

Approved Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting

April 13, 2011

Science Annex Building, Room 329

New Mexico Highlands University, 3:05 p.m.

1. **Call to Order: 3:05 p.m.**
2. **Roll Call:**
3. **Present:** Maureen Romine (*Chair*), Stella Helvie (*Vice Chair*), Ken Bentson, Tatiana Dutoit, Jayni Flores, Gil Gallegos (proxy for Richard Greene), Julius Harrington, April Kent, Effie Laman (proxy for David Braun y Harycki), Abbas Manafy, Maura Pilotti, Maxine Salas, Charles Swim, Susan Williams, and Jennifer Almand (*GSA representative*)
4. **Absent:** Regina Briefs-Elgin (excused absence), Kathy Jenkins (excused absence), Dolores Ortega (proxy for Jane Gorman), Gilbert Rivera (VPAA; excused absence) and Shani Crawford (*Student Senate representative*)
5. **Approval of Agenda:** 13 April 2011 – as amended
6. **Approval of Minutes:** 23 March 2011 – as written
7. **Communication from the Administration:**

Dr. Rivera was absent. The following information was read by Dr. Romine from an e-mail message sent by Dr. Rivera prior to the meeting:

 1. The Collective Bargaining Agreement allows a maximum of 5% of the number of bargaining unit Faculty to be approved for Sabbatical Leave in a given year. This year, the maximum allowed is four; and four Faculty were approved. Two of the Faculty were approved for fall 2011 and two for spring 2012.
 2. Thirteen Faculty searches are currently approved for full-time positions for 2011-2012. Ten of the positions are tenure-track, and three are non-tenure-track. Of the three non-tenure-track positions, one is Retained Term and two are Term.
8. **Communication from the Chair:**

Dr. Romine briefly mentioned the following issues:

 1. The current composition of the Board of Regents has changed with the election of new officers. During the last meeting of the Board of Regents, a presentation was made by representatives of the City of Las Vegas regarding urban development plans. The issue of traffic direction for National and

University Avenues was discussed. During the same meeting, names for a number of buildings were approved (e.g., Laura Shield Building). Lastly, tuition increases were approved.

Questions arose regarding use of income generated by tuition increases. For instance, Dr. Bentson asked whether stipends for teaching assistants would be raised, whereas Dr. Manafy mentioned administrative issues (e.g., number of administrative positions). Dr. Romine recognized that NMHU remains a university with rather low tuition rates.

2. Members of the Student Affairs Committee are examining academic policy. The Committee Chair is scheduled to meet with the Executive Committee of the Senate to discuss progress.

3. Admission reports illustrate increased enrollment for the fall semester.

4. Members of the Learning Platform Committee have recently e-mailed a survey regarding Blackboard usage. The results are yet to be available.

Questions arose regarding the feasibility and availability of alternatives to Ideal New Mexico and the extent to which the new version of Blackboard is user-friendly.

5. Each department now has a representative who serves as liaison between the department and University Relations.

6. Certificates of appreciation will be distributed shortly.

9. Communication from Academic Affairs:

Dr. Bentson indicated that his committee approved changes to the Educational Leadership Program. He also mentioned that two courses, which had been previously excluded from the core curriculum because of prerequisites, no longer have pre-requisites. He asked that the Faculty Senate re-consider its earlier decision.

A motion was made and seconded that *ART 340 and ART 380 be included in the core curriculum as an alternative to ART 100.*
Unanimous approval of this motion ensued.

10. Communication from the Student Senate: None

11. Communication from the GSA:

Ms. Almand discussed an open forum where the Student Senate and the Dean of Students considered the possibility of combining the Student Senate and the GSA into one body. Ms. Almand questioned the rationale behind the Administration's intention to merge the two organizations. She also argued that the goals and interests of the two organizations are quite different, thereby making a merger unwise.

A motion was made and seconded whereby *the Faculty Senate expresses support for the GSA's interest in remaining separate from the Student Senate due to dissimilar interests and goals that these two student-driven organizations hold.*

Unanimous approval of the motion ensued.

Dr. Romine requested that Ms. Almand meet with her to discuss this issue further.

12. Communication from the Staff Senate:

Ms. Salas reported on preliminary data from the staff satisfaction survey. She mentioned first the high response rate. She then proceeded to discuss some of the results, including support for continued existence of the Staff Senate and satisfaction with NMHU. Ms. Salas, however, indicated that she will relinquish this role in the near future.

13. Old Business

1. *Chair Selection Process*

A lively discussion ensued regarding the conundrum generated by a possible tie vote. Namely, the issue discussed is whether instructions should be added to the current chair selection language to guide Faculty to resolve a tie vote. Suggestions ranged from 'draw a card' to 'have Faculty discuss the issue until a consensus is reached' or 'if there is no agreement, the Dean may appoint an interim Chair selected from the candidates submitted by the eligible Faculty of the Department'. Also mentioned was that Faculty of a Department may not reach a consensus.

A motion was made and seconded *to charge the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to develop language to address concerns regarding a tie vote in the Chair Selection Process.*

Unanimous approval of this motion ensued.

A brief discussion arose regarding the functioning of multidisciplinary departments where the Chair may not adequately represent the entire Faculty. The Faculty Senate recognized that this issue is particularly troublesome if one considers the need for standard evaluation guidelines. A suggestion was offered to develop evaluation guidelines for disciplines rather than departments.

2. *University-sanctioned absences*

A lively discussion ensued after Dr. Romine introduced the issue. Discussants included Dr. Manafy who remarked that students are ultimately responsible for their own performance and Dr. Bentson who argued that the language appearing in the current catalogue is fine, but that more control must be exercised over scheduling. Dr. Bentson added that a policy for coaches may be needed.

A motion was made and seconded *to preserve language in the current catalogue and charge the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate to address concerns related to students' absences for University-sanctioned events.*

Unanimous approval of this motion ensued.

3. *Faculty Senate Committees: Update on Section 5 (draft document)*

The issue was introduced by Dr. Romine as topic of discussion. It was recognized that the language that describes the duties of each committee is too succinct, and that more detailed descriptions would be helpful. Other comments involved the nature of the Academic Technology committee and the feasibility of the proposal to eliminate the Faculty Grievance committee.

14. New Business

1. *Election of a new member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee*

A motion was made and seconded *to continue current membership for the remainder of the semester.*

Unanimous approval of the motion ensued.

2. *Request of Academic Affairs Committee: Addition to the core curriculum (1 course)*

A motion was made and seconded *to add MATH 145 (Introduction to Statistics) to the core curriculum as an alternative to College Algebra (MATH 140)*

Unanimous approval of the motion ensued.

3. *Proposed Policy on Special Course Fees*

Dr. Romine highlighted changes made to the original proposal. A question arose regarding where the policy will be housed.

A motion was made and seconded *to approve the proposed policy with a caveat that the Faculty Senate could later determine where the policy is housed.*

4. *Distance Education Accreditation*

A lively discussion arose regarding a definition of the term 'online' and the expected site visit. Dr. Williams and Dr. Helvie contributed to this discussion.

15. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maura Pilotti

Secretary/Treasurer