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University of Idaho

Staff Council

Welcome to the first edition of Staff Council Talking Points. You may have missed the Staff Council newsletter in the past few months. Staff Council has decided to focus on bringing attention to issues that affect University of Idaho staff. Talking points from Staff Council meetings will especially highlight information that may not be readily available elsewhere.

Please note the time signatures after each item. They correspond to the location of this item on our November 13 Staff Council [meeting recording](#).

Staff Member of the Month for November 2019 is Vern Dorendorf, Landscape Maintenance Technician. (10:20)

The Vandalstore (University of Idaho Bookstore) is under consideration for external management. Three different vendors, with three different proposals, gave presentations. The university may accept one or none of the proposals. No matter what, the Starbucks is under a separate contract and will remain. (12:15)

Staff Council Chair Chad Neilson presented on the **Budget Taskforce**. This currently involves policy review, tools ranking, and Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Committee (IPEC) program prioritization. See the [Senate Budget Committees document](#), and the [Budget-Related Policy Report](#). (1:24:00)

President Scott Green came to Staff Council. He appreciated staff pulling together to respond to the TLC/ISUB emergency closure. With regard to the budget, he said that the \$22 million cut should solve our immediate problem, but there is the possibility of an additional 1% holdback from the state this year. He addressed the following questions and issues raised by Staff Council:

- Can we reach R1 status?

- Can we reduce upper administration?
- Is there a timeline for layoffs? What about furloughs?
- How has the change in football league affected finances?
- Can the process of outsourcing be more transparent?
- What about centralization?
- Target market rates are now lower than they were. Are those numbers to be used for pay cuts?
- What actual outsourcing is happening at the Student Rec. Center?
- How can we increase revenue instead of making cuts?
- Is there a reason we don't do trade schools?
- What about increasing online education?
- What are we doing to make sure that the remaining (smaller) workforce isn't being overburdened?

(29:30)



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Staff Council

Staff Council Talking Points

Date: Dec. 11, 2019 9 a.m. [Meeting Recording](#)

- **Staff Member of the Month** for December 2019 is Michael Placke, ResNet Operations Supervisor in Auxiliary Services.
- **Staff Awards Discussion**—Ian Leibbrandt — Discussion on combining staff awards with faculty awards ceremony to save costs. Working on ways to reach all staff, not just those who attend the lunch.
- **Furlough and Voluntary Separation Q&A**—Wes Matthews
 - Voluntary furlough – 703 volunteered so far to take days. Should save ~\$30,000. Mandatory furloughs are not being considered. No one is going to be pressured to do it. It is voluntary. Furlough days can be taken up until June 13. You still have to arrange time off, the difference is in how it is paid. Does furlough affect benefits? Health insurance cost for employees is the same; the employee contribution will be deducted from pay, and the university maintains its contribution. Sick and annual leave accrues based on hours worked. There will be no accrual of sick and annual leave balances during furlough hours. [Furlough FAQs](#).
 - Voluntary separation/early retirement: 160 or so applications so far (later revised to 221). Actual savings will depend on a number of factors.
- **Provost Budget Taskforce Report**—Darren Kearney, Amber Feldman and Jennifer Baillargeon-Hauck:
 - This was a Joint Faculty and Staff member committee to create an advisory document. They had two meetings and ranked 130 items, scale from 0-5 0 being important, 5 not to be considered.
 - Impression from committee members was that the time was too short and many comments were biased.

- **Bylaws Committee**—Emily Tuschhoff: the committee has met and plans to have something for Staff Council to look at in spring. Diane Whitney will need to review.
- **Parking Lot Topics** (to be addressed at a later meeting)—Chad Neilson
 - Vendor bids for facilities are due on Jan 8, 2020.
 - Bookstore – Texas Book Co. has been selected to run the textbook portion of the Bookstore. One position is lost as of July 1, 2020. Terms for commissions are stipulated.
- **Good of the Order**—Chad
 - [Staff Council homepage](#) now includes a form for staff to submit comments or concerns to Staff Council.
 - Supervisors must use one of the [annual evaluation forms](#) available. The narrative form is new, but not required.

Staff Council wishes you safe and Happy Holidays!



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Staff Council

Staff Council Talking Points

Date: Feb. 12, 2019 9 a.m. [Meeting Recording](#)

- **Staff Member of the Month** for February 2020 is Sean Williams, UCM/Centers Web Coordinator.
- **Presentation** – Brandi Terwilliger: A summary of APM and FSH updates regarding retiree benefits changes – Links below are to current policy information. Please reference our Staff Council meeting recording for updates.
 - [APM 55.39](#)
 - [APM 50.04](#)
 - [APM 50.53](#)
 - [APM 50.55](#)
 - [FSH 3090](#)
- **Chair Report**
 - IT Shared Services update: IT employees received a survey to clarify duties and needs. The data will be reviewed and Dan Ewart will visit all IT groups and discuss options. The four end goals are: Distributed Personnel, Personnel Management, Collaborative Work Prioritization and Effective Utilization. [Learn more.](#)
 - Staff Council Annual Retreat Proposal – Mid to end of September so as to start the year with momentum that is currently being lost over the summer.
 - University Awards – Separating awards from recognition. Joint Faculty/Staff awards ceremony to take place on May 6. Attendance will be limited to award winners and their invitees. Recognition for retirement and longevity is still under review by the awards committee.

- o Staff Council bylaws Update – Committee hopes to have a draft ready for presentation at March SC meeting. Main changes include removing out-of-date information as well as items that are too specific. A more detailed operations manual will be created to house specific procedural items.



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Staff Council

Staff Council Talking Points

Date: March 12, 2019

Recording: [Part 1](#) | [Part 2](#)

Facilities Outsourcing Discussion

The majority of the March Staff Council meeting involved discussions around Facilities outsourcing proposals. Brian Foisy, Vice President of Finance and Administration, presented the results of the outsourcing Request for Proposals (RFP).

U of I received proposals from five vendors. Four were quickly rejected, as these were full-scale proposals that would have actually increased costs.

One vendor (AFS) submitted a management-only proposal, and also submitted an option for a hybrid plan that includes replacing vacancies with AFS employees. A vigorous discussion ensued about this option. Some SC members and staff members in attendance contributed concerns and questions, including:

- Q: Could current employees move into higher vacant positions, and would the employee remain a U of I employee, or become an AFS employee?
A: Subject to negotiations with the vendor.
- Q: The vendor could, theoretically, force out U of I employees to gain a larger portion of the operations.
A: Vendor would not benefit, and could be subject to contract cancelation. Experience shows that the vendor does not behave this way.
- Q: Such a transition would likely cause morale problems among U of I Facilities employees.
A: Yes, this is a painful part of a larger painful process.

- Q: Spreadsheet presented by Foisy showed turnover of Facilities employees that was overly aggressive and not supported in experience; therefore, projected savings were not accurate.
A: The formula makes assumptions, and while it may not be precise, lower turnover would still result in savings.
- Q: How does AFS actually achieve savings?
A: Lower wages and benefits, plus they use their management experience to find operational savings.
- Q: Why not wait a while?
A: President Green does not want to drag out the process.

Change in Employee Compensation

Lisa Miller, Chair of the Staff Compensation Committee, presented on the FY21 Change in Employee Compensation (CEC) Recommendation. Miller presented a document outlining options and asked for a recommendation of an option to present to President Green. The Staff Compensation Committee specifically asked for approval of Option 4(a): **Stay the Market Rate course.**

- First apply pay increases based on maintaining current target markets (hourly rate, % of target, exempt salary test), then applying the remaining funds using the “swing-method” formula which allows for relative larger increases using a gradient scale based on “percent of target” for employees furthest behind target pay.

Staff Council did not have sufficient time to review the options and agreed to receive an electronic poll to vote on the options.



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University of Idaho

Staff Council

Staff Council Talking Points

Date: April 8, 2019

[Recording of Zoom Meeting](#)

Staff Council met on April 8, 2020, for an all-Zoom meeting.

Staff Member of the Month

Staff Member of the month was Daniel LaHann – Compliance Coordinator, Office of Research Assurances. LaHann was Nominated by Jason Oliver, Office of Sponsored Programs, who says, “Dan LaHann consistently goes out of his way to assist the Contract Review Unit with export control issues. He is always extremely positive and a pleasure to work with.”

University Awards and Staff Recognition

Ian Leibbrandt announced that the on-campus awards have been cancelled due to “stay at home” orders. We intend to create a robust website instead. Awards have been decided and will be announced. Items (gifts, plaques, etc.) will still be sent out by mail.

Staff Council Bylaws Revision

The Staff Council bylaws are antiquated and need to be updated to current standards and practices. A draft of the updated bylaws was distributed before the meeting, allowing members to comment during the meeting. Most significant updates occurred in the members section and election section. Staff Council members will be provided an online form to make suggestions. The bylaws will then be sent to General Council for review, after which Staff Council will vote on approving the updates.

Staff Council Membership Elections

Elections Officer Erika Crossland notes that there are still vacant positions, and we would like nominees to run for positions. She will distribute online election

ballots to members. See [information about joining Staff Council](#).

Change in Employee Compensation

Staff Council had previously voted to support the compensation committee's recommendation to use the state-allocated 1% CEC increase to further market-based compensation. President Scott Green, however, issued his own decision on the matter on March 25, 2020, before hearing the Staff Compensation Committee's formal recommendation. Staff Council nonetheless forwarded its recommendation to President Green. Some expressed concern about the perceived lack of appreciation for staff in this matter and in the administration's lag in encouraging staff to work from home, where possible, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Update: CEC has been withheld by the state as a result of the budgetary impact of COVID-19.]

Facilities Outsourcing

We have no further information. President Green is waiting for additional feedback. The issue has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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University of Idaho

Staff Council

Staff Council Talking Points

Date: May 13, 2020

[Recording of Zoom meeting](#)

[Archive of all Staff Council meeting agendas, recordings and minutes](#)

Staff Council met on May 13, 2020, for an all-Zoom meeting.

Staff Member of the Month

The Staff Member of the Month for May is Sumit Shahi, Technology Solutions Partner. Sumit was nominated by Toby Schultz, who said, “Sumit spent most of a day assisting me with setting up a new computer with the DUO mode and my phone so that I am able to continue working from home. He had to do this twice because of an error on my part. He was patient, kind and amazing with his skills and knowledge. I am disabled, and it seemed like a miracle the way he directed me through the process. An outstanding tech. I cannot applaud him enough.”

Bylaws

Staff Council voted unanimously to approve new bylaws, which replaced the greatly antiquated bylaws. The bylaws call for an operations manual, which will be created next semester.

Candidates for Officer Positions

Chad Neilson will be running for Chair again in FY21, and Diane McGarry will be running for Vice Chair. Both are running unopposed.

Discussion of Sustainable Financial Model Working Group and Additional Topics with President Green and VP Foisy

The bulk of the May 13 meeting involved a discussion of the [Sustainable Financial Model Working Group](#) and other topics with President Scott Green. The goal of this working group is to recommend a sustainable financial model for the university. Staff Council members participating in the working group were Cari Espenschade and Stephanie Fox.

The current financial model called for incremental funding, where each unit of the university would share increased budgets proportionally, regardless of any metrics regarding the unit's requirements, performance, etc. This model is serving our university and stakeholders poorly. The working group proposed a hybrid model of guaranteeing units a base level of funding, while gradually (over the course of several years) adjusting funding to better fund areas with higher demand. Details on implementation remain to be worked out.

President Green hopes the model will be implemented for FY22, although uncertainty with unforeseen issues, including COVID-19, make that difficult to predict.

One attendee asked if we will make employees at-will, instead of on annual contracts, as Boise State University has done. President Green said we are past the point where it would be possible to implement this for FY21. While President Green can't fully take this possibility off the table for the future, the institution is trying to maintain sufficient enrollments so this will not be the case.

To address deferred maintenance, President Green pointed to Public/Private Partnerships to help generate additional revenues. He specifically mentioned the steam plant.

With regard to mandatory furloughs, faculty senate pushed for progressive apportionment of furloughs, so the highest wage earners would be furloughed for the highest number of hours. Administration hadn't looked at how this would apply to individuals on unpaid Family Medical Leave but will discuss this issue with Human Resources.

Furlough has to be taken after July 1 and will apply to all university employees, even those on grants and soft funding. Guidance for grant-funded projects will be forthcoming.



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