

Initial Findings: A Preliminary Report of the Faculty Subcommittee of the Roles and Rewards Task force

On October 23, 2002, Dr. William V. Flores, Provost and Interim President of NMSU, asked the Faculty Subcommittee of the larger Roles and Rewards Task Force to examine the expanding roles of faculty and the reward systems in place at New Mexico State University as well as our peer institutions. This report is Part One of a larger endeavor -- a comprehensive analysis of faculty roles and various methods of recognition that could be implemented at NMSU to recruit and maintain quality faculty at NMSU. The creation of this task force helps to meet the President's target:

Attract, develop, reward and retain a high-quality faculty and staff

The recommendations in this report are those most easily implemented in the university system. Our second report, an in-depth analysis of promotion and tenure at NMSU as it relates to the definition and recognition of faculty roles, will be presented later in fall 2003 and will include a comparison with our peer institutions to determine in what ways they have "elevated the role of teaching" in their institutions. The task force realizes that some of the changes outlined in Part Two of our report will occur slowly since change in promotion and tenure, critical in rewarding faculty endeavors and retaining good faculty, is a far more complex issue that involves buy-in from both administration and faculty. However, we feel that the findings in Part One may be implemented in 2003 - 2004. We respectfully request that upon receipt of this report that Provost Flores meet with this subcommittee to discuss these recommendations and the outcome of the committee's work.

This report has been organized by dividing recommendations into two categories: 1) no-cost or low cost recommendations, and 2) recommendations that will incur a more substantial cost to the university. We recognize that there is a limited pool of money from which these recommendations can be funded, but we strongly urge the administration to fund as many of these recommendations as possible.

No-Cost or Low-Cost Recommendations

1. Streamlined Bureaucratic Processes (No or Low Cost)

Bureaucratic processes are necessary for any organization at which business is conducted based on universal rules and procedures. On the one hand, complaining about "red tape" is also endemic to organizational life, even though formal procedures are necessary to protect the organization against various kinds of liability. However,

some evidence¹ suggests that such procedures at NMSU are overly elaborate and impede efficient operations, leading also to employee dissatisfaction. Furthermore, NMSU needs to create policies and procedures that improve recruitment and retention of a diverse and excellent faculty.

Procedures that appear to be most problematic at NMSU:

- Personnel and hiring procedures
- Sponsored research, CASS (Cost Accounting Standards System), and accounting
- Team teaching (addressed as a cost-incurring initiative)

Personnel and Hiring Procedures

It is impossible to hire anyone at NMSU in a timely manner. This has to change. At the recent Department Heads' Retreat and in numerous interviews with faculty (formal and informal interviews) the cumbersome hiring process has been raised as a major problem for administrators at NMSU. Faculty who secure external funding for projects indicate that hiring of technical personnel for their grant projects is so slow, that their ability to generate the results for which the grant was written has been compromised. Department heads and others report that hiring for both staff and faculty positions is inordinately complicated. As discussed in Ann Austin's first year evaluator's report for the ADVANCE: Institutional Transformation program, high-demand faculty are lost due to the slow process.

Recommendation: processes related to hiring of personnel—faculty, professional and classified staff, and students—need to be carefully reviewed and revised so that these processes may be streamlined and made more efficient. This should be the new personnel director's highest priority. It is expected that the person hired in this position will communicate better about administrative policies and procedures regarding hiring. For example, the university should provide training for writing job descriptions, including templates and examples, to assure the description is grade-appropriate.

Sponsored Research, CASS, and Accounting

Bureaucratic processes can also place significant and seriously problematic constraints on researchers who obtain external funds and find that it is impossible to have:

- Accounts set up in a timely manner, even with the “pre-award” work that is done;
- Real access to their funds to spend on necessary research-related equipment and supplies;
- An accounting system that makes sense and can be effectively used by researchers to track funds and make reports to funding agencies.

¹ ADVANCE Program Evaluator Ann Austin; ADVANCE National Science Foundation Director , Alice Hogan; and Bob Diamond, academic consultant.

When Alice Hogan visited NMSU in January, 2003, she was able to place the NMSU accounting procedures within the context of eight other major institutions that had received ADVANCE funding. At no other institution did the program coordinator spend 70 percent of her time dealing with accounting/CASS issues.

Recommendations:

1. CASS and accounting procedures should be reviewed and revised by a group of people from various campus offices (e.g., budget office, SPA (Sponsored Programs Administration), faculty who have received external funds, Associate Deans for Research from the Colleges, etc.).
2. Training of faculty in working with the accounting system and CASS.

2. Faculty Merit Evaluations

Highly individualized faculty ranking systems do not achieve their purpose. Such evaluation systems, while attempting to promote competitive behavior, degrade the motivation of highly skilled professionals who are already driven by a strong internal sense to achieve and contribute. We believe that a cohesive, mutually supportive environment has the most potential to enhance creative and productive activities, including the effective mentorship of pre-tenured faculty and the retention of tenured faculty. Such cohesive environments are particularly important as most of the University's teaching, research, service and faculty governance is accomplished at the department level. Further, the complexity of many current evaluation systems unduly detract from faculty and administrative time that alternately would be put to more productive use.

Therefore, we recommend that the University work to dramatically simplify our evaluation systems. We particularly recommend that the University eliminate evaluation systems that focus on minor distinctions in performance and adopt an evaluation system which promotes departmental cohesiveness and a mutually supportive environment. Departments should be given substantial leeway to develop evaluation systems that implement these goals. Two suggested models are the following.

A. Faculty in the department are evaluated as the sum of their collective efforts, with faculty sharing equally in merit allocations.

B. Faculty are evaluated on a three tier evaluation system, with the lowest category reserved for individuals whose level of performance does not meet departmental expectations, a middle level in which faculty are meeting the expectations of faculty in that department, and a high level in which faculty performance exceeds departmental expectations. Note: It should be possible for every member of a department to fall within the same category.

3. New Faculty Orientation

According to the Study of New Scholars by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, "many new and prospective faculty members are dissatisfied and disillusioned with academic careers. Their concerns include the balance between research and

teaching, features of the promotion and tenure process, and the quality of life, especially the balance of personal and professional commitments.” The Harvard New Scholars program proposes that any new faculty orientation be very specifically organized around the roles and expectations of the faculty in order to make them feel comfortable with their new surroundings and positions. In spring 2003, the Faculty Senate Chair, the ADVANCE Director, and the Director of the Teaching Academy met with Jozi DeLeon, Special Assistant to the Provost, to discuss reorganizing NMSU’s faculty orientation to reflect the University’s expectations in research, teaching, and service only, thereby eliminating information extraneous to these topics. It is our recommendation that such a format be the standard for the new faculty orientation at NMSU. The Harvard Study indicates that faculty who fully understand their research and teaching roles at the outset of their employment are more likely to be retained by the institution.

In addition, packets for new faculty should contain an organizational chart of the university. Faculty may be accustomed to an entirely different university structure and need to understand the role their department plays in the overall structure. A chart that delineates the reporting structure of the department to the college to the university is important if we wish faculty to have a firm understanding of how they fit into the overall structure of the university.

As an extension of the university orientation, each college will develop on-going training that focuses on faculty roles. This training will insure that faculty questions are answered as they learn how to function in their new positions.

4. Departmental and Program Awards

Robert Diamond, noted expert on university organization, suggested that we recognize not just individuals who have made exceptional contributions but also departments or programs that have done so. This committee recommends that various departments/programs be recognized as a group based on established and publicized criteria. Recognition of the following initiatives would be appropriate:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Development
- Innovative New Programs
- Graduation Rates
- Faculty & Student Mentoring
- Interdisciplinary Research Projects

5. Publication of Data

We recommend that the Office of Institutional Research publish the data regarding turnover rate in each college for the last three years. In addition, the number of faculty

who do not receive promotion and tenure should be published yearly. Low turnover rates and low refusal rates for promotion and tenure can be used as a faculty recruitment tool.

6. NMSU Service Awards

While faculty and staff appreciate being recognized for their years of service, the quality of gift sometimes demeans the recognition. Some service awards have been inappropriate given the number of years and high quality of service faculty provide. We recommend that the administration re-evaluate the types of gifts awarded and fund gifts that are indicative of the amount of service the employee has provided.

7. Types of Recognition

Each college should develop criteria for recognizing the achievements of faculty within that college. Some examples of ways faculty can be recognized follow:

- commendation letter from president or provost
- travel vouchers/money for conference
- special parking permit
- certificates, plaques
- name in the newspaper or NMSU publications
- name mentioned at convocation

***The university should not only fund these awards but also pay the tax liability on them.

8. NMSU Calendar

Time has become a commodity that is valued by both the employer and twelve-month personnel. While direct compensation may not be possible to thank our twelve-month personnel for the good work that they do, one way we might provide recognition is by allowing “time off” more often than we do. This could be achieved by eliminating a few required work days from the NMSU calendar. Since nine-month faculty and students have more days off than twelve-month employees, the perception is that a work day (such as the day before Thanksgiving) is a punishment of twelve-month personnel.

1. Close campus offices for all employees on the following days:
 - a. Day before Thanksgiving
 - b. Entire weeks around the winter holiday and New Year’s (eliminating partial weeks).
2. Extend annual leave three days per year.

9. Rule Change Regarding Supplemental Pay

Recommendation: Eliminate Section 4.70 of the *NMSU Policy Manual* to allow supplemental compensation. Restrictions will be subject only to the restrictions of the funding source. This will also eliminate the restrictions defined by 5.25.40 regarding summer compensation. Current requirements are overly restrictive and eliminate participation in activities that allow faculty extra compensation as well as enrichment opportunities. In addition, our overly-restrictive policies encourage faculty to work as consultants for other universities or to take on part-time employment in the community. Neither of these is an acceptable resolution to NMSU's low salaries. Eliminating these restrictions would encourage faculty to utilize fully the university for their grants and consultancy work as well as potentially provide financial gains for the university as a result of indirect cost recovery.

Cost-Incurring Recommendations

1. Streamlined Bureaucratic Processes (Cost-Incurring)

New Policies and Procedures for the 21st Century Workforce

While there have been significant changes in the demographic composition and needs of faculty in the past 20 years, new policies and procedures to effectively manage faculty have been slow in coming to NMSU. NMSU has failed to keep pace with the development and implementation of "family friendly policies" like those at our peer institutions or in private industry. Furthermore, as was clearly conveyed via in-depth exit interviews with faculty that have departed NMSU from science and engineering fields and with department heads in the past two years, managing interpersonal conflicts that arise between faculty members can go far in making NMSU a workplace that accepts and values diverse points of view.

New policies are necessary to enable recruitment and retention of a diverse and effective faculty at NMSU, including:

- Procedures for enabling potential faculty to identify meaningful occupational opportunities for their partner (partner assistance services or dual career couple programs).
- Cafeteria-style benefits plans.
- Faculty ombudsprogram

All three of the above programs exist to varying degree at many of NMSU's peer institutions. An American Physical Society report and Wolf *et al*² present research

² Wolf-Wendel, L. E., S. Twombly, and S. Rice. 1998. "Dual Career Couples: How Institutions of Higher Education are Keeping them Together." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the

about dual career couple programs at U.S. colleges and universities citing the pressing need for such institutional responses to the increasing number of these situations. Since Wolf *et al.*'s paper appeared, many other institutions have implemented programs and a program is in the planning stages at NMSU.

On a related note, cafeteria-style benefits, effective family leave policies, and domestic partner benefits are essential to the new 21st century labor force. Failure to develop effective policies in these areas will make it increasingly difficult for NMSU to recruit and retain a diverse faculty in the coming years.

Interviews with department heads and faculty who have left NMSU over the past couple of years have highlighted the importance of having a functioning faculty ombuds program of some kind. Many of our peer institutions have programs of this kind, usually run from the Office of the Provost. These programs provide faculty members with an important informational link as well as a mechanism by which faculty members can resolve problems that may arise related to any aspect of their work.

Recommendations:

- Policies and procedures related to family issues and ombudsperson offices at our peer institutions should be reviewed and considered for adoption at NMSU.
- A regular mechanism for compiling information about new developments in policies and procedures in higher education administration needs to be implemented at NMSU.

While some policies and procedures of the institution need to be reviewed and streamlined, new policies and procedures will be essential to make sure that NMSU is capable of recruiting and retaining a strong faculty for the 21st century. In all cases, multi-disciplinary teams will be essential in making sure that rather than being more red tape, policies and procedures enable increased efficiency and decreased frustration on the part of employees of NMSU.

Team Teaching

As interdisciplinary research has become more important and as new fields have emerged in the past twenty years, NMSU has failed to develop the mechanisms to permit team teaching of classes. Interdisciplinary research and teaching are essential in competing for grants and for preparing our students for the complex global economy. Team teaching requires a financial investment, but it is a wonderful way to enhance teaching. Two people cannot work together to teach a class without modifying their teaching. While other faculty development efforts invite changes, team teaching fosters them.

Study of Higher Education, Miami, FL, November, 1998.

_____. 1999. "Case Studies of Dual Career Couple Policies." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, San Antonio, TX, 1999.

Team teaching initiatives that allow faculty to work together in pairs or groups requires re-assigned time for one faculty member. Significant re-assigned time should be provided annually, with team teachers required to teach as a team, rather than to teach serially.

Recommendations:

- Identify the barriers to team teaching and remove them (i.e., room scheduling, course credits...). Faculty who team teach classes should be given full “credit” for the team-teaching assignment.
- Invest in a team teaching initiative on campus by providing a source of annual funds to support or subsidize re-assigned time.
- Develop appropriate methods of encouraging and rewarding team teaching.

2. Improved Benefits Package

Reduce outgoing expenses (dental, health, parking fees): continue looking for cheaper coverage without sacrificing quality.

Based on data presented by Institutional Research, New Mexico State University faculty consistently make less money than our CHE peer institutions. This presents obvious problems for the university in terms of hiring and retention. Since current economic times indicate that a mass influx of new money for raises will not be forthcoming, another means of addressing this is through an improved benefits package.

The committee supports the efforts that were begun during the Spring 2003 semester to raise the insurance caps mandated by New Mexico Law. Initiated by the Compensation Committee, ACAP sent a memo to Provost Flores and President Gogue supporting this effort. Also, Faculty Senate passed a Memorial in support of raising these caps. Specifically, this committee requests that upper administration include this topic when talking with other New Mexico Universities about mutually beneficial legislation. A bill was introduced last session to raise this cap for public school employees. Although this bill did not make it through the legislature, we should work with other educational entities to include higher education in future efforts of this nature.

In addition, the administration should support efforts to increase the retirement multiplier.

3. Summer Teaching

Teaching summer school is an important aspect of annual compensation for many members of the NMSU faculty at all levels. Summer teaching is also used by many departments as a recruiting device to help compensate for less competitive starting salaries. Changes to the current pay structure that would result in less summer pay for all members of the faculty or for any particular group of faculty will be viewed as a pay cut, even if nine-month salaries do not change. This is especially true if, for example, Professors were not allowed to teach summer school. Further, at a time when NMSU

salaries are not competitive, it is important to maintain all sources of income for the NMSU faculty. We believe that changes that reduce summer school pay will inevitably have a negative effect on morale.

We do recognize the need to maintain salaries but also recognize that adjustments to minimum class size might be needed in order to justify maintaining summer salaries.

Therefore we recommend that on a per course basis that:

NMSU maintain a formula that is tied to individual salary when calculating summer salary pay for an individual class. The following two exceptions apply.

Exception 1:

The University administration is allowed to make adjustments in minimum class size to justify summer salaries.

Exception 2:

Furthermore we recommend that NMSU remove the current penalty for teaching a second course in the same summer session.

Currently those members of the faculty who teach more than one course in a particular summer session are not paid for two full courses. They are penalized about 10%. For example, a faculty member with an annual salary of \$50,000 will earn \$5,583 for teaching his/her first SS course. Instead of earning \$11,166 for teaching two courses, she/he will only earn \$10,000 for teaching two courses. This seems unfair on its face.

These recommendations address the *NMSU Policy Manual* sections 6.88 Summer Session and 5.25.40 Compensation - Summer.

4. Professorships

A. No matter how much is done to add recognition and tweak faculty workloads, ultimately any program of rewards for the faculty will have to include financial incentives. Unfortunately, NMSU salaries for faculty are seriously below those of our peer institutions, let alone the salaries of the institutions we would like to equal. The funding formula for the University, the lack of financial wealth in the state the current economic struggles of state governments across the nation, and the financially cautious tone of the legislature are all factors that make it very hard to see how faculty base salaries can be raised the 15-30 per cent needed to enable us to keep outstanding mid-career faculty, let alone attract excellent new faculty in the sciences and technological fields.

Many universities, including NMSU, have opted to use endowed chairs as a means to

augment basic salaries and to reward and keep excellent faculty. We recommend that the University administration continue the Regents Professorships and similar programs and work to expand the role of endowed professorships in the retention of faculty. Specifically, we suggest the following steps:

- Continue the emphasis in fundraising efforts on endowing named chairs at the level of Professor; and
- Direct fundraising efforts to endow named chairs so that outstanding faculty at the associate professor level receive supplements of 20-30 percent stipends to encourage them to stay at NMSU and work for a Regents Professorship.

B. Enhancing the Prestige of Teaching at NMSU

The Regent's Professorship is now the most prestigious award on campus and has been awarded to truly outstanding faculty. Part of this committee's charge was to recommend ways to elevate the status of teaching and to find ways in which teaching could be recognized on its own merits. Therefore we recommend an award based on teaching only – which would come with a designated title: Regent's Teaching Professor.

5. Mini-Grants for Course Development and/or Design

Another way to elevate the status of teaching at NMSU is to provide faculty with mini-grants for course development and/or design. Just as mini-grants are awarded for research projects by the colleges, NMSU should establish a university-wide mini-grant program that would invite faculty to submit proposals that show how they will better design their courses, using current research on teaching. These grants would also encourage reflection on both teaching methods and practices.

6. Teaching Award for Regularized College Faculty

We recommend that the University develop an award to recognize the accomplishments of regularized college faculty. Funding for these awards should be determined at the administrative level.

7. Support for a New Distance Education Compensation Model

One of the goals of the Activities/Targets for 2001-2002 was to expand the delivery and expansion of distance education. This goal has been carried over into the 2002-2003 Targets as well. To accomplish this target, adequate incentives must be provided for faculty developing and teaching distance education courses and programs. Therefore, we recommend that the Provost work closely with the Vice Provost for the Office of Distance Education to develop a compensation model that takes into account such things as course/program development, delivery mode, numbers of students, travel, and so on.

8. Special Funds

Many faculty and staff demonstrate outstanding performance over the course of a career or respond in an extraordinary way during a given period of time. When this occurs, it is essential that the college and university recognize such efforts. Presently the university and many colleges offer one time dollars, plaques, and certificates to recognize faculty and staff for outstanding accomplishments.

At the present time the university sometimes uses equity dollars to assist faculty when salary compression issues emerge. Additionally, there are cases in which the institution has matched a salary offer from another institution when a faculty member is offered a position elsewhere. Recently the President and Regents implemented a process for recognizing teaching, service, and overall performance. The Regent's Chair positions and distinguished professorships recognize outstanding performance and length of service for faculty. These awards are given to faculty members who have emerged as premier scholars and teachers in their discipline.

Even with all of the above-mentioned forms of recognition available, there are still worthy faculty and staff who often are not recognized with financial awards. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this committee that the university and each college and branch campus establish a fund that deans or central administration can use to financially recognize outstanding performance by awarding the faculty member with an annual stipend.

It is apparent that departments and administrative units on campus have outstanding individuals who have not been financially rewarded by this institution. Since raises and merit raises tend to be in small increments, it is imperative that NMSU find other ways to recognize outstanding annual performance. Based on this premise, the committee recommends that a special fund be established that can be used to enhance salaries for faculty and staff that perform in an extraordinary way. These permanent dollar awards could be a mechanism that allows the university to keep outstanding faculty and staff and recognize those that perform at a high level.

Examples of outstanding performance are listed below, but are not limited to this list:

- For unusual and exceptional performance during the past 1-3 years
- Recognition for attaining a national office or presidency
- Outstanding work in scholarship – achieving national recognition
- Outstanding work with students or student organizations
- Receiving a substantial grant or several grants
- Reception of a prestigious award, such as one given by a national organization, noting a significant contribution to the profession
- Unusual and extensive support for College/Dept/Unit activities
- Recognized for outstanding service to state, regional, or national organizations and governmental agencies
- Recognition for outstanding teaching
- Accepting additional responsibilities without additional compensation (going the extra

mile)

Outcome

While a few of these recommendations require policy change through the Faculty Senate, most of the recommendations can be acted upon administratively. It is the recommendation of the committee that the Provost, in conjunction with others, institute changes that reflect the findings in this report.

We feel that these recommendations are appropriate and will have a positive impact on the morale of the faculty at New Mexico State University. The committee requests that a one-hour interview with the Provost take place to discuss these recommendations and the timeline by which they can occur.

CC: Maureen Camunez and Diana Quintana, Co-Chairs of the Staff Task Force
Ben Woods, Chair of the Survey Committee
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Appendix A
Roles and Rewards Taskforce
Faculty Subcommittee

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