University of Idaho
2023 – 2024 Faculty Senate Agenda

Meeting # 8

Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 3:30 pm
Zoom Only

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes
   • Minutes of the 2023-24 Faculty Senate Meeting #7 October 3, 2023 Attach. #1

III. Chair’s Report
   • IT concerns – Update
   • Faculty welfare concerns -- Update
   • University of Phoenix - Task Force Update
   • On-going effort by the Committee on Committees – Update

IV. Provost’s Report

V. Announcements and Communications
   • University of Phoenix - Torrey Lawrence, Provost and Executive Vice President
   • Artificial Intelligence Task Force - Jean-Marc Gauthier, Faculty Senate Chair

VI. New Business
   • New Policy Tracking Schedule and Planning
   • New Senate Networking Event

VII. Adjournment

Attachments
   • Attach. #1 Minutes of the 2023-24 Faculty Senate Meeting #7 October 3, 2023
2023 – 2024 Faculty Senate – Pending Approval
Meeting # 7
Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Zoom only

Present: Barannyk, Chapman, Gauthier (Chair), Haltinner (Vice Chair), Hobbs, Justwan, Kenyon, Kirchmeier, Torrey Lawrence (w/o vote), Long, Miller, Mittelstaedt, Murphy, Rode, Ramirez, Rinker, Roberson, Rode, Sammarruca (w/o vote), Schiele, Schwarzlaender, Shook, Tibbals, McKenna.
Absent: Raney (excused), Blevins (excused), Mischel, Reynolds, Strickland.

Guests/Speakers: Traci Craig, Blaine Eckles.

Call to Order: Chair Gauthier called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

Approval of Minutes (vote):
The minutes of the 2023-24 Meeting #6, September 26, 2023, were approved as distributed.

Chair’s Report:
• Chair Gauthier gave an overview of today’s program. He anticipates a constructive discussion ending with a vote about the UOPX survey.
• We are happy to have Dean of Students Blaine Eckles participate in a conversation about employee welfare.

Provost’s Report:
• The Provost introduced Chris Parker, who will replace Cari Espenschade in supporting Faculty Senate. Welcome, Chris!
• The first faculty gathering at the ICCU Arena was a success. The next one will be on Wednesday, October 25, hosted by the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences.
• All Employee Required Training is open. It must be completed by November 1, 2023.
• The government shutdown has been avoided.

Committee Reports (vote):
• UCC 136: Interdisciplinary Studies (BA or BS) – Traci Craig, Associate Dean, College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences
  The BA/BS in Interdisciplinary Studies draws from existing courses across many programs. Some of those programs are available fully or partially online and this means that students can complete this degree entirely online. The program will be available to students online and face-to-face, according to their particular study plan. The Interdisciplinary Studies program provides a unique opportunity for a student to create a curriculum that meets their needs and desired goals. Students develop their unique curriculum by combining at least two fields of study into one program to allow them to pursue their career and educational goals. The primary impetus for this change is to indicate that the Interdisciplinary Program is both an online and face-to-face program.
  There were no questions or comments.
  Vote: 21/21 in favor. Motion passes.
Announcements and Communications:

- University of Phoenix Discussion
  
  **Task Force Creation - Survey for Opinions Surrounding University of Phoenix (vote)**
  
  At the last UFM, faculty expressed interest in a survey about the affiliation with UOPX. The questions to address are: does Senate want to move on with the survey? If so, what are the goals? The FSL idea is to task a small group of senators with developing a constructive survey. Both Chair Gauthier and Vice Chair Haltinner agree that it is important to know what concerns people have at this time. It is a complex situation for which we have no precedent.
  
  Some Senators reported that many faculty in their colleges are interested in such a survey. Some senators thought we should collect quantitative information on the percentage of employees who are in support of the affiliation, and to know how people understand this partnership.

  The discussion moved to the best way to utilize the poll results. There seems to be agreement that the survey should be a way to collect opinions as well as a conversation starter. The Secretary recommended a simple and succinct survey, to capture, in a sensitive way, the degree of employees’ enthusiasm or concern. The Provost reminded all that the administration is open to suggestions on how to best engage the university community to increase understanding about the affiliation.

  Some senators emphasized that the UOPX affiliation shouldn’t have been made without faculty and staff involvement – this is a major source of discontent that should be communicated to the President. Perhaps, a senator argued, the best way to move forward at this point is to make sure that people have accurate information and the transaction works.

  More comments were offered in favor of a survey – it would help people feel heard. The Secretary suggested that a confidential poll to find out how people feel now, and why, would be a constructive and informative way to proceed.

  After some additional discussion, it was moved (Long) to approve the creation of a task force charged with working on the survey. Seconded by Kirchmeier. Motion to amend (Roberson) with the inclusion of a timeline. Amendment accepted by Long. Motion to vote on: *To approve the creation of task force for survey of opinions surrounding University of Phoenix*” with the inclusion of the friendly amendment that the task force will report to Senate in two weeks.

  Vote: 19/21 yes; 2/21 no. Motion passes.
  
  Contact Vice Chair Haltinner if you wish to be on the task force.

- Charge for the IT committee
  
  The purpose of this discussion is to identify topics that Faculty Senate would like the university-level IT committee to look into. Items which came up during last week discussion include: the need of local IT professionals instead of global OIT professionals; satisfaction with OIT handling researchers’ specialized needs. It was also brought up that Idaho Falls competes with INL for staff, which makes it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified staff. Chair Gauthier that the idea of a faculty “mediator” brought up last week (to help find a collaborative solution in some of the special cases), could be something to consider.
Other senators wondered about the cost saving from removing phones. A senator pointed to the President’s memo from July 13, 2023 (communicating his decision about APM 30.16) for information on the savings from centralized procurement. A Senator reported that some faculty are requesting reimbursement for the use of their personal phones for university business. Vice Chair Haltinner thinks that the broader issue is decision making without faculty input.

- **Improving faculty’s work environment and quality of life** – a broad discussion on faculty welfare. Issues of concern include:
  - Safety on campus, particularly at night; increase of guns on campus; teaching safety to students; ability to reach 911 using Teams (this question is addressed in the list of [FAQ](#) about the transition to Microsoft Teams Voice). Dean of Students Blaine Eckles noted that in September (Kathy Benoit Safety Awareness Month), many improvements with campus lighting were implemented.
  - Sensitivity towards employees with young families should be used when scheduling meetings. Childcare remains a major problem for U of I employees with young children. Blaine Eckles’ team is working on those problems, but it will take time.
  - Among the many mandatory trainings, there should be active shooter training. Cameras in classrooms to record display of guns, panic buttons in the TLC classrooms, self-defense classes, were also brought up. Blaine Eckles ensured the senators that display of guns is taken very seriously, even when accidental. As for self-defense, his office was not able to secure an instructor for a class, but they are now working on self-defense seminars, to reach out to as many people as possible. Dean Eckles suggested to include in the UOPX survey a question about major safety concerns.
  - A senator recalled the efforts undertaken last year by senate to improve working conditions for non-tenure track faculty. Senate will take this up again.

- In the remaining time, Provost Lawrence will address some of the questions about UOPX which could not be addressed last week. Parking on campus will be discussed at a later meeting.
  - A question was raised earlier about U of I exposure to UOPX liability. UOPX liability does not transfer to UI as a consequence of this affiliation – we are fully insulated from that. However, we may get a better bond rate if we guarantee more. The number which we might consider is up to $9.9M. The choice will be made during the bonding process. It is possible that we don’t get a better bond rate, or that the rate at that time is not worth taking on the risk. If we do choose to take on this liability to benefit the deal, the risk is very low as it would require an extreme scenario.
  - There was a question two weeks ago about whether U of I and UOPX online programs are unique to each other. The Provost displayed a slide with U of I and UOPX online programs side by side, showing little overlap. **Note:** this information is not the result of a thorough study of curriculums. The Provost put it together cross referencing same or similar program names in the catalogs.
Adjournment:
The agenda not being completed, Chair Gauthier asked for a motion to adjourn. So moved (Gauthier, Chapman). Meeting adjourned at 5:01pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Francesca Sammarruca  
Secretary of the University Faculty & Secretary to Faculty Senate