

H NEW MEXICO **HIGHLANDS** UNIVERSITY®

STAFF ADVISORY SENATE

Regular meeting of the Staff Advisory Senate

November 12 2020

President Veronica Black called the meeting to order at 2.33pm

Roll Call: Veronica Black, Inca Crespin, Marcy Silva, Robert Anaya, Buddy Rivera. Ruthy Watson. Doris Gallegos

Absent Anne Bradford (excused) Vince Vigil

Guests: Dr. Minner Miriama Whalen

Also joining on Zoom: Tina Clayton, Germaine Alarcos, Cathryn Brooks- Williams

Approval of the Agenda: Robert moved to approve, Buddy second. Motion carried.

Approval October Minutes. Buddy Moved to approve minutes with amendments. Ruthy Watson's name and the date. Inca Crespin seconded. Motion carried.

Guest Dr. Sam Minner: Provided a campus update. November 11 Veterans Day presentation with veterans and active service member, staff members and students. Dr. Minner thanked Buddy for his service to the United States. Panel discussion regarding the first Woman Vice President, the first woman of color to hold the position. Ruthy Watson was on the panel. There is a recording of the discussion.

The Governor will have her usual weekly meeting tomorrow Nov. 13 at 3pm. No preview regarding her announcements but Dr. Minner believes there will be some additional and harsher State orders issued.

Several new reports of positive COVID 19 infection have been reported. All living off campus in Albuquerque area. Dr. Minner also mention the tragic murder of one of NMHU students. The suspect is in custody. NMHU will be having a Spring Break. We will continue managing the Campus as we have this fall. The default position is on online learning. The various Deans will consult with faculty members who want to be on campus. Faculty Senate recommended maintaining the Spring Break as scheduled. Dr. Minner reserves the right to change this if health and safety of our students is jeopardized.

There is planning for a virtual graduation. Students who missed their graduation last year can take part in the Spring Virtual Graduation.

In the recent election Proposition B was passed and will benefit our library and Proposition C benefits the renovation of Slinger Hall. NMHU will receive 7 million dollars toward this. The Matanza will be a continuing tradition every two years. The cultural Park will be provide space for many other events.

Sustainability: We are still recycling but we have had to reduce items that should be recycled due to lack of revenue. A recharging station is being built on campus. Highlands took delivery of its first electric car Tesla Model 3 which Dr. Minner test drove. He was suitably impressed with the car. As we replace our fleet we will replace them with electric cars.

Apparently NMHU owns National and we have had many problems with it. City of Las Vegas commissioned a study and the number one recommendation was to close National and make University a two way street. It was decided that the best deal for economic development would be for the middle exit off I25 to go straight through to the Plaza. If this comes to pass then National will be turned into a pedestrian walkway. An analysis of the hits on social media is on-going and if the staff Senate is interested in that data Dr. Minner would be happy to supply it.

Highlands was required to go to minimum wage of \$12 per hour in two years but we have gone to \$12 this year. Dr. Minner is hoping to go to \$15 per hour next year. This, of course, results in compression of wages to those who have been here for many years. Those who jumped to \$12 an hour benefited greater than those who have worked here for years and received 2%.

These raises were granted despite the tough economic challenges. The legal battle with the contractors of the Student Union Building being one. This was resolved this year. Other factors were the Golf course that NMHU was subsidizing to the tune of \$200,000 per year building to a deficit of over 2 million.

A bench to shelf venture, Highlands stable isotopes that remediated hydrazine, which is highly toxic, if a jet crashes. Not many purchased it even though it worked. Those three items are no longer costing the university and so has improved the financial situation.

The compensation study is ongoing.

Dr. Minner then asked for questions. Robert asked if there was a possibility that the age of children of employees who want to return to school could be raised. Dr. Minner would support this.

Inca asked if there was a possibility of eliminating fees charged to employees pursuing a degree. He said he would look into this.

Veronica ask Dr. Minner about the leadership training for SAS that Adele had been pursuing while she was president. Dr. Minner said he would gladly entertain a proposal from the SAS regarding voluntary leadership training.

Robert and Buddy will work on a draft letter from the SAS to President Minner regarding increasing the age for employee's children wanting to return to school. There is a question as to whether this is a State policy or an NMHU policy. Robert felt it was important to formalize the concerns regarding the fees and the change in age.

New Business: Dr. Moore, vice chair of the President's Council for Diversity Equity and Inclusion gave an overview of the campus wide climate survey going on across campus. A connection with the Higher Education Data Support and Analysis that had an instrument that met the requirements of the Council and Dr. Minner has agreed to pay for the survey instrument.

Dr. Moore has already met with the Faculty and student senate, and she shared some of the processes. This is a research study involving all our students, staff, faculty and administrators with the purpose of assessing the perceptions of NMHU's climate and how NMHU Diversity and Equity and understanding the experience of discrimination and harassment at NMHU. This survey is totally anonymous and NMHU will have no access to the survey until the data has been analyzed. Dr. Moore is hoping that the SAS will circulate the information that this survey will benefit everyone. We need a better understanding about what is happening on campus and at the centers.

Dr. Moore has been working with Dr. Edward Martinez, who has been assigned to start looking at equity among staff and faculty members when it comes to hiring, mentoring and retention.

Buddy asked Dr. Moore if she thought there may be a EEOC person designated OR the establishment of an office, and how that would work with the DEI Council. Ruth Mariampolski was employed intentionally because of the gap in delivery of services in this unit. The faculty handbook refers to an EOC officer but this individual did not exist, until Ruth came on board. NMHU now has an avenue for any investigations that may be required. An EEOC role and responsibilities looks at how HR advertises for recruits and retains staff and faculty. So everyone is trying to work together. Ruth is also the Title 9 investigator and EO compliance officer. Dr. Moore stated that even non ethnic minority people feel that they have been discriminated against and that there are issues on the surface that we don't talk about and we need more open communication. Carlos asked a question regarding where someone would go if they felt they had been discriminated against and could they go to an outside source. Dr. Moore confirmed that they could indeed go to a private attorney. Ruthy Watson mentioned that Mariampolski has the inside knowledge and expertise when it comes to EOC, retaliation and discrimination. Dr. Moore asked that the Staff Senate supports the survey instrument. Dr. Moore and Dr. Martinez have been working together on several issues and this survey will help Dr. Martinez in his proposal. In the past a lot of money has been lost because of race based lawsuits and we have to clean house before we can bring new people in.

Veronica thanked Dr. Moore for her report.

Veronica suggested that we ask Ruth Mariampolski back to an SAS meeting and give us more information.

Inca reported on the Faculty Senate forming a Black Lives Matter advisory committee. They intend to bring mentoring and more attention on our Black students. Veronica ask for volunteers to stand of this committee. Doors are still being propped open and causing a safety issue at the University. Dr. Gonzales talked about technology down days for the faculty so they don't feel they are working 24 /7. Inca said that staff should be included in this plan. And she suggested there should be a shout out in support of staff also. Reminders to take a 15 minute break and be mindful of not getting worn out sitting in front of a computer all day. Veronica suggested we could post reminders on the Portal regarding taking breaks. She has it on her calendar each day to remind her to take a break. Inca thought a Global E mail popping up at 10am as a reminder. Ruthy suggested an App. for reminders in one's phone.. Veronica proposed that a flyer might help to inform people of how they can remind ourselves to take a break. We should have an ongoing conversation to assist people to take their breaks. . The hemp certificate has been approved and will be up and running soon.

Mariama Whalen Labor employee relation office. Introduced herself to the SAS. Mariama works in partnership with the Unions. She shared her phone number and Email with us and said we could phone her or Email her if we had any concerns. 505 454 3236 and E mail miriama@nmhu.edu.

Buddy asked that as the first person to have this job at NMHU does Miriama's position have any reach outside of the unions. As an example if the SAS put forward a proposal that staff benefits be similar to those of faculty, would Miriama be involved. Miriama replied that she imagined she would be part of the conversation as long as it did not interrupt existing benefits. Although she would not be the final decision maker it would be critical to be included to be sure that contractual language and practices are honored and preserved. Veronica sked if Miriama was working on the current Staff bargaining agreement. Miriama confirmed that she was working on that but she could not say too much as bargaining is ongoing. Inca asked how Union negotiating members are chosen. Tina Clayton explained that Union members could volunteer to be on the bargaining unit.

Veronica thanked Miriama for attending our meeting.

Employee recognition: Inca had reach out to Marka Trujillo who was on the original committee but had no response. She then sent an E mail to everyone she believed was on that committee. No response. Inca would like to meet with Faron and ask if he could help as the SAS has been asked by the President to do something regarding employee recognition.

Marcy reported on Cathryn's thoughts she believed that a monthly shout out via global e mail would improve morale amongst us they could involve customer service, campus innovations time of service etc. Veronica suggested that at the end of each meeting we choose a department or person to highlight and thank them. It was also suggested that certificates could be sent celebrating anniversaries as we can no longer have the breakfast we have had in the past. Buddy thanked Inca for 10 years of service to NMHU.

There was a discussion regarding how to celebrate the holidays. Zoom Happy Hour. Games, sharing traditions, cooking, sharing recipes.

Announcements Veronica suggested that as the Faculty Senate meets twice a month perhaps SAS should consider this next semester. It was suggested that we held one 2 hour meeting and then a one hour meeting. Veronica will poll the members to see if that would work.

Next meeting: January 7 2021 2:30pm via Zoom

Doris made a motion to adjourn Veronica seconded and the motioned carried. Meeting was adjourned at 4:33pm

