



Academic Affairs Committee Minutes

Location: Zoom only

Date: October 21, 2020

Approved November 4, 2020

1. Roll Call

Present: Robin Bartee (Social Work), Peter Buchanan (English), Blanca Céspedes (Forestry), Kevin Ensor (Counseling & Guidance), Gloria Gadsden (Sociology, Anthropology, & Criminal Justice), Gil Gallegos (Computer & Mathematical Sciences), Sandra Gardner (Nursing), Katie Gray (Library), Edward Harrington (Visual & Performing Arts), Sheree Jederberg (Educational Leadership), Kathy Jenkins (Exercise & Sport Sciences), Arcadius Krivoshein (Chemistry), Angela Meron (Media Arts & Technology), Daniel Olufemi (Curriculum & Instruction), David Pan (Psychology), Jim Peters (Business Administration), Michael Petronis (Natural Resources Management), Luke Ritter (History & Political Science), Eric Romero (Languages & Culture), Maureen Romine (Biology)

Absent: Shirley Meckes (Teacher Education)

Vacant positions: Education – Special Education

Ex Officio Members: Roxanne Gonzales (VPAA), Henrietta Romero (Registrar)

Also Present: Christina Durán (Dean, Social Work), Mary Earick (Dean, School of Education), Justine Garcia (Biology), Shipra Gupta (Chemistry), Brandon Kempner (Dean, CAS), April Kent (Library, Faculty Senate Representative), Jennifer Lindline (Chair, Natural Resources Management), Veena Parboteeah (Dean, Business & Media Arts), Jesús Rivas (Chair, Biology), David Sammeth (Chair, Chemistry), Jan Shepherd (Chemistry), Joshua Sloan (Chair, Forestry), Ian Williamson (AVPAA)

2. Approval of the Agenda

Committee member requested adding a discussion under “Late Additions” [Item 17] concerning emails received from students about early exams.

MOTION to approve amended agenda. Seconded. Approved by consensus.

3. Approval of Minutes – October 07, 2020

Comment from the Chair that the date of the minutes listed under “Approval of Minutes” is incorrect. Secretary corrected the date.

MOTION to approve the minutes. Seconded. Approved by Consensus.

4. Subcommittee Reports (see attached subcommittee list)

a. Undergraduate Appeals (Meron)

Nothing to report.

b. Graduate Appeals (Jenkins)

Nothing to report.

c. Ballen (Buchanan)

Nothing to report.

d. Ad Hoc: C19 Policy Review (Gardner)

Nothing further to report.

Chair stated that the work of this subcommittee is complete and it should be stricken from future agendas.

5. Program Review Subcommittee Reports (see attached subcommittee list)

a. Health (Buchanan) – Postponed to Spring 2021

b. HPS Undergraduate (Gadsden) – Postponed to Spring 2021

c. HPS Graduate (Gadsden) – Postponed to Spring 2021

d. University Studies (Wolf) – Postponed to Spring 2021

e. Southwest Studies (Gallegos)

Report is still being worked on.

f. Forestry (Buchanan)

Chair of the program review subcommittee noted that all documents pertaining to this review are posted in Sharepoint including original report, lightly revised report, and accreditation materials. Subcommittee Chair then presented the final report of the subcommittee. [See attached for full report.]

AAC Chair asked the Chair of the Forestry Department if they will plan to track the impact of becoming their own department. J. Sloan stated that the department has not discussed that yet, with the program review being retrospective. However, he agreed that that is a good point.

AAC Chair thanked all those involved with the program review.

g. Native American Hispano Cultural Studies (Jenkins)

Department is still working on the report.

h. General Engineering (Jenkins) – Program review suspended.

Request from School of Education concerning reorganization of Program Reviews – action item (Valenzuela)

AAC Chair stated that she received an email from E. Valenzuela stating that the faculty of the Department of Teacher Education voted unanimously to request a single program review.

Comment from a committee member that our program review rules don't allow that. Chair stated that the decision is up to the department.

Comment from a committee member that the AAC conducts program reviews by majors and minors. We can use an accreditation report, but a decision has to be made on each major and minor. Chair suggested that we could have one review, but it will have to address each major and minor.

Question from a committee member. Is there just one budget? Dean Earick stated that each department has their own budget. So, the Department of Teacher Education has one budget.

Chair asked for clarification that it shouldn't be an issue for them to address each major and minor. Dean Earick stated that that is correct and that the national review follows this same process.

Comment from a committee member that this means we only need one committee.

MOTION to approve one program review for the Department of Teacher Education that will address each major and minor. Seconded. Approved by consensus.

Question from a committee member asking which program reviews would be folded into this one review. Secretary stated that the previously-identified program reviews are 6.i, 6.j., 6.k, and 6.m. Committee member asked if there were more than that. Dean Earick stated that it would include Elementary education, Early childhood education, Birth to K, and Early childhood K-3. Dean Earick also stated that she would contact the department Chairs and put together a one-page document that will list the programs.

Program review Subcommittee members: Kathy Jenkins, Jim Peters, and Mike Petronis.

- i. Education - Early Childhood Multicultural Ed (Jenkins)
- j. Education - Elementary Education (Peters)
- k. Education - General Science for Secondary Teachers (Céspedes) – Postponed to Spring 2021
- l. Education - Counseling and Guidance (Gadsden)

No update.

- m. Education - Math/Computer Science for Secondary School Teachers (Gray) – Postponed to Spring 2021
- n. Education - Special Education (Harrington) – Postponed to Spring 2021
- o. Educational Leadership (Gardner)

Nothing to report. R. Karaba said it would be done by the end of October, but subcommittee Chair is worried about the timing. AAC Chair noted that the process can bleed over to the spring semester if necessary.

- p. Curriculum & Instruction - Bilingual Education/TESOL/ Reading Education/Advance Program/Secondary Education (Buchanan) – Postponed to Fall 2021

6. Geology Department – New course, Introduction to Geospatial Technology – action item (Petronis)

Chair opened the floor for any questions or discussion.

Committee member noted that we asked for additional information at the last meeting. M. Petronis stated that a section was added to the proposal cover page to address that.

Comment from a committee member that the class is listed as 1 hour of lecture and 1 hour of lab, but they believe it needs to be 1-2. The Registrar concurred. Chair stated that she could make that edit to the form.

MOTION to approve with change. Seconded. Approved by consensus.

7. Biology Department – New program, BS in Wildlife Biology Conservation; Program Revision, Biology BS and BA; Course Revision, BIOL 385 - discussion item (Romine, Rivas)

Chair stated that 10 minutes will be allotted to the Biology Department and 5 minutes to the Chemistry Department to respond, then the floor will open for discussion. Members of the committee will be given the floor first.

J. Rivas presented a Powerpoint outlining Biology's proposals. Points included:

- Biology is a diverse discipline. Differences within biology are larger than between other disciplines. There isn't a rigid pattern about what should be in a biology program. What we are suggesting falls squarely into larger pattern.
- NSF [National Science Foundation] recommends integrating core concepts and competencies through the curriculum. This promotes learning by doing.
- There are some chemical components in biology. We have learned that you don't have to have a lot of organic chemistry to succeed in biology. Some students take Organic Chemistry in their last semester just to check it off, meaning they did not need it for their work in the major. Students learn about chemical reactions with biological context.
- Concerning the revision of BIOL 385 to 2850. This is not an Organic Chemistry class. The Content and SLOs are different. There might be some overlap. There are no prerequisites. This is a change in pedagogical approach. There are implicit biases in the way we teach classes now. This approach has been proven to serve under-privileged students.

Chair called time for the Biology Department.

M. Romine noted that the department was only allotted 10 minutes, but there are 3 different proposals. Chair stated that they were brought forward together as one proposal.

D. Sammeth presented the concerns of the Chemistry Department. Points included:

- The Biology Department wishes to remove Organic Chemistry from the BS and BA.
- The AAC is charged with overseeing what is taught. At last year's AAC meeting It was stated by a committee member that Biology should be able to decide their own curriculum and that Chemistry should not have veto power. Changes must be approved by the AAC. If it was up to department alone, we would not need an AAC.
- Some Biology departments offer a 1-semester Organic Chemistry class, which is what we agreed to do. If we removed the Organic Chemistry requirements, it would produce a sub-par degree. It would not be accepted at UNM. If a student wants to go to medical school, this degree without Organic Chemistry would not allow them.
- The Chemistry Department does not support the removal of Organic Chemistry from the BS/BA.
- The Chemistry Department supports the creation of the Wildlife Conservation degree.

- The Chemistry Department does not believe Bioorganic Molecules should be allowed to substitute for Organic Chemistry.

Chair called time for the Chemistry Department.

Comment from a committee member that they are disappointed. The issue was whether or not the revised course is a Chemistry course or not. The committee member would like to hear more about whether this is a Chemistry or Biology course. The committee member stated that they believe that Biology has the right to choose their own curriculum, but that it is good to get outside eyes reviewing requests. However, the AAUP [American Association of University Professors] does say it's up to the faculty to decide. Biology and Chemistry should have come together and solved this. The committee member uncomfortable and doesn't want to be in the middle. Does the Chemistry Department think this is a Chemistry or Biology course?

Dr. Sammeth stated that the syllabus presented matches perfectly with an Introduction Chemistry course.

Dr. Rivas stated that they provided side by side comparison of the SLOs, which are completely different. This course is about biology.

Committee member stated that they read everything, and there is a lot of overlap. The SLOs are very similar.

Chair stated that one of the concerns Faculty Senate shared is that the form stated that it is a replacement for Organic Chemistry. Dr. Rivas stated that is what it is.

A. Krivoshein stated that his PhD is in bioorganic chemistry. Chemistry studies molecules and chemical reactions, so if this class covers that, it is a chemistry class fundamentally. This class is not bioorganic chemistry, it is a diluted version of chemistry. This lowers the standards of instruction. This will make NMHU grads eligible only for lower level jobs.

Comment from a committee member that they find troubling the idea that only biologists can teach biology-focused chemistry. Should we have a geology-focused chemistry? The committee member thinks the foundational stuff needs to be established before you get into detail-specific ideas. Who's going to take this? How does it relate to the other disciplines?

Comment from a committee member regarding the statement that there are no standardized requirements for these degrees. The committee member stated they are uncomfortable with this idea of decolonizing education. It's not a good direction to lower standards.

Comment from a committee member that it's worth noting that this committee wasn't that divided on 2 out of 3 proposals. The committee member stands behind the idea that departments should determine their own curriculum. The committee member thinks that ultimately they want the Biology Department to have the program they feel they need. It's important that they have options. Standards should be as high as they need to be for students to learn what they need to know. This committee means everyone should weigh in.

Dr. Romine stated that Chemistry is integral to Biology. Biology has mixes of several other sciences. This is not about lowering our standards, and she takes exception to that.

J. Garcia stated that Biology and Chemistry are intimately linked. She stated that she is a molecular biologist and does both. This does look very different from an Organic Chemistry class. Different does not mean worse. This is not less vigorous. We have many specialized classes there are physics classes for different majors. It is common to make specialized classes for different subsets of students. There is a race and gender problem in STEM. We are trying to take approaches that promote learning and retention in women and minorities. Chemistry has a disconnect with Biology. Dr. Garcia stated that can't say "Is this Bio or Chem?" It's clearly both. We have to decide if we can make a class that is rigorous for a biologist that has chemistry in it.

Comment from a committee member that they are uncomfortable with this conversation. Biology has the right to choose what courses are in their program, but it is important to ask if this biology or chemistry. The committee member respects all the faculty, but there is a disconnect. The committee member believes that Biology has a right to choose which courses are in their curriculum, but that they do understand the role of the Academic Affairs Committee.

A. Krivoshein stated that there are 5 faculty members in the Chemistry Department who are qualified to teach biochemistry. Dr. Timofeeva has more publications than the entire Biology department.

Chair stated that the Biology and Chemistry Departments will be allowed time to summarize.

J. Shepherd stated that looking at the syllabus, it's 30% general chemistry and mostly Organic Chemistry. Dr. Shepherd stated that he would go with UNM and NMSU and do what they do. If a student takes 2 semesters of general chemistry, can they take this course after? It was presented as an organic-first course.

Dr. Sammeth stated that the wildlife degree is fantastic, and the department has no concerns. He also stated that they support Biology and put forth the survey of Organic Chemistry for that point. This course is dedicated solely for the Biology program. We want to work together.

Dr. Rivas stated that this only affects Biology students. Chemistry has nothing at stake here. Dr. Rivas takes exception to the implication that the department is watering down their standards. This is a change to their pedagogical approach. Implicit biases are real. Traditional methods work for some, but that's not good enough. The standards are not less. Geology and forestry changed their courses to delete Chemistry courses, and the Chemistry Department opposed them, as well.

Comment from a committee member that they hope the next time we talk about this, we don't do this mudslinging.

MOTION to approve the new program in Wildlife Biology Conservation. Seconded.

Point of order from Chair. This item needs to be changed to an action item first. Previous motion is invalid.

MOTION to make the new program proposal in Wildlife Biology Conservation an action item. Seconded.

Comment from a committee member that some of these are interlinked, and they'd like to hear what Dr. Sammeth has to say.

Dr. Krivoshein agreed that the proposals should be separated. He reiterated that the most productive way to solve this problem is for Dr. Rivas and Dr. Sammeth to get together and solve it in a civilized fashion. This is a matter of little details.

Dr. Sammeth stated he is willing to discuss it. He stated that the wildlife program has the bioorganic molecules in the program of study.

Vote was taken on the motion. 15 ayes, 1 nay, 1 abstention. Motion passes.

MOTION to approve only the Wildlife Biology Conservation program. Seconded.

Comment from a committee member that the program is a great idea. However, it would be a bad precedent to leave in a substitution that seems to be a fundamental issue. If it could be stricken that would be great. This proposal package was submitted as one.

Question from a committee member about whether the committee can change a department's proposal. Chair clarified that the Department can, but the committee cannot.

Comment from a committee member that the Chemistry Department has stated that they are in favor of the program. What is the one sentence in question? And can Biology remove it?

Dr. Sammeth stated that there wasn't a lot of discussion about the substitution of Bioorganic Molecules for Organic Chemistry.

Comment from a committee member that the requirements listed in the new program proposal list only General Chemistry and Bioorganic Molecules, both of which already exist. Even if the revision for BIOL 385 does not get approved, that course already exists. There is no mention of Organic Chemistry in the proposal.

Comment from a committee member that the name of the course is different.
Comment from a committee member that we can only approve the new program with the name of the course as it currently stands.

Dr. Rivas stated they could change the name of the course listed from "Bioorganic Molecules" to "Biological Molecules" [current course name].

MOTION amended by motioning member to include change in the course title. Seconding member agreed. Approved by consensus.

MOTION to table the rest of the discussion. Seconded. Approved by consensus.

8. Chemistry Department – New course, Survey of Organic Chemistry and Laboratory; New course, 1-term General Chemistry Survey – discussion/action item (Krivoshein, Sammeth)

Tabled.

9. Senate Charge – Upper division courses counting as general education – discussion item

Tabled.

10. Sociology Department – Course Revision, Reproductive Justice; New Course, Visual Sociology – discussion item (Derkas)

Tabled.

11. Marketing Academic Programs – R. Gonzales (VPAA)

Tabled.

12. Communication from the Chair (Gadsden)

Tabled.

13. Communication from the Registrar (Romero)

Tabled.

14. Communication from the Faculty Senate (Kent)

Tabled.

15. Communication from the Graduate Council (Gadsden)

Tabled.

16. Communication from the Administration (Gonzales)

Tabled.

17. Late Additions to the Agenda (minor items only)

A committee member reported on a recent email trend. Within the span of 30 minutes, the committee member received 8 emails from athletes. They appeared to be form letters asking to have the final exam administered early. All said they don't have the resources to complete the courses from home. The committee member pointed out that we have contact time required. All the emailers said they live in the dorms and that they're going home and not coming back. The committee member is uncomfortable that someone is obviously helping them write this letter. Every person in the committee member's department got the same email. It seems like these letters are being received throughout the university.

Chair noted that four members of her department also got these letters.

Provost Gonzales agreed with the committee member and thanked them for bringing this up. In the summer, the Deans put a proposal together to end the fall semester at Thanksgiving, but Dr. Minner decided not to do that. They have talked about doing this with spring break, but the university has more time to prepare for that. Provost Gonzales stated that she is concerned that this seems like a form letter. At this point, faculty can't turn on a dime. Ending at Thanksgiving is not an option for us. We cannot change exam dates. If they choose to finish their school work from home, that's fine. But we can't change the schedule.

The Chair asked for clarification that the university is not putting us online after Thanksgiving. Provost Gonzales stated that we are doing exactly what we are doing now, whatever the modality is.

Comment from a committee member that all their classes are online. If students go home early, it doesn't affect anything. The line that many students are using is "I don't have the university resources necessary to complete my education." Their department is concerned it's from athletics.

The Registrar stated that this is not something uncommon. This happened to a lot of institutions when Covid-19 hit. We don't have the ability to just end a semester early. The Department of Education stipulates that we can't do that.

Comment from a committee member that if there are students who don't have the resources, that's something the university should look at. But they don't think as many students have this problem as stated in these emails.

Comment from a committee member that we don't know who's fibbing and who's not. There might be someone out there that don't have the physical resources to continue. What can we do as a university about that? It's troubling that the students are pulling on your heartstrings, but there's no way to evaluate the validity of the statement.

A. Kent stated it only would affect in-person. We may want to have Dr. Minner send a communication, which would be good. Ms. Kent reported, as a member of the EOC [Emergency Operations Center] that A. Ludi and J. Gieri are working on having tech available for check out. We have to start looking at the spring semester.

J. Lindline stated that if students are experiencing a hardship, they can request an incomplete.

18. Next meeting – November 4, 2020

Zoom only, <https://nmhu.zoom.us/j/5054543209>

19. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn. Seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:02.

Submission Reminders

1. For items to be added to the AAC agenda, all documents must be complete and submitted to the Chair and Secretary by the Thursday before the next AAC meeting.
2. Proposals that need to be voted on by the end of Fall 2020 must be submitted to the AAC no later than Nov 4, 2020.
3. Any proposals requiring a catalog change must be submitted to the AAC no later than March 15, 2021.

Forestry Program Review
Academic Affairs Sub-Committee Evaluation and Report

The Forestry program at NMHU is a program that sets Highlands apart from other institutions in the state and establishes our university as a leader in both teaching and research in the field. The documents presented as part of the program review process and the accreditation materials submitted in fall 2019 to the Society of American Foresters (SAF) clearly demonstrate the success of the program in attracting students and maintaining high levels of teaching and research standards maintained by NMHU faculty while also suggesting a number of areas for continued growth and program development in the next five years.

Over the course of the past five years, the Forestry program has maintained consistent enrollment numbers of around 54 students enrolled in the undergraduate major, spread across several concentrations. This average has remained stable even despite university wide enrollment drops. However, in spite of the stable level of undergraduate enrollment, the number of students graduating in any given year has tended to fluctuate between highs of up to 12 students in a given calendar year to lows of 4, averaging 7-9 students in any given year. The numbers have been relatively low in the most recent years, which the review documents attribute to uncertainty in the wake of the university's HLC probation as to whether the SAF would renew the program level accreditation. Now that SAF accreditation has been granted, the program should pay attention to graduation rates over the next few years to determine whether there are any other factors at play, but the review committee believes Forestry is justified in anticipating growth in the future.

One of the strengths of the review documents is the care that they take in aligning the program's mission and student learning outcomes with the university's mission and vision as well as the competency standards required for accreditation by the SAF. There are explicit and thoughtful connections to the school and university core values and core traits. Faculty competencies, courses in which skills are developed, alignment with university traits, etc. are all clearly discussed, and it is clear that there is an investment across the program in using data to drive decisions about adjustments to the program as well as to the outcomes process itself. One of the areas for improvement identified is developing an outcomes process that is more skill oriented. Currently, outcomes are primarily assessed through class grades, and while they seem appropriate with current outcomes assessment standards at Highlands, the goal of continuing improvement in this area is commendable. For example, plant identification is currently taught in a third-year course in Dendrology and reinforced and assessed in a fourth year Capstone in which students work together to do forest inventories. Faculty realized that students were showing considerable discomfort with plant identification in the Capstone, and have been making changes to provide additional reinforcement of the skills through lab experiences, but they also realized that the use of grades as a benchmark wasn't contributing a clear enough sense of student abilities. The incorporation of more skill-based assessments is also in line with recommendations from the SAF.

One of the strengths of the Forestry program is the record of research performed by program faculty and the success that they have had in obtaining grants, most notably a \$5 million NSF grant to establish a Center for Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST) at Highlands in the field of forestry. Faculty have performed extensive research in the program in recent years, resulting in increased opportunities for students to participate in research projects and strengthening ties to governmental and educational institutions across the state, country, and world. One of the program priorities over the next five years is to use the CREST funding to expand program offerings at both the undergraduate and graduate level. The undergraduate major currently

includes concentrations in Forestry Management and Wildland Fire, and the review anticipates adding up to three additional concentrations in Watershed Management, Wildlife Management, and Urban Forestry. They are also in the process of drafting a proposal to create a Master of Forestry program that would serve as a terminal degree for practicing professional foresters. These anticipated programs are supported by both the external Advisory Board for the Forestry program as well as the SAF. One requirement of SAF accreditation is that programs are to maintain 8 FTE lines in the program. The program has 7 FTE lines housed in the program, with the eighth cobbled together from faculty in other programs. Faculty appear diverse in terms of their areas of specialization and their contributions to the department. Many have experience both within academia and also in applied positions prior to their current appointments, which likely strengthens their program. The review calls for the conversion of a retained term line to a tenure track line to bring the program up to this standard. The review justifies this by noting efforts and articulation agreements made in the past two years to develop feeder programs for transfer students across the region. As new programs are developed, careful attention should be paid to whether the anticipated growth in enrollment necessary to justify this line is realized.

Overall, the Forestry program appears to be of high quality and to have a lot of potential in terms of research, student recruitment and retention, and training students to be successful in the field. As the only forestry program in New Mexico, this program educates many professionals who will work in the field to preserve and maintain New Mexico's natural resources. Students are well-prepared for careers in forestry or continued studies in graduate school, with many research and field opportunities for undergraduate students.