

New Mexico Highlands University
Special Board of Regents Meeting
Higher Education Center
Room 157 at 1950 Siringo Road
Santa Fe, NM 87505
September 06, 2017, at 9:00 a.m.

1. Call to Order – Chairman Leveo Sanchez
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda for September 06, 2017
4. Approval of the Minutes from the July 26, 2017 and August 22, 2017 Meeting – Action Item
5. Higher Learning Commission Assurance Argument – Action Item
6. Adjournment

**New Mexico Highlands University
Board of Regents Meeting
September 6, 2017**

The New Mexico Highlands University Board of Regents held a meeting on September 6, 2017, in room 157 at the Higher Education Center, 1950 Siringo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505. Chairman Sanchez called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

Attendance

Board Members Present: Mr. Frank Marchi, Ms. LouElla Marr-Montoya, Ms. Sandra Turner, Mr. Leveo V. Sanchez, and Mr. John Ramon Vigil

Administrative Personnel Present: Dr. Sam Minner, President; Dr. Roxanne Gonzales, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Edward Martínez, Int. Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management; Mr. Max Baca, Vice President for Finance & Administration; Ms. Theresa Law, JD/CFRE, Vice President for Advancement; and Dr. Kimberly Blea, Int. Dean of Students

Others Present: Dr. Brandon Kempner, Higher Learning Commissions Accreditation Director; Dr. Ian Williamson, Faculty Senate Chair; Mr. Laird Thornton, Staff Advisory Senate President; and Ms. Carolina Martínez, Executive Administrative Assistant. The meeting was zoomed and was broadcast over the KEDP Radio Station.

Approval of the September 6, 2017 Meeting Agenda

Regent Marr-Montoya moved to approve the September 6, 2017 Board Meeting Agenda. Regent Turner seconded. Voting in favor were: Regent Marchi, Regent Marr-Montoya, Regent Turner, and Chairman Sanchez.

Approval of the Minutes from the July 26, 2017 and August 22, 2017 Meetings – Action Item

Regent Marchi moved to approve the July 26, 2017 and August 22, 2017 meeting minutes. Regent Turner seconded. Voting in favor were: Regent Marchi, Regent Marr-Montoya, Regent Turner, and Chairman Sanchez.

Higher Learning Commission Assurance Argument – Action Item

President Minner reminded the Regents that during the fall of 2015, his first semester on the job, the university's 2015 Assurance Argument was submitted to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The HLC raised a number of concerns regarding our Assurance Argument before they visited the campus. Before their visit, President Minner began re-engineering campus processes on to get on track with the HLC accreditation requirements.

President Minner noted that accreditation is a voluntary. Higher education institutions do not have to participate in accreditation. The main reason Highlands continues to seek accreditation is to ensure that our students remain eligible to receive federal financial aid.

President Minner reported that over the past year, he has worked with his administrative team, members of the faculty, staff, and students to address the accreditation challenges. President

Minner stated that he has made many personnel changes in order to get us back on track with our accreditor and to promote the quality of education and service to our students. President Minner added that he has worked to upgrade processes to bring clarity about who is responsible for each segment of the Assurance Argument and the university's accreditation in general. He has also worked to identify resources for the university's accreditation process.

President Minner stated that the university's Assurance Argument is due on September 11, 2017. He recommended holding another Board of Regents meeting with the HLC visiting team regarding the Board's understanding of the Assurance Argument and accreditation.

President Minner reported that he asked Dr. Brandon Kempner to serve as the university's HLC liaison until a new director of institutional research is hired. That person will assume the role of accreditation liaison in the summer 2018 semester.

President Minner added that in preparation for writing our Assurance Argument and the HLC visit, Dr. Douglas Davenport, HLC Consultant, was hired and brought to campus. Our HLC Liaison, Dr. Anthea Sweeney was also invited to the campus.

Dr. Kempner provided a written Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Assurance Argument. Dr. Kempner reviewed the accreditation timeline with the regents. He noted that the Assurance Argument will serve as the basis of what the HLC will review and follow-up on for the upcoming year.

Dr. Kempner stated the following:

- The Assurance Argument is due to the HLC on September 11, 2017
- The HLC will visit the campus November 6-8, 2017
- A Special Board of Regents meeting will be scheduled for November 6th, pending Board approval
- November 3, 2017, some HLC team members will visit the Albuquerque and Rio Rancho Centers
- The team will begin writing their report on November 7th-8th, the last days of their on-campus visit
- The university will receive a draft report from the visiting team in early December at which point the university will have a few weeks to respond to their report
- The university's final response, as well as the Assurance Argument and the site visit team's report, will be submitted to the Institutional Actions Committee
- A team of four university members will attend a hearing with the Institutional Action Committee to answer questions regarding the visit and any questions they have regarding our Assurance Argument, the visit, accreditation concerns; we will have approximately one month to respond to this report (mid-May 2018)
- June 2018 the university will receive a decision from the HLC Board regarding our accreditation status

Regent Vigil joined the meeting at 9:24 a.m.

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that probation area 4.B., stated that the university did not provide adequate evidence of Board training; the Board acting in the best interest of the

university; and the Board knowing about the Assurance Argument. Dr. Kempner stated that the Assurance Argument would be discussed today giving the university the ability to provide evidence that the Board was involved in this Assurance Argument during a special Board meeting and that each of the probation areas was discussed during the meeting.

Dr. Kempner stated that he will be reviewing each of the nine probation areas and what the university has done to resolve them. Dr. Kempner reported that a 2-3 page executive summary would be prepared on the probation areas.

Dr. Kempner mentioned that the Board of Regents has been deeply involved, from beginning to end, in each probation area which speaks well of the strength and shared governance at Highlands. Dr. Kempner further stated that the Board, the administration, faculty, staff, and students all worked hard to resolve the accreditation issues.

Dr. Kempner provided his presentation on the Assurance Argument.

Probation Area 1.A. Mission

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that our previous Mission Statement was too vague. The university finalized a new Mission Statement in the spring of 2016, before the university was placed on probation. The Mission Statement was discussed, voted on, and approved by the Faculty Senate and Staff Advisory Senate during several meetings. The Student Senate discussed the Mission Statement and passed a statement of resolution. Several campus and community forums were also held to discuss the university's mission. It was approved by the Board of Regents on February 26, 2016. Finally the HLC approved the Mission Statement in May 2016. The approved Mission Statement includes six strategic goals. The Mission and goals gives the university direction to achieve excellence.

The Mission Statement and strategic goals have been added to every university document: the Faculty Handbook, the Staff Advisory Senate Handbook, the Student Handbook, the course catalogs, it is posted on the website, and printed on campus banners.

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that all of the reports provided during Board meetings are tied into the university's Mission Statement, strategic goals and accomplishments. A video webpage was created by Mr. Sean Weaver, Director of University Relations, to highlight the university's mission accomplishments.

A demonstration of the video loops was provided.

Probation Area 2.A. Contingent Faculty Handbook

Dr. Kempner reported that in the fall of 2016 there were 131 contingent, 50 full-time term and 9 retained term faculty teaching at Highlands in fall 2016.

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that the Contingent Faculty Handbook was written by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. It was approved by the Faculty Senate and general faculty. He sent the handbook out to contingent faculty for feedback. The handbook was approved by the Board of Regents on April 8, 2016. The handbook has been in use for one

academic year. It informs contingent faculty of resources about courses, evaluations and orientations.

Probation Area 3.C. Contingent Faculty Evaluation and Orientation

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that during the last HLC visit, the university had no formal way of evaluating contingent faculty. A contingent faculty evaluation process was developed which is included in the Contingent Faculty Handbook. Every contingent faculty member needs to have a classroom observation by their department chair or dean or other tenured faculty member once every two years. All new contingent faculty members will have a classroom observation during their first semester. Evaluations forms will also be regularly filled out by the department chair and/or dean, using the semester-end student evaluations and the classroom observation. We now can provide a clear check list of who had been evaluated, when the observation took place, and what department the faculty member is in.

Dr. Kempner added that all contingent faculty are invited to Faculty Development Week. Our Center for Teaching Excellence reaches out to contingent faculty are involved in the center. If contingent faculty cannot make it to the main campus for orientation, we provide an online orientation class available to them.

Probation Area 3.D. Resources at Centers

Dr. Kempner reported that a new chart showing the percentage of student credit hours generated by location was created to assist with identifying the needs of all of our students. Another new chart showing full-time faculty distribution at the centers was created to show how committed the university is to appropriately staff the centers based on student credit hours. Dr. Kemper noted that the university has increased full-time faculty by more than 10 over the past 7 years, based on center needs.

Part of this probation area includes center services; this part of the Assurance Argument includes links to charts and flyers informing students of available services. This area also includes responsiveness to student concerns. The university is working to be more efficient to answer all student concerns by way of creating a Customer Relations Coordinator position that was posted 9/5/17. This hire will work from the main campus to assist all students. We have made customer service the centerpiece of responding to student concerns. We have implemented a business office help line. Employee hours have been extended allowing students more time to reach someone with their concerns. A customer services initiative has also been implemented by Dr. Denise Montoya, Human Resources Director. A new Interim Registrar, Business Office Director, and Financial Aid Director have been hired; all are committed to the university mission.

Dr. Gonzales added that she is visiting the centers to review the recommendations made by a center services task force. In that structure, one person at each location will be cross trained to serve all students in financial aid, registrars, and business office processes.

Probation Area 4.B. Assessment: Student Learning Outcomes and Co-Curricular

Dr. Kempner informed the Board that co-curricular programs are programs that contribute to a student's academic success and learning but are not academic programs. Co-curricular programs

at Highlands include tutoring, academic clubs, and student employment. A committee including himself, Dr. Blea, and members of the faculty and staff wrote a co-curricular assessment process. The Board of Regents approved the process into the Outcomes Assessment Handbook in December 2016. Dr. Kempner stated that each of the co-curricular programs has completed a program assessment and the reports are available and online on the Highlands website.

Probation Area 4.C. Student Retention, Persistence and Completion

Dr. Kempner reported that President Minner established the Office of Strategic Enrollment Management. Dr. Martinez, VPSEM, formed the Retention Advisory Council and the Matriculation Task Force Committees. The university formally approved retention plan with accomplishments with that plan. The retention plan was passed through the Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Senate, and Board of Regents. The university has been working on the retention plan for the past year. Page 90 of the Assurance Argument lists all of the university's retention goals. Dr. Martinez will present a retention update and 2016-2017 retention accomplishments at the next Board of Regents meeting.

Probation Area 5.A. Reserves and Strategic Budgeting

Dr. Kempner reported that the university's state appropriation has declined and has received several budget cuts. Information in 5.A. shows that, overall, the budget and expenditures have been flat through the past decade.

Dr. Kempner pointed out that page 101 includes information on the approximate \$1.9 million in funding the Foundation Office had generated for the university thanks for the efforts of Ms. Law under the direction of President Minner.

The university's composite financial index (CFI) was a great concern during our last visit. In FY12 our CFI reached a low point due to budget cuts, completion of the student center, and expenses being mis-categorized. The university has taken steps to rectify the problem and preventing it from occurring in the future by implementing a new buildings procedure, rebuilding reserves and revising budget controls. As a result, Highlands' CFI is no longer "in the zone" of danger identified by the HLC.

Probation Area 5.B. Board of Regents

Dr. Kempner stated that the Board of Regents was listed as a probation area because we did not show evidence that the Board receives any formal regent training; that the Board makes good decisions in the best interest of the university; and did the Board know about the Assurance Argument and accreditation process.

Dr. Kempner informed the Board of the evidence we now have to show the HLC:

- We can show evidence that the Board of Regents had an Association of Governing Board Training (AGB) which included a self-assessment process. The Board has committed to go through an AGB training every three years
- We did not show evidence that new Regents attend state level trainings; we have now included that material in the Assurance argument
- Regent Marchi provided information on the Regents Coalition that most of our members are a part of. We can provide agendas and minutes for the coalition meetings

- To show evidence that the Board is making decisions in the best interest of the university we have posted the meeting documents/packets showing all of the information you review before each meeting. Dr. Kempner has attached the meeting minutes and packets to the Assurance Argument for HLC review
- We can now show that the Regents devoted a full meeting to discuss the university's Assurance Argument

Probation Area 5.C. Strategic Planning

Dr. Kempner reported that the university has performed and integrated a strategic planning process. Every academic department and university unit created a strategic plan that aligns with the university's strategic plan, mission, and goals. Our HLC Consultant suggested the university create an executive strategic plan that ties and align each individual department/unit's strategic plans to the university mission and goals. We now have a clear alignment of our executive members with HU Vision 2020.

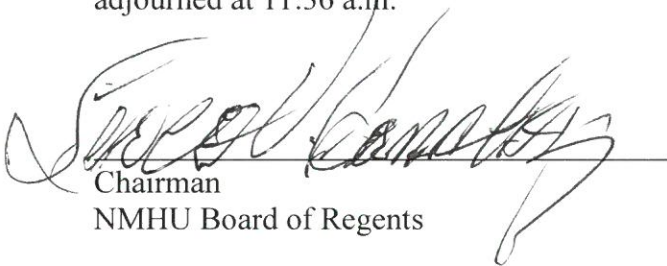
Dr. Kempner informed the Board that a link to President Minner's document to institutionalizing changes to ensure that HU is never placed on academic probation again is on page 120.

Action Item: Approval of Assurance Argument

Regent Marr-Montoya moved to approve the Higher Learning Commission Assurance Argument (**Attachment A**) as presented allowing for minor revisions. Regent Turner seconded. Voting in favor were: Regent Marchi, Regent Marr-Montoya, Regent Turner, Regent Vigil, and Chairman Sanchez.

Adjournment

Regent Marchi moved to adjourn. Regent Turner seconded. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 11:36 a.m.


Chairman
NMHU Board of Regents


Secretary/Treasurer
NMHU Board of Regents