

Approved Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting 12 August 2009

Kennedy Lounge - New Mexico Highlands University 3:00 pm

1. Call to Order: 3:03pm
2. **Roll Call: Present:** Dr. Romine, April Kent, Kathy Jenkins, Jim Peters, Stella Helvie, Ken Bentson, David Lobdell, David Arguello, Gilbert Rivera (VPAA, *ex officio*), David Sammeth (proxy Merritt Helvenston).
Absent: Merritt Helvenston (proxy), Julius Harrington (No ITV setup, excused), Lori Rudolf.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved with modifications, unanimously.
4. **Approval of Minutes of 6 May 2009:** Approved with two abstentions.
5. **Communication from the Administration:** Dr. Rivera had four items, but three already appear under new business. The only item necessary to mention has to do with the tenure & promotion review process, and particularly the new Dossier Review Committee; the administration is asking for 3 faculty members from each school/college; nominations will go to the administration. A subcommittee of five will review each dossier. He is seeking to have the committee formed as soon as possible, in order to deal with the process in a timely manner. The new process will provide wider review for faculty in small departments. Dr. Rivera also discussed the development of a handbook for adjunct/term/retained term faculty. Dr. Hill has drafted such a document, but there is a need for faculty ownership of the process. There was a discussion centering on the parameters of such a document, and the advisability of making changes to the existing Faculty Handbook, rather than developing an entirely new document. Dr. Rivera will send the document to Mary Jane, who will disseminate it to the Senate. There will be a discussion during the next Faculty Senate meeting about how best to proceed.
6. **Communication from the Chair:** There were two Board of Regents meetings since the last meeting of the Faculty Senate—with one being very short, involving the approval of a bond resolution. Dr. Romine reported that at a recent meeting designs for the new Student Center were displayed and discussed; the specifications include: 64,000 square feet of area, with meeting rooms, study rooms, a bookstore with an attached convenience store, and possibly a bridge connecting the Student Center to the library. Dr. Peters asked about parking space problems. Dr. Romine also reported that the Regents had begun to use a consent calendar system in order to

streamline the process for approving consensus actions. Other issues raised included was the approval a 5-year plan and list of possible graduate programs; also approved was a minor in Women's Studies. Dr. Romine also reported that she and Mary Jane are in the process of making the approved revisions in the Faculty Handbook, to bring it into line with the current collective contract. There are some significant problems in formatting the document. Dr. Romine also noted the difficulties involved in getting current information about committee membership; Dr. Linder will continue to seek such information. The chair also reported that she has received relatively little input after disseminating via e-mail some proposed changes in the Handbook language regarding committee membership, to reflect the impact of last year's reorganization. The information was sent out twice, and Dr. Romine is waiting for more input from faculty before taking any action. Dr. Romine reported on the result of a charge given to Academic Affairs to examine the termination of academic programs for reasons other than financial exigency. It was moved & seconded to adopt the committee's recommendation; the motion was approved unanimously.

The discussion then turned to some recent concerns regarding athletics. Dr. Carol Linder will meet with the coaches & Faculty Athletic Committee to discuss faculty concerns. Several senators noted ongoing and specific problems involving practice schedules, facilities competition, and difficulties in reconciling the university's academic and athletic missions. A lively discussion ensued.

Communication from Academic Affairs: No meeting has taken place. The first meeting of Fall 2009 will take place on 19 August.

7. **Communication from the Student Senate:** No member was present.
8. **Communication from the Graduate Student Association:** No member was present.
9. **New Business:**
 - a) **Selection of Faculty Senate representatives to student associations:** tabled until the meeting times are known. Dr. Linder will contact Wade López and someone from the Graduate Student Association, to find out when and where those bodies will be meeting.
 - b) **Election of Grievance Committee members:** Several members of the Faculty are currently undergoing the mediation training provided as part of Faculty Development Week, and three faculty members have volunteered to serve on the Grievance Committee, David Hacker, Julius Harrington, and Meryl Kravitz. There was a brief discussion about whether everyone on the committee needed to complete the training. Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Helvie vouched for the utility of the training. The election of the three volunteers was moved and seconded, and the slate was approved unanimously.

- c) **Practice of changing students' registration to audit after the cutoff date, for students who had requested withdrawals to avoid failing grades:** Dr. Peters spoke of his recent experience, when a number of students were allowed to change from grade to audit after the official deadline for such changes. Dr. Rivera expressed surprise at this, and asked for the opportunity to investigate the issue and find out how it happened. Stella Helvie shared an additional concern about slow response times from the Registrar's Office, particularly with Graduate Programs of Study. Another lively discussion ensued. Dr. Rivera discussed the possible utility of online signatures. Dr. Romine will raise this issue at the next President's Advisory Committee meeting.
- d) **Strategic & Master Plans:** Tabled due to Linda LaGrange's absence.
- e) **Dean & Chair Selection:** Dr. Romine outlined the issue, and asked Dr. Rivera to comment. Dr. Rivera noted that the issue was one that concerned him, and he had hoped that the process could be resolved over the summer through collective bargaining. He proposed to follow the process outlined in the Faculty Handbook for the selection of chairs, and expressed the hope that the issue could be dealt with in time to adjust spring 2010 schedules to reflect release time. The Senate then discussed the process of chair selection as outlined by the Faculty Handbook. The discussion then turned to the selection of deans. Dr. Peters asked about who was eligible; the VPAA asserted that while the handbook language specifies eligible faculty, that it does not preclude non-tenured faculty from being appointed as deans. A discussion ensued, and became lively at times. Dr. Rivera agreed that the processes outlined in the Faculty Handbook would be honored.
- f) **Financial Planning Committee Update—Jim Peters:** Dr. Peters made brief remarks about the financial planning process, and distributed a handout explaining the budget process. A discussion ensued about how to manage budgetary problems without compromising academic quality. Dr. Rivera noted the crucial importance of retention, and of improving retention rates. The conversation then turned to the complexities of funding and hiring new faculty.
- g) **Charge to Grievance Committee—review duties & responsibilities in light of collective bargaining agreement:** Dr. Romine noted the need for this charge; the proposed charge was moved, seconded, passed unanimously.
- h) **Charge to Faculty Affairs Committee to review duties & responsibilities in light of collective bargaining agreement:** In particular, the approval process for research & scholarship criteria developed by departments and schools: Dr. Romine outlined the need for the proposed charge; it was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

- i) **Charge to AA to examine the FYE requirement, and the waiver of the same:** Dr. Romine & Dr. Rivera outlining the process. Dr. Jenkins noted its importance as a governance issue. Dr. Sammeth suggested that Dr. Risch's ad hoc committee do their work of examining and recommending revisions to the First Year Programs, then report to AA, and that the chair of AA report to the Senate on the plan. Dr. Rivera indicated that the process outlined was what was anticipated. The EC will discuss the governance issue at our next meeting.

- j) **Charge to Academic Affairs to work with the registrar to enable faculty to change audit to F in online grading:** Dr. Jenkins explained the problem, and noted the circumstances that led to the proposal. Dr. Peters raised the question of whether or not a charge was necessary. The discussion moved to the question of whether students not meeting the requirements of audit should receive an F or a W. Dr. Romine will investigate further.

- k) **Charge to AA to discuss recommendation from FS of deleting subcommittee on DE, and replacing it with an ad hoc committee.** Issue was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Adjourned: 5:10pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter S. Linder
Secretary/Treasurer