

# Minutes

Approved December 14, 2011

**Faculty Senate Meeting  
November 09, 2011  
Science Annex Building, Room 329  
New Mexico Highlands University, 3:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to Order: 3:07 p.m.**

**2. Roll Call:**

**Present:** Braun y Harycki, David (School of Education), Dutoit, Tatiana (Visual & Performing Arts), Flores, Jayni (School of Education), Gonzales, Margaret (*Staff Senate*), Greene, Richard (Computer & Mathematical Sciences), Harrington, Julius (School of Social Work), Helvie, Stella (School of Education), Kempner, Brandon (English & Philosophy), Kent, April (Library), LeRoy, Peter (Exercise & Sport Sciences), Linder, Peter (History/Political Science/Language & Culture), Loewen, Kerry (School of Business, Media & Technology), Marrujo, Virginia (*GSA*), Martinez, Edward (Natural Resource Management), Penn, Mwuahgwu (*GSA*) Pilotti, Maura (Social & Behavioral Sciences), and Romine, Maureen (Biology & Chemistry).

**Also Present:** Rivera, Gilbert (VPAA)  
Fidel Trujillo (Dean of Students)

**Absent:**

Arguello, David (School of Social Work),  
Williams, Susan (Nursing),  
Gomez, Jessica (*Student Senate*). Proxy (Rahul Sigdel) was present.

**3. Approval of Agenda:** 26 October 2011 – Approved as written (1 nay)

**4. Approval of Minutes:** 12 October 2011 – Approved as written

**5. Communication from the Administration:**

Dr. Rivera reminded Faculty of the NCATE visit (11/9-11/16), spoke about the open house hosted by the NMHU Higher Education Center on November 3<sup>rd</sup> in Santa Fe, and explained the issue of Faculty contracts. Dr. Rivera asked Dr. Linder to summarize the status of discussion regarding Faculty contracts. He also clarified the definition of Faculty with administrative positions. Currently, he said that six individuals hold such a position. Questions arose about salary negotiations and their relationship with the NM State budget.

**6. Communication from the Chair:**

The Chair reminded her audience of the NCATE visit, which involves two teams. She invited Senators to attend two meetings pertaining to both the Faculty Senate and the Academic Affairs Committee: Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 -10:30, and Monday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00-4:00. The Chair also indicated that the proposal for the Center of Teaching Excellence had been sent to Administration and that a summary of the revised NMHU Research Handbook was attached to documents Senators received prior to the meeting.

**7. Communication from Academic Affairs:**

Dr. LeRoy briefly overviewed content from the last meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee. He focused mostly on a program that was flagged last year (Southwest Studies) and answered questions related to its enrollment and graduate rates. A written summary of the meeting was sent to Senators via e-mail.

**8. Communication from the Student Senate and GSA:**

A lengthy discussion regarding the merger of the Student Senate and GSA was entertained. The Dean of Students, Dr. Trujillo, offered a rationale for the current status of the GSA and indicated that a meeting had been scheduled for Friday. Dr. Trujillo then spoke of proportional representation for undergraduate and graduate students and discussed the allocation of funds to each constituency. The current status of the GSA as an Ad Hoc committee and its constitution(s) were also mentioned. Interactions with student representatives punctuated Dr. Trujillo's presentation of relevant issues. The need to improve communication between student representatives and Administration was reiterated by both constituencies.

Initiatives related to the Campus Violence Prevention Program were mentioned, including open forums and the purchase of pepper (i.e., Oleoresin Capsicum) spray. Dr. Trujillo mentioned that rumors were circulating among students and community members regarding a sexual assault that had occurred on campus. He reiterated that local press reports regarding this incident were largely unsubstantiated. He also indicated that members of the NMHU community were actively cooperating with investigators.

**9. Communication from the Staff Senate:**

Mrs. Gonzales mentioned the content and goals of upcoming meetings, distribution of the newsletter to all employees, and suggestion boxes available on campus.

**10. Old Business:**

*a. Retained-Term Track Voting Rights – Proposed language*

*'A retained-term faculty member with at least two years of full-time continuous service to NMHU may be granted voting rights on a specific committee for a period of one year with Department, Committee, and Faculty Senate approval.*

*No more than one retained-term faculty member will have voting rights on any given committee. Retained-term faculty members will not be eligible to be given voting rights on the Faculty Affairs and the Academic Affairs committees.'*

A heated discussion was entertained regarding this issue. Then a motion was made and seconded to approve the language and send it to Faculty for ratification and inclusion in the Faculty Handbook. The motion was defeated (4 yeas, 6 nays, and 2 abstentions). Post facto comments were made regarding the intelligibility of the proposed language and its applicability.

*b. Handbook revisions – Sections I-IV, excluding language devoted to Dean Selection Process and Removal of Department Chair*

The Chair asked Faculty Senators to examine the proposed revisions and be prepared to discuss them during the next meeting. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate was asked to develop a document in which original language would be placed next to proposed alterations.

11. **New Business:**

*a. Student Academic Integrity Policy – action item*

A discussion arose regarding a new paragraph introduced in both the student and the faculty version of the policy. Revised language for the student version of the policy is as follows:

*Before assessing a penalty, faculty members should inform the student suspected of the infraction; and the student should be given the opportunity to respond. If more than one student is involved, each student should be interviewed separately and his/her responses compared.*

Revised language for the Faculty version of the policy is as follows:

*Before assessing a penalty, faculty members should inform the student suspected of the infraction; and the student should be given the opportunity to respond. If more than one student is involved, each student should be interviewed separately and his/her responses compared. Faculty members should consult with their immediate supervisor(s) and should feel free to consult with their colleagues before making any final decision on assessing a penalty. Penalties for academic dishonesty carry substantial negative consequences for students. While academic dishonesty is a serious offense and should carry serious penalties, faculty should err on the side of caution when evidence is circumstantial or unclear.*

A motion was made and seconded to approve the proposed text. The motion was unanimously approved.

*b. Student retention*

Dr. Trujillo spoke on the issue of retention. He reminded Senators of a grant awarded to NMHU by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities and funded by the Wal-Mart Foundation, with the goal of increasing retention and graduation rates of Hispanic students. Dr. Trujillo indicated that Mrs. Ortiz-Gallegos (Director of Academic Support), Mr. Roland Salas (Director of Support Services), and he had attended an information session regarding retention initiatives at California State

University, Fullerton, which serves as mentoring institution. Among the initiatives under consideration, Dr. Martinez's supplemental instruction program was recognized for its established effectiveness. Dr. Trujillo mentioned that suggestions from Faculty on how to improve student performance and persistence were particularly critical to the success of any of the initiatives targeted for intervention. Dr. Martinez reiterated that the effectiveness of the supplemental instruction program on campus arises from its careful implementation, which follows the model proposed in the early 1970s. Suggestions were made regarding the current implementation of Learning Communities and the necessity of offering training and guidance to participating Faculty. Also mentioned was the issue of sustainability of novel initiatives and programs, which, once offered, may lack funds without institutional support.

c. *NCATE update*

This item was briefly discussed by the Chair during her earlier communication to the Faculty Senate.

**12. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Maura Pilotti**

**Secretary/Treasurer**