

Approved Minutes

Faculty Senate Meeting

28 April 2010

Kennedy Lounge - New Mexico Highlands University 3:00 pm

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

Roll Call: Present: David Lobdell, Maureen Romine, Kathy Jenkins, April Kent, Maura Pilotti, Ken Bentson, Stella Helvie, Jayni Flores, Jim Peters, Merritt Helvenston, Julius Harrington, Sheri Nsamenang (GSA), Brandon Kempner (Proxy, Daniel Martinez), Gilbert Rivera, Brad Radeke (Student Senate), Maxine Salas (Staff Senate).
Absent: Jane Gorman.

2. **Approval of Agenda:** 28 April 2010: Approved with limited modifications.

3. **Approval of Minutes:** 14 April 2010: Approved with no changes.

4. **Communication from the Administration:** Dr. Rivera reported on progress with the search for a dean in the School of Business, while noting that interviews have taken place in two of the four departments currently needing chairs. The VPAA also responded to questions about the situation in the School of Education. Dr. Rivera then reported on the meeting of the Board of Regents, held earlier in the day, and indicated that the university expects some 740 graduates this spring, 347 of whom are graduate students. Some 373 of the total graduates are at main campus (50.4%) and some 367 are at the centers, (49.6%). He also broke them down on the basis of gender.

5. **Communication from the Chair:** Dr. Romine noted that April Kent & Peter Linder had attended Board of Regents' subcommittee meetings, and asked each to make a brief report, which they proceed to do. Dr. Romine then reported on the meeting of the Board of Regents, and noted that both the Rodeo and Wrestling programs had obtained funding for one more year. She indicated also that during the meeting, the budget was exhaustively reviewed and approved. Dr. Romine observed that stimulus money would be used to pay some of the university's utility bills. The regents also disaggregated and approved a series of policies, most of which apply to staff, but not to faculty—policies applying to tenured/tenure-track faculty will be dealt with through the collective bargaining process and the contract. Dr. Romine then responded to questions about stimulus money and funding for the Rodeo and Wrestling programs. She then discussed faculty salaries, building-naming and graphic standards policies, and the upcoming availability of NMHU license plates. There followed some discussion of the contract, involving Dr. Rivera. Dr. Romine also mentioned the prospect of the Outcomes Assessment Committee having its responsibilities expanded to include program review. As the newly

named director of Institutional Research and Assessment, Dr. Jean Hill will be involved, and may be included in the committee as an *ex officio* member. There was then some discussion about Dr. Sayre's responsibilities in the future, and the potential benefits—or possible lack thereof—of the consolidation of administrative structures and positions. Dr. Rivera provided the administration's viewpoint, and talked about some of the position consolidations and eliminations underway or being contemplated. Dr. Romine reported as well on the International Education committee, certificates for committee service, and work on revising the Faculty Handbook.

6. **Communication from Academic Affairs:** Dr. Bentson reported on the approval of the list of graduates, the review of a flagged program, and the approval of certificate programs. A GIS minor and certificate program were approved. He then distributed a draft of student academic integrity policy. A lively discussion ensued. There was a motion to approve the policy, with a modification of the penalty section by removing first two paragraphs under penalties, except for a sentence indicating that an F for academic dishonesty cannot be expunged from the record and calculation of the cumulative GPA by retaking the course. Additional discussion was required to clarify the motion. The motion was then passed unanimously.
7. **Communication from the Student Senate:** Mr. Radeke noted that the Student Senate is still working on a new draft of the constitution; apparently a set of proposed changes went to the Board of Regents for today's meeting. He also reported the approval of a "Seth Wright Day," to honor NMHU's national champion athlete. He then informed the Senate of the Student Senate Gala, scheduled for 6 May.
8. **Communication from the GSA. Ms. Nsamenang** reported on a recent sheriff candidates' debate held on campus. She then noted that the GSA had undertaken the solicitation of nominees for Graduate Student of the Year. Nominations can be sent to Ms. Nsamenang or President Simon Cao of the GSA.
9. **Communication from the Staff Senate:** Ms. Salas reported on the passage of new staff Human Resources policies, and reported on plans for a Staff Development Week to be conducted in August. She reported that the 1st issue of a quarterly staff newsletter is now out, and available from the website. She then gave an update on a recent staff satisfaction survey, in which the Staff Senate received a 46% response rate. She also reported that a high percentage of NMHU staff have either a Bachelor's or Master's degree; she indicated that some 66% of the staff members with college degrees earned them at NMHU. Finally, she informed the Senate that between 30 April-14 May, nominations for 6 vacant seats on the Staff Senate would be accepted.

10. New Business

- a) **Election of Vice Chair, Secretary/Treasurer, and two at-large members of the Executive Committee:** Dr. Romine noted the need to fill vacancies in the Senate leadership, and listed the names of current Senate officials. After lively discussion, Stella Helvie was elected by acclamation as Vice Chair of the Faculty Senate for 2010-2011. There was a nomination for April Kent as secretary/treasurer for 2010-2011; she respectfully declined. There was a nomination of Maura Pilotti to be secretary/treasurer for 2010-2011. There was discussion, and she accepted the nomination. The nominations closed, and she was elected unanimously. The two at-large members of the EC being open, April Kent was nominated and declined. Dr. Jenkins was nominated and accepted. There was a motion, seconded, to leave one position vacant until the start of the fall semester. Dr. Jenkins was then elected by acclamation.
- b) **Policy on Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom, from the Student Affairs Committee:** Dr. Romine introduced the issue, and there was some discussion. Dr. Bentson moved that the policy be approved and inserted in Student & Faculty Handbooks, and that syllabi make reference to the policy. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.
- c) **Recommendations for advising:** Dr. Romine introduced the issue. There was a motion to accept the recommendations from the Student Affairs Committee for further consideration, and it was seconded. A lively discussion ensued. Dr. Rivera noted that he had asked the president to reactivate the campus-wide retention committee. Noting the importance of advisement, Dr. Rivera indicated that he would like to have members of Student Affairs serve on the committee. The motion passed unanimously. Then Dr. Bentson moved that the Senate recommend to the administration the purchase and implementation of the DegreeWorks software program. There was a second, and the motion passed with two abstentions.
- d) **Sabbatical Leave:** Dr. Romine noted that an issue had arisen over the sabbatical leave, specifically a unilateral change to the policy by the administration. Dr. Romine asked Dr. Jenkins to comment on behalf of the NMHU Faculty Association, and Dr. Jenkins provided the perspective of the union. She noted that, rather than taking formal action, the Faculty Association asked that the Senate take up the issue to point out that the administration should have consulted with the Senate prior to any modification of the existing policy. Dr. Romine asked the VPAA to comment; Dr. Rivera provided once again the university administration's perspective. He noted that the administration could not predict financial conditions—and hence whether or not there would be sabbaticals until very late in some years. Rather than simply declare that there would be no sabbaticals for the academic year, Dr. Rivera had polled the school and college deans about whether faculty would apply for a full year sabbatical at half pay, and the indications were that there were some. On that basis, Dr. Rivera made the decision to go ahead with offering only a year

sabbatical at half pay. Dr. Rivera had already made a recommendation on the one applicant. And there it lies.

- e) **Committee reports and updates:** Dr. Peters reported that the Financial Planning Committee has not as yet had time to meet with the university administration to discuss the budget. Thus there was little chance for the committee to inject faculty perspective in the budgeting process. He also reported that the *ad hoc* committee on learning platforms has essentially ceased to function for the moment, given their decision to delay a recommendation on a new platform for a year. He noted further that IdealNM has not paid Blackboard for its services to date, due to the company's noncompliance with contract. Dr. Jenkins reported that the Distance Education committee will have a rough draft of a revised DE manual by the end of May, and will work over the summer on the issue. There is no indication that the Higher Learning Commission is changing policies; this means that putting the manual together will be easier than previously thought. Dr. Peters asked that the DE committee provide basic specifications for a learning platform. Dr. Jenkins indicated that such task could be worked on over the summer.

11. **Adjournment:** Dr. Romine thanked members for this service. Dr. Rivera made a statement about the need to resolve the relationship between the Faculty Handbook and the Contract. He requested a meeting with the Executive Committee to clarify the outstanding issues, citing specifically the issue of sabbatical leave. Dr. Jenkins responded that the fundamental issue was communication, and the need to communicate in particular before decisions are made. Dr. Helvie commented that the issue of sabbaticals had not been brought up in the School of Education. Others indicated that the deans do not always transmit information through their units. A lively discussion ensued (yet again). **Adjournment took place at 5:05pm.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter S. Linder

Secretary/Treasurer, Ret.