October 10, 2017

To: Linda Clark, Idaho State Board of Education – President
Richard Westerberg, Idaho State Board of Education – Idaho State University President Search Committee Chair
board@osbe.idaho.gov

From: Idaho State University Staff Council – Staff@isu.edu

On behalf of approximately 1,200 Idaho State University (ISU) Staff Employees, we submit this letter to inform you of the displeasure on not being invited to participate in the recruitment process as a committee member for the next president of Idaho State University. Not being included on the committee has created a sense of being undervalued and silenced which directly opposes the guiding principles that Staff Council was created to accomplish.

Staff Council is the recognized representative body for staff employees at ISU and individuals serving on the council are elected by their constituent groups to represent them on various issues, concerns, and policies that impact their employment at the university. Following is a brief summary of the mission of Staff Council at ISU – an organization representing all Classified and Non-classified employees, independent of other organizations. As representatives of the staff employees, the Council represents the interests and is the voice for all staff employees at ISU. Furthermore, the goals of Staff Council are to provide leadership to staff members in the promotion and development of programs, policies, and procedures which enhance ISU in the pursuit of its mission; To promote an active role for staff members in the University governance structure; To study and make recommendations concerning the University’s operating policies and procedures affecting staff members; To cooperate with the Faculty Senate in the formulation of joint recommendations concerning the solutions of problems common to faculty and staff members; To form, or serve on committees, as required and to study special issues or problems; To provide opportunities for professional development for all staff members; and finally to recognize and honor staff members for their service to ISU.

Representatives on the Council are elected by their employment constituent groups to represent them, thus we are greatly disappointed in not having a membership seat on the recruitment committee. It has come to Staff Council’s attention that the SBOE committee believes that Dr. Lewis Eakins will serve in the role of representing staff but since he was not elected by staff constituents at the University, Staff Council feels strongly that he is unable to represent the interest of the Council in this search process. It should be noted that currently there are three representation positions from Faculty on the committee; thus it seems reasonable and fair to include a representative from Staff Council to this process. This letter is therefore submitted with the hope that reconsideration of exclusion of an elected Staff Council representative from the State Board of Education search committee is considered and a placement is given on the committee so that the second largest constituent group at ISU is given a voice in the recruitment process for the next president of ISU.

Respectfully submitted,

Mia Benkenstein
Staff Council President 2017-2018