

# **H** NEW MEXICO **HIGHLANDS** UNIVERSITY®

## **STAFF ADVISORY SENATE**

Regular meeting of Staff Advisory Senate

March 11 2021 VIA Zoom

Present: Carlos Nevarez, Marcy Silva, Inca Crespín, Anne Bradford, Veronica Black, Doris Gallegos, Robert Anaya.

Absent: Vince Vigil

Excused: Ruthy Watson

Guests: Yvette Wilkes, Joni Chavez, Cathryn Brook Williams, Sharon Maldonado, Angel Benavidez, Mary Angel, Tina Clayton, Sharon Doom, RA Ortiz

A quorum was established and the meeting was opened by President Veronica Black at 2:39pm

Approval of Agenda: Robert motioned and Inca second. Motion carried

Approval February Minutes: Carlos made a motion and Inca seconded to accept the minutes with corrections.. Motion carried. Inca suggested that we read the minutes prior to the meeting as was agreed. Anne will try to submit the minutes earlier if at all possible. Carlos suggested that any visitors presenting should be given time before the business of the meeting are completed.

### **Senator Reports:**

Work Place Quality Survey. We have been working on this survey for almost a year. It is quantified and it needs summarizing before presenting to president Minner and sharing with the campus community. Marcy thanked Cathryn Brooks Williams for her assistance.

Robert expressed some concerns from current and former students and staff at Rio Rancho. He had heard there might be a possible sale pending. Veronica said she had not heard anything at the Board of Regents meetings. Robert suggest we ask President Minner when he joins the meeting.

Veronica reported that she attended the Board of Regents special meeting where they discussed tuition and fees. Max Baca gave an overview of where we stand and the overall consensus was that Highlands is going well. The B of R are not recorded but the minutes are available. The next meeting will discuss the possible rise in fees.

Dr. Minner joined the meeting at 3:00pm. He gave a campus update. The COVID relief bill was approved by the House and goes to President Biden for his signature shortly. This is good news for Higher Education.

As a sector Higher Education is set to receive 400 billion dollars. An analyst is looking into what New Mexico might receive and it is projected that NMHU will receive additional money from this. It could be as much as 4 million. That is a lot a money but we, NMHU, have spent a great deal on COVID and we have not accrued a lot because of the effect COVID has had on the auxiliary side. Housing and meal plans are part of the auxiliaries and have been severely impacted because of the reduced number of students living on campus. Part of this money will be used to help that situation. The biggest COVID story is probably related to athletics. As members of the RMAC and NCCA we were subject to very rigid requirements which we were not able to square away until recently. We now have the testing capacity and vaccines available and a process in place so our students in spring sports have been able to compete even out of state. It is a costly and complicated scheme that we must adhere to. Testing students a few days before, immediately prior to and immediately after a competition or meet. Thus far we have not had a single positive test.

The legislative session has been a 60 day session this year and has been a wild one. Most meetings are conducted on Zoom Dr. Minner has devoted a lot of his time testifying or as an expert witness and they think they know what the budget is going to look like now. There will be a 1.5% compensation increase for university employees. This will start at the beginning of the fiscal year July 1 2021.

The Governor's free tuition for all was announced two years ago but due to COVID and reduction in oil revenues it only applied to two year students. It is hoped that with oil prices back up and coming out of COVID it is believed that the opportunity scholarship, as it is called, will be applicable to least some four year schools. New Mexico will be the first in the nation to have such a program.

Dr. Minner shared his budget priorities such as increasing floor salaries to \$15 if we can afford it. This will, of course, exacerbate the compensation compression. Dealing with this issue will be his second priority.

The Evergreen compensation study was received two days ago, and we now have knowledge of what job titles and staff positions should be compensated. It is probably not a target that can be met in one fell swoop, as it would take millions to make those kind of adjustments for everyone who works here.

There will be a couple of opportunities to share this with everyone and then we can start down the road to better and fair compensation.

Not much has been done with Campus Life. Early in the fall 2021 there are plans for an outdoor event at the golf course. Plans have not been finalized but we know it will be a major act, The Matanzas will happen again this year. If anyone has any ideas regarding events, contact Donna Martinez.

Commencement will be virtual. Once we are back to face to face students who take part in the virtual commencement will be able to walk at a future commencement. In addition to the diploma, graduating students will receive a certificate for a graduate class at Highland free. Grad. Students will receive a piece of Nambe.

The commencement speaker will be Dolores Huerta, the great civil rights activist. She will be presented with an honorary doctorate from Highlands.

Robert Anaya thanked Dr. Minner for his priority of \$15 minimum wage on campus and the fact that no one was furloughed or lost their job. Robert asked about the possible sale of land in Rio Rancho. The foundation owns the land and building and NMHU rents from the foundation. If the property sells Highlands may continue to rent from the new owner. Dr. Minner congratulated Tina Clayton and Tom for their beautiful renovation of their building on Railroad Ave.

Veronica reported that Dr. Minner had some ideas regarding appreciation of staff when we return to campus in the fall. Maybe a coffee morning for the staff as a gratitude event. Veronica opened up a discussion for further ideas.

Robert suggested that we put Dr. Minner on the agenda each month. Veronica will ask Maria to place it on his calendar.

Inca attended the faculty Senate meeting. It was a short meeting consisting of Dr. Minner's report given at the SAS meeting today.

**New Business:**

Provost Gonzales has reached out for a SAS representative on the improvement committee for the Strategic Planning. Veronica will go to the first meeting and report back regarding what this would entail so we can make an informed decision.

Veronica wanted to check in with our committees

**Budget and Finance:** Anne and Doris.

**Recruit One Committee:** Doris and Veronica. Doris will set up another meeting.

**Faculty Senate:** Inca and Doris are splitting time on that.

**Diversity Equity and Inclusion:** Doris and Robert and Buddy are our representatives.

**Work Place Quality Survey:** Marcy. By next meeting we should have something to report.

**Strategic Planning:** Inca and Robert will split the time on that.

**Power of Service:** Veronica Marcy Anne and Inca

**Pod Cast program committee:** Carlos and Robert. Robert invited Veronica and Carlos to join him on the pod cast he does on KSWV, a Northern New Mexico Station. This is recorded and could be used by SAS on our website.

**Professional development Committee.** Veronica suggested we postpone this until we can identify the needs, Marcy mentioned that there were several suggestions in the Survey that we could use.

**Internal Strategic Plan:** (SAS) Veronica reported that they had already started but had stepped back from drafting the plan due to other commitments. So it was suggested that we pause this until the semester is over instead of jumping in before we are ready. The Board was in agreement.

A question on Chat from Joni Chavez regarding the program Learning Happens Here. Marcy informed us that this was through HR and she will check with Kelly and Aaron if they are going to continue.

**Discussion items:**

**Employee recognition event.** Inca is leading this event. Inca reported that there is a committee. There was a larger committee at one point but many of those people have retired. They are working with Marka in HR and Maria Sena. The first thing will be a save the date which should go out on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The 2020 employees as well as the 2021 employees will be recognized, as 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic. Dr. Minner will be the MC. The event date is April 29<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 11 am.

Dr. Minner also wants to celebrate monumental things that our staff are doing. Not sure what this will look like but we should put this on the agenda to discuss next month.

SAS could accept nominations of people's accomplishments.

**Campus safety:**

Carlos brought to the attention of the SAS the skateboarding on campus. The majority of skaters are not NMHU students and are all over campus. There are no signs around campus prohibiting skateboarding except a sign in Central park which is not visible. Speeding on Campus is also an issue. Carlos expressed great concern regarding the a lack of speed limit signs across campus. There is no yield sign behind Melody hall at the junction of Rosenfeld which could cause a traffic accident. The parking lot at Gregg House has no sign to indicate there is no right turn into is a one way street and the temptation is to make a right and take a short cut to VCH. The excuse not to post signs is that it will ruin the beauty of the campus. The posts are already there it just needs signs added. The lack of signs could result in a law suit in the future. Veronica suggested that if the new direction of University Ave. takes place the question of signage should also be addressed. Robert suggested that we make this an action item on the next agenda and we will create a plan to take to the President.

Persons wishing to address the Staff Senate. No one

Announcements. None

Next meeting April 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 Marcy has already sent the invitation. Anne asked Marcy to add Yvette Wilkes to the invite.

Carlos motioned to adjourn Seconded by Doris motion carried.

Meeting closed at 3:52 pm