

Proposition: 18-08/09R 3/15/09

Title: Memorial Concerning Declining Research Infrastructure Support

Co-Sponsors: Rayson (A&S), Ni (A&S), Munson-McGee (Engineering)

Proposed Committee Assignment: Academic Affairs

Actual Committee Assignment: Long Range Planning

Background

During the past twenty years, numerous research support facilities have been either down-graded or eliminated throughout the University. These have included, but are not limited to, scientific instrumentation design and repair services, advanced manufacturing center (AMC), a technical glass blowing facility, systems modeling support resources. Such previously subsidized services have been affected by requirements that each become self-supported through billable services. These services each met unique needs of limited researchers that enable the pursuit of novel experiments that often resulted in the generation of significant external funding but for which little or no funding was available to undertake the initial, proof-of-concept investigations. The lack of such infrastructure support continues to negatively impact future research endeavors, effectively forcing faculty to forego pursuing many investigations.

Language of the memorial

WHEREAS, New Mexico State University continues to be designated as a Carnegie Research Extensive university, and

Whereas the faculty of NMSU continue to conduct world-class research, and

Whereas an environment that fosters such research requires continued support from the University administration, and

Whereas such a conducive environment necessitates sufficient infrastructure support, and

Whereas recent years have evidence a decline in research enabling infrastructure through the closing of support facilities, and

Whereas decisions to eliminate in-house support capabilities have necessitated the expenditure of research funds for either the purchase of expensive service contracts or costly instrument service repair visits, and

Whereas declining support for research infrastructure has negatively impacted the opportunities for faculty to engage in creative research endeavors and students to gain research experience, and

Whereas the central administration has placed increase emphasis on interdisciplinary research efforts that often require shared facilities, resources, and

Whereas many of the past decisions resulting in reduction or elimination of infrastructure support facilities has been done without consultation with affected faculty and the NMSU Faculty Senate,

THEREFORE, the NMSU Faculty Senate hereby formally and respectfully requests members of the central administration of NMSU, including the Vice-president for Research and Deans and directors of associated units, to actively engage in fruitful dialog with research-active faculty from throughout the University to identify, replace, and support facilities and services required to enable and promote world-class, cutting-edge research.