Minutes  
Boise State University Faculty Senate  
February 10, 2009 3:15pm  
Special Events Center, Student Union Building

President Rainford called meeting to order at 3:15pm


Minutes

The approval of minutes was suspended due to the special nature of the current meeting. Approval of minutes from December 9, 2008 and January 27, 2009 will be voted on at the next meeting.

Presidential Privilege

President Rainford proposed a special session of the Faculty Senate be held today to allow President Kustra and the members of the Senate to discuss current budget issues in light of the budget cuts being proposed by Gov. Otter. Normal business will be suspended and the minutes will reflect only brief discussion points by Senators and President Kustra. Additionally, Senator Marker on behalf of the Professional Standards Committee would like to address the issue of anonymous feedback from students at the next meeting. The issue will need to be given to another committee to be deliberated and handled. By consensus the issue will be addressed at the next meeting.

Discussion

President Rainford - There is a rumor that, as state employees, faculty will be facing a 10% salary cut. The joint finance and appropriations committee (JFAC) will be the first committee to vote on the issue.

Senator Saunders – can this body make a statement about the issue?

President Rainford – once a bill is printed we can make a statement but we can not lobby as a collective body. However, independently people can contact their legislators if they have an opinion to share.

Senator McDougal – regarding rewarding faculty and staff – as a faculty member bringing in grants, I am limited on the amount of soft money I can pay myself and other
staff in the department. It becomes difficult when holdbacks come through and even though our department is bringing in substantial monies from grants there is nothing we can do.

President Kustra – Regarding the state employees issue – I have had a long standing difference of opinion about defining BSU employees as state employees. Classified employees at BSU are considered state employees and this issue is a problem in many areas (ie travel and purchasing). The state has been inclined to continue defining classified staff as state employees which is difficult for a university because our situation is so much different. This issue is critical when it comes to the budget crisis because we have many options for dealing with our budget that do not include taking 10% out of salaries (ie furlough). As far as the budget goes, we are far from making any major decisions because we are unsure of tuition increases, etc. We are looking at every possible solution and will continue to do so.

On the positive side we have managed ourselves at BSU in a way that has allowed us to cover the already taken 6 % from the money we had in reserve.

Regarding the research issue – the research consultant report is in. The report affirms all the concerns that researchers have brought to light. One of the meetings we have had has been about how to use the funding that comes in for research. We will get back to people when we work out the details.

Senator McDougal – Is there a plan in place regarding structure for addressing the specific issues that have been brought up (ie purchasing that takes 2 to 6 months for a piece of scientific equipment)?

President Kustra – I don’t want to get too specific until the report is disseminated to everyone but there are a lot of structural changes that will take place. The major problem with purchasing is with the state not the university.

Vice President Pearson - There are a lot of issues around systems that will have to be re-oriented.

Senator Pfautsch – Regarding fee waivers for CWI faculty to take classes at BSU, are they no longer going to be offered?

President Kustra – It is being discussed as an option but has not been approved.

Vice President Pearson – There is one caveat that will be proposed. The employees transferring to CWI that have already been registered we want to honor that agreement for one year of waiver.

Senator Klein – Faculty and staff have been making a lot of sacrifices with regards to cuts. We don’t hear a lot of information about what administration is doing to feel the
pain of budget cuts. I would be good for moral if faculty and staff could hear from administration on what changes they are making.

President Kustra – We are constantly re-thinking ways in which we could make adjustments. What I will do is work on a list of what the administration is doing. One example of what I am doing is cancelling my membership to American Association of State College and Universities (ASSCU). Provost Andrews also belongs to a similar organization which she is cancelling her membership to as well. These organizations charge somewhere between $14,000 and $16,000 a year for membership and they are perks of the job that we are giving up.

Vice President Pearson – Everyone went through the 6% holdbacks. We have eliminated some of the vacant positions for FY10. Re-organizations have been happening in all areas and have been very painful for everyone. We are sorting through all of our reserve balances and talking about revenue options. It’s difficult to come up with a list because nothing is permanent yet. The budget guidelines are coming out today and in them is a request for a 6%, 8%, and 10% scenario. That is so we can make decisions so we don’t have to make across the board cuts.

Vice President Lubamersky – One option that is available to save money is to allow people to retire but in the past when people retire those positions have been lost. What is your opinion of each department receiving a contract that will ensure those positions are not lost permanently.

President Kustra – It makes sense but I’m not sure how many people will want to do that in this economy. It makes sense that we would honor that slot for a future year.

Senator McDougal – In the department of chemistry that has increased student services by 80% since 2007, was in line for a graduate program that allow 30% enrollment and would more than pay for the program itself. It is a strategic maneuver that financially BSU would come out ahead, at what point do we, as a university, begin moving forward with strategic moves that would help the problem?

President Kustra – If you can put a business model together that fits the description you just gave, I can’t argue with that.

Marty – The money is in place for that program, the reasons for hold are political reasons. The State Board of Education may not give us the go ahead for creating a program like that in a time when budget concerns are so high.

President Kustra – I’m willing to give that a try.

Senator Gough – When you get the budget and you from JFAC are you planning to come to the departments and colleges and give them choices as to what they do with the cuts?
Vice President Pearson – The 6, 8, and 10% scenario allows each department to present how they would make the cuts and the impact. The Deans and Chairs to present options.

President Rainford – Do you have any sense for firm deadlines for decision making in terms of cuts?

Vice President Pearson – Yes we get our budget approved on April 19th. That will give us allocation from state funding and then we will run the numbers. I don’t think we will be able to make every decision by then but April 27th is the date for non-renewal notices. There will probably be less ability to hire adjuncts and special lectures.

Senator Marker – How much of an impact will Seland College on this scenario?

President Kustra – I don’t think we would be set back greatly by the creation of CWI. We planned for a recruitment effort a couple of years ago. We hired someone to work on this issue specifically to counter the loss of students to CWI.

Senator Klein – The rumor going around is to increase teaching loads to 4:4.

President Kustra – I am opposed to increasing teaching loads, because if we did so, we could no longer carry out the mission of the university and ‘might as well become ‘CWI East’.

Senator McCain – When we talk about cutting expenses for travel etc. There are some disciplines that can’t submit papers to journals without first delivering them at conferences. There needs to be a more strategic way decision to say that some of the things we are doing are more important than others.

President Kustra – We are not in a position to be able to make all of these decisions within colleges. Deans and Chairs need to get together to prioritize decisions and inform the Provost what is most important. Every university is going through these cut backs and travel is almost always the first to go.

Vice President Lubamersky – We need more flexibility to make decisions on what within our departments get changed.

President Kustra – That is a fair request and we will try to make adjustments so there is more flexibility.

Senator Gregory – This is a unique opportunity to re-think about how we do instruction and how and why we organize things the way we do. This can be a transformative experience and can be positive.

President Kustra – An example of that is that we have also thought of introducing some fast track opportunities during winter break etc.
Senator Ahten – Have we considered trimester system?

President Kustra – What I have been told in the past is that tends to be a deal breaker for faculty but I am open to exploring that as an option. We are definitely beginning to move toward a more robust summer session.

Senator Ahten – One of the problems with the summer option is that scholarships are not offered in the summer for students.

Senator McDougal – Regarding strategy and talking about janitorial staff, in the Biology departments there are problems with justifying positions that appear to be trivial but are essential support position for laboratory science. The position was approved on a temporary basis and it is difficult to get good people if the position is only posted for a year.

Marty – everyone needs to be educated on how things are done and the most efficient way of taking care of students at the university.

President Kustra – I have begun going through every request for new position or filling of a vacant position. I am part of the system that may be slowing things down and making it more difficult to fill these positions.

Senator Ahten – One issue I would like clarified is the historical funding per student parity at BSU compared to what is funded at other universities.

President Kustra – If you look at the funding per student among the 4 universities it’s over $9000 at the University of Idaho. Boise State University is the lowest, it is funded almost 65% below U of I on a per student ratio.

Vice President Pearson – It is somewhat historical - the land grant university coming in with a higher budget – the problem is how as the state appropriations for education declined and their enrollments declined it exacerbated the problem for BSU.

President Kustra – In 1989 the state put together the enrollment workload adjustment which basically said it would fund the X number of dollars times the number of students. However, in years when the state wouldn’t fund EWA, BSU enrollment was increasing. If your enrollment numbers are not increasing it doesn’t matter if they fund EWA but for the universities whose numbers are increasing, like BSU, it matters. It goes on a 3 year rolling average.

Senator Peloquin – Will the strategy be public knowledge when the decisions have been made?

President Kustra – At the end of the process and we have a final decisions have been made the faculty will be notified.
Senator Lonsdale – I would like to ask that the hiring process for grant funded individuals be expedited.

President Kustra - Please let me know when there is a problem in the system so I can try to do something about it.

Jim Munger brought information from the Provost as a follow up to the conversation at the last meeting regarding listing of managerial position from IPEDS data.

Vice President Lubamersky brought the definitions from the IPEDS report to pass out to Senators. Due to time limitations, this conversation was tabled but will be the first item of business on the next meeting agenda.

Committee Reports

* Academic Standards – No Report
* Core Curriculum – No Report
* Curriculum – No Report
* Diversity – No Report
* Financial Affairs – No Report
* Faculty Grievance – No Report
* Faculty Professional Standards – No report
* Graduate Council – No Report
* Sabbatical Leave – No Report
* Nominating – No Report
* Student Affairs – No Report
* Research Council – No Report

Meeting adjourned at 5:10pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimi Eames,
Secretary, BSU Faculty Senate