

**Idaho Falls Higher Education Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
**September 19, 2007 – 10:00 a.m.**  
**Bennion Student Union Multipurpose Room - University Place – Idaho Falls**

**Member Attendees:** Marge Foster (Chair), Harold Blackman, George Boland, Robb Chiles, Shlene Cox, Jared Fuhriman, Fred Gunnerson, Scott Hinschberger, Jackie Larsen, Steve Larsen, Jim McFadden, Anne Mollberg, Maureen Parks, Bruce Roberts, Ken Taylor, Anne Voiliqué, Mark Young

**Institutional Attendees:** Doug Baker, Scott Hamilton, Ann Howell, Bill Robertson, Sydney Sallabanks, Bob Smith, Carol Spain, Art Valais, Bob Wharton, Tim White

**Other Guests:** Blake Hall, Dean Mortimer,

**Welcome and Introductions:** Marge Foster welcomed everyone and introductions were made.

**Minutes:** The April 26 minutes were approved as written.

**Institutional Reports:** EITC – President Bill Robertson said they had received a letter in July reaffirming their accreditation. There will be an Open House for the Health Care Education Building on September 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. and everyone is invited. EITC will be opening an outreach center in Rexburg. They will work with high school level, the existing nursing program, and workforce development. In terms of the budget, a fairly significant array of state-of-the-art capital equipment in the labs is needed to prepare students to be acquainted with industry standards for employment after graduation. This is needed in addition to the co-op and outside work experience. There is a small line item for faculty upgrades in terms of salaries and salary competitiveness. One issue that technical colleges face is that faculty members are hired and make less teaching than they did in industry. This request would help with attracting and retaining faculty. Another important part of the budget is through via the Department of Public Works. EITC has presented a number of initiatives including upgrades of the HVAC system, replacing old lighting with energy efficient fixtures, campus security issues, and a small parking lot adjacent to the Health Care Education Building.

ISU – President Arthur Vailas commented on the importance of energy to the country. UI, BSU and ISU are working together to ask the state legislature for a \$3.1 million line item for the Center for Advanced Energy Studies. It was presented to the State Board of Education and they unanimously endorsed the proposal. This will allow the universities in partnership with the INL to identify those gap areas of intellectual need and to recruit internationally and to take steps in the CAES program to advance energy research. Idaho is not an oil and gas state. The opportunity we have in Idaho is the continued investment in alternative energies. Anytime high-end and high tech-opportunities come into the region it cascades into economic growth. In addition to the research universities, all the technical and two year schools supported the CAES proposal because they know that workforce is going to be critical to execute many aspects of this kind of activity. The Advisory Council's support is needed to make sure it happens. Governor Otter has looked at the proposal and is supportive.

President Vailas talked with Jim Ellick of the Idaho Department of Commerce. As a result of that conversation they are thinking of ways to improve the intellectual property process. Southeastern Idaho is at a point that we need to take a good, hard look at connectivity and how it can benefit our educational infrastructure, our research infrastructure and business infrastructure.

ISU is partnering with hospitals in the region to form a network of health care teaching and training opportunities. Hospitals take care of patients but they are also a teaching environment. A lot of the physicians in this area teach. Clinical trials are an example of spinoffs from medical research and education that can benefit charities in the sense that uninsured people can qualify for trials and get treatment. The Idaho Accelerator Center is partnering on nondestructive imaging technology. The medical and nonmedical arenas are now coming together to find ways to solve problems. Pocatello hosted the International Society for Nuclear Science Accelerator Applications meeting. As a result of that meeting there are 5-6 MOUs with foreign countries with exchange programs in southeastern Idaho. The region made a great impression on an elite international society.

Demonstration projects are important to the past and future of Idaho Falls and the INL. The collaboration of the INL and the Idaho universities make demonstration projects doable, especially in alternative energies. The opportunity to do this and the opportunity to export knowledge gained worldwide is huge.

UI – President Tim White said the UI is undergoing a renewal of people, programs, and place. This fall 66 new faculty members were welcomed to the UI. That is about 10% of the permanent academic workforce. That indicates a lot of interest to be at the UI and a lot of interest in new programs. With most of the leadership team and the deans being new, there is a lot of energy and new ideas permeating the leadership team. When it comes to programs, a new program in Fire Ecology began this last fall. It is the first program in the nation focused on fire ecology and it is almost fully subscribed coming out of the gate. The degree deals with the whole eco-system--what contributes to fire and how to manage resources to prevent them. This has natural resources implications, cultural and Native American implications, and land and water use implications. An interesting set of skills make up the curriculum. The UI is seriously committed to sustainability in every sense. It builds on the strengths of many of the academic programs including law, natural resources, engineering, agriculture and more. This October 1-2, the UI will host the first President's Sustainability Symposium. Governor Otter along with Richard Sander, the Chairman of the Chicago Climate Exchange, are keynote speakers. The symposium involves leading scientists from around the nation, including those here in Idaho Falls, dealing with the issues of carbon, climate and the environment. With respect to medical education, this last year the legislature increased the number of WAMI seats to 20. These students can start to pursue their medical career at the University of Idaho and go to the University of Washington for one year and return to Idaho for the rest of their program. The UI is pleased about the legislature's investment in that program.

In terms of place, CAES is at the top of the list. They are pleased with the Board's response to the three universities' request for funding lines. That will support six new faculty members at the UI around the whole issue of the energy nexus in Idaho. UI has had the good fortune to match opportunity with need by engaging with Dennis Pence and the Wild Rose Foundation associated with Coldwater Creek in northern Idaho. It is a marriage of a university and a community and at the end of a series of transactions, with Board approval, a new campus of the University of Idaho will be established in Sandpoint. The campus will start with four significant buildings which will all be gifted back to the UI. When this is all said and done, it will be about a \$35 million gift to the UI, really a gift to the State of Idaho, by a person who wants to give back to his community. With a lot of help from the Regents, the legislature, the Governors, and the federal delegation, the UI has successfully moved forward on planning for a Center for Livestock and Environmental Science in the Twin Falls area. It will be a first class operation that deals with energy issues. Because of its proximity to Idaho Falls it will provide the ability to connect scientists at the INL with a student facility working with the issues of animal by-products and the energy world

Regarding people, programs and place in Idaho Falls, 3 new faculty members were hired in the College of Engineering. Dr. Tokuhiro and Dr. Phongikaroon are in Idaho Falls and Dr. Charit is in Moscow. Fred Gunnerson and Lee Ostrom are working on a Nuclear and Criticality Safety Certification program. As that curriculum develops it will go through the university and Board process before being implemented. Idaho Water Resources Research Institute will be hiring two new research scientists in Idaho Falls to work on issues relating to the Snake River Plain Aquifer. The nuclear engineering program has about 25 graduate students and about 50 students participating in nuclear energy related classes. Overall, the UI has over \$4 million in funded activities in Idaho Falls that impact the local economy. That includes a recently awarded \$100,000 grant for GNEP readiness support; \$2 million in active research funding; another \$800,000 approved and pending release of funds; and \$1.8 million in the education contract.

A lot of things are going well for the UI. There are a lot of opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. This holds true throughout the state. Because of the land grant mission and the high research university designation, the UI has activities throughout the state and programs in 42 counties. President White often comments that the campus of the University of Idaho is the state or Idaho. He is quite pleased to be part of the Idaho Falls scene.

BYU-I – Academic Vice President Max Checketts presented goals for the number of graduates from BYU-I. Graduates are defined as a combination of both Bachelors and Associate degrees. This last year

they had 3,257 graduates which was the 104<sup>th</sup> largest graduating class in the U.S. They awarded just under 1,000 Associate degrees and they are hoping to grow that number by over 1,000. The goal of 5,000 undergraduates will take some time because they do not plan to invest a lot more in bricks and mortar but by pursuing more modern ways of instruction. This will provide two opportunities that he encouraged the other universities to think about. The first is that they do not offer Bachelor degree programs that coincide with the Associate degrees. This provides a great opportunity for the other institutions to consider a 2+2 program. The second consideration is that with that number of graduates with Bachelor degrees there is great potential to get some of the undergraduates into graduate programs.

The 14 weeks semesters are working quite well. Sixty minute classes forced the faculty to approach instruction differently and they are engaging in many different instructional methods. Official numbers come out tomorrow. They have about 13,200 headcount and about 11, 880 FTE. Students from Idaho are by far the largest number at 5,500. The largest program is education: 211 in Early Childhood; 769 in Elementary; over 1,000 in Secondary. Business Management is about 1200-1300. Communications is 800. Biology has 700 with the primary interest in going to medical or dental school. They have a strong construction management program and it will probably be the first they will have to cap. The Health Science program has 669 majors. They will ask their board for permission to start a Health Management and Administration program which will prepare students to administer in clinics but not hospitals. Hospital administrators need a Masters degree into a Public Administration. This is another opportunity for other institutions to work with the undergraduate students. BSU has already approached them regarding that opportunity. They have 363 nursing students with students entering every semester. There are about 319 Mechanical Engineering students. They do not intend to have other engineering programs and they would love to cooperate and send 2 year students to finish out 4 year degrees.

They are revamping the general education program and it is now called "Foundations." Rather than have broad survey they are trying to do themes that cut across at least two disciplines. For example, a course about light would involve physics and biology. One of the great challenges is to get the faculty to work together. The hope is this will drive students to recognize that many of the great discoveries happen on the borders of the disciplines. The program will start in the Fall of 2008. Right now they are trying to develop curriculum for 18 different courses. Along with that, they have just developed The Learning Model under President Clark's leadership. The three parts to the model are preparation, ponder and prove. Students must be prepared before come to class because there is a lot of discussion and a lot of learning from each other. It is proving successful and students who have already participated are almost demanding it from their faculty.

**Higher Education in Idaho:** Blake Hall, member of the State Board of Education, began by recognizing the talent and caliber of the presidents of the five institutions of higher education. The SBOE is responsible for all public education in Idaho. The most important thing the Board of Regents or the SBOE does for the institutions of higher education is hire the CEO and empower them to realize the vision of each institution that the board shares with them. Bill Robertson at EITC has exceeded expectations and has done a fabulous job. Blake hopes everyone has attended an EITC graduation. The graduates are inspiring. They are students many said wouldn't make it. As they pick up their GED certificate, they can say "I've done it and I am ready for the next step." Once they find that level of success in education they have the opportunity to go on to junior college, community college or another institution of higher education in our state and have greater success. That is how we build both a workforce and, more importantly, citizens to carry our nation forward. The investiture of Art Vailas at ISU was last week. He came from a background that wasn't that conducive to higher education. He was inspired by athletics and a teacher to go on to higher education at the University of New Hampshire. He was the oldest of four boys and each of his younger siblings went on to higher education and has a graduate degree as well. He is a self-made individual who understands what it is like to struggle to get an education and who understands how important education is and can provide that kind of leadership for students at ISU.

Tim White was born in Argentina. He understands the value of higher education and has distinguished himself both at Oregon State and the University of Idaho. Not everyone understands the level of diversity among the presidents of institutions of higher education in the state and the quality of individuals that we

have. If you don't know President Dene Thomas at LCSC or President Bob Kustra from BSU, please get acquainted with them. The SBOE has discharged its primary responsibility in regard to higher education by hiring these outstanding individuals. These are people we are very fortunate to have who are providing outstanding leadership and serving the people of the state of Idaho.

Improving the rate of students that go on to higher education has been an area of focus for Blake Hall during his eight year tenure with the SBOE. One way to do that is concurrent enrollment means high school students can earn college credits while still in high school. When he first came on to the SBOE, he went to each university president about concurrent enrollment. Nothing much happened. He was frustrated by the fact that Utah State was providing more concurrent credit in the state of Idaho than all of our Idaho institutions combined. As a result, it was likely that all of our brightest students would end up at USU or somewhere else rather than attending school in Idaho. Concurrent enrollment can be accomplished in different ways. The university can provide an instructor to teach in the high school or through distance learning. Or, a high school teacher with at least a Masters degree can teach the course in the high school. This is what USU was doing throughout southeastern Idaho. We struggled to get our institutions in Idaho to see the vision. After five years of being frustrated by not making much progress, he came to the conclusion that there might be one way to get it done. Since the presidents have a one year contract and are at-will employees, it was made a condition of their contract renewal that they report progress on concurrent enrollment. Failure to make progress would be grounds for failure to retain them as a president of the institution. Since then, the walls have begun to break down between the public schools and the institutions of higher education.

The second thing they have done to get more students into higher education is the retooling of the rigor by getting more students in science and math in K-12. His vision and hope is that every qualified high school graduate will be prepared to go to college. In the last two years, legislation has been enacted to increase the rigor in high school. We have such a small percentage of our kids who go on to higher education and then 80% of them need remedial courses. We need to make sure students are actually prepared and ready to take college credits when they get to the university. Equally as important is that each of our high school students pass the ISAT when they are sophomores and then when they are seniors they will have the opportunity to start taking college credits while in high school. In a perfect world they would all have at least one semester of college credits by the time they graduate from high school. If they knew they would have 15 college credits at ISU to start with, they would know they could be successful at ISU and, more importantly for ISU, the students who get those credits will probably be the brighter students. Instead of going to USU they will go to ISU and we can keep the intellectual base in the state. One of the ways we are trying to increase the number of students going on to higher education, is to make sure that they get higher education while in high school.

The third item is to work with the legislature and the institutions of higher education to get need-based scholarships. One of the responsibilities of the SBOE provided by statute is to lobby and advocate for higher education in a responsible fashion to ensure there is no duplication. In every one of the eight years he has been on the SBOE, the budget they have submitted has been higher than what has ever been passed by the legislature. The SBOE works very hard for adequate funding for higher education. The legislature faces a lot of needs from other entities in the state like Health and Welfare and Corrections. In spite of the fact we have advocated for more money for higher education, we haven't always been successful. In years when the budget is tight, it seems that higher education gets hit worse than anywhere else and the education budget often gets balanced on the back of higher education. There are those occasions where higher education does very well, like occurred in this last legislative session. The presidents set their budgets and know how much they will need in order to realize the vision they have set for their institutions. Then the legislature makes its appropriations and the last bubble that sits out there for the institutions to get the needed money is tuition or matriculation fees. One of the tensions that exists, is how to keep education affordable and at the same time ensure that there are adequate funds to do all that we need to do with our institutions of higher education. Blake has been a strong advocate for the least amount of tuition increases for students because he believes one of the barriers we are beginning to run up against for higher education for many students is the fact that the cost continues to increase dramatically. This is not just a phenomenon occurring in Idaho. Across the nation public funding for public institutions

is down and tuition costs are up. He is working very hard to try to keep tuition costs as low as possible. They continue to increase and that is why they worked with the legislature and the Governor's office to try to create need-based scholarships. They are desperately needed in Idaho so economically disadvantaged students still have the opportunity to go on to higher education and are not precluded from that opportunity simply because of the cost. They also recognize by increasing rigor in high school for math and science they will need more teachers. He was impressed by the number of students in education at BYU-I. Often times trying to attract students into science and math from a secondary education standpoint is a difficult process. They worked with the legislature to be able to get loans for students that choose to go into education. After graduation, one-quarter of the loan is forgiven each year that they teach in Idaho. The purpose is to train more math and science teachers and in theory they will stay for the duration after working for four years. It is a tough process because Nevada and Utah have higher teacher pay due to the casinos in Nevada and the oil and coal in Wyoming. They have no income tax which is the equivalent of an 8% raise. It is difficult to compete with those states that have advantages that we don't have.

He was asked to address the vision of higher education in the Idaho Falls area. He submits that it is our responsibility to determine that vision and provide that information to the SBOE for them to decide if they concur. A community college system is one of the top priorities of the SBOE. In large part because there are a number of people similar to him. Upon graduation from high school, he was not ready to go on to a university. If he had gone, he doubts he would have been successful in accomplishing the goals he had in regards for higher education. He went to Ricks College which was a small school at that time. A counselor, Kent Marler, tutored him to a level far beyond his expectations. After a couple of years, he went on to BYU and by that point he had enough confidence to be successful. A lot of us may be late bloomers physically, academically or otherwise. Community colleges create a great opportunity for those students who may not be ready to go to a university to be trained and gain confidence and allow them to see they can be successful at that level. Arizona State University is a premiere institution in Phoenix and there are a dozen community colleges in Maricopa County. All of whom feed into ASU. This does two things. It gives all of those people who aren't ready to go to a university a place to be successful and then go on to ASU. At the same time it allows ASU to focus on its true mission of being a highly regarded academic and research institution. If Idaho had a statewide community college system, we would pick up a lot of students who otherwise would not make it to an institution of higher education. In addition, community colleges are cheaper than our four year institutions. It would cost half substantially less to attend community college than a university. He would hate to see any of our young men and women robbed of that opportunity because there isn't access. The easiest way to get a community college system would be to pass legislation. That was the bill SBOE proposed last year that didn't make it. It isn't impossible to get a community college, and the people in this room are the people that could make it happen. Why does he say that? We have a new community college Canyon County which is more conservative than Bonneville. Education, business, and political leaders got together and said "Yes, we can." They put together a campaign and they were successful in adopting a community college district. The district includes Ada and Canyon counties. Why would Ada vote for a community college located in Canyon? After all they have BSU that has a community college function embedded in its institution just like ISU. Leadership is how it got done. That is his vision for higher education in the Idaho Falls area. We probably don't have the same obstacles that they have in the Boise valley. They don't have any buildings or any campus. They have got to figure out how to do that. The facilities at EITC are owned by the state. Why not just make EITC a community college? EITC is not a creation of the SBOE. It is a creation of the legislature. Only the legislature has the ability to change the responsibilities or create EITC into a community college if they choose to do so. He doesn't know that will happen unless the leadership makes it happen. The Governor has said he believes that in order to get a community college it needs to be done the way it has been done in other parts of the state and that is through the creation of a community college district which requires a vote. Once you do have that vote, if somehow you can negotiate with the SBOE and the State Land Board to transfer EITC to the community college district, you would have already in place the best campus of any community college in the state of Idaho. The rest of the cost could be covered by the \$5 million offered last year. The western side of the state is going to have to tax themselves significantly for a community college. We have the advantages but thus far we

seem to lack the leadership and the vision to make that happen here. It can only happen through the vision and leadership of the community, educational and political leaders of this region. If they can do it in western Idaho we can do it here in this region

Finally as the people responsible for creating the vision for higher education in Idaho Falls, he would encourage the Council to look at the Board regulation that requires each institution in Idaho to develop an 8 year plan that needs to be updated every two years. Look at that for your institutions that are located here and see how you can help create a vision for higher education here in Idaho Falls. If you will do that, we will work with you. It is just like when the institutions came to the SBOE with the CAES facility. There were tough negotiations with Battelle but we got a good deal. Now we will have a world class research facility located right here that can compete with anywhere in the world in regard to energy alternatives. The SBOE is anxious to work with any local leadership to accomplish their visions for higher education.

**Questions:** Jim McFadden asked where they stand right now in terms of getting money back and eliminating some of the testing at the K-12 level so you don't have to take money from higher education. Blake responded that it was accomplished about a week and a half ago. They have eliminated the ISAT contract for testing for a couple of years in the elementary schools. As a result, they have ensured that they won't have to take that money from higher education. It is premature to decide if they will need to reinstate the testing in the future. It will depend if deficiencies are created as a result.

Anne Voilliqué asked if the SBOE has ever taken a position on all the tax exemptions that exist in the state and if that might benefit higher education. Blake said the legislature has set up an interim committee to look at that. The legislature feels strongly that the purview of the SBOE is to advocate for education and not for tax policy.

The need-based scholarships were discussed. Blake doesn't know what will be proposed this year. The budgets are going to the Governor's office and they will find out what they are allowed to propose in the next week or two.

Anne asked Blake to comment on privatizing public universities. He said there has been no discussion of that in the state of Idaho. Every institution would like more funding from the legislature and none of them are interested in losing the level of funding they are getting. The SBOE works hard to try to increase it every year and some years are more successful than others.

Tim White described how the Oregon the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland became a semi-public corporation. They broke from the system and that gave them the ability to do bonding and capital improvements. As a medical school they have some massive capital that other schools may not have. The UI is about a \$350 million enterprise of which about 1/3 comes from the legislature. Oregon and Oregon State have about 16-17% from the legislature. Berkley is at about 9% and Michigan is at about 4%. Idaho students pay about \$2-3 thousand less per year on matriculation fees than they pay for tuition at nationally competitive institutions. The advantage is to our students. When the state pays a greater percentage, students pay less. There is a hydraulic associated with state funding that is on the backs of students and our overall job is to keep that ecosystem affordable. One way you do that is keep costs down. Another way is by increasing financial aid so we never disadvantage a person who has the ability and is willing to work on it.

Blake said we really do quite well with the budgets we have. He discussed how building at the institutions has changed beginning with the vision of Governor Kempthorne to bond at the universities. He noted the Health Care Building at EITC and the Rendezvous Center at ISU

The next meeting is December 5 with Dr. Mike Rush, Director of Professional Technical Education and Interim Director of the SBOE will be the speaker.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Carol Spain, Management Assistant, University of Idaho-Idaho Falls