

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
FACULTY SENATE MEETING
Tuesday, March 4, 2025
3:30 pm, Workman 101
Minutes

1. Call to Order.

Dr. Curtis O'Malley called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm.

2. Approval of the Minutes.

- Dr. Brian Borchers moved to approve the February 4, 2025 minutes, followed by a second from Dr. Iain Crump. Motion passed.

3. Reports of Standing Committees.

a. Retention Committee, *Michelle Creech Eakman*.

Dr. Creech Eakman provided an overview of this year's report.

- Recommendations for Retention, Persistence, and Graduation Rates
 - The rates that were previously discussed and approved included:
 - Freshmen fall-to-fall retention: 80%; 5th semester persistence: 67%; 6 Yr Graduation rates: 50%
 - Transfer fall-to-fall retention: 78%; 5th semester persistence: 70%; 6 Yr Graduation rates: 67%
 - The graphs outlining these rates were updated with this year's data.
 - No changes to these rates were recommended at this time. Note: retention rates are leading indicators while graduation rates are looking backward.
- The outcomes from the prior year's recommendations that are being tracked by the committee include:
 - Use of the Canvas gradebook and DropOut Detective. About 70% of faculty who teach introductory courses use their gradebook. As a result, faculty teaching introductory courses were encouraged to use it so that the impact of dropout detective could be enhanced. Another recommendation for faculty to consider was incorporating daily interactions with students.
 - Identification of and improvement strategies for high DFW courses.
 - Recommendation of additional staff in Counseling, Student Access Services and Student Success Services Offices.
 - Faculty workshops to improve course content and accessibility. Faculty were encouraged to contact VPAA with ideas and potential workshop facilitators.
 - Adoption of financial literacy training and FAFSA paperwork for all students and their families as part of orientation. Summer orientations now include training and assistance with FAFSA. However, existing students may not have access to assistance with FAFSA, which may be something worth exploring.
 - Hiring a Chief Enrollment Officer to manage student enrollment and associated data.
 - Use of Retention Management software and associated data to develop predictive models to support student success.
 - Undertaking the NSSE and FSSE surveys and disseminating the results to campus. A report should be forthcoming now that the HLC visit is wrapping up.

- Establishing Student Success Coaching or Freshman Experience Courses. This hasn't been done yet across the institution and faculty were recommended to consider this further.
- Establishing an "In Service Day" for faculty training, pedagogy and required campus-wide certifications. Faculty were asked for their continued patience as Academic Affairs develops and refines the structure for these training sessions.
- Addition of "break time before finals" via the Calendar Committee activity. Committee members face a number of constraints when reviewing the academic calendar. Faculty were encouraged to volunteer for the committee.
- Finally, tables outlining the demographics of NMT students and comparisons with similar institutions was presented. Faculty were encouraged to reach out to students who are struggling, particularly those in the 'at risk' categories. A key statistic was 'Of the 82.6% of students with a first semester GPA above 2.0, 68.7% had graduated after 6 years.' This highlights how critical success in the first semester at NMT is for eventual graduation. Also discussed were ACT scores for incoming students, how they have decreased over time, and that many scores are below ACT's STEM score benchmark of 26 (that is associated with at least a 50% chance of earning at B or higher in a STEM-related course; a STEM score is the average of their Math and Science scores). Additionally, the requirement to take Algebra 2 for high school graduation has been removed. The impact of this may result in fewer students taking math in their senior year.
- Dr. Fuierer inquired why students with good GPAs were leaving NMT. Dr. Borchers noted that it is a challenge collecting information. Exit interviews have been distributed in the past but they were voluntary. Some comments for why students were leaving were discussed.

b. Academic Standards and Admission Committee, *Ben Duval*.

- Dr. Duval discussed the change to the standardized testing requirements for admission based on High School GPA. Previous requirements state a High School GPA of 3.3 or above is needed to waive the standardized testing requirement. In August (shortly before August 18), the High School GPA requirement was lowered to a 3.0 on the website. VPAA noted that ASAC and Retention committees were contacted about this potential change on August 23 with a follow-up to ASAC on September 4.

Discussion followed as to whether this should be a motion to be voted on or if something different should be considered. It was noted that the process should start with ASAC, Faculty Senate, and eventually the Board of Regents – who have the authority and make the final decision. Discussion also included whether there should be another process for contacting committees as emails may be missed (e.g., email the Senate Executive Committee).

Following further discussion, Dr. Tom Kieft made the motion, seconded by Dr. Paul Fuierer.

Motion: Over the summer 2024, the admissions standard was changed without consultation with the Faculty Senate. This was an apparent violation of the Policy on Policies. Faculty request that the administration seek Faculty Senate approval when changing academic policies as the Policy on Policies dictates.

The motion passed.

c. Ombudsperson Role, *Richard Sonnenfeld*.

- Dr. Sonnenfeld discussed the Ombudsperson role who helps facilitate informal resolution of concerns of employees in the organization. An individual in this role is not a mandatory reporter. They are not required to report discussions and they can assist with communications and make them more effective, along with providing support and advocacy. They can help with conversations with other department chairs, members of the administration, etc. Although the position doesn't have power, such an individual can help with advocacy and assist a faculty member who has concerns about speaking out to research their rights and possible solutions to a problem while protecting their identity. The goal is to bring people together and help discussions occur. If any faculty need assistance, they are welcome to reach out. Typically, only a handful of individuals use this resource annually.

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

- Dr. Sonnenfeld indicated the Regents-Faculty Conference committee shall prepare a report to the Board of Regents on the status of the Institute from the faculty's perspective at their annual summer retreat. The committee distributed the survey to faculty and individuals need to be logged into their NMT account. Only one response per individual is permitted, although they can be edited. The committee will be sure to protect confidentiality and use the information individuals provide to prepare their report. Faculty were asked to submit their information by March 11. This year's focus, beyond any academic issues, will be on the non-academic functions of the university since it impacts faculty responsibilities. Results will be presented at the April Faculty Senate meeting.

e. Space Utilization and Planning Committee, *Nikolai Kalugin*.

- Dr. Kalugin outlined the committee's mission, charge, membership, and reporting structure. Before proceeding further, the committee would like this approved by the Faculty Senate. This will help identify what they are responsible for (and not responsible for), who is a member, and the range of their activities.
- Discussion included what this document was to be used for (e.g., committee's operating procedures vs. change to the Faculty Senate's standing rules) and how information would be gathered/received. For example, do faculty come to the committee when issues arise, what is their role in long-term planning, does the administration consult with the committee prior to making decisions (recognizing the committee does not have any official powers).
- The general sentiment was that the committee is empowered to move forward in a manner outlined in their document. This document though can be endorsed by the Faculty Senate.
- Dr. Tom Kieft requested a change to the wording in the first sentence to be "of the Faculty Senate" rather than "to the Faculty Senate".

Motion: Dr. Bill Stone made a motion to adopt the document as the committee's plan/operating procedures with the recommended change. The motion was seconded by Dr. Brian Borchers. The motion was approved.

f. Direction to Faculty Senate Committees, *Curtis O'Malley*.

- The executive committee of Faculty Senate requested all committees submit a 1-paragraph description of the committee's short-term efforts along with suggestions on when to present a report to the Faculty Senate. Descriptions are due by May 6 and will

help with filling open positions and schedule committee reports for the upcoming academic year.

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

a. Grad Council Minutes.

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

- Announcements related to the:
 - Colorado School of Mines Information Session,
 - Los Alamos Continuing Education Showcase (Event is on March 26 and individuals were requested to send any recruiting materials to the Center),
 - Contract cancellation issues in particular with TAs (timing is critical for these changes, so please work with the Center to make sure no extra or fewer paychecks are distributed),
 - Fall 2025 application update/inquires (while applications are higher as compared to last year, please continue moving applications through the Slate system; faculty have about 200 applications waiting for review while department chairs have about 14),
 - Extra applications available in Slate,
 - Degree requirements (individuals were encouraged to direct students to the catalog rather than putting the information on a webpage), and
 - New graduate student hire/graduate office.
- New Business items that were discussed included:
 - Co-advisors on graduate committees as possible (although there can only be one academic advisor), and
 - DE courses (faculty were encouraged to consider having a DE option for their courses and graduate programs, in part to ensure there are sufficient enrollments).
- Dr. El Osery also announced NMT's admission to the GEM Fellowship program. This provides NMT with access to 4,000 additional potential students who may be interested in pursuing graduate studies. The Center will send communications this week to prospective students. If faculty have anything flashy, e.g., big grant, breakthrough, collaboration, cool picture, etc that can be included in the email, please let him know (Aly.ElOsery@nmt.edu). The GEM Fellowship program will also be promoted to our current pool of students. The Center is looking into having GEM personnel visit the campus and hold a workshop for students that are thinking about graduate school.
 - Question: How many can we have at NMT at any time? Dr. El-Osery didn't believe there were any limits. Students apply to the fellowship and they indicate the institution where they would like to use it.

5. Council of Chairs, *Michael Jackson (MJ)*.

- a. MJ thanked Dr. Rick Thompson for leading the HLC reaffirmation of accreditation effort. Rick also expressed his appreciation for the numerous individuals who participated across the institution – faculty, staff, students, and members of the community. Their efforts helped make this year's site visit successful and it was a team effort.
- b. Draft Minutes of the January 21, 2025 Council of Chairs meeting. MJ highlighted several items found in the draft minutes from the last Council of Chairs meeting.
 - Announcements highlighted the importance of attending training sessions offered by ACT, the move to annual course schedules, the upcoming transition to Canvas Studio, the need to make sure instructional materials follow ADA guidelines, and the importance of

putting course materials in blueprint courses (as student information should only be maintained for about 2 years).

- The Purchasing Office developed guidelines and forms for how faculty can pay for reprints and publication costs (for both domestic and international publishers). This information was included and faculty should contact the Purchasing Office if there are any questions.
- AVP Brandon Boulter provided an overview of Research @ Tech Day and is interested in any feedback individuals have on this year's event (brandon.boulter@nmt.edu).
- On the last page of the Council of Chairs minutes, you will find some questions asked during some legislative committees. MJ encouraged faculty to reflect on the questions asked by legislators (e.g., student success, retention and graduation rates, impact of higher education) and how we, as an institution, should be prepared to respond to such inquiries.

b. AA Management Directive

Proposed revisions to the existing guidance on the Dean's Research Scholars was presented along with a newly developed Dean's Developing Scholar for individuals who don't yet qualify for the Dean's Research Scholar.

Action: The documents, having come from the Council of Chairs, was moved for approval. There was no further discussion. The two documents were approved.

c. Procedure for Department Chairperson Elections

Proposed revisions to the procedure for electing department chairpersons was presented.

Action: The document, having come from the Council of Chairs, was moved for approval. A question was raised about departments who had their own procedure. This situation is noted in the draft procedure's comments, which highlights that a department's procedures can still be used. However, there should be a mechanism for individuals to provide their Dean with feedback on the candidate(s). The document was approved with the change that 'Chair' be used instead of 'Chairperson'.

d. Policy for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty

Proposed revisions to the policy, and its related procedures, were presented. Along with proposed changes to the procedures, information related to Teaching Professor ranks were incorporated into the existing document. One change to the title of Appendix B was recommended prior to the meeting.

Action: The document, having come from the Council of Chairs, was moved for approval. During the discussion several questions were asked included.

- What titles will 'Teaching Professor' replace? It will replace the 'Instructor' title. 'Lecturer', for example, will continue being used for part-time faculty.
- Has the topic of 'Teaching Professor' been discussed previously? Yes. Last year, Faculty Senate approved guidelines for Teaching Professor ranks (partly because of time limitations). This is to implement it into policy.
- On page 26, the term 'instructor' is used. Is that problematic? No. It is used in a general way rather than as a title. However, we will replace the term with 'faculty member' to avoid any confusion.

Following discussion, the document was approved with the above changes. Next, it will go out for community feedback prior to going to the President and Board of Regents for approval.

6. Old Business.

7. New Business.

a. HED Catalog Cleanup, *Steve Simpson*.

Dr. Simpson provided an overview of the changes that need to be made related to the HED catalog.

- A while back, the HED conducted an audit of every NM Higher Education Institution's catalog and flagged inconsistencies with the state common number catalog and the state General Education matrix. NMT was asked to correct the issues within the year or possibly face a penalty in their state funding.
- For example, two examples of issues were (a) changes that were not updated in NMT's catalog, and (b) language taken from NMT's course syllabus instead of the NMT's course catalog. Other examples were highlighted, such as the difference in descriptions used for Calculus III and denoting which courses are general education and how that will be designated in our system/on our transcript.
- To address this, a memo was developed that summarizes this process and the changes that were done. Any changes that needed a curriculum committee review have gone through the process last semester and are noted as such in the memo. The remaining items are more clerical items that are being corrected.
- The spreadsheet is meant for NMT's Registrar and the equivalent position in the HED (rather than using change forms for these courses). Dr. Simpson encouraged folks to reach out to him if there are questions about any particular courses.
- The following motion was made by Dr. Simpson and seconded by Dr. Fuierer.

Motion: The Faculty Senate approves Dr. Steve Simpson to move forward in working with the HED and other campus entities to resolve the clerical issues identified in the spreadsheet.

Discussion ensued, that included:

- Consequence for transfer students. Is there any impact if descriptions are not exactly aligned? Likely not. Small wording issues should hopefully not impact transfer credits. The transfer of CCNS courses should be transferable. It is important to have the same titles though. Note: because institutions can add content to a course, a description may contain the core, agreed upon language along with some additional information to describe the additional content. An example of this is our MATH 2420 course – the sentence at the end of the course description is unique to NMT with the rest following the CCNS description.

Following discussion, the motion was approved.

b. 2025-2026 AY Tuition and Fees, *Michael Jackson*.

VPAA showed the draft tuition rates that will be discussed with students next week for NMT.

- NMT is proposing a reduction in the per-credit-hour tuition, lowering it from about \$329 to \$299 (approximately 9% decrease).
- NMT will align our tuition structure with the models used by UNM and NMSU, where tuition remains flat from 14 to 18 credit hours (15 to 18 for UNM and NMSU). This adjustment provides a more balanced pricing structure while encouraging students to optimize their course loads for on-time graduation.
- Unlike other research universities, NMT will not (at this time) impose additional differential fees on STEM programs (e.g., NMSU and UNM charge an extra \$39 and \$16 per credit hour, respectively, for engineering and other programs).
- As per the Office of Financial Aid, through Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships, alongside NMT's own financial aid programs, approximately 92% of students receive financial assistance, with an average award of \$16,000 per year.

- Discussion included a range of topics including
 - the motivation of the proposed change (to lower the per-credit cost, align structure in a similar way to other institutions, reduce the extent to which tuition is discounted);
 - whether it would affect student enrollment patterns (it could, but we think to a limited extent);
 - this change, if approved, will be important for academic advisors to be aware of; and
 - whether it would generate or lose revenue (goal is to have it be slightly above neutral).

8. Announcements.

- a. Announcements from Academic Affairs included:
 - Distinguished Teaching Award nominations can be made using the link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSepD68lCosZ6AoK-TeAd8HFll1F_YG14VYXP4mfZenmV5XFzA/viewform?usp=header
 - Student Research Symposium (April 22 – 25); Abstracts / registration are due March 14. Categories include: Poster sessions (undergrad & grad students), GSA Poster Competition (grad students only), Oral Presentation (undergrad & grad students), 3-Minute Speech Competition (undergrad & grad students) along with Department and Program Showcases. Faculty and staff may volunteer to serve as evaluators by signing up at: <https://form.jotform.com/250346277108153>. For questions or more information, please contact [Aga Gabor da Silva](#) (or at srs@nmt.edu; Office 103, Skeen Library; Phone: (575) 835-5241).
 - Collaborations with UTEP faculty and staff – if interested, please reach out to michael.jackson@nmt.edu.
 - Sabbatical applications (for Spring 2026+) are due to Department Chairpersons by March 15, 2025 (so March 17 as it would be the next business day).
 - The Board of Regents Finance Subcommittee will hold a budget forum toward the end of March/Beginning of April. Please email any questions you have for them by noon, Friday, March 14 to linda.deveaux@nmt.edu with a cc to michael.jackson@nmt.edu.
- b. Native Forward NMT Partnership meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 5 from 11am – noon in room 113 Speare Hall. All NMT faculty and staff are welcome to attend to learn more about the Native Forward Scholars Fund, resources, and networking opportunities that are open to our students.
- c. The Marketing Committee announced the tasks they are working on (e.g., feedback on the NMT Motto, Logo wording, University Colors, One-pager template).
- d. MechE Mayhem will be held on Saturday March 29 in the Macey Center parking lot. Approximately 75 teams will compete and individuals can volunteer at: <https://forms.gle/p1Khqe8ABGK1CkTQ8>

9. Adjournment.

Dr. Brian Borchers made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 pm. Dr. Iain Crump seconded the motion. Motion passed.