



Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2025
Location: RAB 120

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

Approved January 14, 2026

1. Call meeting to order.

2. Roll Call.

	ATTENDANCE		
	Present	Absent	Excused
Art & Music; Edward Harrington	X		
Biology; Maureen Romine	X		
Business Administration; Stephen Owusu-Ansah [G. Moreira, proxy]	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	X		
Education - Teacher Education; Angela Redondo [E. Valenzuela, proxy]	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) [P. Baumann, proxy]	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 [R. Moore, proxy]	X		
Sociology, Anthropology, and CJ; Gloria Gadsden	X		
President; Neil Woolf	X		
Provost/VPAA; Dann Brown	X		
Staff Senate; Gina Marie Medina	X		
Student Senate; Lydia Okojie	X		

3. Approval of Agenda.

MOTION to approve. Seconded. Motion carried unanimously with 16 votes counted.

4. Approval of Minutes from November 12, 2025 (attachment).

MOTION to approve. Seconded. 16 ayes, 0 nays, 2 abstentions. Motion carried.

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

N. Woolf reported the following:

- Report from the HLC was sent out.
- Recently returned from Orlando for a meeting with a university to collaborate on a Masters in Anesthesiology which is planned to launch in Summer 2027.
- Unified Higher Education priorities: 4.7% in formula funding; fully fund legislative mandates; when compensation increases are provided, we are requesting language that says average; requesting when states benefits enhancement packages go out, that we are funded 100%; campus safety increases; cyber security; building renewal and replacement; equipment renewal and replacement; dollars for workforce training; working with Economic Development Department of the state for Innovation Hub package; technology enhancing fund; funds for dual credit.
- HU is asking for: Destination Highlands; \$17M for phase 1 of stadium improvements; \$1M for Connor and Kenndy Halls upgrades; \$10M for library renovation and planning; \$3M for IT services and equipment upgrades; \$6M for campus safety and lockdown infrastructure. RPSPs: 2 new ones are limited to projects that lost revenue from Federal funding.
- Land development: finalizing contract for developer for golf course property; around 175 single-family homes, 120 apartments, and hotel/convention center. 42 acres behind the baseball field owned by the NE Regional Housing Authority and trying to have those lands transferred to HU for additional housing.
- Going to map the Highlands experience.
- Board meeting this Friday in Rio Rancho.
- Happy Holiday to all.

Question from a Senator about the head of Facilities. Dr. Woolf announces that Sylvia Baca is retiring and as of December 1, Aaron Flure is overseeing Facilities.

Dr. Woolf noted that since the last meeting, his office also had a ticket closed without it being resolved, so he spoke with the head of ITS who is instituting a system where a ticket cannot be closed without the submitter consenting.

Question from a Senator about whether there will be a celebration of Ms. Baca's work. Dr. Woolf noted that there will be a grand opening of the building and a celebration of her work.

Question from a Senator concerning the repairs at Ilfeld. Dr. Woolf noted that the HVAC system is not active, which makes the building unusable in the winter months. Admin is requesting money for renovations, but it will cost millions of dollars. Dr. Woolf noted that the Board has a list of 5 capital projects, and the library is the top one right now. So, the Ilfeld needs to be added to that list.

Comment from a Senator that there is a valuable Steinway piano in the Ilfeld Auditorium that will need to be moved for its preservation.

Question from a Senator about how the Destination Highlands campaign with its five pillars relates to the Highlands Elevated campaign and its pillars. Dr. Woolf stated they are coordinated and that the Elevated campaign is the public phase of the fundraising campaign and Destination Highlands is a way to operationalize it.

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

D. Brown reported the following:

- Wanted to thank everyone.
- Enrollment increase this fall, including International students, Las Vegas residents, and online students.
- HLC visit was a success.
- Working on faculty contracts for Fall 2026.
- Grades are due next Tuesday at 8:00 a.m.
- All book orders are in except 1.
- May 8 will be Rio Rancho commencement. May 9 will be Las Vegas commencement. May 16 will be Farmington commencement on the San Juan campus.
- In the spring, Dr. Brown would like to discuss Mackenzie Scott's donations to universities.

Question from a Senator regarding spring Faculty Development Days. Dr. Brown stated it will be on January 8 and 9 and the general theme is student success. Sessions will be in person and on Zoom. There will be a student panel on day 2.

Chair noted that it has been in two of the global announcements, but faculty might have missed it due to the format of global emails.

Question from a Senator about whether there has been any development in hiring a new faculty member for political science. Dr. Brown stated that Dean Todd Lekan came to him weeks ago to discuss this issue. Dr. Brown stated that he will be collaborating with the schools and college about their priorities and having a shared process with faculty.

Chair noted that this is not a new position so she would like some clarification about why they would need to have budget prioritization conversations. Dr. Brown stated that he is looking at the demand for the position.

Question from a Senator concerning professional development days requesting that in the future the university would go back to having the Faculty Senate help set the agenda and theme.

Question from a Senator about the decrease in funding for departments to hire tutors and for scholarships. Dr. Brown stated that they are reviewing requests from firms to help with scholarship optimization. Dr. Brown stated that one of the ways the university can save students money is by graduating from them earlier.

Comment from a Senator that they were told that the new Dean of Social Work would be based in Albuquerque and an Associate Dean would be placed in Las Vegas but this was never discussed with faculty. Dr. Brown stated that no final decisions have been made but that the university has to work strategically with the space we have.

Question from a Senator concerning the pledge made by the university a few years ago that any student wanting a job on campus who is qualified would be given a job. Dr. Brown stated that he has never been to an institution that promised students a position on campus. Dr. Woolf stated that the university was out of compliance with work-study dollars and that students are only allowed to work 20 hours during the academic session. Dr. Woolf stated the university only gets a few hundred thousand dollars a year.

Comment from a Senator concerning the earlier statement about graduating students early, that Highlands services a particular type of student who may not be prepared to take 15-21 credits to graduate early and that we have to balance that with the financial aspect.

Question from a Senator about the hiring of an Interim Dean for the School of Education. Dr. Brown stated that he is planning to announce publicly tomorrow who will serve as Interim Dean in the Spring 2026 and that his department has developed a contract with a third-party national search firm to lead the hiring process, starting in January.

Comment from a Senator that International students can only work on campus.

Comment from the Chair that in addition to the impact on students, there are also many positions within departments that are in deficit.

Dr. Brown stated that if there are any students going door to door looking for jobs, to send them to his office for assistance.

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

Chair reported the following:

- Grievance and Conciliation Committee completed formal grievance and mediation training.
- Regarding professional development days, Chair met with C. Weckerly of the CTE about the program and noted that there have been two calls for faculty to submit proposals for pop-up sessions.
- It was reported that the Research Committee has finished reviewing proposals, but Chair has not received a formal update.
- Chair met with President Woolf, academic leaders, ITS head, Doajo Hicks, and others about issues that have been reported.

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

G. Gadsden reported the following:

- One undergraduate petition was resolved.
- One of the eight remaining program reviews was completed (Spanish).
- There will be 6 new program reviews in the spring and 3 more that were pushed forward.
- AAC moved forward an English major program revision and an English writing minor program revision.
- B. Wharton reported that the Registrar's office has caught up. Dr. Wharton is looking into a work around for students who are currently enrolled in a prerequisite course and are trying to enroll in the next course in the sequence for the next semester. The university saw a significant increase in the number of winter intersession courses offered.

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

L. Okojie reported the following:

- The Student Senate was able to arrange programs to help students achieve their academic goals.
- The Senate needs representatives from various departments to serve the interests of the students.
- The students would like faculty assistance with introductions to professional organizations and conferences.
- The Senate was not able to sponsor students to register for conferences.
- The Senate would like to collaborate with faculty to hold a research conference.
- The Senate is glad to see that there is a science fair.

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

G. Medina reported the following:

- Staff Senate has new leadership.
- Staff Senate would like to have a full operating Senate by February 15.
- Staff Senate would like to start planning Staff Professional Development Days for fall by April 15.
- Staff Senate is revamping their bylaws and constitution.
- Staff Senate is enjoying their budding relations with the Faculty Senate and would like to establish the same type of relationship with the Student Senate.

Comment from a Senator congratulating the Staff Senate and a question regarding who their leadership is. Ms. Medina stated that their Parliamentarian is Cin Ulibarri, no Secretary yet, Treasurer is Mario Ulibarri, no Vice-President, and Gina Medina is the President.

11. Old Business

a. Faculty Senate Committee Nominations/Elections

i. Pino Endowment Committee

MOTION to approve Jess Goldberg, Erika Derkas, Daniel Olufemi, and Gabriel Merrill-Steskal as members of the Pino Endowment Committee. Seconded. 18 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

Chair reminded the Senate about the definition of faculty from the Faculty Handbook and that librarians are voting members and contingent faculty are non-voting members. Chair noted that contingent faculty are welcome to serve on committees and to be liaisons between their units and the committees.

ii. Athletic Committee

iii. Student Affairs Committee

iv. International Education Committee

There were no further nominations for committees.

12. New Business

a. Academic Affairs Committee Program Addition/Deletion/Modification Proposals

i. M.S. in Supply Chain Management (J. Milczewski)

J. Milczewski provided an overview of the proposal. This will be a stand-alone in supply chain management. The Master's degree is an extension of what has already been started with the concentration which began last January.

Question from a Senator about the MS designation, which the catalog specifically states has to have a STEM background. Dr. Milczewski stated that most supply chain management programs are STEM-related and that there is a need for science, integration of technology, and engineering in the design of supply chains and that mathematics falls into all three of those.

Question from a Senator asking if this proposal for Highlands has enough science and math to meet the catalog's definition of MS. Dr. Milczewski stated that it ties in with digitization, AI, and mathematics for analytics. Senator asked V. Parboteeah to clarify.

Comment from a Senator that the MS degrees at NMHU are particular to the College of Arts and Sciences and that the School of Business is a professional school and therefore, by definition, has MA degrees. Senator also noted that engineering and technology are science designations, not business designations. Senator recommended that the School consider it as a MA instead of an MS or integrate with the College of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Milczewski stated that is not an all-business or all-science degree; it is more of tie-in.

Comment from a Senator that the statements support the idea that the proposed program should not only be taught by business faculty if it is not only a business degree.

Comment from a Senator agreeing with previous Senators' concerns and that there has been no discussion with Computer and Mathematical Sciences. Senator expressed concern that there has been no communication between departments on this program.

Dr. Milczewski stated that this is more about integration and tying in supply chain from beginning to end more than the hands-on level.

Chair noted that the BA requires students to complete college algebra, but the BS requires 8 credits in math and that the MS degrees should not accept students unless they have a calculus foundation.

Comment from a Senator that they are uncomfortable seeing degree programs come forward that state they do not need resources. Senator stated that everyone who works at Highlands has a full load and that if you add a program you are by definition adding classes, which would require adjuncts or a redistribution of class load. Senator asked for an explanation of why the program does not need more resources and also asked that Academic Affairs Committee investigate this in programs before they are approved.

Dr. Milczewski stated that this type of program is an MS at other schools and that something like Calculus is a course a student would take at the Bachelor's level.

MOTION that the M.S. in Supply Chain Management proposal be sent back to the Academic Affairs Committee for further discussion. Seconded.

Comment from a Senator that they would like to see a discussion with the Department of Computer and Mathematical Sciences about the possibilities of collaboration on this program.

Comment from a Senator that it sounds like there might also be a benefit from these students taking courses in public affairs to help understand how government works.

Dr. Milczewski stated that one of the courses that will be offered is Introduction to Public Procurement.

I. Williamson noted that there have been a number of Graduate issues coming forward lately and that the university should look into how this issue is positioned statewide and nationally. Dr. Williamson noted that it is standard for these programs to be MS and that they are offered in Business.

Comment from a Senator that they are not suggesting that this has to be an MA but that if it is going to be an MS it has to conform to Highlands' standards

and that the School of Business should work with the College of Arts and Sciences.

Comment from a Senator that we only have one College (Arts & Sciences) and that all the others are professional schools. Senator noted that this would be a philosophical shift. Senator stated that if it is going to be an MS it needs to be combined with a program in Arts & Sciences, otherwise it should be an MA.

Senator called the question.

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

ii. Dual Master's Degree Program in General Psychology & Criminology (T. Brooks and G. Gadsden)

Dr. Gadsden provided an overview of the proposal. Dr. Gadsden noted that this is an attempt to address a policy problem, which is that currently if a student wants to earn two Graduate degrees at Highlands, they cannot share any courses across the degrees. Dr. Gadsden noted that the dual degree allows students to share courses across two programs.

Comment from a Senator that this is a great proposal with a good resource section. Senator also noted that this is an example of thinking outside the box and coming up with ways to make students marketable without making them spend more time at Highlands than is necessary.

MOTION to approve the Dual Master's Degree Program in General Psychology & Criminology proposal. Seconded.

Comment from a Senator that it seems like this program is using credits from one degree as transfer credits for the second degree and that this does not seem appropriate to them. Senator noted that these should be merged into a synthesized degree.

Dr. Gadsden noted that they are being very careful about the courses that will be shared, such as a statistics course that is already taken by many criminology and psychology students. Dr. Gadsden noted that these are shared courses and that they are the only ones that would be counted.

Senator noted that they are double counting, which they should not be able to do.

Dr. Gadsden noted that that is a policy issue and that there is already a dual degree program at Highlands that does that.

Question from the Chair about whether someone graduating from the program would have two separate degrees or one combined degree.

Dr. Gadsden stated that they would be getting an MA and an MS; it is not one degree.

Comment from the Chair that credits can only be used for one degree.

Dr. Gadsden noted that this already exists for the MBA and MSW, which share 9 credits, and that this is the same premise.

Comment from a Senator that it does not make sense for students trying to get both degrees that they would have to take different classes because they had already taken the required courses for the other degree.

Comment from a Senator that they appreciate the proposal because it is interdisciplinary and benefits students.

Senator reiterated that they feel that it is inappropriate to double-count courses for a separate degree and suggested policies allowing courses to be retaken or for similar courses to be taken.

Dr. Gadsden noted that not being able to double count courses creates a problem for a program and requires them to change their curriculum.

Comment from a Senator that the students still have to take so many of the credits that are required for the degree programs that it is more substantial than one novel joint degree program.

Comment from a Senator supporting the dual program noting that the university already accepts credits from other organizations, so why not from another program.

Question from a Senator about what are the hours that are needed for the degree and if the program meets the requirements for hours.

Dr. Gadsden noted that this was addressed in the proposal, including what the programs will be sharing, what they will be adding, and the exact number of credits needed for both.

Comment from a Senator that per the Graduate Handbook, 25% of any given program can be counted from a different university, so if those are accepted from an outside institution, why not from within the institution.

Chair called the question.

16 ayes, 0 nays, 3 abstentions. Motion carried.

MOTION to table. Seconded. 19 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions. Motion carried.

iii. MA/MS of Computer Science Program Revision (G. Gallegos and M. Langer)

MOTION to table. Seconded.

b. Issues with Human Resources, ITS, and Facilities Ticketing

13.Executive Session.

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

15.Adjournment.

Meeting adjourned at 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.