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For Immediate Release

April 22, 2021

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**BOARD TO REVIEW POLICIES ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM
AND RESPONSIBILITY ON IDAHO CAMPUSES**

The Idaho State Board of Education will conduct a review of its policies around academic freedom and responsibility both for faculty and students attending Idaho’s public college and universities.

The recommendation was made by incoming Board President Kurt Liebich, who today was elected to succeed Debbie Critchfield who has served as Board president for the last two years.

Recent controversies about freedom of speech, including claims of “indoctrination” occurring at all levels of public education have dominated much of the legislative session.

“It has had a significant impact on how our education system is perceived in this state,” Liebich said. “I have seen no evidence that we have a systematic issue. School boards across the state have policies in place to address issues when they arise and our institutions have policies and procedures too, but I don’t want to discount some of the concerns either.”

The recommendations are:

- Work with institution presidents and faculty to possibly revise the Board’s policies on academic freedom and responsibility both for [faculty](#) and for [students](#).
- Develop a strategy to raise awareness about academic freedom and responsibility policies and make them more visible and useful both to students and faculty.
- Develop and implement a system to measure student satisfaction and overall campus climate and produce yearly reports at each institution.

“We need to find a way to objectively measure what is happening,” Liebich said. “The problem that we have is that any incident that occurs on campus is posted on social media and those trying to attack our institutions take these isolated events and try to create an aura that this is a systematic issue. I think it is wise to actually measure the climate around freedom of speech that exists on our campuses.”

Other action items from today’s Board meeting include:

- Approved a first reading of proposed changes to the Board policy to remove a minimum requirement that incoming college students take a college entrance exam in order to be admitted to one of Idaho’s four-year institutions. The Board will make a final decision at its regular Board meeting in June. If approved, college entrance exam requirements would be decided by each institution, likely starting in the 2022/23 academic year.
- Approved a first reading of proposed changes to Board policy regarding access and affordability of textbooks and other materials. The changes direct institutions to develop plans that document, support, and reward faculty exploration of open educational resources as well as other tactics for lowering costs and increasing access to instructional materials for students. The Board will make a final decision regarding the proposed policy changes at the June regular Board meeting.

- Approved a request by Boise State University to initiate and offer a Master of Science program in cybersecurity. The program will honor the Board's interest in the development of new cybersecurity pathways and complement the collaborative efforts of Idaho's public institutions to better meet employer and student needs.
- Approved a cooperative purchasing agreement involving all of the public four-year institutions as part of the overall effort to establish a system-wide approach to purchasing that is intended to save the institutions money.

In addition to electing Kurt Liebich as president, Board members also chose Dr. David Hill to serve as vice president, and Dr. Linda Clark as secretary. All three make up the Board's executive team.

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