

# University of Idaho

Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President

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**TO:** University of Idaho Faculty and Staff  
**FROM:** John Wiencek, Provost and Executive Vice President  
**DATE:** March 27, 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Revisions to Program Prioritization Evaluation Process and Criteria

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Thank you for providing input on the initial program prioritization draft evaluation criteria. Your feedback is very important to the process and we are making significant changes to the criteria based on that feedback. I want to thank the workgroups for their hard work in producing the initial criteria and their continued investment in doing this process well. A spreadsheet including all the feedback we received on the criteria is available on the [Provost's Office website](#). A brief synopsis of the feedback and a reminder of next steps is below.

108 departments, 121 individual faculty and 54 individual staff completed the feedback tool. In addition, our office directly received several longer narrative emails and feedback. The detailed position control guidelines were not posted in a timely way on the provost's website, so there were many questions asked that are addressed in that [document](#). Nonetheless, it is clear that some substantial changes in the approach and the criteria are recommended by our community.

Based on these comments and suggestions, revisions to the program prioritization process and outcomes should be adopted to ensure that the result will:

1. Align well with the strategic plan, using the same language and metrics. There was particular concern that research productivity was not properly measured or weighted in the initial draft criteria.
2. Allow more refinement so experts in a given area do the evaluation (especially for the non-academic units).
3. Account for or mitigate bias related to unit size.

4. Allow more nuanced evaluation that involves human wisdom and judgement. Avoid metrics and measures that treat units as “one size fits all.”
5. Have a balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative measures and make sure that mix is consistent across all units (i.e. do not have many quantitative metrics for academics and none for other units).

The Institutional Planning and Effectiveness Committee (IPEC) will discuss ideas to address these concerns in the coming days. As discussed in earlier communications, IPEC will forward feedback to the workgroups with suggested changes. Given the feedback, it is clear the proposed changes will be substantial.

Based on typical employee turnover and the proposed position control policy, we estimate 3-4 percent of general education funds will be redirected to the University Budget and Finance Committee (UBFC) for use in funding high priorities. With those funds, we will make substantial headway on important institutional priorities, such as market-based compensation and in-state tuition waivers for teaching assistants. In addition, if we grow enrollment by 500 full-time undergraduate students, we will be able to adjust the position control policy so that less money is subject to reallocation. If we get an additional 1,000 undergraduate students (1,500 total above current enrollment), we will have the latitude to stop all mandatory reallocation based on quintiles if we so choose. For now, these reallocated funds will be our means to feed innovation and growth at the University of Idaho as we launch our strategic plan. Once enrollment picks up, we will be able to adjust the policy as we reap more revenue from new enrollments.

In closing, let me say again that we do not have the option of refusing to conduct program prioritization. This is a State Board of Education policy requirement that must be implemented in a sustainable and systemic way by the end of this fiscal year. We have complete latitude to design and adjust the process in ways that work best for our great institution, which is what we are doing now. We will have a process in place this summer and it will launch on July 1, 2017. It may not be perfect, but we can adjust the process each year based on our experience and understanding of the impact on the institution.

Thank you again for your participation in this important process. More information will be provided as we move through the next steps.