

MINUTES  
**SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 23, 2017

**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW53

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Den Hartog, Senators Patrick, Bayer, Guthrie, Johnson, Thayn, Foreman, Smith (Rice) and Jordan

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None

**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:** **Vice Chairman Den Hartog** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Rick Waitley** introduced the Class 37 of Leadership Idaho Agriculture. **Mr. Waitley** advised that when this class graduates there will be 930 graduates in the State of Idaho that have gone through this program.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Foreman** moved to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2017. Seconded by **Senator Jordan**. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION: University of Idaho (UI), College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and Research Extension. Dean Michael Parrella**, disclosed his background relating that most of his career was spent at the University of California at Davis as a Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Nematology and Associate Dean for Agricultural Programs. California is a big agriculture state which had large problems associated with the industry. Accepting his position at UI again another big agriculture industry with similar problems such as invasive species and issues surrounding water. His experience and background from research and administration in California has served him well in the transition to the position of Dean at UI.

**Dean Parrella** gave a brief update of the direction and challenges for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences:

- Investment and infrastructure. UI has nine research and extension centers that are scattered throughout the State along with owning almost 4,000 acres of land. One of the issues the UI faces is its aging infrastructure. The average age of the buildings is 45 years and the replacement cost for the facilities is estimated at \$98 million. The deferred maintenance estimated costs are \$48 million. The university goal is to recruit early career faculty into restored facilities. Twenty-five percent of the UI faculty will be retiring within the next five years; many of them at the research and extension centers. Hiring the best faculty is linked to modernized facilities so the UI can attract and retain the best faculty is critical. Investing in the infrastructure is of the utmost importance to the future of UI and the services this faculty will provide to the State. UI has requested \$351,000 from JFAC in FY 2017 for lab renovations and equipment at the research and extension centers. Another \$500,000 request for graduate student housing at the research and extension centers, which is linked to graduate student recruitment. Hiring early career faculty generates the need for graduate students in the field stations for robust research programs that serve the stakeholders throughout the State.

- Salary and retention. This is front and center for Dean Parrella and an issue for other colleges on the Moscow Campus and throughout the State. The staff turnover rate is at 18 percent, which is unacceptable. If you are a research faculty member with staff that is trained to work in a specific field and they are not being paid a marketable wage, it is easy to lose the staff and the cost of recruitment and retraining is considerable. Over this past year UI has hired 30 faculty members. Because of these new faculty members they are seeing a turnover and revitalization of the faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. UI is moving toward an 80 percent market base compensation for staff to be in place by July, 2017 to make the university more competitive for staff. Another committee is putting together a compensation plan equivalent to what other universities are offering for faculty recruitment. By hiring early career faculty, at a competitive wage, UI will have the issue of salary compression. UI will need to adjust the compensation for the faculty members already in need of salary increases for overall faculty moral.
- Incentive based budget. In partnering with different commodities within the State there is an opportunity for a faculty incentive from those groups. UI has recently partnered with the Barley Commission for this type of incentive and have been able to attract a very talented agronomist. One aspect moving forward, from a college perspective, which is quite revolutionary is UI, is looking at budgets allocated to departments and research and extension centers that are incentive based rather than historical. When the university looks at how budgets are allocated these entities get budgets that are repetitive from year to year based on history rather than performance and research. The incentive based budgets are geared to reward departments for their performance in different areas, which will follow UI's strategic plan. Following the UI strategic plan with undergraduate enrollment incentives. The more students a department attracts into its majors, the more student contact hours, the more they teach on the campus, the more extramural dollars the enrollment brings into the UI, the more extension contacts and impacts these trigger, are factors that will delegate more resources to departments based on these metrics. It will be a transparent system so any extension center or department can see what other departments are allocated for resources. Other departments can see what they can do to get more resources from UI based on improving different areas of performance.
- Graduate students. Most of UI faculty are off campus in research and extension centers. UI wants the graduate students to work at these centers with the faculty so there must be better housing for graduate students at those facilities. The \$500,000 JFAC request is to invest graduate student housing at the research and extension centers.
- Research. UI is interested in moving the research enterprise forward in the College of Agriculture. In terms of extramural dollars brought in from a research perspective this year, the UI campus has brought in \$100 million in research grants. About a fifth of this money is being brought in by faculty in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The idea of hiring early career faculty and charging them with doing high quality research and obtaining extramural grants is part of UI's vision going forward. The research enterprise is to increase the number of graduate students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. UI wants to raise the stipend for graduate students because like faculty and staff salaries are graduate stipends are very low. The compensation plan has moved them to where UI is reasonably competitive and attracts better students.

- Partnering with stakeholders. If a faculty member submits a grant proposal to a commission and there is a graduate student that is part of that proposal, the commission likes the research, then UI will pay half of that graduate students fee and partner with the commission who will be expected to pay for the other half.

Dean Parella concluded his presentation by showing the Committee a video on the partnership between the Wheat Commission and Limagrain Cereal Seeds encouraging early career scientists.

**PRESENTATION: Idaho Bean Commission (IBC).** Andi Woolf-Weibye, Executive Director, introduced Michael Goodson, who is currently serving as the Chairman for the Idaho Bean Commission and a grower out of Parma, Idaho. **Ms. Woolf-Weibye** stated that in 2016 they continued to pursue creating a multi-state consortium and at present IBC is waiting on collaboration from UI. IBC sponsored a reverse trade mission for producers from Costa Rica to show them mid-way production, harvest and clean-up. This was a very successful event. Some of the areas of the harvest that Costa Ricans found impressive were the mechanical harvest ability, yield, and quality of production. They took Idaho seed home with them in the hopes of increasing their production and quality of bean (see Attachment 1).

One of the IBC's successes this year was a storage tube project that they administered in conjunction with the UI. There were some seed pests in the Puerto Rican crop. The UI research facility placed the seed in a vacuum, which killed the pests. The model process has been created for that market; the process is an easy fix and cheap. **Mr. Goodson** met with this research team of two Idaho agricultural students and two engineering students who developed the storage tube. The project introduced college of agriculture students to the seed industry along with engineering students to the agriculture industry. This project focused not only on the pest removal but also storage methods.

**Ms. Woolf-Weibye** concluded with a snap shot of the industries long term projects. 1) increase exports of Idaho bean seed into Mexico; 2) continued grower education and outreach; 3) pursue sources of supplemental funding for programs for Idaho dry bean seed to South and Central America; and 4) work cooperatively with other states and organizations to pool resources and reduce costs. **Ms. Woolf-Weibye** reported on the IBC's financial report. (See Attachment 1).

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business. **Vice Chairman Den Hartog** adjourned the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

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Senator Smith(Rice)  
Chair

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Carol Deis  
Secretary