



# FACULTY ADVOCATE

IFT Higher Education Council

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## ISU CONFIDENCE VOTE ON AGAIN

A confidence vote on ISU President Arthur Vailas was scheduled for December 6 of last year, but the State Board of Education intervened and persuaded Faculty Senate chair Phil Cole and the ISU administration to agree to mediation instead.

Negotiations on the scope of the talks broke down when ISU faculty learned that what was assumed to be mediation on a wide range of issues turned out to be a focused discussion on institutional governance. There was no faculty in-put in the contract drawn up with MGT of America and the word “mediation” had been replaced by “facilitated discussion.”

A large number of ISU faculty felt that they had been betrayed and they once again initiated a petition drive to demand a vote on the Vailas presidency. The November 8<sup>th</sup> Faculty Senate vote was close (13-11), but this time the margin in favor was 19-6 with five abstentions. In executive session the Faculty Senate verified the names on the petition and the vote is scheduled for February 10.

This time the senators were more explicit in their complaints against Vailas. Among the 27 issues was the statement that “many faculty question the integrity of President Vailas” and the claim that he “continually engenders faculty distrust by promulgating information that faculty believe to be untrue or unsubstantiated or unsupportable by known evidence and history.”

In a letter Vailas replied to the Faculty Senate resolution declaring that it is “filled with allegations that are either untrue or misleading. Many of these allegations have already been reviewed or investigated by the appropriate parties and have been found to be without any merit.”

## BSU CONSTITUTION PROTECTS ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN SERVICE

The most important changes in the amended BSU Faculty Constitution released in December had to do with protecting faculty from retaliation in carrying out their faculty governance duties. If the ISU had this language, engineering professor Habib Sadid would still have his job. See all the details of his case at [www.idaho-aft.org/Sadid.htm](http://www.idaho-aft.org/Sadid.htm).

Typically, faculty constitutions and by-laws protect academic freedom in teaching and research, but rarely is there explicit language about service on faculty committees and speaking out in meetings. The new BSU constitution makes this right very clear.

Here are the essential passages from the Preamble:

“Academic freedom in service is fundamental to the advancement of the common good and the development of educational programs and policies. Academic freedom should not be abridged or abused.”

“Faculty are entitled to speak or write freely without institutional discipline or restraint on matters pertaining to faculty governance and development of educational programs and policies.”

North Idaho College already has an even stronger policy:

“As a member of the college community, freedom to propose controversial or unpopular policies or practices to college bodies such as standing and ad hoc committees, supervisors, governing boards, and other groups and individuals; and freedom to

question, criticize, and seek revision of NIC policies and practices in accordance with the normal review process in effect at the college” (Section 3). [www.nic.edu/modules/images/websites/121/file/section3/3.05policy.pdf](http://www.nic.edu/modules/images/websites/121/file/section3/3.05policy.pdf)

The UI Faculty Affairs committee is now considering adding similar language to a section on academic freedom, and a LCSC faculty committee is doing likewise. The IFT president will contact the CSI and CWI faculty senates and alert them to the strong NIC language. The ISU faculty will soon be writing their first constitution and the IFT will make sure that academic freedom in campus service is honored.

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