

Lewis-Clark S T A T E C O L L E G E

2009-10 Officers

January 21, 2010

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Idaho State Board of Education
650 W. State Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0027

RE: SBOE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 18, 2010

Dear Members of the State Board of Idaho

The faculty of Lewis-Clark State College hereby re-assert their *opposition* to the proposed revisions to SBOE's Human Resource policies II.B, II.F, II.G, and II.N, now scheduled for a second reading at the Board's February 18, 2010 meeting.¹

By this submittal, we reiterate our opposition for the following reasons:

Under the proposed revisions, the lack of a "promise for a promise" will render the contractual relationship between faculty and institution meaningless. By authorizing what amounts to adhesion contracts to effectuate salary reductions in the form of

¹ The faculty of LCSC have opposed these changes since they were first proposed. We stated our opposition formally in our Faculty Senate Resolution FSR-2009-01, passed unanimously on October 8, 2009 (a copy of which was provided to you on November 4, 2009). On October 27, 2009, a senate subcommittee conducted a campus-wide poll of the faculty to determine whether they opposed, supported (fully or partially) or wanted changes to, the proposed SBOE changes that were coming on for a first reading at the board's December 10, 2009 meeting in Boise. Of our 173 faculty, 158 responded, and ALL opposed the SBOE proposed language. At subsequent meetings of our Faculty Association, all of our faculty continued to oppose these changes. The senate reaffirmed resolution FSR-2009-10 at its January 21, 2010 meeting. Furthermore, we invite you to read the white paper submitted for your December 10, 2009 meeting that explains our position in further detail; it may be found at <http://www.lcsc.edu/faculty>.

Faculty Association

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furloughs, the Board is acquiescing in unfair, unaccountable, and unconscionable practices that are contrary to public policy and sound employment principles. The contracts will be unfairly imposed, they do not accord dignity, integrity or respect for the professional status of the faculty, and they will engender a workplace environment of mistrust, disloyalty, and cynicism. These proposed policies will create an at-will employment environment for its employees and will undermine the state's ability to attract faculty to guide the success of higher education's students.

- 2 Furthermore, the actions sought by the proposed changes are already provided for in the existing policies II.B, II.F, II.G, and II.N. The Board has stated that its undertaking to revamp these Human Resource policies was in response to administrators' request for clarification of their authority in times of financial hardship. Indeed, it is perplexing that the Board has not required the administrators to distinguish between "financial hardship" and "financial exigency," for these proposed policies are creating a new breed of financial difficulties that allow for the same kind of benefits that financial exigency offers, but without the declaration of such.

In other words, the policies that exist allow for salary reductions such as furloughs; the precursor to this, of course, is that institutions must declare financial exigency. Financial exigency provides for accountability to the SBOE that a bona fide financial crisis exists. It is clear that the change in the existing policies will allow presidents to avoid a declaration of financial exigency when one exists. The most dangerous aspect of this change is that presidents will have unprecedented power to alter basic agreements to reduce salaries when the president has decided to reduce budgetary expenditures ***without accountability to the Board or to the taxpayers whose hard-earned taxes fund higher education***. Furthermore, it is unconscionable that the SBOE is abdicating its authority to allow institutions to engage in unethical, unaccountable behavior that disenfranchises their personnel.

- 3 Last, the faculty of LCSC oppose these policies because they completely disregard the basic tenets of shared governance within institutions of higher education. This is the crux of our opposition. Higher education is sustained not just through monies appropriated to it; it has survived for hundreds of years because of the solidarity and commitment of the faculty. The faculty of our institutions are inextricably tied to the SBOE's vision of a "well-educated Idaho." The faculty are the engine that drives higher education; without the faculty, there is no education. No matter how great the athletic teams' success, no matter how much money is paid to attract a president, no matter how many beautiful buildings are built--an institution of higher education will fail, if it cannot retain or attract faculty to teach or conduct research.

Building a strong faculty base begins with the strength of the relationship that is forged between institution and each faculty member--a relationship based on trust, dignity, respect, and integrity.

The work of faculty involves not only advancing its students through teaching and research; without a doubt, they bring a unique perspective and depth of knowledge to all other matters that concern the institution. We invite you to tap these vast reserves of knowledge to formulate solutions to help make Idaho's institutions of higher education better serve their constituents.

We urge each member of the SBOE to reverse the vote cast at the first reading of these policy changes and to vote against changing any of the existing policies. The policies in effect now provide Idaho's higher education presidents with the tools they seek; more important, however, is the fact that they require strategic, principled decision-making and due process when faculty's contracts or salaries must be changed. Such is not the case with the proposed changes.

We believe you have a duty to the students, employees, faculty, and citizens of this state to preserve honor and ethical conduct in Idaho's institutions of higher education. We urge you to vote against these policy changes.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joni Mina', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joni Mina, Ph.D.

Chair, LCSC Faculty Association

cc: Faculty Senate/Association
ISU Faculty Senate
UI Faculty Senate
BSU Faculty Senate