

10 November 2010

Dear BSU Faculty,

The Faculty Senate at Boise State University is working on a number of initiatives that may be of interest to you. We began the academic year with a full day retreat focused on advancing an agenda of curriculum, governance, and compensation. Additionally, we have been diligent to ensure that measures begun in the 2009/2010 academic year have either been completed or remain projects that are progressing toward completion. Some of these projects are: the formation of a health care consortium with other public and private universities in the state of Idaho, a tuition dependent benefit program, the Faculty Incentive Pay Program, a credit hour reduction from 128 to 120, and the development of a core curriculum comparable to other top institutions in the country. A new agenda item introduced by the University's administration includes an evaluation of the academic calendar to assess the viability of a trimester system at Boise State University. To address each of these initiatives, I have split the remainder of this update letter into the categories addressed at the retreat.

Curriculum

- 1) **Credit hour reduction 128 to 120:** The Faculty Senate approved the credit hour reduction required to obtain a Bachelor's degree at Boise State University from 128 to 120 on March 23, 2010. Provost Andrews presented this program to the Idaho State Board of Education on August 12, 2010 followed by voluntary implementation at BSU beginning fall 2010. Resources have been made available to facilitate the reduction in credit hours for participating departments and colleges. As of October 2010, more than thirty departments across campus have agreed to participate.
- 2) **Core Curriculum:** At the October 26, 2010 meeting of the Faculty Senate, the core curriculum proposal as detailed in: <http://academics.boisestate.edu/provost/files/2010/10/Core-Reform-Foundations-Program-October-2010.pdf>, was approved. Again, financial resources will be made available to faculty and departments that participate in the program. The Faculty Senate began evaluating draft proposals from the Core Reform Task Force (CRTF) in spring 2009, participated in a number of open forums, and moved to approve the proposal of the CRTF for implementation in fall 2012.
- 3) **Alternative Academic Calendar Committee:** A committee assembled at the request of President Kustra and Interim Provost Schimpf will evaluate the viability of utilizing the facilities of Boise State University toward the goal of becoming a year-round university. An emphasis will be placed on models

that enhance efficiency, maximize resources, and advance the University in its mission as an outstanding public institution of higher education.

Governance

- 1) **Constitution:** The Faculty Senate is in the process of revising the Constitution of the faculty. The document was last revised in 1998 and includes a clause that it be updated every five years. It is well past due and provides many definitions and procedures that are no longer relevant. This process gained momentum last spring with the approval of policy 7000: Position Definitions. At the October 12, 2010 meeting of the Faculty Senate, Lecturers, Clinical and Research Faculty gained one voting seat on the Senate, but did not receive a vote in all campus meetings. The Constitution, once approved by the Senate, will go to all Academic and Administrative Faculty on campus for a vote. A two thirds majority of Academic and Administrative faculty that vote by secret ballot must be in favor of the amendments to the constitution for it to be accepted by the faculty and recommended to the administration. In the Governing Policies and Procedures of the Idaho State Board of Education, Section: III. Postsecondary affairs, C. Institutional Governance, 2. Faculty Governance, it states the following: "The faculty of each institution will establish written bylaws, a constitution, and necessary procedures, subject to the approval by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board, for making recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer as a part of the decision-making process of the institution. All policies and procedures must be consistent with the Board's Governing Policies and Procedures." Please look for the document to come to you in the weeks ahead. Your attention to this matter is significant.
- 2) **Bylaws:** Once the Constitution is completed, the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate will be revised to be consistent with the Constitution. This process does not require a vote by Academic and Administrative Faculty. Please remain in contact with your Senators to ensure your opinion is represented in this process.
- 3) **Academic Freedom of Speech:** The topic of Academic Freedom was addressed by the Professional Standards Committee earlier this fall. It represents one of the new items incorporated into the current draft of the Constitution. Exact wording is being refined in accordance with concerns raised from Faculty Senators.
- 4) **Provost Search:** Significant this year will be the search for a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. A search committee has been formed by President Kustra and will begin the process of evaluating candidates through the winter. The goal of the committee is to find an intellectual strategist that will move BSU to the next level of research and academic achievement. The successful candidate is anticipated to begin by June 2011.

Faculty Compensation

- 1) **Faculty Incentive Pay Program:** This fall, Vice President for Research Mark Rudin introduced the Faculty Incentive Pay Program (FIPP). The FIPP represents a means by which research faculty can buy out of research and teaching commitments with grant funds and collect a portion of the monies as a lump sum payment at the end of the fiscal year. It is a voluntary program that must be agreed to between the faculty member and the department head.
- 2) **Tuition Dependent Benefit Program:** Vice President for Finance and Administration, Stacy Pearson, has recently unveiled a trial program that her and I will present at the State Board of Education meeting in Coeur d'Alene, December 9, 2010. This program will allow a single dependent of a BSU full time employee to obtain a 65% reduction in tuition at BSU. This represents a significant effort by the BSU administration to address employee satisfaction and compensation.
- 3) **Health Care Consortium:** Jane Buser, Human Resource Executive Director, has made appreciable progress toward evaluating the feasibility of BSU establishing a health care consortium in the state of Idaho. Many state and private colleges and universities are interested in the plan and the evaluation process is well underway. The likelihood of a shift could occur as early as 2012. Updates on the status of the project will be forthcoming.
- 4) **Faculty Compensation Investigation:** At the October 26, 2010 meeting of the Faculty Senate, it was agreed that the Faculty Financial Affairs Committee would evaluate the faculty compensation opportunities that are available across campus. A compilation of the findings will be made available to faculty and a plan will be established to enhance the opportunities for new programs to be developed toward the goal of enhancing faculty compensation.

In summary, please look for the Constitution. Your attention to review the document and vote for or against it is critical to our mission to ensure the guiding principles of co-governance on campus. If you have concerns or recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact your Faculty Senator or me. Thank you for your time to become informed on matters that affect the environment at Boise State University.

Best regards,



Owen M. McDougal, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry
President, Faculty Senate