

MINUTES  
**JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Friday, January 27, 2023  
**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.  
**PLACE:** Room C310  
**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Senators Co-chairman Grow, Bjerke, Burtenshaw, Lent, Cook, VanOrden, Adams, Herndon, Ward-Engelking, Just  
Representatives Co-chairman Horman, Miller, Bundy, Raybould, Furniss, Handy, Lambert, Petzke, Tanner, Nash  
**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None

**Co-chairman Horman** called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Mr. Nate Osborne**, Analyst, LSO Budget & Policy, gave a brief overview of the University of Idaho and its associated agencies and budgets.

**President C. Scott Green**, University of Idaho, gave introductory remarks and discussed the mission and work of the University. University of Idaho was named the number one best value public university in the West by *US News & World Report*. He shared recent accomplishments of the University.

**President Green** expressed appreciation for the Legislature's FY 2023 appropriations to the University of Idaho. These monies funded a partnership with Idaho National Laboratory and ISU to advance engineering and energy solutions for Idaho; staffing for the McClure Center; and support for the Palmer Research and Extension Center. Last year's appropriation allowed the University to deal with significant deferred maintenance issues, which has made a difference for faculty and students.

**President Green** expressed appreciation for the supplemental appropriation recommendation to help the University of Idaho with the expenses related to the recent terrible crime in Moscow. Committee members expressed condolences about the tragedy and appreciation for President Green's leadership.

**President Green** explained inflationary pressures on the University's budget, particularly in maintenance contracts, information technology costs, and job market/wage inflation; he expressed support for the Governor's FY 2024 budget recommendations. President Green stated in FY 2021, the University cut \$18M in permanent personnel costs from the general education budget. He stated his concern about the University's ability to close the gap between the impacts of inflation and paying the CEC without impacting students.

**President Green** explained the FY 2024 capital improvement requests for the McCall Field Campus, the Meat Science and Innovation Center, the Parma Research and Extension Center, and the Joint ROTC and Military Studies Facility.

In response to a committee question, **President Green** stated the agricultural research facilities focus on issues such as regenerative farming. He referenced the deep-soil electron lab as critical in the effort to find mitigation strategies to deal with drought and other issues for ranchers and farmers in the state.

**Dr. Dennis Becker**, Dean, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho, cited statutory authority for the Forest, Wildlife, and Range Experiment Station. The Forest Utilization Research (FUR) Bill was passed in 1976 as a mechanism for funding specific areas of the Natural Resource Experiment Station. The FUR program conducts research and analyzes policy to increase the productivity of Idaho's forests and rangelands.

**Dr. Becker** described the work and accomplishments of the Policy Analysis Group, Rangeland Center, the UI Experimental Forest, Center for Forest Nursery and Seedling Research (Pitkin Nursery), and Mica Creek Watershed Project.

**Dr. Becker** explained the FY 2024 budget request for the Station. He thanked the Governor for including the Wildland Fire Center in his proposal. The Wildland Fire Center will help protect endowment lands, assist private landowners to complement safety measures, and focus on pre- and post- wildfire planning and recovery.

In response to committee questions, **Dr. Becker** explained a significant challenge to the state assuming responsibility for federal lands is the financial obligation for fire work. He further explained the state focuses on fire prevention, stating fire is a necessary part of the ecosystem, but better management can mitigate the devastation.

In response to additional committee questions, **Dr. Becker** explained a significant challenge to fire prevention work is helping private landowners understand the importance of forest thinning, which gives value to the taxpayer not only by reducing the costs of fire suppression but also by preserving the future value of the timber.

**Dr. Claudio Berti**, Director, Geological Survey, University of Idaho, explained the statutory authority and mission of the Idaho Geological Survey (IGS). IGS is requesting a FY 2024 maintenance budget.

**Mr. Osborne** gave a brief overview of the Agricultural Research and Extension Services (ARES) and its associated budget.

**Dean Michael Parrella**, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALs), University of Idaho, explained the statutory authority and mission of the Agricultural Research and Extension Services (ARES). He stated the College focuses on healthy soil, water quality, and water quantity through precision agriculture.

**Dean Parrella** explained the FY 2024 ARES budget requests, including funding for CEC, research extension faculty for CAFE, an adult computer literacy program, design and construction of the Meat Science and Innovation Center, and continued funding for the Idaho Center for Plant and Soil Health.

In response to a committee question about last year's 19% faculty and staff turnover rate, **Dean Parrella** stated many factors are affecting the labor force. ARES struggles with low salaries, open vacancies, and no applicants.

**Dean Parrella** explained CALs' statutory authority and responsibilities for the Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Utah (WIMU) Regional Program in Veterinary Medicine. He explained the FY 2024 budget requests.

**Dean Parrella** explained the work of the Task Force includes renegotiating the funding formula for the University of Idaho to address issues with increasing tuition costs, residency of students and payments, exploring new aspects of training students, and expanding the role for veterinary technicians.

**Dr. Jeff Seegmiller**, Regional Dean at University of Idaho for the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, Idaho (WWAMI) Medical Education Program, gave a summary of WWAMI's 50-year history. This program allows Idaho citizens to pay in-state tuition while attending medical training in neighboring states.

**Dr. Seegmiller** reviewed the challenge of the statewide shortage of doctors, particularly in rural areas, and the aging physician population. He also explained the ECHO system, which is a virtual platform to help overcome barriers like physician shortage and physical distance between rural communities and health care services.

In response to committee questions about curriculum content, **Dr. Seegmiller** stated the education medical students receive while in Idaho is 100% compliant with state laws.

In response to committee questions, **Dr. Seegmiller** explained there is a predicted nationwide shortage of physicians; as Idaho has continued to grow in population, the state has moved to the bottom in number of physicians per capita. He recognized the efforts the Legislature has taken to address the issue. In response to further questions, **Co-chairman Grow** stated there are two concerns to expanding medical residencies in Idaho: increased state funding and finding physicians willing to teach the medical residents.

**Dr. Frank Batcha**, Regional Clinical Dean, Idaho WWAMI, University of Washington, explained medical education. The first two years are classwork; the second two years are rotations. He explained WWAMI depends on volunteer physicians to teach the third- and fourth-year students; these practicing physicians are not paid for this teaching work. He explained post-Covid, it has been harder to recruit practicing MDs to teach third- and fourth-year medical students.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

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Representative Horman  
Chair

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Alyson Jackson  
Secretary