

# Approved Minutes

## Faculty Senate Meeting

13 January 2010

Kennedy Lounge - New Mexico Highlands University 3:00 pm

1. **Meeting Call to Order:** 3:08pm
2. **Roll Call: Present:** Maureen Romine, David Lobdell, April Kent, Kathy Jenkins, Maura Pilotti, Julius Harrington; Daniel Martínez, Ken Bentson, David Argüello, Jim Peters, Jayni Flores, Merritt Helvenston; Stella Helvie, Gilbert Rivera (VPAA, *ex officio*), Dr. James Fries (President, *ex officio*)  
**Also Present:** Mary Jane Valdez; Brad Radeke, Dr. Jean Hill, Dr. Ian Williamson.  
**Absent:** Sheri Nsamenang (GSA), Maxine Salas (Staff Senate),
3. **Approval of Agenda:** Approved with minor changes, with 1 abstention.
4. **Approval of Minutes:** 09 December 2009: approved with minor revisions with 2 abstentions.
5. **Communication from the Administration:** Dr. Fries reported briefly on a series of policies issued by the Human Resources office, policies that would be applicable to all employees, including faculty. A number of senators commented on the proposed policies, and Dr. Jenkins noted that this was an issue for collective bargaining, as many of the proposed policies governed working conditions. Dr. Fries also reported on the availability of new NMHU commemorative license plates; this represents a new potential source of revenue for the university. He then turned to the topic of the upcoming legislative session, and the prospects for funding for capital improvements and the overall budget. He noted a significant gap between the priorities of the state executive and the legislature, and noted that the Legislative Finance Committee budget looked significantly less favorable to higher education than the proposals emanating from the Governor's Office. He observed that if LFC recommendations shaped the final budget, the university would see \$3.3 million in reductions for the ING budget; 14.2% for Athletics, research budget, and a 50.9% reduction in RPSP programs. Total: some \$4,680,000 in cuts. If a rumored 2% salary cut is imposed, that would represent an additional \$500,000 in reductions. Dr. Fries also discussed the potential impact of budget priorities on the tuition credit: if the executive proposals were implemented, 0%; if LFC proposals won, more than 6%. Dr. Fries then responded to questions about the potential for cuts to the retirement fund, and the suspension of capital projects, and the issue of the IdealNM/Blackboard learning platform. He also commented briefly about the controversy

associated with the acquisition of property and the construction of the new Student Union Building, and noted as well the need to continue the university's recent progress, despite the current budgetary limitations. Dr. Fries then departed, and then Dr. Rivera reported on Spring 2010 enrollments. He reported a headcount increase of 3%, and a credit hour increase of 2%. He informed the Senate of some 474 students on the (honors) Dean's List, 390 on probation, and 49 students placed on academic suspension for a year. Many of those suspended/dismissed will appeal. Dr. Rivera noted that many faculty had not turned in grades in a timely manner, or at all. A lively discussion ensued about the issue of grades and suspensions. Dr. Rivera also reported on a meeting of the chief academic officers of universities in New Mexico, and the Academic Council. Dr. Rivera will be sending out a list of faculty working on articulation agreements; he noted also some changes in the dual credit policy in the state's colleges and universities, and a suggestion to look at the possibility of 3-year bachelor's degree programs, perhaps in conjunction with dual credit. He also discussed the recent flagging study, and noted the need to examine flagging criteria. He observed that legislative scrutiny is increasing of academic programs, an ominous development in the current budgetary climate; six programs are in need of review. He also noted discussions of nursing, general education changes (deadline of late February). He noted that attendance for the seminar on 7 January was good on main campus, but the conflict resolution seminar was not well-attended. A lively—not to say contentious—discussion ensued. Dr. Rivera reported that he is requesting that the Academic Affairs Committee review catalog language, and consider making a number of necessary changes.

6. **Communication from the Chair:** Dr. Romine reported on a President's Advisory Council meeting on 17 December, and relayed a request from Dr. Caballero, who is seeking \$300,000, and is asking for nominations for outstanding alumnus by 26 February, for the Homecoming banquet. Apparently Los Alamos National Laboratory is examining what they need for new hires, in order to facilitate the university's preparation of potential employees. She also reported on the activities of the *ad hoc* committees, and distributed a communiqué from Mike Petronis. She also reported briefly on a communication from Sean Weaver. She also mentioned the DegreeWorks program, and asked Dr. Bentson to report on Academic Affairs Committee's plan for a video presentation on the program, scheduled for 22 January, at 11am, in TEC 203. Dr. Romine then reported briefly on the AAUP surveys sent out to senators, general faculty, and an upcoming meeting of the EC with committee chairs on Friday, 15 January, 2pm, Lib 327. She then mentioned the peer university issue, and invited Dr. Hill to comment; and Dr. Hill spoke at some length. Dr. Jenkins then made a statement to the effect that the Faculty Senate should have a central role in the process of choosing the list of peer institutions. This issue will be on the Senate agenda next time. Dr. Hill noted that the process is still at a very early stage, and remarked as well that all groups should be involved. The conversation then turned again to the

question of the proposed HR policies, and what role the Senate and the Faculty Association should play.

7. **Communication from Academic Affairs: The Academic Affairs Committee** had not yet met during the spring term, but will be dealing with the flagging study issue and program reviews.
8. **Communication from the Student Senate:** No meeting, nothing to report. Dr. Jenkins confirmed the time of the next meeting.
9. **Communication from the GSA:** No representative present, no report.
10. **Communication from the Staff Senate: No representative, no report.**
11. **Shared governance concerns—Social & Behavioral Sciences concerns:** Dr. Romine introduced Dr. Ian Williamson, who provided a brief summary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department's concerns about a September 2009 vote of the Senate not to formally express concern about the administration's decision regarding the First Year Experience requirement. He provided documentation from the Faculty Handbook, and expressed the view of his department that the action of the administration, and the vote by the Senate, were opposed to the norms and policies for shared governance, and might be judged as a repudiation of the principle of faculty control over curriculum. A lively discussion ensued, and various points of view expressed, both for and against the original statement. Dr. Romine noted that the issue ought to be revisited, and others indicated a willingness to revisit the issue of shared governance. Dr. Jenkins expressed a desire to have the minutes reflect that it was never the Senate's intent to suggest that the Academic Affairs Committee did not have responsibility to oversee curricular matters.
12. **Old Business:**
  - a. **Evaluation of Shared Governance – survey from Senators:** this matter was addressed in Dr. Romine's report.
  - b. **Constitutional change to reduce quorum for General Faculty meetings, redux:** tabled.
13. **New Business:**
  - a. **Financial Planning Report/Learning Platform Committee—Dr. Jim Peters:** Dr. Peters noted that he needed some clarification of the Senate's wishes. Specifically, how much faculty input/involvement did the Senate expect. Dr. Jenkins noted that she had concerns about Dr. Peters's committee, and wanted to ensure communication and avoid or manage any overlap. The two planned to meet in the near future.
  - b. **DE Committee Update—Dr. Kathy Jenkins:** Dr. Jenkins distributed comments from the NCA/HLC consultant/evaluators. She also noted some confusion about last week's presentation. She noted as well ongoing discussions between Dr. Taylor, Dr. Rivera, and Susan Williams of the

Nursing Program about instructional technology and the purchase of useful tools (e.g. Lecture Capture system), and observed that exciting things are available or in the offing. She noted that a great deal remains to be resolved in the preparation of a new Distance Education manual.

**14. Adjournment: 5:02pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Peter S. Linder**  
**Secretary/Treasurer, Faculty Senate**