

Approved Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting

9 February 2011

Sci. Annex Bld., Room 329 - New Mexico Highlands University, 3:08 p.m.

1. **Call to Order: 3:00 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call:**
3. **Present:** Maureen Romine (Chair), Stella Helvie (Vice Chair), Ken Bentson, David Braun y Harycki, Regina Briefs-Elgin, Tom Corbin, Jayni Flores, Jane Gorman, Richard Greene, Julius Harrington, Kathy Jenkins, Kent April, Maura Pilotti, Charles Swim, and Jennifer Almand.
4. **Also Present:** Gilbert Rivera (VPAA)
5. **Absent:** Tatiana Dutoit (excused absence), Maxine Salas, & Brad Radeke
6. **Approval of Agenda:** 9 February 2011
7. **Approval of Minutes:** 26 January 2011 – as amended
8. **Communication from the Administration:**
The following issues were presented:
 - a. Dr. Rivera briefly cited the implementation of fire code requirements and resulting concerns (e.g., open vs. closed office doors). A lively discussion arose. Dr. Romine promised to send a note to the President. The intent of the note would be not only to describe concerns that Faculty might have regarding Fire Marshals' request to keep office doors closed, but also to request that alternative options be explored.
 - b. Dr. Rivera mentioned that 440 students qualified for Academic Honors during fall 2010 (GPA equal or greater than 3.5). He then reported on the number of students who received academic probation and academic dismissal.

The statistics pertaining to students receiving academic probation are as follows:

Freshmen:	GPA < 1.75	159
Upper Classmen:	GPA < 2.0	185
	TOTAL	344

The statistics pertaining to number of students receiving academic dismissals,

which may be appealed, are as follows:

Two Consecutive Terms on Probation – One Semester

Freshmen	13 (9 Registered)
Upperclassmen	22 (20 Registered)
TOTAL	35 (29 Registered)

Three Consecutive Terms – One Year (3 Registered)

d. Dr. Rivera mentioned the Census Report concerning Spring 2011-Spring 2010:

HC Main Campus	- .5%
SCH	+3.5%
HC Centers	+2.0%
Total	+ .5%

End of Term Spring 2010:	HC 3,531	SCH 34,765
Census Spring 2011	HC 3,504	SCH 35,839

e. Lastly, Dr. Rivera announced Fall-Spring retention rates. Out of 320 first-time, full-time freshmen enrolled in the fall 2010 semester, 248 were enrolled as of census date (i.e., retention rate of 77.5%). This retention rate is the highest it has been since the fall of 2004 when it was 78%. Then he spoke of a NMHU policy according to which individuals who do not have a high school diploma or GED and are at least 18-years-old may be admitted as non-degree undergraduate students. Albeit the policy states that students may apply for regular status once they earn a GED, the policy does not limit the number of credits such students can earn. Dr. Rivera and Faculty discussed the potential consequences and remedies of this policy.

*The Academic Affairs Committee was charged to examine the issue of non-degree undergraduate students who do not possess a GED or High School diploma, but may have accumulated a substantial number of credit hours.**

9. Communication from the Chair:

Dr. Romine briefly discussed the following issues:

a. Members of the Executive Committee met with the President on January 26th, 2011. Discussion pertained to three main issues: NMHU website, selection of Peer Institutions, and Dean Selection Process. Dr. Romine explained that discussion of the functionality and adequacy of the NMHU website was led by Dr. Petronis who developed a website for his academic program through Google. She indicated that the President promised to facilitate communication between different constituencies. Dr. Romine then described the challenges of selecting peer institutions and the possibility of expanding the list to include other master-degree granting institutions. Criteria to consider and weight to attribute to each criterion

were mentioned as critical to the selection process. Lastly, Dr. Romine noted that the President had indicated that the search for a VPAA would precede the selection of the Dean of Arts and Sciences and that an interim Dean would be appointed. Dr. Rivera indicated that the absence of an agreement between the Administration and the Faculty Bargaining Unit regarding the Dean Selection Process was responsible for the latter decision.

- b. At the end of her report, Dr. Romine reminded attending Senators that the Chair Selection Process for three departments (Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Department of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, and Department of English and Philosophy) would be monitored by members of the Executive Committee (Stella Helvie, Kathy Jenkins and Maura Pilotti).

10. Communication from Academic Affairs:

Dr. Bentson reported that inclement weather prevented a meeting of his committee.

11. Communication from the Student Senate:

None

12. Communication from the GSA:

Ms. Almand asked if campus closures due to inclement weather would alter the graduation date. Dr. Rivera indicated that there was neither need nor plan to make changes to the current schedule.

13. Communication from the Staff Senate:

None

14. Old Business

a. Proposed policy for special classroom fees

Questions arose regarding the document entitled 'Proposed Policy on Special Classroom Fees' compiled by the Faculty Senate Financial Planning Committee. The following are some of the points/issues mentioned:

- ✓ Proposed title change: 'Proposed Policy on Special Course Fees'.
- ✓ Proposed specification of routing procedure (i.e., change to first paragraph): 'All proposals to add a new fee or increase an existing fee would originate from the Department Chair or Dean and be sent to the Chair of the Financial Planning Committee. In the absence of a Department Chair, the action can be initiated by Faculty through the Dean'.
- ✓ Questions regarding routing procedure (e.g., should the document be sent by the Chair of the Financial Planning Committee to the Vice President of Finance and Administration?)

- ✓ Questions regarding the duration of a policy decision for any classroom fees (i.e., how long does a policy stay in effect?) and the inclusion of language to describe the action of eliminating a fee.
- ✓ Suggestion that Point # 4 be treated as a note.
- ✓ Location of the policy document should be specified (e.g., where is it to be posted on our website?)

*The Faculty Senate Financial Planning Committee was charged to clarify and address issues identified by the Faculty Senate.**

Dr. Romine indicated that suggestions would be reviewed by the members of the Executive Committee. She also indicated that the document, after being completed by the Faculty Senate Financial Planning Committee, would be sent to the Executive Committee for review.

b. Recruitment and retention

A lively discussion arose regarding how the Faculty Senate should handle suggestions listed in the document distributed to Senators prior to the meeting. The document illustrated a list of suggestions made by members of a campus-wide committee formed by the President to address recruitment and retention issues. Several points were made:

- ✓ Recruitment and retention are prerogatives of the Faculty. The committee should include a larger contingent of Faculty.
- ✓ Little support exists for recruitment.
- ✓ There are problems with advising services. Remedies may include: advising through Support Services limited to students who have not declared their major; transfer students sent directly to departments representing their major; and successful resolution of issues posed by online registration.
- ✓ Recruitment is an administrative operation that requires fixing (see problems with NMHU website).
- ✓ Retention is (and has been) primarily the responsibility of Faculty, whereas enrollment is (and has been) largely the responsibility of Administrators.
- ✓ Students benefit from face-to-face meetings with Faculty.
- ✓ Quality and commitment of Faculty are critical to retention.

Questions arose regarding data available for recruitment and retention. Namely, the issue raised was the difficulty of obtaining factual knowledge of reasons behind students' completing their degree at NMHU or leaving NMHU prior to degree completion. A lively discussion arose regarding the tools available to gather reliable and valid data.

Dr. Romine asked whether a committee should be formed to resolve/address these issues. Another lively discussion arose, this time regarding the need to

create an additional committee instead of relying on the Student Affairs Committee.

*The Student Affairs Committee was charged to examine retention initiatives and report recommendations to the Faculty Senate.**

c. Summary of recommendations for alignment of reports – Dr. Bentson

Dr. Bentson discussed the content of a document entitled *A Proposal for Academic Unit Evaluation, Planning and Documentation*, which had been distributed to Senators before the January 26th meeting. Dr. Bentson is the author of this document. The purpose of Dr. Bentson's text is to address four main issues: (1) explicit evaluation of overall functioning of academic units; (2) introduction of internal mechanisms to evaluate performance of programs and suggest timely interventions; (3) need for transparent assessment of data and processes by which academic units are evaluated; and (4) need for more efficient planning and reporting.

A lively discussion arose regarding several points:

- ✓ Strategic planning implementation increases Faculty's workload. One needs to ask what are its benefits and costs.
- ✓ The processes contemplated by Strategic Planning must be examined to evaluate their reason to exist and, consequently, their effectiveness.
- ✓ Faculty participation is critical (e.g., how many responses were received regarding the Strategic Planning Process that was approved at the last meeting?)
- ✓ Accountability is also critical.
- ✓ Procedures must be implemented to increase compliance.
- ✓ A Chair Handbook, which currently does not exist, would be a valuable tool for Faculty coping with administrative duties.
- ✓ Current program reviews may go beyond current accreditation requirements. Some departments may need it, whereas others may not.
- ✓ Outcome assessment used as quality control tool vs. quality improvement tool. NMHU tends to use outcome assessment as a tool for quality improvement. It should be used as a tool for quality control.

Dr. Greene noted that co-governance is intrinsically challenging and messy, even though all parties are well-meaning. Dr. Jenkins proposed not to stop the process while the process is being evaluated. Comments were offered regarding the increasing burden of assessment and the need to identify components of assessment that can fit accreditation requirements and avoid replications. One critical type of assessment (e.g., NCATE recommendations and rules) could be used as *prima facie* evidence of assessment for the members of a program/department/school.

*An Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate was created and charged to examine the efficiency of reporting under Strategic Planning. * Dr. Helvie and Dr. Pilotti volunteered to serve on the committee headed by Dr. Bentson.*

15. New Business

a. Athletes missing classes

Dr. Romine introduced this issue to the floor. A lively discussion arose. Dr. Romine asked whether the Athletic Committee should be charged to examine the issue of athletes missing classes. The motion was tabled.

b. Changes to the core – involvement of the Academic Affairs Committee and the Faculty Senate.

Tabled

*unanimous approval

16. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Pilotti

Secretary/Treasurer