

## Report of the Annual Meeting & Caucuses

*9 July 2009*

The Annual Meeting and Caucuses of the BYU-Idaho Faculty Association were held on 9 July 2009 from 2:00-3:00 PM in the Taylor Building. The faculty met first in a general meeting in the Taylor Chapel—with total attendance at 170 faculty members—where association president David Peck spoke on the purposes of the association and the caucuses.

### **Faculty Association President's Message** (David D. Peck, Ph.D.)

I first wish to thank members of the outgoing Faculty Association Board and our Past President for their service to my colleagues and to BYU-Idaho.

I want to take just a few minutes and share my vision of the vital role played by you at BYU-Idaho. I grew up on and around university campuses: BYU, Arizona State, Illinois-Urbana, the University of Utah, Syracuse University, among others, following my father's academic career. I had the opportunity to observe numerous faculty members at these institutions, and form an idea of what I thought an ideal professor was like. When I was first invited to teach at Ricks College in 1993, I was impressed by the many ways in which the faculty met that ideal, particularly with reference to the mission of Ricks College and the need of its students. I was impressed by the strength and dedication of the faculty, their collegiality and selfless service, and their originality.

I was privileged to serve at Ricks College having gone through the same process of approval that most of you went through. Like you, I was certified to teach here by my department colleagues and the administration, I had an interview with a General Authority, and having met with approval, I was presented to and approved by the Board of Trustees as a qualified member of the faculty. Each of you is here by the approval of members of the First Presidency, the Quorum of the Twelve, and other general Church organizations. Individually in our instructional stewardships, our administrative assignments, and other duties, is entitled to revelation, inspiration, and the companionship of the Holy Spirit. This is a sobering realization, and I am privileged to be among you.

The purpose of this meeting is to conduct the business of the Faculty Association, in a spirit of dedication and service, and with inspiration. In a minute, we are going to separate into colleges to conduct that business. We have two agenda items. First, we need to appoint your college representatives by nomination and election. It has been a long time since this has happened, and we look forward to working with a Faculty Association Board appointed by you. Second, you will have the opportunity to discuss whatever topics you believe should be included on the Faculty Association's agenda for the coming year, topics that should be the subject of fact-finding surveys, or for presentation to the administration.

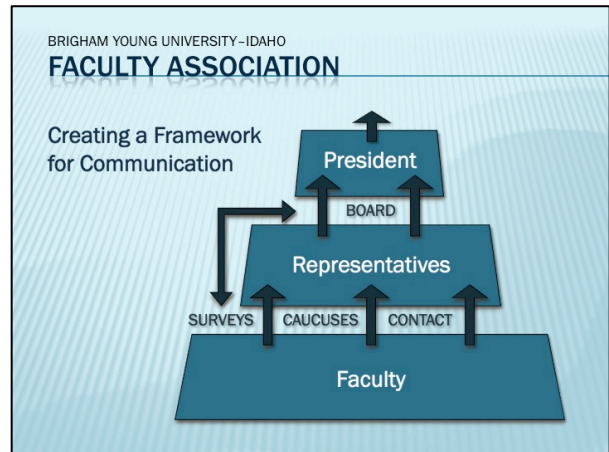
Before separating into colleges, I want to share with you an overview of the Faculty Association organizational structure, so that you will know how your comments will be handled. The new constitution empowers the Board, which consists of college representatives and a representative for all part-time, adjunct, professional and one-year faculty, to control the agenda. We intend for the Board to be genuinely representative, and to interact closely with their colleagues in the collection of information and opinion. The Board, in regular meetings will communicate your opinions and the information entrusted to them to the Executive Board, which is entrusted with the task of conducting surveys and other fact-finding efforts. The results are entrusted to the Faculty Association President, who serves as the public face of the Faculty Association, who communicates with the administration, and will report back to the members of the Association. For this model to function, your Faculty Association needs and values your active involvement.

As you now go to your college meetings, please express yourselves, please participate as you see fit. Thank you.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-IDAHO  
**FACULTY ASSOCIATION**

Reasons to Love this Campus Community

- Strength and dedication of the faculty
- Collegiality and selfless service
- Originality and interdisciplinary opportunities



**Faculty Association Caucuses**

The faculty then broke into caucuses, which elected the following representatives:

- College of Agriculture & Life Sciences.....John Griffith
- College of Business & Communication..... Ron Weekes
- College of Education & Human Development..... David Magleby
- College of Language & Letters..... Michael Madsen
- College of Performing & Visual Arts..... Bryce Mecham
- College of Physical Sciences & Engineering..... Brian Pyper
- Adjunct, Part-Time & Professional Faculty..... Brooks Haderlie

Caucus leaders then led discussions concerning topics to be addressed by the Faculty Association for the 2009-2010 academic year. Caucus leaders submitted written reports outlining the topics discussed. These topics were further clarified in a meeting of the new Faculty Association General Board on 14 July 2009.

**CAUCUS TOPICS—EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In every caucus, participating faculty members evinced a deep love for BYU-Idaho and a commitment to achieving its unique institutional mission through the active engagement and involvement of the faculty. To this end, the following three areas emerged as the faculty’s top priorities:

1. *A Communication Gap Between Faculty and Administration* – “Better communication” can mean different things to administrators—for whom it might connote such ideas as “clearer explanations” or “more effective messaging”—and to the faculty—for whom it might mean “more open dialogue” or “clearer opportunities to provide constructive feedback.” Faculty members often perceive that their expertise and contributions are not sought, well received, or taken seriously. Current communication opportunities—such as the Q&A format—reflect a one-way communication dynamic that assumes faculty have only questions and administrators have only answers. Faculty members view themselves as contributing colleagues and active partners in addressing the challenges faced by the university rather than as passive subordinates. Establishing a more open system of “counseling with our councils” would be the ideal model in which the faculty (as a whole) is invited to contribute ideas and suggestions before policies are decided. New models of broad communication should be considered, besides web-based threaded discussions or large meetings soliciting unprepared responses.

2. *Professional Development* – Faculty members expressed a concern that the quality of instruction at BYU-Idaho is suffering from a lack of professional development in the faculty. The definition of “professional development” and the leave policies that support it are currently vague and inconsistent, largely because they are not formalized and written. As part of the clarifying process, a comprehensive definition of “professional development” needs to be created. And since each discipline has different requirements for academic currency, individual faculty members will be essential in creating this definition. Faculty members expressed a desire to correct a perceived imbalance between definitions that privilege institutional needs (i.e. curriculum development, learning model activity, etc.) over professional standards (research, creative work, honing skills, etc.).

3. *Workload* – The faculty perceives an inconsistency between the ways in which workload is defined institutionally and the actual experience of the individual faculty members. For example, load policies reward large sections in lecture formats over smaller classes where the Learning Model can be applied even more effectively. Also, overload policies often disadvantage faculty members who are required to teach overloads (in order to cover the curriculum) but are weakly compensated. Finally, there are continuing encroachments on preparation time as test days are expanded and semester start dates moved up.

#### CAUCUS TOPICS—COMPREHENSIVE LIST

The following topics were raised in the individual caucuses, and are presented here in their original language as reported, along with the attendance statistics. Potential attendees were calculated by subtracting the number of administrative faculty (chairs, deans, etc.) from the number of regular faculty in each college

##### College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

*Potential Attendance* — 73

*Actual Attendance* — 5

*Percentage Attending* — 7%

- University forums should be placed under the direction of a committee made up of faculty members. By doing this, forums may be more correlated with what faculty are teaching.
- The Foundations program needs a place of central control. Create a Department of Foundations that would contract out to other departments to teach their classes. That way we can keep track of the equity of departmental contributions, questions of budget, etc.
- Number of preps — this is even more crucial than the number of load hours.
- Need to set faculty base standards — whether they are doing their job, how they are teaching their classes, whether they are coming in on time — but to do this in way that would avoid a witch hunt.
- How do we rekindle enthusiasm for Faculty Association? Many faculty wonder if there is even a point to having the organization. Many faculty seem to be disengaged from the processes of the association and even the campus community in general. They feel no investment in either. Maybe the association could help by focusing on what is going well in addition to focusing on the challenges.

##### College of Business & Communication

*Potential Attendance* — 53

*Actual Attendance* — 8

*Percentage Attending* — 15%

- Sabbaticals – We need more "go and do" instead of staying on campus writing case studies.
- Faculty misconceptions about what the Faculty Association does.
- Faculty concern about the tone of the FA accreditation report.
- FA Board should approve anything that goes public.

College of Education & Human Development

*Potential Attendance — 86*

*Actual Attendance — 34*

*Percentage Attending — 40%*

- Question the need for the association, as concerns can be voiced to chairs and deans. Association should not be the exclusive mechanism for raising concern.
- Faculty development opportunities – sabbaticals.
- Faculty honors faculty – awards – recognition – faculty honors their own.
- Develop way to deal with student feeling of entitlement.
- Student pride – tail wagging dog – student complaints lead to discipline of faculty and staff without chance for faculty explanation.
- Need for interdisciplinary communications – more direct communication and discussion.
- More faculty college meetings.
- Faculty to be considered both voice and resource.
- Presentations – have a learning day with faculty presentations.
- Examine and foster expertise/professionalism in faculty.
- Faculty sponsored forums with/using faculty expertise.
- Faculty parking.
- Have forum for verifying ideas, programs, etc. from administration
- How to voice concerns without being viewed as adversarial–argumentative.
- Foster interdisciplinary sharing – conference, other venues.
- Can I opt out of association?

College of Language & Letters

*Potential Attendance — 75*

*Actual Attendance — 34*

*Percentage Attending — 45%*

- Honest Two-Way Communication
  - Counsel with the council
  - Discussion of an issue before inspiration (similar to what is done in the church)
  - Avoiding an “us against them” mentality (from both the faculty and administration)
  - What has been done in the past to improve communication? Why hasn’t it worked? Past presidents and current president all have agreed that communication with the faculty has been a problem.
  - Why can’t we work with the administration as colleagues? They appear to have no respect for our expertise.
  - Marriage metaphor—Faculty sometimes feel like a young woman who is approached by a young man who tells her that after prayerful study he has received inspiration that they should get married, but the young woman feels she hasn’t received any such revelation, even though the process involves her.
- Learning Model/Foundations/3-Track Semester
  - What do ALL the students think of these programs?
  - What does the faculty think?
  - Evaluations—shouldn’t we be evaluating the administration? The deans? Our department chairs?
  - Hasn’t anyone in administration realized the irony of the inspired learning model? Teach one another? Why doesn’t the faculty participate and “teach” the administration?
- Small things
  - Why can’t we have a contract that is two 15 weeks semesters?
  - Why can’t we take a contract other than the 100% contract without guilt?
  - We need a two-week break in the spring.
  - The dress code for female faculty places an undue burden on them.

- Appointing department chairs. Could we have more transparency? Many on the faculty think that the chairs are chosen to represent the administration to the faculty but shouldn't the chairs be chosen to represent the faculty (be of like mind) to the administration?
- Why is it assumed that the business model we currently operate under is the best model for a university? Shouldn't administration have a variety of outlooks and styles advising the president? Currently everyone who works closely with the university president is an advocate of the business model. How can that arrangement encourage a critical eye and encourage creative and independent ideas?
- The parking on lower campus is horrible. A faculty member must arrive no later than 7:15 am in order to find a place in the Clark parking lot. In fact, parking in the Clark is a gamble for anyone arriving after 6:50. The Snow parking lot is full after 9:30. If someone needs to run to a doctor's appointment, no parking between 9:00 and 1:00 is available.
- Creeping encroachment on "non student-contact hours." This school year we will be losing days during our winter break. Apparently the university believes that because it is "legal" to take those days away from faculty, they are not obliged to talk to us, counsel with us, or even warn us before we lost days. Administration is certainly not thinking of our mental health and physical energy when they keep taking these days away from us. It just adds to faculty burn-out and lowers morale.

#### College of Performing & Visual Arts

*Potential Attendance — 41*

*Actual Attendance — 11*

*Percentage Attending — 27%*

- Workload—FLU's, preps, burnout, TIME – creativity – professional development.
- Written policies — CFS, Leaves, policies.
- Middle Management Bottleneck — clear communication – face-to-face meetings.
- Frame these in positive, non-divisive ways.
- Spirit of Ricks—taught by those who never taught at Ricks.
- Research — not having enough time to stay up on professional skills and competence (separate from teaching skills).

#### College of Physical Sciences & Engineering

*Potential Attendance — 74*

*Actual Attendance — 22*

*Percentage Attending — 30%*

- Are our concerns being heard and addressed at all by the administration?
- Policies ought to be applied consistently and fairly:
  - Leaves
  - Overloads
  - Department scholarships
  - Recognition of faculty work and innovation
- Travel is an important aspect of professional development.
- Communication Top-Down:
  - Leaves
  - Publisher's decision
  - Lot changes and construction
- Clear up policy section on web—clear out out-dated materials.
- Reconsider 13-weeks, full-time.
- Utilize faculty with expertise (i.e. architecture).

## Adjunct, Part-Time & Professional Faculty

### *Attendance — 12*

- We need a clear definition about what is an Adjunct, Part-time, and Professional Faculty member. This must be made known and used campus-wide.
- Rewrite and make know the Handbook defining department practices regarding Adjunct. Make chairs aware of the common needs of the adjunct (i.e. office, computer, etc.).
- Opportunities for Professional Development (for adjunct and part-time faculty).
- Recognition of educational advancements (for adjunct and part-time faculty).
- Consider the adjunct for one-year and full-time hires.