

MINUTES  
**SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

- DATE:** Wednesday, January 28, 2015
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Mortimer, Vice Chairman Thayn, Senators Keough, Patrick, Souza, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb and Ward-Engelking
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Nonini (arrived late to meeting).
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Mortimer** convened the meeting at 3:12 p.m. and welcomed the audience.
- PRESENTATION:** **Dr. Bob Kustra**, President, Boise State University (BSU), introduced his colleagues. He told the Committee that there are many disruptive issues in regard to higher education. In his research he is finding that college graduates are underemployed. BSU is working to change that statistic, but that means changing the way traditional colleges operate. He spoke about the new program at BSU, Bridge to Career, which will offer short courses in skills and competencies, that more companies are looking for in employees. BSU is opening a new college, Innovation and Design, a concept from Stanford University. He is excited about the work BSU is doing to move students forward into the next century.
- Senator Patrick** commented that Dr. Kustra's talk today got him very excited about the Innovation Program. He said he had a chance to walk through the displays and stated he was very impressed with the potential. He said he would like to head down to the Bonneville Salt Flats to see just how fast that car will go. **Dr. Kustra** laughed, and said he would go with him.
- Vice Chairman Thayn** asked how a student could challenge a class at BSU. **Dr. Kustra** replied BSU has a competency-based education program. BSU is spending most of its time completing online programs for students to use.
- Vice Chairman Thayn** asked him to tell the committee more about the Innovation and Design College's lead person. **Dr Kustra** said Gordon Jones has a MBA from Stanford University and spent most of his career working with companies to find new directions. He was with the Harvard Innovation Lab for five years. His experience there is cross-disciplinary and that should carry over nicely to the new college at BSU.
- PRESENTATION:** **Dr Arthur Vailas**, President, Idaho State University (ISU) introduced his colleagues in attendance. He stated ISU is one of the most transformative universities in the U.S. ISU reviewed its alignment and mission to develop a strategic plan so its colleges would not work in silos. He detailed the specifics of his presentation and highlighted ISU being the leader in the State for health care majors. He said that engineering and science is growing and making contributions across the State. **Dr. Vailas** emphasized the work that ISU does to bridge education with K-12 the result is costs to students is minimized. He concluded by showing ISU's accomplished statistics (see attachment 1).

**Senator Patrick** inquired about the battery program. **Dr. Vailas** stated some of what the school is doing cannot be disclosed. He remarked the semiconductor the students are working on comes from uranium waste. The battery has a way to change the structure to create energy storage in its purity of about 200 to 300 times a regular battery. The battery being one-third the size and one-tenth the weight.

**Chairman Mortimer** said ISU's continued growth is impressive. How has the growth at ISU come about? **Dr. Vailas** said it started by the school demonstrating some efficiency with program prioritization. There is a set of matrices that show programs transparencies, costs, viabilities and infrastructure needs. He described some of the different funding options for many of the programs.

**Senator Souza** stated she has a nursing background and was a small business owner. She asked if ISU was blending business classes with the healthcare degrees. **Dr. Vailas** replied in the affirmative. He continued saying everyone wants to know how to run a business, and every profession needs business information. **Dr. Vailas** believes one of the core competencies should be finance for all majors.

**PRESENTATION:** **Anthony Fernandez**, President, Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) introduced his colleagues in attendance. He stated that LCSC is a teaching institution where some research is conducted but that is student cooperating research and is done in concordance with the other universities in the State. The primary focus of LCSC for over 100 years, has been its undergraduate education. It is the most affordable four year school in the State. It is a small public college with a private college feel. He outlined the five year strategic plan goals (see attachment 2).

**Chairman Mortimer** asked how LCSC has managed to get its student retention rate to 60 percent. **President Fernandez** said a bit of their student population is challenged. They have developed programs that will work with those at-risk students

**Chairman Mortimer** introduced a distinguished guest in the audience, Dr. Peggy Luksik, Chairman, Founded on Truth. He stated she was here for an event regarding Common Core and SBAC. He thanked her for being at the Committee meeting.

**PRESENTATION:** **Zack Wesley**, President, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), stated the Committee meeting was the last activity for the 2015 PTA Legislative Day. He reported on the day's activities. **Mr. Wesley** explained the PTA's 2015 priorities, funding being the most important (see attachment 3).

**Chairman Mortimer** asked him to tell the Committee more about the PTA. **Mr. Wesley** explained the Idaho PTA is part of the National PTA and works to advocate for students. They are in 125 schools with 5000 to 6000 active members.

**RS 23255:** **Tracie Bent**, Chief Policy Officer, State Board of Education presented **RS 23255** Charter School Financial Support. **Ms. Bent** stated this RS amends the section of code that was put into place in 2013 that created the Public Charter School Authorizer Fund. For the schools that are commissioned by the Public Charter Commission (Commission) there is a fee and the fee money goes into that fund. It is tied directly to the appropriation for the Commission. The proposed amendment uncouples the fee from the overall appropriation. If the General Fund revenue is increased it would not be an automatic increase. There is an opportunity for the Legislature to increase the appropriation to the Charter School Fund but it is not automatic.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nonini** moved to send **RS 23255** to print. **Senator Keough** seconded the motion. Motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business, **Chairman Mortimer** adjourned the meeting at 4:28 p.m.

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Senator Mortimer  
Chair

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LeAnn South  
Secretary