

# Minutes

## Faculty Senate Meeting

10 March 2010

Kennedy Lounge - New Mexico Highlands University 3:00 pm

1. **Call to Order: 3:07pm.**

**Roll Call: Present:** David Lobdell (tardy), Maureen Romine, April Kent, Maura Pilotti, Julius Harrington, Ken Bentson, Jim Peters, Jayni Flores, Merritt Helvenston, Sheri Nsamenang (GSA), Kathy Jenkins, Jane Gorman. Brad Radeke (Student Senate), Maxine Salas (Staff Senate).

**Also Present:** Mary Jane Valdez, Susan Williams.

**Absent:** Daniel Martínez, Stella Helvie.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** 10 March 2010, approved without change.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** 24 February 2010. Approved with minor changes, with one abstention.

4. **Communication from the Administration:** No member of the administration was present.

5. **Communication from the Chair:** Dr. Romine reported on the changes in the committee structure changes in the Faculty Handbook. The discussion centered on whether changes approved by the Board of Regents should go into effect immediately. Dr. Jenkins opined that any committee mentioned in the contract must conform to the structure outlined in the handbook. She also discussed bringing different policies relating to the General Faculty quorum issue at the next General Faculty meeting. She further mentioned certificates for committee service, and the evaluation of administrators by the faculty. Members of the Executive Committee met with the Faculty Affairs and Grievance Committees to discuss their changing responsibilities in light of the contract. She also reported on the announcement seeking members for an *ad hoc* committee for selecting peer institutions to which to compare New Mexico Highlands University.

6. **Communication from Academic Affairs:** Dr. Bentson discussed the meeting of the previous week, noting the review and recommendation for continuation of the Public Affairs program, Directed Study, Honors Program, Catalog revisions. He then responded to various questions from the faculty. This was followed by lengthy discussions of the duties and responsibilities of the Academic Affairs Committee and the recently approved honors program. A broad consensus emerged that the program needs to be institutionalized and that the university make an extended commitment to it. Dr. Romine

recommended that the issue be discussed both by the *ad hoc* Academic Enhancement Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee.

7. **Communication from the Student Senate:** Brad Radeke discussed a series of meetings held between the Student Senate and the International Education Committee of the Faculty Senate, and a meeting held with the Vice President of the Student Senate, Nick Maestas. He indicated that many international students felt that the cafeteria was not meeting student needs, and discussed a handout, the “International Student Responsibilities Contract,” given to international students upon arrival. He noted that the document was outdated, and referred to the University of New Mexico rather than New Mexico Highlands University. He also expressed some concerns about the treatment accorded to international students. Dr. Jenkins proposed that the International Education Committee be charged to work with the International Education Office to review and revise existing documents provided to international students, and devise a student guide to compliance with university and federal regulations and policies affecting them. This motion passed unanimously. Dr. Williams also recommended that this issue be included in the curriculum of Faculty Development Week. Mr. Radeke also noted interest in establishing an African-American Student organization, similar to the Native American Student Association.
8. **Communication from the GSA:** Sheri Nsamenang reminded the Senate that the members of the GSA are discussing the establishment of an in-house journal. She asked for input on how articles should be selected. Efforts were made to identify the entity to whom the issue should be referred; ultimately it was recommended to refer the issue to the Graduate Council.
9. **Communication from the Staff Senate:** Ms. Salas noted that the Staff Senate had not met, but that the body was still working on policies and procedures, and were waiting on action from the Human Resources Office.
10. **Old Business:**
  - a) **Catalog Format and Content:** Dr. Romine noted that Dr. Bentson had provided suggestions, distributed at the last meeting. She inquired about what should happen next. After some discussion, it was observed that this was properly an Academic Affairs matter, and a lively discussion ensued. Dr. Bentson will bring it to the Academic Affairs Committee.
11. **New Business**
  - a) **Learning Platform Committee report:** Dr. Peters noted that the committee decided to postpone making a decision; the committee’s view is that the central issue revolves around portability, which Blackboard is apparently making increasingly difficult in order to stem the hemorrhaging of clients fed up with their system. Dr. Peters noted also that changing platforms will be a big project, and that IdealNM has been funded for the next year at least. He also relayed a concern that faculty is insufficiently versed in the issues, and thus not sufficiently supportive of the committee. So the committee decided to defer any decision

until next year. Dr. Peters then reported briefly on the Financial Planning Committee; he noted that budgetary issues are such that the Administration does not want to talk to faculty at present. He then responded to questions on a variety of issues, and the discussion focused in turn on Blackboard issues, accreditation standards, and course portability.

- b) **Request from Dr. Bentson regarding Flagged Programs:** Dr. Romine noted a concern expressed by Dr. Bentson about the finances of programs flagged for low enrollment and/or low graduation rates. Dr. Peters explained some of the issues involved, but expressed the belief that Financial Planning Committee could do this. Dr. Jenkins noted that according to the Governor's Office the university will receive stimulus money. She expressed a conviction that the FP Committee should be involved in advocating for faculty in terms of how such monies will be spent. She noted that there is great uncertainty about the current financial status of the university, and suggested that Dr. Romine ask the president about the budget and the current state of information.
- c) **Other Committee Reports & Updates:** Dr. Jenkins noted that the Distance Education Committee has been plagued by absenteeism. Many members are not attending meetings, thus delaying the creation of a template for a revised Distance Education manual. She observed also that reality is outrunning the regulatory environment very rapidly.

**12. Adjournment: 4:53pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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