

**February 3, 2005**

## **BOARD ENDORSES TUITION BILL**

BOISE - The State Board of Education today endorsed a bill to allow Boise State University, Idaho State University, and Lewis-Clark State College to charge tuition fees.

Last week at its meeting held on January 24, the Board discussed the issue of tuition fees and received input from Idaho's university presidents and from student leaders. At that meeting, the Board expressed support for the concept, but asked that Board staff amend the proposed legislative language in preparation for a final vote today.

The proposed bill allows the University of Idaho to charge fees, but restricts the university from charging tuition fees for instructional purposes. Such a change for the University of Idaho would require an amendment to the Idaho Constitution. The University of Idaho earlier expressed its support for the proposed tuition fees bill applicable to the other major institutions in the State.

Under current law, the State's higher education institutions are not allowed to use student fees to cover instructional costs. The proposed legislation would allow the universities to charge tuition fees and to use those fees more broadly for instruction and other costs previously covered by matriculation fees for construction and maintenance of buildings and facilities, as well as student services and other institutional needs.

Board members cited the change as a way to bring transparency to the universities' use of funds and provide flexibility to Idaho's institutions to use the fees where appropriate for needed instructors and classes.

"Whether you call it student fees, matriculation fees or tuition fees, it is the total amount students pay to attend higher education that is the issue," said Rod Lewis, President of the State Board of Education. "This change doesn't alter the Board's desire to keep total student fees as low as possible. At the same time, this change will allow our universities additional flexibility in their use of funds at a time of restricted state funding."