GREETINGS!

Through the Provost’s Newsletter, we provide timely information and updates on initiatives led by the Office of the Provost for faculty and staff in Academic Affairs. By highlighting specific activities, initiatives and goals, we also hope that you will ask questions and offer your observations and ideas.

Each of this year’s four Newsletters will reflect on one or more goals of the university’s 2012-2017 strategic plan, “Focus on Effectiveness.” In this first issue, we examine our goal to “create a signature, high quality educational experience for all students.” The entire strategic plan can be accessed at academics.boisestate.edu/strategic-plan.

The Provost’s office is committed to building a culture in which faculty, staff and students can thrive as we set to meet Boise State University’s mission. Thank you for doing your part, and let us know how we can support you.

Marty

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Foundational Studies is all about the liberal arts, with the humanities serving as a vital anchor. The humanities are critical to our general education core curriculum, and our goal of making sure that all of our graduates, regardless of major, learn to think critically and retrospectively.

Three years ago, we rolled out our Foundational Studies program, which was developed with input from more than 300 faculty and students. An important part of the vision of Foundational Studies was to embed authentic assessment of outcomes into those courses so that we could continually improve our program. Some of the feedback already has been used to enhance our BroncoVenture new student orientation program.

You may have heard recently that Boise State University received an exemplary award for the Improvement of General Education from the Association of General and Liberal Studies for this learning outcome-based work. That is a credit to the nearly 170 faculty who drafted, piloted, supported and/or submitted data for the assessment plan.

But our work continues. This year is a time to reflect on the Foundational Studies curriculum, in order to continue to make the program even better. Student evaluations are a very important component of assessing all academic programs.

Please encourage your students to fill out evaluations so that we may continue to create a signature, high-quality educational experience for all of our students.

Read more about using incentives >
LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE

We strive to provide bountiful opportunities within and across disciplines for experiential learning. You see this in our growing and thriving Service-Learning Program, which facilitates experiential learning for nearly 2,500 students each year from every college. The Foundational Studies program also requires experiential learning in a student’s sophomore year in UF 200. Experiential learning helps students apply what they learn in the classroom, while gaining valuable workplace skills and expanding their perspectives.

Undergraduate research opportunities are another point of pride at Boise State University. The Vertically Integrated Projects (VIPs) administered through the College of Innovation and Design provide another avenue for students to have an undergraduate research experience that extends beyond a single semester, giving them both time and context to learn and practice professional skills. VIPs also allow students to learn and observe differing roles associated with large design and discovery teams that span multiple disciplines.

In order to help students take even better advantage of experiential learning programs at Boise State, we are remodeling the Simplot Micron Technology Building to create an experiential learning hub. It will bring together Service-Learning, International Learning Opportunities, Academic Advising, the Testing Center, Undergraduate Research Office and more, creating a place where students can connect with these valuable resources.

Co-locating experiential learning units at Boise State is beneficial to students, as well as the greater community. It increases the reach, scope and impact of our existing programs, provides clarity for students on where to find them, and encourages cross-pollination of our resources and tools.

ADJUNCT FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

We continue to improve the student experience and create new opportunities through innovative teaching strategies, such as flipping the classroom and developing hybrid and online courses. Keeping such improvements going requires investment in faculty development, including adjunct faculty.

We have more than 600 adjunct faculty teaching in almost every program that we offer and accounting for about one-third of all the classes that we offer. Through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), we engage in the regular assessment of professional development needs for adjunct faculty, creating university-wide professional development opportunities aimed at their identified needs. Such opportunities include mentoring programs, workshops and opportunities for community building.

Besides an invitation to participate in regular CTL events, additional outreach to adjunct faculty includes a monthly newsletter, an Adjunct Faculty Learning Community and expanded orientation events. CTL has offered a fall semester orientation for adjunct faculty and will offer another in the spring. CTL travel funds also are available to adjunct faculty who have taught more than two semesters at Boise State, in order to encourage them to participate in professional development opportunities.

Read more about CTL Travel Awards >

Each year we try to convert several adjunct positions into full-time faculty positions. Our FY17 budget request to the legislature seeks funding for the addition of 78 new full-time faculty lines, including 30 additional conversions of adjunct faculty to permanent status.
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Have questions, comments, or suggestions for newsletter topics?
Contact Marcy Harmer at marcyharmer@boisestate.edu.

Wonder who to contact in the Provost's Office for general questions?
Visit the Office of the Provost website to see the staff listing.

PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Martin Schimpf

Dr. Martin Schimpf joined the faculty at Boise State University in 1990. He has held several administrative appointments at the University, including Chair of Chemistry, Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He currently serves as Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, a position he has held since 2010. Dr. Schimpf holds degrees in chemistry from the University of Washington and the University of Utah. His interdisciplinary research on thermophoresis and the characterization of nanomaterials has led to more than 80 internationally distributed publications in the Scientific literature.
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

The Provost's office is committed to building a culture, along with the necessary support structures, in which faculty, staff, and students can thrive in our efforts to accomplish Boise State University's mission. Thank you for doing your part, and let us know how we can support you.