

**New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology**  
**FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 2, 2024**  
**3:30 pm, Workman 101**  
**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order**

Dr. Brian Borchers called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm with a call for approval of the March 5, 2024 minutes.

**2. Approval of the Minutes**

Dr. Iain Crump moved to approve the minutes. Dr. Ben Duval seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**3. President's Report, *Dr. Daniel López***

Interim President López summarized legislative outcomes for the Institute as follows:

- I&G for FY25 increased from \$35.683 million in FY24 to \$36.939 million, a boost of \$1.256 million, or 3.52 percent
- Under unfunded mandates:
  - Student support, \$136,755
  - Enhanced faculty compensation, \$319,095
  - Graduate Assistant compensation, \$87, 314
- Bureau of Geology, increase of \$5.874 million (23 percent increase) primarily to address water issues
- PRRC, \$2.154 million, an increase of 10.23 percent

Total revenue, \$52,000,023, an increase of 5.2 percent

- Capital outlay for FY25 totals \$14,000,333 as follows:
  - \$8.5 million for Kelly Hall; GO Bond on the Nov. 5, 2024 general election ballot
  - \$3.5 million for Kelly Hall in special capital funding to cover the Phase 1 shortfall in recognizing inflationary factors since the project was first approved
  - \$1.45 million for Academic Affairs classroom education technology, teaching labs, furnishings
  - \$80k for search and rescue (a student club) vehicles
  - \$250k for fabrication lab equipment
  - \$250k for NCKRI for equipment and exhibits
  - \$300k for vehicles and equipment for the PRTC in Playas

NMT received \$1.12 million for special projects supported by individual legislators in areas of their interests as follows:

- \$160k to Student Life for a student retention pilot project
- \$160k to the Chemical Engineering Dept. for student and research support and resources
- \$160k for the N.M. Science and Engineering Fair hosted by NMT
- \$160k to the Bureau for a mapping project and aquifers study in Rio Arriba County
- \$480k for ICASA to analyze and report on issues related to data systems

Dr. López credited VPAF Richard Cervantes and NMT's legislative team for their efforts on the University's behalf, saying he is leaving his successor with a situation that is reasonably healthy. If an uptick in enrollment continues, it bodes well for the new academic year. The future is not

without its challenges, including a drop in high school graduates. A lot of people want to govern higher education, which is another challenge. He thanked the Senate for their support during his interim term as President. Dr. Borchers thanked Dr. López for his service over the years.

#### **4. Introduction of Peter Szatmary, Director of Marketing and Communication**

Dr. Greene introduced the new director as an award-winning marketing director at several colleges, with experience as a respected editor/writer. Mr. Szatmary, who started as director on March 25, will be meeting with the VPs and Deans. In addition, an RFP has been issued for a website provider.

#### **5. Reports of Standing Committees**

##### **a. Regents-Faculty Conference Committee, *Sharon Sessions***

For this year's report, the RFCC took the results of the 2023 report to develop a Faculty Survey. Faculty could respond during the two-week period of March 5-19, 2024, and space was provided for comments. Faculty were asked to rank from most important to least important six topics: *Faculty Issues*, *University Governance*, *Graduate Student Issues*, *Undergraduate Student Issues*, *Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention*, and *Quality of Life in Socorro*. They were to rank the single topic most important to them, and to rank the topics in order of importance. Dr. Sessions displayed the survey results in a stacked bar chart. Of the 60 survey respondents, 28 cited Faculty Issues as most important; the most important faculty issue was salary, as chosen by 43 respondents. Ranked second most important was Undergraduate Recruitment and Retention; third, University Governance; of least importance was Quality of Life in Socorro. Survey responses were anonymous and comments were randomized and thus untraceable.

From comments, it was clear that salary is very important, followed by benefits and research support. Under University Governance, issues cited were administrative division siloing and budget transparency. Most important under Graduate Student Issues were improved quality of life and more research support. Ranked least important was a larger role for the GSA. The top issue regarding undergraduates was tutoring/mentoring, followed by behavioral health. Ranked first in undergraduate recruitment was efforts to attract out-of-state students. There was no ranked list for undergraduate retention. The most important issue under Quality of Life in Socorro was K-12 education followed by affordable housing.

A brief discussion followed on how to decide between two issues and what percentage of faculty responded to the survey (of 140 faculty, "halfish"). It was noted that only a small number of comments were changed, most were verbatim. Survey results will be presented to incoming President Mahyar Amouzegar and the Board of Regents sometime this summer. Survey comments do not represent either the Faculty Senate or the RFCC. The committee moved, and the Faculty Senate unanimously voted, to approve the report.

##### **b. ADA, *Mark Samuels and Theresa Kappel***

All committee members attended the March 4 ADA meeting over Zoom, as did Theresa Kappel, Director of the Office for Student Access Services, the Director of Facilities Management and a student representative. Discussion included a recent incident whereby a student living at the Mountain Springs apartments sustained a leg injury and had difficulty with access to the apartment. Neither Facilities Management nor the Office for Student Access Services had been aware of the problem. Attendees agreed to create a website or portal where people could report accessibility issues on campus. No timeline

was proposed, but the importance of access and safety issues was cited. The proposed online site would include information on ADA Section 504 and a list of individuals and offices to call regarding access issues; i.e., Facilities Management, the Office for Student Access, Affirmative Action and the Human Resources Department. This information would be made available to faculty, staff, students and all visitors to campus. During the discussion that followed, Dr. Creach-Eakman asked if it were possible to request ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters on the proposed ADA website. Director Kappel replied that info would be posted on how to request an ASL interpreter, adding that NMT does not have such an individual on staff, but one can be brought to campus when needed. The policy addresses disability issues and laws governing them, and a goal is to make this information more accessible and visible.

**c. Honorary Degrees and Awards, *Oleg Makhnin***

Dr. Makhnin recommended that the Faculty Senate approve a request to award a posthumous Ph.D. degree for Joseph Zinecker, who came to New Mexico Tech in January 2021 as a doctoral student in geophysics. Mr. Zinecker died on Dec. 30, 2023 in an auto accident on his way home from a family vacation. A letter requesting the posthumous honor and summarizing his career came from Dr. Jolante W. van Wijk, Mr. Zinecker's academic advisor with the E&ES Department. Mr. Zinecker had completed all formal coursework toward a Ph.D. (with all A's) and had only to complete two research chapters for his dissertation at the time of his passing. The committee moved to approve the posthumous degree, followed by a unanimous vote. In May, Faculty Senate members will choose students for the Langmuir Award, Founders Award, and the Brown Award. Letters of nomination are due on May 2, a week prior to the final Faculty Senate meeting of the academic year on May 9. Nominations also will be accepted from the floor.

**d. Education and Research Efficiency Committee, *Ryan Norris***

EREC members discussed how to clarify their mission, noted Dr. Norris in his report, to wit: "*The purpose of this committee is to represent the educational and research missions of New Mexico Tech to assure that business processes are supportive of these missions and balance business needs against faculty/staff time and attention.*" EREC asked faculty for feedback as to their needs and/or suggestions for improvement, and received four emails, including a suggestion to improve the purchasing process. The committee touched base with the Purchasing Department which recommended that faculty contact them for vendor information before any attempt to purchase equipment or other items. An issue raised at the meeting referred to publication fees, and how dealing with POs/DPs can be very inefficient. The key word for the committee is efficiency; i.e., how are classroom hours scheduled. An idea to use Google forms was deemed a good suggestion.

**e. Faculty Development, *Kip Carrico***

The committee scheduled seven faculty development events for the 2023-2024 academic year, five during calendar year 2023 and two scheduled for April 10 and April 26, 2024. Among 2023 events were two Teaching Tea Time sessions, a Mentoring Program breakfast linking junior faculty with senior faculty; a panel on tenure and two programs highlighting faculty research. Attendance ranged from eight at a Teaching Tea Time event to 23 at a faculty research presentation. Several plans are under way for next year, and the committee is open to suggestions on speakers, topics, volunteers, etc.

**f. Mental Health, *Yulia Mikhailova***

Committee Chair Mikhailova reported on five committee projects completed or in the works, including creating a list of online and in-person mental health resources shared with the SGA Mental Health Committee; and collaborating with SGA in organizing an online Q&A meeting with the director of the N.M. State Crisis Line. The committee has worked on bringing emotional CPR (eCPR) training to Tech; is working on creating and facilitating mutual-support wellness groups; and is working with SGA on next year's Pet Day and creating a "Bring your pet to work" event. Funds are insufficient to finance the entire eCPR course, one of the few evidence-based training options available; and, unlike many other mental health programs, it is not funded by pharmaceutical companies. The committee is grateful to the Office of Student Life and the local AAUW chapter for covering costs for an online training session. With positive responses from Dean Jennifer Chapman and Campus Police Chief Scott Scarborough, the committee reached out to SCOPE on bringing the complete, in-person training here. SCOPE agreed to cover costs of bringing two trainers from Massachusetts to Socorro Sept. 14-15 for an intensive course open to faculty, staff, students, community members and mental health providers. Dr. Mikhailova asked faculty to consider making the sacrifice to attend the two-day (a Saturday and Sunday), 12-hour course.

The discussion that followed focused on the pet events. Among issues raised was consideration for individuals with pet allergies; making sure the pets are well behaved; the need to warn people of animals being on campus; having pets inside buildings could create problems; and the fact that the Employee Handbook prohibits bringing pets to campus without the approval of the President. Dr. Mikhailova responded that the issue will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

**g. Undergraduate Academic Advising, *Taffeta Elliott***

Committee Chair Elliott recommended block scheduling for introductory core courses for adoption in Fall 2025 in tandem with the Scheduling Committee. This arrangement would place first-year cohorts in similar sections. A recommendation to academic departments proposes spring registration get-togethers. Student clubs related to majors, or student groups organized by departments, would get together while pre-registering for Fall 2024. Students could share their thoughts, while upper-class students could offer advice on course sections and electives. The committee addressed early intervention needs for first-year students, noting that Student Success employs the Dropout Detective early-alert system. Math Department Chair Bill Stone recommended that students take Math 1240 (pre-calculus) before Math 1230 (trigonometry), due to a recent curricular change. Currently, Argos is incorrectly placing students due to this curricular change; some information is backwards, noted Arts and Sciences Dean Steve Simpson, who is working with ITC to correct the situation. The committee also is proposing a 75-minute class schedule whereby all classes after 11 am (M, T, Th, F) would meet for 75 minutes, leaving Wednesday afternoons open for meetings. One comment was that the proposal would be a significant academic change (particularly having 75 minute classes), and may not be what students need.

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

**a. Minutes of the March 12 Grad Council Meeting (*Minutes were provided*)**

The Dean of Graduate Studies reported that applications and enrollment are doing really well. Departments now must review applications and make decisions for Fall 2024 admittance. Minimum stipends for TAs will increase 2 percent for all students, and starting this summer, these minimums will increase by 7 percent. In other business, the Council is working on a new Ph.D. form for departments to review. For graduate students who complete their degree requirements between semesters, and prior to the beginning of the following semester, the Council proposed they be allowed to register for one credit that omits tuition and fees. Proposed deadlines are Nov. 15 for December conferral, and April 26 for Spring conferral. Students failing to register for the one credit will have to register for the next semester and pay any costs. The Council also is working on guidelines for students who use their published works for their dissertations/theses, to ensure there are no violations of copyright; and agreed to provide guidance regarding using AI in researching and writing dissertations/theses. The Council agreed that the Office of Graduate Studies needs to know when students expect to complete their degree requirements – and it needs to be enforced.

**7. Academic Assessment Task Force, *Michael Jackson***

VPAA Jackson spoke on behalf of the Task Force, saying that every department must submit to Academic Affairs an annual Assessment Report which should include recommendations and suggestions for improvement (i.e., closing the loop). A number of Assessment Reports were missing the mark; additionally, fundamental elements were missing (e.g., incorrect forms being used, all sections completed), and these reports were returned to departments to be redone in future years. Dr. Jackson referred to a template for the Assessment Report, noting that the last two elements are particularly important. Next year, the Task Force will be asking for copies of rubrics faculty use (or at least examples of their rubrics if the number is extensive. These rubrics should outline the level of performance they are identifying. The Task Force will also be asking for updated version of curriculum maps. Separate, but related to this, is that departments should also update their sample schedules particularly on their webpages and in the course catalog (e.g., one department still lists their schedule for 2018). AVPAA Thompson has been directed to thoroughly review every Assessment Report along with these other issues to ensure we are ready for our March 2025 HLC site visit. The Task Force also needs more volunteers, so if individuals are interested, please contact AVPAA Thompson.

The Distance Education Advisory Board (DEAB) has created a Resource Guide (related to academic integrity, quality assurance, oversight, student engagement, and assessment) for faculty teaching distance education courses. A key element of this will be how the instructor regularly engages the students in a substantive way. Other items that will be relevant to our HLC visit is, for example, course syllabi – something reviewers will be looking at. In every syllabus he examined, Dr. Thompson found at least one missing element – even though a syllabus template is available – such as no instructor contact information and the wrong semester. One department this spring failed to turn in any syllabi. Dr. Jackson emphasized the importance of accurately completing these basic tasks going forward.

**8. Ad Hoc Committee on the Safety Policy, *Dan Jones***

Dr. Jones reported that the Ad Hoc Committee, with members Dr. Doug Wells, Dr. Michael Hargather, and several others convened to discuss concerns Dr. Wells had expressed in an email. The committee then met with Research VP Mike Doyle and Mikell Coleman, Director of

Research Compliance; feedback from this meeting will be incorporated into the Research and Laboratory Safety Policy. Four elements were cited: amending the section on policy compliance to make it clear that violations are consistent with NMT's disciplinary policy; removed and amended the language to clarify that the policy doesn't apply to classrooms, although it does apply to teaching laboratories; amended the language to clarify the policy only applies to individuals working in NMT laboratories or field activities, not if they are working at other institutions; and removed the section on department safety liaisons or safety officers as they have been sometimes called in the past and moved those responsibilities under the department chair with the options of having department safety liaisons if they wish. Next step is to get back with the Research office and review the revised document through the University's Policy on Policy process.

**9. Old Business**

**10. New Business**

**11. Announcements**

**12. Adjournment**

A motion was made at 5:04 pm by Dr. Iain Crump and seconded by Dr. Sharon Sessions to adjourn the meeting.