



Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2025

Location: RAB 120

ZOOM <https://nmhu.zoom.us/j/92457318161>

Approved December 10, 2025

1. Call meeting to order.

2. Roll Call.

	ATTENDANCE		
	Present	Absent	Excused
Art & Music; Edward Harrington [Gabriel Merrill Steskal, proxy]	X		
Biology; Maureen Romine	X		
Business Administration; Stephen Owusu-Ansah	X		
Chemistry; Steven Karpowicz	X		
Computer and Mathematical Sciences; Gil Gallegos, At-Large	X		
Education - Counseling; Diane Lacen	X		
Education - Curriculum & Instruction; Daniel Olufemi	X		
Education - Educational Leadership; Sheree Jederberg, At-Large	X		
Education - Special Education; PJ Sedillo [Mercedes Chavez, proxy]	X		
Education - Teacher Education; Angela Redondo	X		
English and Philosophy; Lauren Fath	X		
Exercise and Sport Sciences; Kathy Jenkins, Vice-Chair	X		
Forestry; Michael Remke (he/him/his)	X		
History and Political Science; Bilgesu Sümer	X		
Languages and Culture; Norma Valenzuela	X		
Library; Katie Gray, Secretary (she/her)	X		
Media Arts and Technology; Miriam Langer	X		
Natural Resources Management; Jennifer Lindline, Chair (she/her)	X		
Nursing; Siri Khalsa (she/her)	X		
Psychology; David Pan	X		
Social Work; VACANT [Rebecca Moore, proxy]	X		
Sociology, Anthropology, and CJ; Gloria Gadsden	X		
President; Neil Woolf	X		
Provost/VPAA; Dann Brown	X		
Staff Senate; Carlos Nevarez		X	
Student Senate; Lydia Okojie		X	

Also Present: Daniel Chadborn (Psychology), G. Glover (Interim Dean, Education), Roxanne Gonzales (Educational Leadership), Todd Lekan (Dean, CAS), Gina Marie Medina (Staff Senate), Veena Parboteeah (Dean, Business & Media Arts), Mike Petronis (Natural Resources Management), John Tourangeau (Interim Dean, Social Work), Cin Ulibarri (ICLRLT), Clint Weckerly (CTE), Barbara Wharton (Director,

Institutional Research and Data Management and Interim Registrar), Ian Williamson (AVPAA/Graduate Dean),

1. Approval of Agenda.

MOTION to approve the agenda. Seconded. 19 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

2. Approval of Minutes from October 22, 2025 (attachment).

MOTION to approve the minutes. Seconded. 19 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

3. Communication from the President (N. Woolf).

N. Woolf reported the following:

- Dr. Woolf thanked everyone who participated in the Matanza, which included 100 volunteers and 800+ attendees.
- HLC visit:
 - Thank you to participants
 - Received draft report today, which was sent to liaisons; formal report will be received in a few weeks and will be sent out when received.
 - 4B Assessment: met standards with concerns around general education assessment. The university will have to file an interim report in 2 years.
 - 5B Human Resources: met standards; no follow-up needed; encouraged us to continue with the work.
- In regard to Staff Senate, Dr. Woolf is going to encourage supervisors to encourage staff to participate.
- In tomorrow's biweekly message, Dr. Woolf will announce that the university will be closed on 12/22/25 and 1/2/26 for a full 2-week break and that essential workers will be on staff and get compensatory time.
- The Board of Regents met for their retreat and met with division heads. J. Lindline and K. Jenkins presented Faculty Senate goals. Dr. Woolf reported that the Board received the letter that was discussed at Senate concerning the HU campaign (Destination Highlands) and that he and P. Grindstaff are working on a response and adjustments.
- Dr. Woolf reported that administration is finalizing the MOU with Taos to offer classes at that location.
- Dr. Woolf offered congratulations to everyone on the R3 research designation and that they are working with the Santa Fe New Mexico to get a story out on it.
- Dr. Woolf noted that Dr. Grindstaff is available if Faculty Senate wants to meet with him.

Question from a Senator about the committee on hate speech and anti-doxxing and when it will be meeting. Dr. Woolf stated that D. Hicks is forming that committee and that he will ask for an update.

Question from a Senator about who is in charge of the website. Dr. Woolf stated that that went to Dr. Grindstaff as part of Advancement and University Relations.

Question from a Senator about the R3 designation, specifically what the criteria are and is Highlands positioned to maintain the designation long-term. Dr. Woolf replied yes to the second part and that the designation was based on level of research and grants.

I. Williamson stated that there are 3 levels of research designations and that R3 means there are grants spending \$2.5+M; R1 and R2 institutions have to have a certain number of doctorates.

Question from a Senator about academic free speech; what is the HU stance on ADEI and what will the university do if the Federal government says we have to remove references to it. Dr. Woolf stated that the university is not changing that and that has been our stance. Dr. Woolf stated that his position would be not to do it, but that the university would have to see any direct requests.

Comment from a Senator that this is the first time faculty has heard about the R3 designation and that it never came through the governance structure.

Chair asked Dr. Woolf what the university was designated as before. Dr. Woolf stated we were a comprehensive; Chair asked if it changes the university's funding competition. Dr. Woolf stated that it is a Carnegie designation based on what we have done; it is not an application.

Comment from a Senator that it is annoying that faculty found out about it when everyone else did and that it is an issue of communication. Senator noted that they are excited and that peer comparisons are now higher institutions that have higher salaries. Senator stated that the lack of discussion is troubling, and faculty are concerned.

Senator asked if the university is in jeopardy of losing grants that were based on being a comprehensive institution.

MOTION to charge the Research Committee with investigating the R3 designation and whether it will impact current or future grants. Seconded.

Dr. Williamson stated that the press comes to the university when these things are announced. Dr. Williamson stated that the Foundation and state funding do not have anything to do with the designation. Dr. Williamson noted that it is not disqualifying in any way and that it is possible that there will be some applications that say "only R3 may apply." Dr. Williamson stated that he does not know of any that are advertised in that way but there are a lot of changes in how funding is advertised at the federal level.

Comment from a Senator that they agree that this should go to the Research Committee so that any questions can be answered and asked about the workload for professors teaching courses in doctoral programs.

Comment from a Senator that the conversation should not include work conditions, because that is a bargaining issue

21 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

4. Communication from the Vice President of Academic Affairs (D. Brown).

Dr. Williamson served as proxy for D. Brown. Dr. Williamson stated that he has no prepared comments but will answer questions.

Chair asked about NMHU day at the legislature which Dr. Brown said would be on a first come first, served basis but the response to her email stated that Provost Brown will determine participation; is there a selection process? Dr. Williamson said he would take that question back to the Provost.

Question from a Senator that there has been discussion about merging certain departments; what is the motivation; is it financial? Is it to make administration easier? Dr. Williamson stated that he is not aware of those conversations and it would have to be a case-by-case basis for motivations.

Comment from a Senator about the lack of response to people who are not getting answers on sabbatical. Dr. Williamson stated that he did inform the Provost of the conversation.

Question from a Senator about the status of the School of Education Dean search. Dr. Williamson stated that there are ongoing conversations between G. Glover and the Provost. Dr. Glover stated that there is minimal information because of the significant number of positions that are empty, and it has been pushed aside a bit. Dr. Glover reported that Dr. Brown has a meeting with a search firm on Thursday.

5. Communication from the Faculty Senate Chair (J. Lindline).

Chair reported the following:

- 12/10 is next and final meeting of the Senate for the fall semester, so please make every effort to attend.
- Chair reported on the Board of Regents workshop that she and Dr. Jenkins presented the Senate's goals and delivered the HU Elevated letter, which the President said he would discuss with VP Advancement Grindstaff.
- 2/19 is Highlands Day at the legislature.
- Faculty has raised R3 designation questions which were already brought up.
- Research Committee was a little slow to get started this year and the call went out for Spring 2026 funding. The Executive Committee reached out and offered assistance. Dr. Lindline noted that there are some vacancies on committee and that funding is critical to faculty for travel and research monies.
- In regard to handbook revisions, Chair reported that the Executive Committee has a draft and that one of the questions concerns committee terms and whether the Senate wants to standardize terms.

Comment from a Senator that inconsistencies can cause issues with attendance.

- Chair reported on the Grievance and Conciliation Committee that there were Faculty Handbook revisions that were passed that moved responsibilities to Faculty Affairs Committee. However, the handbook was never updated; the handbook remains the ruling document and the changes cannot just be copied and pasted into the Faculty Affairs section.

Comment from a Senator that the Senate should do things just one time and that they need to make it in keeping with the CBA and redundancies.

Comment from a Senator that they agree and that the Senate should move forward since it did go all the way through the governance process to the board.

- Chair noted that she is getting reports on the HR ticketing system that tickets are being closed without being resolved.

Comment from a Senator that some people are saying they are being told to close them. Senator asked who is the one issuing that instruction.

Comment from a Senator that they have a per course position in PeopleAdmin as well as a University Studies position and that it has been a disaster. The Senator brought it up with Provost Brown, created a ticket, and went to the forum to express concerns.

Comment from a Senator that they have also had a ticket that should have been closed but was not, and it caused confusion and chaos.

Question from a Senator about whether they are closing out tickets for a higher response rate. Senator also noted that there is something wrong with monitors in classrooms.

Comment from a Senator about ITS ticketing, that they have also been closed without being resolved. Senator noted they were trying to add an event to university calendar.

Comment from a Senator that they have also experienced this with the Facilities ticketing and have had a ticket closed that was not resolved.

Comment from a Senator that they put in a ticket at beginning of semester for a phone, which they still do not have, but the ticket was closed and marked as resolved.

Question from a Senator about who ITS is under. Dr. Woolf stated it is the VP for Finance and Administration.

MOTION to have the VP for Finance and Administration report on why these tickets are being closed.

Upon request of a Senator, MOTION amended to include queries into Human Resources, Facilities, and ITS ticket closures by the President. Seconded.

21 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

- Chair reported that the Financial Planning Committee submitted a report which the Executive Committee will review.
- Chair reported that the Senate is looking for members for the Pino Endowment committee.

Senator recommended sending a call out to the General Faculty for better inclusion.

Question from a Senator about whether Senators can volunteer.

Chair noted that it is not a Senate committee in the strict sense, so it does not count toward the committee limit.

Senator suggested that membership should be first come, first serve but that there also should be parity and representation across disciplines.

G. Merrill-Steskal noted that he had been nominated for this committee.

6. Communication from Academic Affairs Committee (G. Gadsden).

G. Gadsden reported the following:

- The AAC received 1 petition to the Undergraduate Subcommittee.
- The AAC received 1 request for postponement on a program review.
- The AAC passed Dual degree program and DOBA supply chain program proposals.
- The AAC conducted a secondary review of the MS in computer science proposal and approved it. The AAC only looked at the curricular aspect.
- The AAC had a great meeting with B. Wharton who showed great data and was very responsive. Dr. Wharton talked about cohorts and athletes and reported that fall retention is up by 7%.
- Graduate Council is looking at exit project chairs and has created an ad hoc committee to look at 7000 level courses.
- Dr. Williamson shared that the Office of Academic Affairs plans to take on some marketing projects.
- Dr. Gadsden noted that there are concerns about the lack of communication about the start of spring registration and displeasure with new announcement policy; there has been no announcement about intersession courses and second half of semester courses.

7. Communication from the Student Senate (L. Okojie).

Not present.

8. Communication from the Staff Senate (C. Nevarez).

G. Medina reported the following:

- Staff Senate has begun process of moving forward and have a few members who have expressed interest.
- 11/18 meeting set to discuss nomination and election of officers.
- 11/21 meeting to swear in new members of Senate.
- Ms. Medina thanked the Faculty Senate for their support.

9. Old Business

a. 2035 NMHU Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan Governance Draft (attachment) (I. Williamson).

Chair presented an overview.

MOTION to endorse the Strategic Plan. Seconded.

Comment from a Senator that in the development of the mission/vision, the word diversity is not anywhere in the document. Chair noted that this issue was brought up at previous meetings and that Dr. Williamson answered that the values are embedded in each of the goals.

Request from a Senator that the document be cleaned up for grammar and punctuation.

Motioning member amended motion to include provision that the document be cleaned up as requested. Seconding member agreed.

20 ayes, 1 nay, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

b. Faculty Senate Committee Nominations/Elections

- i. **Athletic Committee**
- ii. **Faculty Grievance & Conciliation Committee**
- iii. **Student Affairs Committee**
- iv. **International Education Committee**

No nominations put forth for committees.

c. Faculty Concerns

i. Registrar

Chair opened the floor for discussion of Registrar issues.

Request from Senator from administration to share the timeline of the positions and status of search. Dr. Wharton reported that the position was posted and that she will be chairing the search and will be putting together a committee.

Comment from a Senator that they are most concerned about loss of institutional memory. Senator noted that there has not been a call for 2nd 8-week classes or intersession classes, which are an important part of the retention plan and help

students not lose scholarships. Senator asked if a call would go out. Dr. Wharton stated that they could do that.

Question from a Senator about FERPA training, the lack of a call for training, and whether the university is in violation as a result. Comment from a Senator that they asked that question a couple of meetings ago and the Provost said the university is not in violation. Senator noted they are worried about student workers, GAs, and new faculty. Dr. Woolf stated that administration made the determination that FERPA must be provided annually and that what the university was providing was less than effective; this includes Title IX, sexual harassment, and all other required trainings. Dr. Woolf stated that the FERPA training was homegrown and was not effective or timely and that they are overhauling all training. Dr. Woolf stated that K. Blea has been tasked with that project and will report back.

10. New Business

a. Graduate Council Items (D. Pan)

i. Faculty Handbook Revision; Definition of Graduate Faculty (attachment)

D. Pan provided overview of the proposed change, which was the result of a Faculty Senate Charge. Dr. Pan reported that the Council is trying to bring alignment to Faculty handbook and Graduate Handbook and that the reasons for the suggestions are provided in the proposal.

MOTION to approve the Faculty Handbook revision; definition of Graduate Faculty. Seconded. 21 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

ii. Graduate Catalog and Graduate Handbook Revisions; Provisional Status Policy: Reduction from 12 to 9 credits (attachment)

Chair provided overview of the proposal.

MOTION to approve Graduate Catalog and Graduate Handbook revisions; Provisional Status Policy: reduction from 12 to 9 credits. Seconded. 21 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

MOTION to move into Executive Session. Seconded. 19 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

11. Executive Session.

MOTION to leave Executive Session. Seconded. Unanimous. Motion carried.

12. Action and Statements as Necessary on Executive Session Discussion.

No actions were taken during the Executive Session.

13. Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned, 5:00.

The New Mexico Highlands University faculty recognizes collegiality as a cornerstone of our academic community, characterized by a commitment to work together to support the academic enterprise. We value the diversity of people and perspectives; support open communication and constructive disagreement; and uphold the principles of academic freedom and shared governance. We expect all faculty members to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, including mutual regard, collaborative engagement, and respectful debate.