

Approved Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting

11 November 2009

Kennedy Lounge - New Mexico Highlands University 3:00 pm

1. **Meeting Call to Order:** 3:10pm
2. **Roll Call: Present:** Maureen Romine, April Kent, Kathy Jenkins, Jim Peters, Maura Pilotti, Julius Harrington; Daniel Martínez, Merritt Helvenston, Ken Bentson, Stella Helvie; Gilbert Rivera (VPAA, *ex officio*)
Also Present: Mary Jane Valdez; Maxine Salas, Sheri Nsamenang (GSA) Brad Radeke (Student Senate); Amanda Ortiz (Staff Senate).
Absent: David Argüello, Jayni Flores, David Lobdell.
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved unanimously without changes.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** 28 October 2009. Approved with limited editorial changes.
5. **Communication from the Administration:** Dr. Rivera reported on the progress of the Chair appointment process, and noted that the process had been finalized in the Department of English (Risch) and Behavioral Science (Williamson).
6. **Communication from the Chair:** Dr. Romine reported on the meeting last week between the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and two consultant/evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. She noted that she had reported to the consultant/evaluators on many of the current and planned activities of the Senate, and shared with them her latest report to the Board of Regents. In that meeting she also reported on the Senate's efforts to organize ad hoc committees on distance education systems and department/school websites, and discussions underway regarding shared governance, the interaction between the Senate and the Faculty Association. Other members of the Executive Committee also commented on the meeting and their reactions to it. Dr. Romine next reported on the progress of the ad hoc committees the Senate had voted to organize, and noted that the updated Faculty Handbook is now available online, thanks to the unstinting efforts of Mary Jane Valdez, to whom, thanks are due.
7. **Communication from Academic Affairs:** Dr. Bentson—now the elected chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, reported that early registration has begun, and reported on discussions about online evaluation of instruction. He also reported on a discussion of a software package, DegreeWorks, that may be used. The Academic Affairs Committee also had a lengthy discussion at their last meeting on the advisement issue. He noted that students frequently declare majors very late, and faculty do not necessarily know exactly who their advisees are. A lively discussion ensued. Undergraduate appeals have been stalled by the illness of the committee's secretary. The Senate also discussed the issue of cross-listing Women's Studies

courses, and the issue of corequisites. In addition, certificate programs guidelines were presented, but sent back to committee for some “minor modifications.” Dr. Rivera contributed some clarification of the issues associated with such programs, and noted that such guidelines—once developed—will be circulated to department chairs and deans so that faculty interested in establishing such programs will have the necessary guidance. Dr. Jenkins reported on the recent actions of the Distance Education Subcommittee—of which she is now chair—and the slow process of developing an up-to-date policy manual. A discussion ensued about how best to maintain in usable and easily referenced form the policies and guidelines developed by the Academic Affairs Committee, including mention of the possibility of establishing a separate webpage for the Academic Affairs Committee. Dr. Bentson also reported that a proposal for a “positive psychology” course at the 500-level was referred back to department for some clarification.

8. **Communication from the Student Senate:** Brad Radeke reported that he had nothing to report, and in response to a question, noted that the next meeting of the Student Senate will take place this Sunday (15 November) @7:30pm.
9. **Communication from the Graduate Student Association:** Sheri Nsamenang reported on a meeting held the previous day of the Graduate Student Association, and advised the Faculty Senate about their investigation of the issue of providing health insurance for graduate assistants employed at New Mexico Highlands University.
10. **Communication from the Staff Senate:** Amanda Ortiz reported that the Staff Senate is still working on developing its policies & procedures, and noted as well their anxiety to establish communications with the other representative bodies active on campus.
11. **Old Business:**
 - a) **AAUP statement on Government of Colleges and Universities:** Dr. Romine noted the need to discuss the issue of co-governance (or shared governance) on a regular basis. She then turned the discussion over to Dr. Jenkins, who was asked to provide an overview and background to the topic. Dr. Jenkins gave a summary of the history of academic ceremonies, and noted the implications and meaning behind them. Noting that three governing bodies, the AAUP, the ACE (presidents), and the Association of Governing Boards (Regents), work together in defining roles in universities. The joint government statement thus represents the agreement of all three bodies. The role of shared governance is inmaking sure that the faculty voice is not lost. There followed a brief discourse on the Faculty Handbook, and how it was developed and modified. Dr. Romine then asked Dr. Rivera to comment on the issue of shared governance from the administration’s point of view. He noted the importance of the symbolism of the faculty’s role in the graduation ceremony, and noted the importance of the Faculty Handbook as a governing document, but reminded the members of the Senate of the need for communication, and of the need for the faculty to meet its responsibilities. Dr. Jenkins agreed about the need for communication, and reiterated the importance of

faculty responsibility. She noted the importance of the “university as swamp” analogy heard from one of the North Central Association consultant-evaluators. Then the floor was opened to general comment. Dr. Bentson noted that many of the issues relating to shared governance actually originated with the Board of Regents, and that the Faculty Senate should work to gain control of this issue. A discussion ensued. One idea that surfaced was the possibility of having a faculty regent, an idea that had been bruited about before. Another topic raised involved the relationship between our Faculty Senate and other universities’ faculty senates, and the role of the academic vice president in the meetings of the Board of Regents. Dr. Romine distributed an evaluation of shared governance, and asked senate members to review it and come prepared to discuss it at the next meeting. A number of people noted that Faculty Senate needed to make sure its activities remain relevant to the faculty it represents.

- b) **Governance issues – Faculty search committee function and faculty rights:** Dr. Romine noted that the issue was in some senses subsumed within the broader issues of shared governance. Dr. Rivera was asked to comment, and observed that he followed guidelines, and that when decisions were made against the recommendations of faculty, the concerns were communicated to the search committee chairs, and then when those concerns were not addressed to the satisfaction of the administration, the administration then made a decision. Several faculty members expressed support for following the process outlined in the Faculty Handbook for searches, and for transparency in the process. The discussion then turned to how to move forward from this point. It was noted by several that faculty members also had the responsibility to discuss and attempt to resolve individual issues first, before bringing them to the Senate. Another issue raised involved the relationship between the Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate. In future, the agendas for Executive Committee meetings will be circulated to all members of the Senate.
- c) **Constitutional Change to reduce quorum for General Faculty Meetings:** Tabled.

12. New Business:

- a) **Traits of Effective Senates: A discussion:** Dr. Romine mentioned the AAUP-originated document so titled, and asked the senators to discuss the issue of Faculty Senate performance with their constituents, in light of the traits listed in it.

13. Adjournment: the Meeting was adjourned at 5:03pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Peter S. Linder
Secretary, Faculty Senate