

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
3:30 pm, Workman 101
Minutes

1. Call to Order.

Dr. Linda DeVeaux called the meeting to order at 3:33 pm.

2. Approval of the Minutes.

- Dr. Brian Borchers moved to approve the March 4, 2025 minutes, followed by a second from Dr. Isabel Morris. Motion passed.

Dean Elaine DeBrine Howell welcomed Vanessa Anderson as our new Director of Student Access Services. She comes to us with a lot of experience and we are thrilled to have her here. The Faculty Senate welcomed her to this role at NMT.

3. Report of the VPR, *Lique Coolen*.

Dr. Coolen provided several research updates that could affect faculty.

- Executive Orders on funding freezes and calculations. The impact thus far not as bad as expected:
 - 2 awards were canceled, but these were at end of the award period.
 - 1 award lost a portion of funding for outreach.
 - 20 awards received stop work orders, mostly DOE, but many have been able to continue work, although for some (3) with caution and limited scope for DEI or Community partnership activities.
- The Office of Research has run several scenarios to calculate impact of cuts to F&A rates for NIH and beyond.
 - For NIH, the impact would be minor as we have only one NIH grant.
 - If F&A rates were to be cut throughout all federal funding, we will lose a significant amount, but a lot less than some of our neighbors who have much higher F&A rates.
 - Presently, it doesn't appear to be likely that reducing F&A to 15% will be implemented.
- NMT has had some delays in receiving new funding awards, but only for about 3 DOE awards. These delays are of course disconcerting, but haven't had a major impact on our ability to admit graduate students.
- Dr. Coolen thanked everyone for all of the assistance she has received since arriving and looks forward to working with faculty across the institution.

4. Reports of Standing Committees.

a. Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, *Anders Jorgensen*.

Dr. Anders Jorgensen outlined that this year's committee was tasked with updating the Policy and Procedure for Appointment, Promotion & Tenure.

- The committee identified what faculty positions exist at NMT (e.g., professor, lecturer) and created a table that summarized the different requirements for each type. Following discussion of their document.

- **Motion** (from the Committee, no need for a second): The Faculty Senate adopts these definitions of positions that is being put forward by the Committee.
 - Dr. Jorgensen mentioned that Research Professors descriptions were not included in the document at this time and that could be put forward as another motion if this one is not approved.
 - Discussion ensued. Several individuals believed research professors be included in this document. However, it was pointed out that NMT does not have a policy on Research Professors at this time.
 - VPAA indicated that (a) lecturers (in the policy that just completed its public comment period) can be full- or part-time, but there is no expectation of continued employment and (b) a prior policy was developed for Research Professors and it was approved up to (but not by) the Board of Regents (that Dr. Doug Wells confirmed). Earlier this year, the VPAA suggested the committee hold off adding Research Professors until they have had time to work their way through this former policy to integrate relevant items into this policy.
 - A point that was raised was whether it was possible to grandfather our current instructors into the Assistant Teaching Professor rank. Dr. Jorgensen indicated it was discussed by the committee but that it was not proposed as part of their motion at this time.
 - **Action:** Dr. Brian Borchers moved and Dr. Richard Sonnenfeld seconded an amendment to the original motion to require individuals in the Assistant Teaching Professor rank require a terminal degree.
 - Discussion ensued. Dr. Steve Simpson noted that in some disciplines, such as English, it is common to hire individuals who have a MA degree to teach. Then, if an individual pursues more education, there is a potential career ladder they have through the promotion process. Not having this type of title and option may limit recruiting for some disciplines. Dr. Arjak Bhattacharjee noted in engineering, an individual may not have a PhD but yet they have valuable industry experience to share.
 - It was clarified that the current amendment would not grandfather current employees without a terminal degree into this category.
 - **Decision:** The amendment did not pass.
 - Dr. Bill Stone pointed out that we already have a policy on minimum qualifications of instructional staff that discussed minimum qualifications and that this document may be more restrictive. Dr. Jorgensen noted that the policy on minimum qualifications is cited in their proposal.
 - **Action:** Dr. Borchers moved to return this to the committee to include research professors. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Romero. The motion was approved.

b. Faculty Development Committee, *Bill Stone*.

- Dr. Stone outlined some of the major programs the committee has worked on this past year. This included the Faculty Mentoring program (that had about 27 pairs of early career faculty and their mentors), Teaching Tea Times, and Faculty Research Talks. The

committee is open to other ideas faculty have. He encouraged individuals to please reach out to the committee (chairperson, Dr. Kip Carrico, kip.carrico@nmt.edu), if they have any suggestions.

c. Mental Health, *Yulia Mikhailova*.

- Dr. Mikhailova discussed items the committee worked on this year.
 - The committee assisted the student mental health committee with organizing Pet Day (outside, on the lawn in front of Cramer); for the proposed “Bring your pet to work day” (bringing pets to labs and classes), legal issues became too large for implementation.
 - Earlier this year, the committee helped facilitate a panel discussion who discussed mental health issues.
 - The committee assisted SCOPE who received federal funding to provide an Alternatives to Suicide program led by the US “Wildflower Alliance.” This year’s program will be a two-day event (but it may be involve uncomfortable conversations for participants). However, next fall, another training will be offered and it will be consolidated to be held on one day on a Saturday in September.
 - New members of the committee identified that the committee’s charge was to review mental health policies and procedures at NMT and to keep the faculty informed. The committee will continue working to provide a connection between the individuals who write and implement these policies and the faculty.

d. Student and Faculty Conduct, *Todd Welford*.

- Dr. Welford mentioned the committee met in the fall for training (Title IX and appeals). To date, no cases have been brought forward to the committee to review. A question was raised about Title IX and it was noted that the 2020 requirements are currently in place (Biden-era requirements were recently rescinded).

e. Honorary Degrees and Awards, *Linda DeVeaux (on behalf of the committee)*.

- The committee prepared a flyer that was distributed to the membership. This flyer was shown with their respective potential deadlines for several student awards that faculty decide.

f. Regents-Faculty Conference, *Richard Sonnenfeld*.

- Dr. Sonnenfeld indicated the Regents-Faculty Conference committee prepared a report that will be presented to the Board of Regents.
 - This annual survey began in 2013 at the request of the Board of Regents. Their request was to provide the Regents with feedback from the faculty’s perspective on the state of the institution.
 - Almost no changes to the information that was submitted was made by the committee. During the discussion, it was noted that in prior years comments were either changed or not included, and so the inconsistency was noted as problematic.
 - Dr. Sonnenfeld highlighted several elements in the executive summary included: the number of faculty who (a) participated in the survey, (b) were planning to retire, and (c) were actively looking for other positions (in the short term and after five years. Faculty also expressed concerns about the possibility Institute will be substantially degraded or fail entirely over time.

- **Motion** (from the Committee, no need for a second): The Faculty Senate adopt the committee's report to send and present to the Board of Regents.
 - Some of the items that were discussed included the following:
 - What happens if the motion is approved? If approved, the motion will go to the Regents where the Faculty Senate Chair will present the report.
 - What happens to the committee report? While there is no guarantee that the report will be acted upon, it is a public document for people to share as needed.
 - Has this report compared its recommendations to prior reports? Not at this time.
 - The motion was approved.

5. Grad Council Report, *Aly El-Osery*.

- **Grad Council Minutes.**

Dr. El-Osery provided an overview of the Grad Council minutes along with updates from Graduate Studies. This included:

- Faculty, the AVPAA, Dean of Engineering, and the Dean of Graduate Studies attended Los Alamos' first annual Continuing Education Showcase Information session to represent NMT's graduate programs. In addition to NMT the event included Texas A&M, University of California San Diego, University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, New Mexico Highlands University, Central New Mexico Community College, Northern New Mexico College and Santa Fe Community College. We gave a presentation about graduate programs followed by having a booth to talk to prospective students. About 10 LANL employees attended in addition to 100 online.
- Next week the Office of Graduate Studies is sending two graduate students, one from engineering and one from science, to attend the National Conference on Undergraduate Research to promote NMT's graduate programs.
- The New Mexico Space Grant Consortium is accepting scholarship applications with the deadline of April 14, 2025. NMT graduate students have a good track record of getting this scholarship and we need to encourage more students to apply. The award is \$10,000 over two semesters. More information and the link was sent in the Graduate Newsletter.
- Applications are 30% higher than the same time last year but we still need to be aggressive especially with the uncertainty with visas and international students. So far, we have not noticed any slowdown in departments making funded offers and we have not heard any issues regarding visas. The deadline for almost all funded offers is April 15, 2025 so departments need to have a plan in place to pursue the next students in their queue in case students they made offers to don't accept.
- With the help of the Graduate Student Association and Office of Advancement, we have launched a Scholarship & Emergency Fund Google Form to provide financial assistance to students. So far, we had 8 applications mixed between request for scholarships based on merit and request for financial assistance based on medical emergencies.
- We have graduated 12 PhD students to date for this academic year and we have 11 more that have submitted intent to graduate this semester. Advisors are highly encouraged to help students finish the last mile so that we can hit our 20 PhD target for this year. The Office of Graduate Studies is making their conference room available so students can come and work on their thesis/dissertation and be able to ask questions regarding completion requirements.
- The Dean of Graduate Studies asked faculty, chairs and program directors to review their sections of the catalog and report any issues/mistakes/corrections.

- The Dean of Graduate Studies asked faculty to remind international students that are transitioning from one degree to another to work with the International Office to update their I-20 with the new degree they are pursuing even if their current I-20 is still valid.
- Currently, the Dean of Graduate Studies is the one that makes admission decisions on Pre-Degree Special Graduate Application. The Dean of Graduate Studies proposed to have department chairs and program directors make the admission decision after the initial review is conducted by the Office of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Council was in favor of the change and all members approved.
- Dr. Andrei Zagrai congratulated Dr. El-Osery on guiding NMT toward the goal of graduating 20 PhD students annually and the success we have had to date.

6. Old Business.

7. New Business.

a. Annual Assessment report, *Rick Thompson*.

Dr. Thompson provided an overview of this year's assessment process. Appendix A provides a summary of key points to remember, some are from prior years, others are new this year. A few key points include:

- The assessment of all SLOs does not need to be conducted annually.
- Each SLO should be evaluated using two measures, one of which should be a direct measure.
- There are some departments and programs that offer multiple degree programs within a discipline (e.g., professional master, MS, PhD). To evaluate each of these programs within a single report, the assessment plan should have a mechanism by which each of these programs can be independently assessed.
- Departments and programs are encouraged to consider developing and using rubrics to evaluate student performance on a range of activities and assignments (e.g., presentations, writing, projects, research, designated questions from exams or homework).
- In the Benchmark Target/Goal section of the assessment template, departments and programs outline their expectations for the students' performance that they deem appropriate. For example, 'All students will at least meet expectations.' or some other percentage of students they expect to achieve a particular goal (e.g., 75% of students, 90%).
- As with many assessment reports, the "closing the loop" portion of the report is one of the most challenging elements for departments (in general) to write. But it is a critical element of assessment reports.
- The collection of exemplars for assignment-based assessments (i.e., examples of student work that represent the various scoring levels of a rubric) can lead to more consistent assessments when using student work from multiple class sections taught by multiple instructors.
- Departments should make sure that they describe their assessment methods in enough detail for the reviewers to understand and comment upon their efficacy.
- In most cases, simpler is better when it comes to assessment methods.
- Reporting on the range or standard deviation of assessment outcomes can be helpful for understanding the true level of performance of the students.

Task Force Goals

- Quicker turnaround of assessment report reviews,
 - Better/more useful feedback to departments,
 - Creation of exemplars of good assessment reports; perhaps examples for each column in the template (SLOs, assessment procedures, benchmark/target goals, assessment results, use of prior feedback, and planned adjustments/improvements), and
 - Looking for additional members of the Task Force.
- b. Awards Discussion Date, *Faculty Senate Executive Committee*.
- The next regular meeting of the Faculty Senate is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6. It was discussed whether it was possible to hold the meeting where faculty discuss student awards (e.g., Langmuir Award, Founders Award, Brown Award) on the faculty in-service day scheduled for Friday, May 9. The meeting can be held in the afternoon starting at 1 pm.
 - **Motion** (from the Committee, no need for a second): The Faculty Senate will hold its student award meeting in the afternoon on Friday, May 9.
 - Discussion included whether the engineering chairs had enough time to discuss the Cramer Award. Dr. Corey Leclerc thought the engineering chairs could work around this date so that this could work.
 - The motion was approved.
- c. BibliU, *Mike Jackson*.
- Earlier this year, BibliU began overseeing the management of the Campus Store (Bookstore). They have a service in which they charge the institution a fee so that students may rent their textbooks. Textbooks are provided to students at the start of semester so that they can begin the term having the appropriate materials. The majority of textbooks are provided electronically through Canvas.
 - Student Affairs held a Town Hall meeting for students on March 11. The meeting discussed proposed Tuition Rates and Book Charges. Student Affairs has been speaking with different students who live in the Resident Halls over the past few months to gather their thoughts about the BibliU book process to gather their feedback. To date, students who have participated in these events and conversations have generally been positive.
 - Recently members of AA and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with Student Affairs and BibliU to address a number of remaining questions from discussions held last fall. Those questions were compiled into a FAQ, a draft of which was distributed to the Faculty Senate. This FAQ will be maintained by Student Affairs.
 - VPAA answered additional questions and concerns about this service that included (answers in parentheses)
 - whether the program would save money for students (BibliU believed that on average it should, but students would need to evaluate this as it would vary by student),
 - if the Opportunity Scholarship would cover the cost of this fee (TBD),
 - if this would limit faculty's selection of textbooks (no),
 - if the Bibliu program would reduce the faculty's flexibility in course delivery (it should not, although using an electronic resource may be different from a paper resource),
 - moving toward ebooks will discourage actual reading of the textbooks assigned, as well as discouraging students from retaining copies of textbooks needed as references in future, upper division classes.
 - Dr. Daniel Portner suggested pursuing an opt-in model instead of an opt-out model. Another suggestion was to do a more complete survey of students.

- Several individuals requested if gathering more information was possible and the VPAA mentioned that it has been requested of BibliU.
 - Dr. David Greene also responded to some of the comments and questions, indicating that at this time no contract has been signed with BibliU and that while the conversation has been happening in different areas of campus, they are still gathering feedback.
 - Dr. Borchers indicated that he reviewed the cost for textbooks for one of his student advisees. It turned out that the BibliU model for this student was higher than purchasing the textbooks from the bookstore. Consequently, Dr. Borchers volunteered to calculate the cost of textbooks for a randomly selected group of students (up to 20), when purchased through the BibliU model vs. from the bookstore.
 - Dr. Tom Kieft made the following motion that was seconded by Dr. Borchers: **Motion:** The Faculty Senate does not recommend this initiative move forward until more information is available.
 - The motion was approved.
 - The VPAA was asked whether this would affect the implementation of BibliU. He indicated it was important feedback to receive, which is part of the decision making process. However, the decision to implement rests with management – but collecting more information and passing along the suggestions that were made will be done.
- d. Commencement, *Mike Jackson*.
- Commencement will be held on Saturday, May 17 at the City of Socorro Sports Complex - Rodeo Arena. The event will start at 10 am. For more information, please visit: <https://nmt.edu/registrar/graduation.php>. Following the ceremony, we will hold a reception for all graduates at the Sports Complex (rather than bringing everyone back to campus). If you are able to attend, please do as the students enjoy seeing their faculty there.
 - If you have not already done so, please inform the Commencement committee (commencement@nmt.edu) that you are planning to attend the event (so far about 50 faculty have RSVP'd). Although we are past the deadline to order regalia, the committee may have several extras available.
 - For more information, or if you have questions or need to RSVP, please contact commencement@nmt.edu.
- e. Update on Policies, *Mike Jackson*.
- Two policies were out for campus feedback:
 - AA-01: Policy for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty
 - AA-16: Policy on Emeritus Status
 - A summary of the comments received from the campus community was distributed, along how they would (or would not) be addressed.
 - One of the campus feedback suggestions was: “If an individual applies, but is not recommended, for promotion, can there be a minimum waiting period before they reapply so that they have sufficient time to enhance their portfolio?”. The VPAA inquired if this was appropriate to include. There was general sentiment that as long as the committee and administration (e.g., Deans) were consulted, that such a recommendation would be appropriate to include. Therefore, this suggestion will be incorporated into the policy. The VPAA will be presenting this policy at the April Board of Regents meeting for their consideration.

8. Announcements.

- a. New Mexico Science and Engineering Fair will be held on Saturday, April 12. Dr. Sessions noted they are always looking for judges, so if anyone is interested in volunteering, please do.

- b. Announcements from the OSL included:
 - Reminder about the hours available for students to seek assistance. This includes dedicated hours in the Skeen Library and Torres Hall. This year's *Final Extravaganza* event will be held on May 6 from 3 to 8 pm.
 - Student Research Symposium (April 22 – 25); Faculty and staff may volunteer to serve as evaluators by signing up at: <https://form.jotform.com/250346277108153>.
 - Poster printing for the SRS is done at the Skeen Library for free if they have a consultation with the Writing Center. Next week, there will be several workshops for poster and oral presentations as well as the 3-minute speech competition. Poster printing should be completed by Friday, April 18.
 - The GSA will also have their poster competition at the SRS and will be sending information about this to the campus later this month.
 - For questions, suggestions, or more information, please contact [Aga Gabor da Silva](#) (or at srs@nmt.edu; Office 103, Skeen Library; Phone: (575) 835-5241).
- c. Spring course evaluations will begin on Thursday, April 24 and end on Friday, May 9. Please contact ACT (act@nmt.edu) for more information or if you have questions.

9. Adjournment.

Dr. Brian Borchers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:32 pm. Dr. Iain Crump seconded the motion. Motion passed.