



## **Accelerator Plan**

### **September 2007**

Boise State University commemorated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September, a celebration of our transformation from a private junior college with an enrollment of 78 students to a university with a student population of 19,500, over 180 major fields of study, and 75 graduate programs. Innovation has been an institutional hallmark since our doors opened in 1932 and continues to characterize our culture. In keeping with our tradition of innovation, we have articulated a vision to become a Metropolitan Research University of Distinction. Our strategic plan defines that vision as an institution of academic excellence, public engagement, vibrant culture, and exceptional research. Supporting our faculty is at the heart of the plan and is central to us redefining what it means to be an urban university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **WHO ARE OUR FACULTY?**

Our Boise State University faculty include 451 tenure-track and tenured members with an average of 40 new faculty, including both replacement and new positions, each fall semester for the past several years. Faculty data regarding gender, rank, and age are in the table below:

**Boise State University Official Faculty  
Rank, Gender, and Average Age**

	Female	Male	Total	% Female	% Male	Ave. Age Female	Ave. Age Male
<b>Tenured Faculty</b>							
Professor	44	107	151	29%	71%	55	56
Associate Professor	66	91	157	42%	58%	49	50
Assistant Professor	5	8	13	38%	62%	53	52
Senior Instructor	1	0	1			57	--
<b>Total Tenured</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>On Track Faculty</b>							
Associate Professor	11	5	16	69%	31%	45	50
Assistant Professor	53	52	105	50%	50%	43	39
Instructor	7	1	8	88%	13%	46	29
<b>Total On Track</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Total Faculty</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Percent Tenured</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>71%</b>				
<b>Percent on Track</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>29%</b>				

As the data show, we have a fairly even distribution of faculty at all ranks with slightly more associate professors (both tenured and tenure track) and with close to 75% of our faculty tenured. In this diverse pool of faculty we have those who have been with us for over 30 years and others who have just joined us fresh out of a Ph.D program. Although there is often a tendency for institutions to focus the majority of their efforts on new faculty, Boise State University’s faculty demographics point to the need to also pay attention to the success and career flexibility issues confronting our mid-career to late-career faculty.

**WHAT ARE WE CURRENTLY DOING TO PROMOTE CAREER FLEXIBILITY?**

“Recruiting and retaining faculty to support our vision to be a metropolitan research university” is one of the foundational goals in our university strategic plan and considered to be the most important investment Boise State University makes. We are

committed to offering the flexibility that faculty need to enter, thrive in, and retire from their academic professions while meeting their professional, personal, and family responsibilities.

The University has made a commitment to promoting faculty career flexibility in a number of ways. One is by dedicating a full-time, 12-month professional that focuses exclusively in this area. The Director of Professional Development for Academic Affairs reports directly to the Provost and is charged with 1) developing policies, procedures, programs, and services related to faculty recruitment and retention, new faculty orientation, adjunct faculty integration and support, faculty leadership development, department chair training and development, and resources for deans; 2) creating and maintaining avenues for communication and collaboration among all campus units that provide faculty career services; and 3) facilitating work groups that solve problems and launch initiatives.

In addition, Boise State University currently has a number of policies, programs, and services in place designed to create options for tenure-track and tenured faculty:

[Faculty Dual Career Program](#)

Purpose: To assist dual career couples to be able to consider accepting tenure-track faculty positions when hiring is contingent on employment for both in areas of their respective fields

[Faculty Voluntary Phased Retirement Program](#)

Purpose: To provide faculty with a voluntary phased approach to retirement

[Shared Leave Policy](#)

Purpose: To provide a means for faculty and staff who have not accrued enough sick leave to use leave time donated by other employees

[Tenure Clock Extension Policy](#)

Purpose: To extend the probationary period of a tenure-track faculty member who has circumstances that impede progress toward achieving tenure such as childbirth, adoption, dependent care, chronic illness, or other circumstances beyond the faculty member's control

#### Workload for Official Faculty Policy

Purpose: To balance the scholarly and service interests of individual faculty members to optimize faculty contributions to professional and institutional goals

#### Leave After Birth, Adoption, or Foster Care Placement

Purpose: To provide for partial or full relief of duties for mothers and fathers after the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child

#### Leave for a Serious Health Condition or Disability

Purpose: To provide for partial or full relief of duties due to serious health condition or disability

#### Leave to Care for Spouse, Domestic Partner, Child, or Parent

Purpose: To provide for partial or full relief of duties to care for a family member

#### New Faculty Orientation

Purpose: To provide timely information and support to new faculty throughout their first two years at Boise State University via workshops, information sessions, and social gatherings

#### Department Chairs' Program

Purpose: To provide training and ongoing development for department chairs via workshops, monthly information sessions, and topic-based discussions

#### Emeritus Guild

Purpose: To provide support for the transition to retirement, ongoing social contact with colleagues, and opportunities to continue a relationship with their university

### **WHAT DO BENCHMARK DATA SUGGEST THAT WE MIGHT STRENGTHEN AND/OR DEVELOP TO CREATE IMMEDIATE, BROAD IMPACT?**

The benchmark data provided by the Alfred P. Sloan Awards Institutional Survey that we completed last spring indicate that there are four areas in which we might focus our efforts. These include:

1. Update promotion and tenure policies and procedures to reflect the flexible options that we now provide on a "case by case" basis (items 2.5, 2.6, 10.12, 10.13).
2. Formalize part-time tenure-track and tenured appointment options (items 7.1, 7.6, 7.10, 7.11).

3. Address workplace culture and communication to increase knowledge of and increased participation in flexible career options for faculty at all stages of their careers (items 10.2, 10.6, 10.8).
4. Provide university-coordinated mentoring for faculty at all stages of their careers (item 10.16).

## **WHAT INSTITUTIONAL GOALS DOES OUR ACCELERATOR PLAN ADDRESS?**

These focus areas align with several of the goals and strategies identified in the university's strategic plan *Charting the Course: A Strategic Vision for Boise State University*. Of the goals and strategies in the plan, five of them speak directly to faculty careers:

- Recruit and retain faculty and staff to support the vision
- Create an organization that is responsive to change
- Redesign annual evaluation and promotion and tenure criteria to include integration of research and teaching
- Develop flexible workload policies for faculty
- Develop a staffing plan, compensation packages, and structures commensurate with a metropolitan research university

## **HOW WILL WE ACCELERATE FACULTY CAREER FLEXIBILITY OPPORTUNITIES AT BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY?**

If we were to be awarded the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Award for Faculty Career Flexibility, our immediate goals would be to:

1. Create policies and processes that allow for part-time tenure-track and tenured appointments for faculty at all stages of their careers.
2. Educate Promotion and Tenure Committee Members and faculty regarding policies and procedures that speak to career flexibility to ensure consistency in opportunities and decision-making across the University.
3. Develop mentoring programs for early-career, mid-career, and late-career faculty to address the work-life balance issues inherent in each stage.

***Goal #1: Create policies and processes that allow for part-time tenure-track and tenured appointments for faculty at all stages of their careers.***

At any stage of a faculty member's career, a faculty member may want to explore the option of a part-time tenure-track or tenured appointment. For example, early-career faculty may desire this flexibility to care for families. Mid-career faculty may choose to broaden their professional experiences by taking on administrative roles within the university or by working in community-based business, industry, educational systems, or agencies. Mid-career and late-career faculty may also have dependent care responsibilities or wish to explore retirement options. At each career stage, there are multiple reasons why faculty might desire voluntary part-time appointment opportunities, including split-appointments, job shares, and less-than-fulltime appointments.

While arrangements for part-time appointments on a temporary basis are possible at Boise State University, they are done on a case-by-case basis as individual need arises. The next step is to formalize part-time options and educate faculty and decision-makers to promote and consider them when circumstances warrant. The desired state is to have all faculty and prospective faculty aware that this is a viable option if they so choose and to understand the procedures for doing so.

To accelerate progress in this area, Boise State University would take the following actions:

1. Identify interests and needs among faculty
2. Develop specific part-time appointment options and adopt formal policies to facilitate them

4. Educate faculty and decision-makers about part-time appointments and their availability
5. Identify strategies for implementation
6. Remove barriers to implementation and participation

Our progress and success will be measured by:

- Tracking the number of faculty in part-time appointments
- Collecting information on how this impacts their work and career choices

***Goal #2: Educate Promotion and Tenure Committee Members and faculty regarding policies and procedures that speak to career flexibility to ensure consistency in opportunities and decision-making across the University.***

While we have made progress in recent years regarding policies related to promotion and tenure, we have not addressed the interpretation of those policies at the department and college levels where promotion and tenure guidance and recommendations are made.

For instance, although we have a tenure clock extension policy and a faculty workload policy that allows for individual faculty members to shape how they apportion their time, we still need to ensure that faculty being considered for tenure and promotion and their department chairs and deans understand the flexible options available, how to assess contributions made in a non-traditional time frame, and how to foster dialogue in their departments and colleges about how to meet their collective goals while affording flexibility to their individual faculty.

To accelerate progress in this area, Boise State University will take the following actions:

1. Use results of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Award Faculty Survey to determine the extent to which faculty perceive flexibility in the promotion and tenure process.
2. Develop both pilot and ongoing workshops for deans, department chairs, and promotion and tenure committee members to discuss and interpret policies and how they impact P&T decisions.
3. Revise university-wide policies and procedures based on workshop input.
4. Identify departments that represent best practices in implementing the flexible workload policy and have them serve as sponsors for departments wishing to do the same.
5. Promote availability of these policies through the web, announcements, and a faculty handbook.

Our progress and success will be measured by:

- Attendance at workshops
- Analyzing the tenure and promotion rates of our faculty based on variables that include tenure clock extension, work load distribution, etc.
- Using the data from the analysis to revise materials and workshops to continue to improve the dialog and communication on these issues.

***Goal #3: Develop mentoring programs for early-career, mid-career, and late-career faculty to address the work-life balance issues inherent in each stage.***

Faculty mentoring at Boise State University is currently coordinated at the academic department and/or college level, if at all. It varies in definition, formality, purpose, and outcomes, and focuses primarily on early-career, tenure-track faculty. And while university faculty mentoring programs are common at many universities, providing mentoring at all stages of a faculty member's careers (beyond junior faculty) has the potential to reinvigorate and open up new options for mid and late career faculty. Knowing that the need for wise and friendly counsel does not stop when

tenure or promotion is achieved, we would like to formalize a university-wide mentoring program for faculty at all stages of their careers to focus on success and work-life balance issues inherent in each stage.

Components of the program would include university-level coordination; training and support for mentors; individual and cohort activities for those who participate; tracking of those who participate to assess their career goal achievement and satisfaction; and outcomes assessment of the program.

To accelerate progress in this area, Boise State University will take the following actions:

1. Create a steering committee to develop the program and articulate expected outcomes.
2. Recruit, identify, and train mentors to work specifically with early-career, mid-career, and late-career faculty.
3. Develop a mentoring handbook for both mentors and mentee to understand the mentoring process and describe best practices for a successful mentoring relationship.
4. Pilot the program starting in the Fall 2008 with a limited number of participants and scale it up in subsequent years to include all faculty who wish to participate
5. Make known the program and training sessions via announcements and web information
6. Track participants and develop annual outcome measures.

Our progress and success will be measured by:

- Number of faculty enrolled in a mentoring program over time
- The number of faculty mentors
- Success rate of those being mentored in achieving their goals

## **HOW WILL WE DEMONSTRATE OUR ONGOING INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT?**

Boise State University has already demonstrated its commitment to improving faculty career flexibility through the policies it has adopted and the permanent funding it has put behind newly created positions and programs in support of faculty.

To sustain our initiatives we will:

1. Create an advisory committee that includes faculty, staff, and administrators with the focus on continuing to enhance faculty career flexibility.
2. Make sure that we include in our faculty databases those variables that speak to career flexibility in order to track this information.
3. Develop assessments for our career flexibility options to measure their effectiveness and make improvements.
4. Continue to build into our permanent university budget the resources needed to support career flexibility initiatives and programs.
5. Issue an annual report card to the campus on progress made on the initiatives outlined in this proposal.
6. Re-administer our existing climate survey (initially conducted in 2006) to measure progress and list new areas that need our attention in regard to career flexibility for faculty.

It is Boise State University's goal to be recognized as a university that is a great place for students to learn and for faculty and staff to work. As we transition to a metropolitan research university of distinction, creating career flexibility options for faculty will be crucial to our success and to those who work at our university. Our commitment could not be stronger.