the initiative of the students themselves to declare a major and find a department and faculty mentor on their own. Ford said the Administration was **looking for guidance from the faculty** how best to tackle this problem. How can departments ensure that a declared major sees or talks to an advisor at least once during their academic career? What can be done with undeclared majors to hook them up with a department that suits their talents and interests?

Discussion ensued about possible ways of identifying students at risk and addressing the advising and mentoring issues. Ford suggested Council **members talk to the staff in the Advising Center** and come up with feasible solutions. The College of Technology does an excellent job of placing and tracking its students. Delehanty said that in his experience talking with a student and laying out a **multi-year plan** to get them to where they want to be is very effective. Pros and cons of online advising were discussed. It was mentioned that there is a danger in doing everything online and impersonally; although some degree programs are run primarily online there is no easy way of connecting with the students and making them feel part of the program. Students taking online classes from a distance cannot meet with advisors or instructors face-to-face. Even here on campus many students get to their senior year only to find they are missing classes required for graduation. The new degree audit checking feature would help mitigate this problem. However, the point was brought up that some programs such as those incorporating distance delivery have no option but online advising.

Another problem identified was the **inequity of advising roles** from department to department and sometimes within departments. Advising is not rewarded so some faculty are reluctant to take on the responsibility even though it is part of their job. Ford mentioned that workload and performance evaluations are being reviewed this year; if it is important enough to do well, it is important enough to be rewarded.

- b. ISU academic schedule and energy issues – Several possible topics for consideration were discussed, including:
- i. going to a 4-day teaching week
  - ii. starting after Labor Day and
  - iii. expanding winter break from Thanksgiving to New Years
  - iv. Summer session scheduling with new Banner system

There were questions as to the scope of the issues that the Council would be expected to address. Delehanty said that as long as the Council stays within how the suggested topics would affect how faculty teach and students learn, these are feasible. It would be up to others to figure out the other implications involved if these changes were to be made. Delehanty said that the 4-day teaching week was NOT equivalent to a 4-day work week; Friday would become a day for research, grading papers, advising, meetings, and other such tasks. It would increase efficiency and student contact time, and free up students to study or do other things on Friday without necessarily having to commute to school. Some colleges and departments

already are on this schedule. Another possible change to consider would be to start classes after Labor Day and extend the winter break from Thanksgiving to New Years Day. Students would benefit from longer winter and summer breaks that allow them to work retail and recreation related jobs.

The question regarding the Council's role in policy decisions was raised. Several members stated that CTL would only be expected to get input from campus faculty to see if these ideas would work for them. If there is resistance, the idea would be dropped and not pursued further. If the faculty is amenable, then facilities and room capacity questions and administrative concerns would need to be addressed. Ford said the Administration has been actively **seeking faculty input regarding their classroom teaching requirements and constraints**. The multiple notices sent to department chairs has elicited less than 50% response rate.

Reynolds expressed concern about the **lack of technological support after 5:00 p.m.**; no one is available to help with computer or classroom equipment problems, or for problems with online classes. **Library technology is also limited**; students often have to physically go to the library to access online databases. A major problem for faculty as well as students is the **inability to access and print journal articles and research papers** once found through search engines. The library's current electronic subscription resources are too limited for productive research. Groome reminded that although this is a budgetary issue, the **faculty do have a voice in deciding how financial resources are allocated**. This Council should make its recommendations known.

The Council discussed another possible topic on the agenda this year, that being **summer session scheduling**. If Banner requires prerequisite checking, students will not be able to register for classes before grades are posted. That will likely require a week interval between the end of Spring semester and the start of summer classes. A related issue brought up in discussion is the current staggering of summer courses and whether that should become more homogeneous.

Because of time constraints, **Groome will email a list of the four topics under consideration** for each Council member to **rank in priority order** and return to him along with any comments they might have. He will collate the results and inform the Council before the next meeting. Reynolds, as Vice-Chair, offered to help.

c. Meeting schedule.

For this semester the Council will meet the **second Tuesday of each month**, with the possibility of meeting more frequently if the workload necessitates.

**6. Adjournment:** 5:15 p.m.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 14, 2008**.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Wallace  
Administrative Assistant I  
Faculty Senate

Approved by Council for Teaching and Learning: October 14, 2008  
Accepted by Faculty Senate: October 27, 2008