

# NEW MEXICO INSTITUTE OF MINING AND TECHNOLOGY

## FACULTY SENATE MEETING

Tuesday, May 2, 2023

3:30 p.m. Workman 101

## Minutes

### 1. Call to order

Dr. Brian Borchers called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

### 2. Announcement

Next Faculty Senate meeting will be May 11, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.

### 3. Council of Chairs Updates – *Dr. Mike Jackson*

- Invite VPAA anytime to any department meetings.
- Strategic Plan volunteer opportunities are available along with other volunteer activities (Assessment & Accreditation).
- **Importance of Advising**
  - Critical given the lower number of incoming students this year.
  - ADVR002 and DSEC003 give placement information for incoming students. If assistance is needed, please contact Dr. Mike Jackson.
- **Program Review for Next Year**
  - Mathematics, EE&S, Physics, Biology Chemistry, CLASS, CSE (Non-CS degree programs) – undergraduate/graduate degree programs.
  - Strategic Plan volunteers or other volunteer activities (Assessment & Accreditation)
- **Other items**
  - Please submit grades on time so that degree conferrals can be processed in a timely fashion.
  - Grades for Graduating Students are due by noon on Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - Grades for Non-Graduating Students are due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- **Faculty Development Week**
  - Potential topics include: Accommodations, time and stress management.
  - OSL will ask for a schedule when faculty will teach various topics during the fall semester. They are also interested in knowing what topics students will likely struggle with along with any extra examples/problems to use. A reminder will go out during the Faculty Development Week about this as well.
  - Please let VPAA know of other topics that faculty would like to see for professional development.
- **AA Budget**
  - AA's Budget will be presented at Council of Chairs later this month (or in June).
  - Discussed with Council of Chairs some of the challenges departments have faced (such as MENG) – but we think there may be some solutions on the horizon.
  - AA Budget for next year is cut by about \$148K; absorbed by Administration but we

are asking departments to scale back on non-essential travel and ‘entertainment’ such as meals and food.

- Discretionary raises for faculty were \$275 K. This was distributed: Instructors received \$1,000; Assistant Professors \$500; Associate Professors \$1,000; Professors \$1,500 with some additional equity adjustments within/between departments.
- VPAA requests that Faculty Senate provides guidance each Fall semester for different scenarios (above/below certain thresholds, funding provided by equity, compression, merit – or a combination thereof; if at discretion of institution).
- Discussion was held; a suggestion was to redistribute raises using different percentages. This may be possible if legislative funding used the word ‘average’ in describing a 6% faculty raise.
- A request was made not to sweep department budgets. VPAA indicated that the goal would be to have VPAA reserves swept prior to any budgets at the department level.

#### **4. Budget and Research Committee Report – *Dr. Mark Person***

Budget Presentation was shown.

- As a reminder, the agenda for the May 2 special meeting included "information only" items that were reports from the Council of Chairs and the Budget and Research Committee and therefore motions were not taken from the floor.
- The Faculty Senate Budget Committee presented its report. Some key challenges noted in their report included:
  - There are 445 fewer students at NMT in 2022 compared with 2016 enrollment numbers,
  - Office of the VPAF estimates that this has resulted in an I&G structural budget deficit of about \$3.96M/year on average as a result of declining enrollment,
  - The number of graduating high school seniors is expected to grow until 2025 in New Mexico when it will then begin to decline,
  - Unmandated increases in faculty salaries seem unlikely in this climate of decreasing enrollment, and
  - the US Dept. of Labor has recently increased H1-B prevailing wages due to inflationary pressures. Since about 25% of the NMT faculty are foreign nationals, this can pose a challenge for hiring talented faculty.
- The Committee attempted to answer three fundamental questions about the budget:
  - Are funds transferred out of I&G, and if so, how much? The committee determined funds were transferred out of I&G. The amount varies by year, up to \$12.5M, varying from about 16% to 23% of the I&G budget (going back to 2014).
  - What were the revenue sources for these transfers, and where did the money go? The committee identified the funding sources and the amount of funding they were transferred to.
  - Has money from the I&G transfers been used for capital projects on campus? The committee identified that transfers from I&G were made into Campus Capital Outlay Reserves to fund construction projects on campus. These funds are derived from the Land and Permanent Fund as well as overhead from NMT research entities.
- The Committee will continue meeting with the VPAF in the upcoming academic year.

- Two points raised by Dr. Doug Wells during the discussion included his belief that
  - Based on the information that the leadership of Administration and Finance shared with the Senate Budget Committee, NMT has been misreporting institutional financial data for regulatory compliance to NM-HED. This also has important consequences for the published percentages of each major budget category.
  - The budget trends under the NMT administration of AY2016-2017 through AY2022-2023 have been systematically directing funding growth away from academics (instruction, and academic support) and toward administration (institutional support and O&M).
- Other key elements of the discussion included:
  - Questions were raised and discussed about fringe benefits (parental leave), financial misreporting (why didn't auditors catch this?), the role of enrollment (and what to do about it), and why other comparable institutions do not see the same trends.
- An observation made is that some of the budget concerns we have are also tied to enrollment. Are there any specific recruitment strategies being considered?
  - Faculty Senate Chair indicated there is a Strategic Enrollment Management Committee on which there is faculty representation.
  - VPAA indicated it was unclear why enrollment was down in comparison to prior two years (two minor changes: move back to testing requirement for incoming students, but test optional pathway was made available in November; scholarships were distributed about 1 week later than usual).
  - VPAA emphasized that retention is just as important as recruitment and retention is an area where the institution could improve. What obstacles are students facing in gateway courses and major courses? Are there ways we can engage students better – through active learning, inclusive instruction, etc? Trying to meet students where they are and bringing them up rather than a meet/do not meet standard. Why are students leaving programs/institution?
  - Later in the conversation, some ideas for addressing recruitment and retention issues included: providing flexibility to students to retake courses outside NMT; Online summer math courses; improving connections to area schools; growing the Summer STEM program; re-engaging with outreach initiatives (e.g., Science Olympiad, Science Fair).
  - The Director of Admission emphasized how collaborative the faculty have been to requests from his office. Faculty and staff have often dropped everything to meet prospective students – and that makes a big difference in the recruitment process. He asked for their continued support. He was skeptical that visiting schools would be overly productive – but providing students opportunities to engage with faculty on our campus is critical.
- Faculty Senate chair emphasized this will be a continuing conversation.

## 5. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Ken Mincschwaner and seconded by Dr. Mark Person  
The motion passed unanimously.