

**NMSU Faculty Senate Meeting**  
January 15, 2026, 4:00 p.m.  
Hadley Hall Rm 130 and [Zoom](#)  
**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 4:02 p.m.**

**2. Recognition of Guests**

- Kolby Graham Taylor, ASNMSU Vice President

The ASNMSU Vice President, Kolby Graham Taylor, introduced himself and explained that he is serving in a temporary capacity. He stated that he is substituting for the usual representative, who was unable to attend, and that the new ASNMSU representative will be appointed by next Thursday. He noted that all parties will be informed of the new representative once the appointment is finalized.

- Joseph Lakey, Assoc. Dean, Arts & Sciences

Vice Chair Chris Brown provided background on the program sustainability plan prior to discussion, noting that when the committee informed Dean Lakey that the plan was moving through committee and coming forward for action, Dean Lakey offered to attend the meeting to answer questions. Vice Chair Brown explained that the initiative originated with the regions under former leadership, involving Provost Alan Shoho, and was brought to UPAC in March or April 2024. UPAC worked on the plan over the summer through a subcommittee and produced a document that was submitted to the Provost's Office. Progress paused due to competing institutional priorities but resumed over the summer, at which point the Provost requested a formal review and endorsement. Vice Chair Brown noted that the Curriculum and Planning committee produced an extensive report and that the item was brought forward for action, with Dean Lakey present to answer questions.

Dean Lakey provided additional context, explaining that the task was initially assigned by Provost Shoho in response to the need for a consistent, institution-wide approach to addressing periodic budget-driven challenges. He stated that historically, budget shortfalls were often addressed by holding or shutting down faculty lines in a random manner. The intent of the program sustainability process, he emphasized, was not to proactively eliminate faculty lines or shut down programs, but to evaluate programs holistically and establish a sensible, transparent framework for addressing budget-related pressures. Dean Lakey noted that the process is intended to help prevent situations in which programs are unable to function effectively due to ad hoc budget actions and to provide a means to articulate the value and importance of programs that may have low degree production but serve critical institutional, regional, or state needs.

Vice Chair Brown added that following discussion led by Provost Reddi, the focus shifted from identifying low-yield programs to emphasizing program sustainability. He stated that the outlined steps provide a clear pathway for programs with low enrollment or degree production to move toward greater sustainability. He also noted concerns that, in the absence of an internal process, external entities could impose decisions on the institution. Vice Chair Brown characterized the document as well thought out, acknowledged committee recommendations, and

invited questions for Joseph.

Senator Thomas Manz asked a technical question regarding how PhD degrees are counted, using engineering programs as an example, where degrees are awarded as a PhD in Engineering with concentrations. Dean Lakey responded that the framework allows for significant leniency for PhD programs, noting the importance of PhD production to maintaining R1 status. He explained that as long as there is not a three-year lapse in degree production, PhD programs are allowed to continue, and that broadly defined PhD programs, such as Engineering, would not typically be subdivided by concentration for this purpose.

Senator Erickson raised a concern discussed previously in committee regarding the ambiguity in the definition of a “program.” Dean Lakey responded that the proposed metrics use degree level and CIP code as the primary criteria, aggregating degrees such as BA and BS under the same CIP code when evaluating degree production over a three-year period. He noted that while this does not strictly define a program, it provides a workable basis for evaluation.

Senator Boutsen asked about the role of metrics, support capacity, degree output, program proliferation, and cost considerations. Dean Lakey responded that the original motivation for the process was to address situations in which programs have high costs and relatively low degree yield. He stated that the institution has access to cost data through Gray Decision Intelligence, which can assign costs to degree-producing programs. Dean Lakey emphasized that when a program has high costs and low output, additional qualitative considerations—such as workforce needs, regional or state demand, or other institutional priorities—must be weighed to justify continuation. At the conclusion of the discussion, Dean Lakey encouraged senators to contact him directly with additional questions or requests for further information.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

Senate approved the agenda.

### **4. Approval of Minutes of December 4, 2025, meeting**

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes.

Minutes approved and submitted.

### **5. Reports of Officers**

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Chaitanya provided a brief report from the “meeting of the four,” which includes the Senate Chair, Senate Vice Chair, Provost, and President. He reported that recent discussions have focused on graduate students, particularly their onboarding and overall campus experience, due to concerns about a potential shortage of graduate students. These concerns are driven in part by increasing international travel and visa restrictions affecting countries that have historically provided a significant number of NMSU graduate students.

Chair Chaitanya reported that the Provost has created a task force to address these issues, focused specifically on international graduate students’ onboarding and

post-arrival experiences. The task force includes Chair Chaitanya, the Graduate Dean, the Director of International Programs and Compliance (formerly ISSS), Senator Finlator, and Deputy Provost McAteer. The group is reviewing the current international climate, best practices, and potential strategies NMSU can implement. Chair Chaitanya noted that the percentage of accepted students who ultimately receive visas and enroll at NMSU has dropped from approximately 50% to 35%, reflecting broader declines in visa issuance by U.S. consular offices. He further reported that approximately 75 countries are now subject to travel restrictions, including Bangladesh, Nepal, and Iran. While F-1 student visas from some of these countries, such as Bangladesh and Nepal, are currently still being issued—and these students remain important to programs such as engineering, physics, and chemistry—future policy changes remain uncertain. Chair Chaitanya also noted that some visitor visa restrictions include proposed bond requirements ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000, which may present significant financial barriers for families of international students.

Chair Chaitanya stated that Derek Yu has been providing updates to the campus community on these matters, but he requested that both he and the Vice Chair be included in future communications alongside deans and other recipients. He also reported on his service on the Policy Steering Committee, noting in particular the policy regarding service animals, emotional support animals, and other animals. He emphasized that this federally and state-mandated policy will affect faculty and that it is important for faculty to understand how to respond to requests involving service or emotional support animals in the classroom. The policy has been accepted and will be presented as an informational item at this time, with opportunities for stakeholder input.

Chair Chaitanya also provided an update on the University System Budget Committee, noting efforts to change how the RPSP process is handled in order to increase faculty input and vetting. He reported that Senator Henson is playing a significant role in this effort and that Chair Chaitanya, Senator Henson, and Senator Erickson are serving on the committee.

In addition, Chair Chaitanya shared updates from cabinet meetings, highlighting both positive and concerning developments. He reported that the university is on track to receive approximately \$55 million for an interdisciplinary building, \$16 million for student support, approximately \$20 million for infrastructure and deferred maintenance, and additional funding in the range of \$16–25 million for PSL. He characterized these allocations as positive news and funding that can be put to good use.

Finally, Chair Chaitanya addressed faculty salary concerns, noting that both the Legislative Finance Committee and the executive branch are currently proposing only a 1% increase. He reported that he and Vice Chair Brown discussed this issue with the President, who is aware of the concern and indicated to the Faculty Center Leadership Committee that he would attempt to address it.

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown  
Vice Chair Brown reported that the “group of four” continues to meet. He stated that recent discussions have focused on improving the efficiency of graduate enrollment and application processes. He noted that currently, graduate applications missing a single reference letter are not forwarded to departments, and discussions are underway with Graduate School staff and leadership to allow academic units to view and act on incomplete applications at their discretion. Vice Chair Brown noted that data previously shared by Derek Yu regarding travel bans

was discussed again, emphasizing that the situation continues to change on a daily basis.

He also reported that the group had an extensive discussion on improving the process for transmitting Senate-passed bills between Senate leadership and central administration and ensuring effective communication back to the Senate. He stated that the process is in better shape than it was a year ago. Carley Casey attended the meeting and presented potential tools to improve efficiency and effectiveness in this workflow, and she is expected to bring a formal proposal forward in the near future. Vice Chair Brown explained that the goal is to streamline the process whereby, after Senate action, the transmittal is routed efficiently to the appropriate campus units.

Vice Chair Brown reported that ADAC met once in December and received a report from the Graduate Dean on graduate applications and enrollment. While the data showed a decline, he explained that two high-volume programs do not admit students every semester, which affected the numbers. Overall enrollment figures remain lower than the previous year, though improved from initial projections. He noted that the Graduate School is pursuing marketing and recruitment efforts, including a \$1,000 Graduate Success Scholarship to encourage applications to master's programs. He also reported that Dean Koodali continues to work toward eliminating paper forms, wet signatures, and email attachments by transitioning Graduate School forms to an electronic workflow system, such as DocuSign or Adobe Sign.

Vice Chair Brown stated that UPAC did not meet during the reporting period. He noted that the Policy Steering Committee met, as previously reported by Chair, and that summaries of actions are included in the committee report. He also noted that an amended report he had asked Mari to post was missing a table due to an error and stated that he would revert to the original document to ensure it is correctly submitted. He concluded by noting that updates on these items will continue to be provided.

## **6. Reports of Standing Committees**

- Budget and Resources Chair, Stephen Hanson  
Chair Hanson reported that the Budget and Resources Committee met and achieved a quorum. He noted that his written report is posted online. Committee business included consideration of the sustainable programs bill, for which the committee forwarded a recommendation that is expected to be discussed later in the meeting. Chair Hanson also reported on related committee work, noting that the Business Process Improvement Committee met in December and held productive discussions with representatives from Procurement and IT. These discussions focused on simplifying software purchases and subscription processes, particularly for small, individual, or discipline-specific tools that have historically experienced significant delays. He reported that the issue has been acknowledged, some changes have already been implemented, and additional streamlining is anticipated. Additionally, Chair Hanson noted discussion of an unmet need related to artificial intelligence on campus, specifically the need for discipline-specific research support for AI tools. He stated that the Budget and Resources Committee may take up this issue for further consideration in the near future. Full BR report is posted on the FS website.

- The Senate moved and seconded to approve the Budget and Resources Committee report with the voted Proposition 04-25/26.
  - The Senate votes in the affirmative to accept Budget and Resources Committee report with the voted Proposition 04-25/26 to be discussed as existing business in the Senate meeting, with a vote to follow.
- University Planning Chair, Stephanie Walker  
UP Senator Mickelson presented the report on behalf of Chair Walker, who was unavailable. Senator Mickelson reported that the University Planning Committee was tasked with tracking NMSU departments' reviews of their Promotion and Tenure (P&T) guidelines following a request from Deputy Provost McAteer issued in early September. As of December 23, 100% of departments had submitted reports to the committee. Of those, two departments indicated that revisions to their P&T guidelines were either underway or had been completed, while the remaining 56 departments reported that no changes were required.
- Curriculum and Planning Chair, Oladayo Bello  
Chair Bello reported that the committee's meeting, originally scheduled for December 11, was postponed. She noted that there were no pending tasks requiring discussion at that time and that the meeting coincided with the final exam and grading period; therefore, the committee did not meet during this reporting period.
- Research and Creative Activity Chair, Omar Holguin  
Chair Holguin called the meeting to order and explained that the RCA Committee met at an alternative time due to scheduling conflicts. A quorum was not achieved, and as a result, no official business was conducted. The committee reviewed a response from Paul Hamilton, Chair of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT), regarding previously submitted questions about the university's process for acquiring software. The discussion focused on research- and productivity-related software, including Adobe Creative Suite, graphing software, and statistical software. Mr. Hamilton shared that after meeting with the FACT Committee, Chief Information Officer Jim Stanfill indicated that the current IT budget cannot support the purchase of additional enterprise software licenses at this time. The FACT Committee recommended that faculty with inquiries about software that may qualify for enterprise-level licensing contact Deanne Stewart to assess priorities and explore potential solutions. The FACT Committee also confirmed that the list of institutionally supported software on the NMSU software portal is current, addressing a concern raised during a previous RCA meeting. Additional discussion addressed access to software through computer labs and virtual desktop environments. Concerns were noted regarding performance and functionality issues with virtual desktops when accessing certain software packages. The FACT Committee indicated that they are reviewing these performance issues and exploring ways to improve access. The next meeting will return to addressing the FACT Committee's comments and suggested workarounds, with the goal of gaining a clearer understanding of enterprise software needs identified by faculty and identifying potential solutions to improve software accessibility. Full RCA report is posted on the FS website.

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair, Karen Kopera-Frye  
Chair Kopera-Frye was unavailable to present the report, and Vice Chair Brown delivered the committee report on her behalf. Vice Chair Brown noted that this report reflects the committee's new name, Access, Opportunity, and Outreach, (AOO), and thanked Mari for updating the committee's name on the website. The committee met on December 17 following the posting of grades. Under new business, the committee discussed a joint resolution submitted to NMSU from Central New Mexico Community College and the University of New Mexico Faculty Senate. On December 12, Chair Chaitanya, Senator Kopera-Frye, and Vice Chair Brown met with the chair and vice chair of the respective senates, Jennifer Rush from CNM and Justin Bendell from UNM, regarding the resolution that those senates will be considered and to which NMSU was invited to participate. The resolution was reviewed and discussed within Karen's committee, where there was general interest in advancing it. It was noted that a bill related to this resolution is expected to come before the Faculty Senate Leadership Committee at the end of the month, requesting that the full Faculty Senate review and potentially endorse the resolution. A limited discussion of the proposal occurred at the most recent Faculty Senate Leadership Committee meeting. It was expressed that bringing the resolution to the full Senate for a thorough discussion is appropriate. The anticipated timeline includes consideration by the Faculty Senate Leadership Committee at the end of the month, a first reading by the full Faculty Senate in February, and a vote in March.
- Student Success Chair, Kristian Finlator  
Chair Finlator reported that the Student Success Committee met on December 11 and achieved a quorum. The committee hosted guests including Graduate College Dean Rajit Koodali and International Programs and Compliance (IPC) Director Derek Yu, who provided updates on efforts to improve the onboarding process for international graduate students. This discussion was a continuation of conversations that began in the spring in response to previously raised concerns. Dean Koodali outlined several initiatives, including the revival of the Graduate Wellness Initiative and the development of a Canvas course for all incoming graduate students. The course is designed to guide students through the process of acclimating to NMSU, with particular attention to the needs of international graduate students.  
IPC Director Derek Yu also presented six initiatives being undertaken to provide comprehensive introductory documentation for students. These efforts include restructuring orientation programming, redesigning student forms, and related improvements. These initiatives aligned closely with issues identified through prior listening sessions with international graduate students and through survey feedback collected in the spring. Chair Finlator noted that a detailed written report is available online and identifies several areas for continued consideration. As a member of the previously referenced task force, the committee will continue to monitor and track progress on these initiatives.  
Full SS report is posted on the FS website.

## 7. New Business

- 05-25/26 – Proposal to Establish Task Force on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Pedagogy. Sponsor (s) – C. Erickson (BUS), K. Sharp-Hoskins (A&S), and other to follow. **Proposed committee - Curriculum and Planning.**

Senator Erickson, sponsor of Proposition 05-25/26, provided a brief introduction and rationale for the proposal. Senator Erickson noted that while there are existing committees addressing artificial intelligence on campus, there is currently no coordinated institutional policy. The purpose of the proposal is to establish a task force to develop a coordinated campus-wide approach to artificial intelligence, particularly with respect to pedagogy, which falls within the purview of the Faculty Senate. Senator Erickson emphasized that the complexity of the issue warrants a task force rather than a standing committee. Senator Erickson further explained that the proposal requests administrative support in the form of staff access, including consultation with budget and information technology units as needed, rather than dedicated staffing. It was clarified that the proposal is a memorial rather than a bill. Senator Erickson highlighted the need for an institutional process that accounts for the varied needs of different disciplines, noting that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning. As an illustrative example, Senator Erickson described instructional models at some institutions that are shifting from traditional one-hour lectures to longer studio-style classes that combine instruction with supervised in-class work. Such models could provide faculty with greater oversight of student use of artificial intelligence but would require institutional-level changes to course scheduling and registration systems. Senator Erickson emphasized that these types of changes cannot be implemented by individual faculty alone and require coordinated institutional consideration. Additional discussion addressed the importance of maintaining faculty control over classroom practices related to artificial intelligence, noting that while current policy allows faculty discretion, formal institutional recognition of these principles such as within the Academic Program Review process—would be beneficial. Senator Erickson expressed appreciation to Senator Sharp-Hoskins for her assistance in editing the proposal and emphasized the urgency of the issue, requesting a deadline of April 1 of the following year for the task force’s work due to the rapidly evolving nature of artificial intelligence.

Senator Sharp-Hoskins offered a brief comment in support of the proposal, expressing interest in the creation of a body that could thoughtfully evaluate institution-wide adoption of artificial intelligence tools and software that affect all faculty. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that tools are not implemented broadly through systems such as Canvas without review by a diverse group of stakeholders, and that institutional decisions should not compromise individual faculty autonomy in their classrooms.

The item will proceed to Curriculum and Planning for discussion in February. The bill has been posted to the Faculty Senate website.

## 8. Unfinished Business

- 04-25/26 - Faculty Senate input to Academic Program Sustainability Plan Proposal. Sponsors – O. Bello (Engineering), C. Brown (A&S), and others to follow. **Assigned to Budget and Resources.**

Senator Hanson explained that the amendments were fairly extensive but did not change the spirit of the bill. The discussion emphasized that program sustainability is inherently complex and that rigid metrics may not account for program-specific exceptions. The intent of the amendments was to incorporate flexibility and practicality, using metrics as indicators for further examination rather than as automatic determinants for program cuts. A program-specific analysis would follow when concerns are identified.

The committee noted the difficulty of capturing this approach in contractual language. As part of the amendments, the committee adopted the report previously developed by the Curriculum and Planning Committee. Although extensively amended, the bill was described as remaining faithful to its original intent while encouraging flexibility and program-specific consideration in sustainability decisions.

The motion to pass the bill as amended was made by Senator Erickson and seconded by Senator Cook.

#### **During discussion:**

Vice Chair expressed appreciation for the work of Curriculum and Planning (C&P) and Budget & Resources (B&R), as well as contextual comments provided by Dean Lakey. The Vice Chair suggested that members of B&R and C&P collaborate to produce a concise, one-page set of recommendations outlining endorsed exceptions (e.g., A, B, C, or D). This request was framed as a response to repeated inquiries from the Board regarding program sustainability and the need for clarity before final consideration. The Vice Chair emphasized that any requested amendments should be clearly articulated so they could be incorporated into a final version presented to the Board.

Senator Hanson stated that B&R would be willing to participate and believed the task could be completed quickly. Senator Bello also expressed willingness to participate.

Senator Manz asked for clarification regarding whether a vote would be taken on the related resolution during the meeting. Senator Erickson clarified that the resolution had been assigned to committee and would not be voted on at this time. The committee would later return with a recommendation to pass, do not pass, or pass as amended.

Senator Sandstrom asked how strong the due pass recommendation would be if the amendments were not accepted. Senator Hanson responded that without taking a vote, he could not speculate, though he stated his personal vote would have been to pass the bill as originally written.

Senator Erickson clarified that the motion on the floor was to pass the bill as amended, adopting the committee's recommendation as documented. While additional discussion or clarification documents could be developed, the vote pertained solely to the bill as proposed. Any further changes would require a separate motion.



Chair Chaitanya then moved the bill to a vote.

**VOTE:**

**YES: 37**

**NO: 1**

**ABSTAIN: -0-**

Motion passes: Proposition approved by Senate.

## **9. Other Business – NONE**

## **10. Remarks and Announcements**

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Chaitanya made two announcements.

First, he noted that NMSU Day will take place on February 9 and that he is serving on the planning committee. He anticipates attending the event and relayed that the President has requested senators coordinate shared travel arrangements to minimize expenses.

The event is being coordinated by Clayton, Government Relations Officer, who has made or is negotiating hotel reservations at Piñon Court by La Fonda at an approximate rate of \$145 per night. Once priority invites are accommodated, rooms may become available to others, including senators. He also noted that alternative lodging options at similar price points may be available and that lodging should not present a barrier to attendance.

Second, he expressed concern regarding the availability of graduate students for research and the absence of a permanent Vice President for Research (VPR) during a particularly challenging period. He reported that a presentation was made to the President at a prior meeting and to the Faculty Senate Leadership Committee requesting an accelerated VPR search process. The goal would be to begin the process immediately and host VPR candidates on campus by late April or early May, prior to the departure of nine-month appointees. The President is considering this request and will consult with search firms to determine feasibility within the current calendar.

He further reported significant concerns regarding graduate enrollment. Specifically, 126 I-20s have been issued to international students, with only 38 visas approved to date, compared to a typical yield of 65–70 students. He emphasized the need for increased focus on graduate student enrollment and encouraged senators, particularly program managers or those in contact with them, to expedite admissions and related processes.

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

The Vice Chair reported that, as outlined in the amended Vice Chair report, the Vice Chair is responsible for reviewing student enrollment and faculty headcount data obtained from the census and from Human Resources regarding faculty lines. Data was provided by Calixto Melero and analyzed using the established Excel model and formulas that have been used for several years. The Vice Chair thanked Jamie Bronstein for assistance in verifying the calculations.

Based on this review, there were no changes to the number of senators allocated per college or representative group. All allocations to colleges, representative

groups, and the Faculty Senate Leadership Committee (FSLC) remain unchanged as previously posted on the Senate website. The total number of senators will remain at 68. The Vice Chair noted that while the proportional distribution among voting groups may change based on the formula, no changes resulted from the current data review. The posted allocations will remain in effect for the upcoming year.

**11. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.**

**Present:** FS Chair V. Chaitanya, FS Vice Chair C. Brown, T. Aguirre, D. Fuqua, I. Hansen, R. Jayaraman, R. Schumacher, F. Boutsen, M. de Boyrie, M. Montañez, G. De Necochea, T. Conner, V. Murga, R. Figueroa, E. Oskey, C. DeBlieck, Z. Shen, K.T. Manis, R. Villegas-Arguelles, D. Overstreet, B. Hampton, J. Sandstrom, S. Way, J. Bengtson, T. Allred, R. Gioannini, P. Kemp, K. Knight, S. Lynch, M. Burkardt, D. Magoc, J Bronstein, J. Cook, R. Li, K. Sharp-Hoskins, H. Baek, O. Bello, M. Talipov, S. Mikkelson, T. Manz, R. Ghimire, O. Holguin, P. Tian, S. Hanson, K. Finlator, C. Erickson, Parliamentarian L. LaPlue, Rec.Sec. M.Cisneros

**Guests:** Deputy Provost James McAteer, Assoc. Dean, Arts & Sciences Joseph Lakey, ASNMSU Vice President Kolby Graham Taylor, Chief of Staff, BOR Adam Cavotta.

**Revised and finalized by:**

**Chair Chaitanya and Vice Chair Brown on 1/5/2026**