

Faculty Senate Chair's Report

Interval: August 28, 2026 - October 1, 2026

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Opening Message

During its first full month of academic-year duty, the 2026-2027 Faculty Senate faithfully carried out a great many tasks for which plans had been made by the time of the previous meeting. Many senators also stepped up for additional responsibilities that arose over the month, adding more to their plates and further strengthening shared governance at NMSU. Please welcome **Senator Michael Webb**, who has stepped up to represent non-tenure-track faculty at NMSU-Grants. Please also welcome **Senator Megan Finno-Velasquez**, who has joined the tenure-track HEST delegation. With these additions, the 2026-2027 Faculty Senate roster is now complete.

1. External Committee Appointments Table

In a cogent demonstration of the NMSU's commitment to Shared Governance, the number of external committees with Faculty Senate representation has now grown to 27. The current table of assignments is below. The fourth column indicates a proposed schedule for when each committee should be reported on to the full Faculty Senate by the corresponding Faculty Senator.

Committee	Senator(s)	Comments	updating
Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT)	Erickson		Oct 2026
Legislative Task Force	Finlator	convenes in Spring	
University System Budget Committee	Finlator	(9/23/2026 meeting cancelled)	Nov 2026
Faculty Senate Library Advisory Committee	Lopez Gallagher		Oct 2026
Graduate Faculty Council	Tian	(Sens. Palacios and Abdelkefi are also on it, but were not appointed by FS)	Oct 2026
Athletic Department Advisory Committee	Aguirre		Nov 2026
Global Faculty Advisory Council (GFAC)	Manis		Nov 2026
Classroom Technology Strategic Planning	Manis		Dec 2026
ASNMSU Liaison	Kenney & Bryce	to be appointed by Student Success	Dec 2026
Open Access Fund Allocation Committee (OAPFAC)	Abdelkefi, Sandstrom	(not appointed by FS)	Dec 2026

Committee	Senator(s)	Comments	updating
UPAC	Bello	FS Vice Chair is <i>ex officio</i> co-chair	
ADAC	Bello	FS Vice Chair is <i>ex officio</i> member	
Policy Steering Committee (PSC)	Finlator, Bello	FS Chair and Vice Chair <i>ex-officio</i> members	
ADA Compliance Task Force	Bello	should complete by May 2027	
Housing Strategic Visioning Group	Finlator	has met once	
Integrated Development Campus Plan (ICDP)	Finlator	has met twice	
ICDP Core Working Group	Pimentel		Jan 2026
Data Stewards Committee	Finlator	meets second Friday each month	
Enrollment Management Committee	Finlator	meets third Thursday each month. (Previously Bello also served, but VPSS Marin is slimming it down starting Oct 2026.)	
IT Governance Committee	Finlator	meets first Thursday each month	
President's Cabinet	Finlator	meets bi-weekly	
Search: VPR	Finlator	co-chairing with Deputy Provost McAteer	
Search: VP of Global	Bello, Palacios		
Search: Cooperative Experiential Associate Provost	Holguin		
Employee Recognition Council	Finlator	New initiative by HR to re-think Employee Recognition; under development.	Jan 2026
Student Fee Review Board		Faculty senator needed for a board run mostly by ASNMSU. Time commitment is one meeting each in Nov. and Feb. plus packet review.	

2. Board of Regents Meetings

The Board of Regents met on 9/8/2026. They approved a long-term partnership agreement with White Sands Federal Credit Union that secures WSFCU exclusive naming rights to the Pan Am Center for ten years in exchange for \$1.3 million per year of support. The name “Pan American” will be preserved in the Center’s name, but it will be augmented to acknowledge WFCSU support. Additionally, the “naming partnership would

include comprehensive marketing and branding opportunities throughout the venue and NMSU Athletics ecosystem.”

The Board of Regents Student Success Committee met 9/10/2026.

1. Regents Professor Dr. Martha Desmond proposed a new BS in Wildlife Law Enforcement, an interdisciplinary degree involving CJ, Philosophy, and Fish & Wildlife. Unanimously approved.
2. The Provost’s office is identifying “roadblock courses;” that is, courses where high DFW rates hinder student advancement. These are often not in the student’s major. In ENGR generally, this is calculus. For CS, this is lab courses. The goal is to identify where teaching supports are needed.
3. Program Sustainability: Assoc. Provost for Inst. Effectiveness Cecilia Hernandez announced that 16 undergraduate and 12 graduate programs have been identified as “low-yield.” The way forward remains under discussion, **but** CH insisted that the ad-hoc committee doesn’t just dismiss programs (they don’t have this power). Provost Bull added that even eliminating programs wouldn’t mean eliminating faculty. Instead, there will be a three-year timeline for identifying and addressing problems or requesting an exception.

3. Group of 5 Meetings

Chair Finlator met with the President, Provost, and Deputy Provost on 9/16/2026.

- Chair Finlator asked about the status of the Complete College America initiative, a statewide initiative to review the student experience across several universities that was begun last year. President Fermé and Provost Bull had not heard much about it recently. However, there should be a meeting within two weeks; that is, by the end of September 2026.
- Chair Finlator asked about the status of the AI Task Force (Proposition 05-25/26). This is with Dean Pontelli, who heads the AI Consortium for all of NM. NMSU has committed to hiring two AI pedagogues, and the AI Task Force should bring together NMSU’s AI Institute, the statewide AI Consortium, and these pedagogues. The Provost and Deputy Provost will ping this.
- Chair Finlator asked about NMSU’s response to Compact for Higher Education 2.0. President Fermé has broached this with the BoR as well as in council with the four NM peer institutions, and he will meet with the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) on it too. President Fermé and the BoR agree to take a “wait and see” approach, noting that, nationwide, the response has been “quiet.” Chair Finlator noted that the faculty want to be involved.
- Chair Finlator asked about the posted AVPR position. President Fermé conceded that the timing is strange, but speculated that the position needed to be filled in order to support federal compliance work, noting that compliance is an area where NMSU has room for improvement.
- Chair Finlator asked that MAE receive formal notification that Dr. Bull has been granted tenure there, as negotiated during his hire. President Fermé and Dr. Bull indicated that they would raise this with Dr. Dial (HR).
- Chair Finlator passed on that current staffing level and response times in Facilities & Services are leading to significant wasted effort and low morale, particularly with newly arrived faculty even though the head of F&S, Neil Bohn, is clearly doing everything he can. Dr. Bull agreed that onboarding has been cumbersome and President Fermé offered to bring up with the CFO how F&S staffing needs can be prioritized. (President Fermé is personally acquainted with NMSU’s deferred maintenance issues as the roof of the Presidential Residence recently sprang two leaks.)
- Chair Finlator asked who NMSU’s official peer institutions are. DP McAteer responded; they are:
 - Oklahoma State U
 - Kansas State U

- North Dakota State U - Main
 - U of Nevada Reno
 - UT San Antonio
 - U of Wyoming
 - UT EP
 - U of Idaho
 - Northern Arizona U
 - Colorado State, Fort Collins
 - Oregon State U
 - Washington State U
 - South Dakota State U
 - U of Arkansas
 - Mississippi State U
 - U of Hawaii at Manoa
 - Utah State U
 - UNM
 - Montana State U
 - U of Alaska, FB
 - U of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Deputy Provost McAteer noted the good news that the proposed rules requiring fixed durations for visas were stayed by a federal court. The would have required all foreign doctoral students to complete their PhDs in four years.
 - Deputy Provost McAteer also noted that the Open Access Publication Fund has not arrived in the Provost's office and been converted into a simple index yet; this is in-progress. Funds may still be requested and spent, but securing reimbursement remains more complicated than it will be once the fund's control is transferred.

4. Policy Steering Committee

The Policy Steering Committee (PSC) met on 9/14/2026.

- The proposed revisions to ARP 4.61, which were approved by Faculty Senate without going through committee, were opened for public comment.
- Associate Vice President for Human Resource Services Dr. Bill Dial is developing new policy that would circumscribe the conditions under which full-time, exempt staff may take on part-time, temporary teaching assignments that supplement their full-time staff obligations. This is a response to concerns that some exempt staff are assuming teaching responsibilities that interfere with their regular staff duties. It does not affect faculty. No further policy actions were taken.
- The imminent launching of a new platform for managing policy was announced, which should make bookkeeping easier for the PSC going forwards.

The 9/28/2026 meeting was cancelled because no policy items were pending.

5. Data Stewards

The Data Stewards committee met on 9/11/2026 and discussed (1) Data Tools trainings (selection of topics, training organization, identification of internal or external subject matter experts); and (2) briefly stepped into the maze of NMSU's many data sets, 33 associated software applications, and the

overarching question of, “Who is the Data Trustee for what Data?” No need for faculty input was obvious. (This important conversation is challenging to run in an organized fashion.)

6. President’s Cabinet

The President’s Cabinet met on 9/14/2026.

- The Integrated Campus Development Plan team met and discussed the financial plan and periodic assessment. I was not there, but Chief Financial Officer Dr. Bottorff has solicited Faculty Senate engagement, leading to Senator Victor Pimentel’s appointment at the last FSLC meeting.
- Marketing & Communications (“MarComm”) led organization of the Gratitude Run, where I saw many colleagues and students out there doing their best (my wife was inspired to propose that she join in with our three kids next fall).
- Carina Frisch (ASNMSU President) has her hands full fiddling bylaws, setting up reimbursements, and organizing homecoming.
- Chancellor Monica Torres has been overseeing Community College Strategic Plan developments. DACC is nearly finished; Grants and Alamogordo are in progress. She has also invested significant effort in identifying & ameliorating administrative bottlenecks for CC students to transfer to NMSU-Main. Evidently, far fewer CC students are transferring than indicate the intention eventually to transfer when they enroll in CCs, so it’s hoped that this will remove barriers.
- VP Linda Scholz summarized the Domenici Conference - 200 attendees. Some talks were good (especially the student contributions); others were weaker. The format (too much sitting?) and cadence (how often? who will fund it?) will be reviewed.
- Provost Bull announced Interim Dean Boren’s appointment to ACES. A steering committee is pushing ADA compliance, focusing on courseware. A committee will be formed to plan the Multidisciplinary Building, which should have a multicultural appearance. The College of Engineering is exploring MoU agreements with tribal colleges, only one of which has an accredited ENGR program.
- CIO Jim Stanfill announced the first IT report. A five-year plan for tech at NMSU will be developed.
- Athletics Director Joe Fields reported that volleyball, soccer, cross-country are underway, and referenced a “Naming Opportunity.” (Whether this is the WSFCU agreement was unclear.) Block ticket sales are doing well but will take some adjustment for crowds used to buying tickets at walkup.
- Dean of Students Anne Goodman: Classroom management training is available. We also had Hazing Prevention and Constitution Day and look forward to Voter Registration drives.
- Justin Dunivan, Public Safety: the Domenici Conference, move-in, and the first big game went well, and security numbers look good. The All Hazards Emergency Ops roll-out went great. Fire Alarms will be upgraded to report directly to Emergency Response. A new Fire Chief, Christopher Sloman, who was previously a captain at NMSU will start 10/1. He has to relocate back from Hawai’i.
- IVPR Patricia Sullivan: There will be a “cluster hire” in support of a Biomedical initiative. Arrowhead IP modernization is underway to facilitate IP coming in through private sectors instead of going out from faculty. Excited about PTIE initiative (talk to Sen. Holguin).
- HEST Dean Marlatt: HEST serves 4500 students this fall - highest ever. They’re “activating dormant foundation accounts” and trying to create four new endowed seats. HEST also has two “Social Transformation” speakers coming per term; these are well-attended.

- COAS Dean Pontelli reports 13 graduate students in the new interdisciplinary program; he presented the MS in AI to Santa Fe on 9/15/2026.
- VP for Student Success Marin clarified that student enrollment bookkeeping is being updated; NMSU had K-12 recruitment at 23 of 33 NM County Fairs and will be visiting High Schools; there was the 42nd Career Expo; lots of assessment of fractional grading & course scheduling is ongoing; and that students who transfer from NMSU mostly transfer to NM schools including DACC and CNM.
- PSC has new Policy Tracking software and has hired a new attorney.
- HR has put out an RFP regarding classification & compensation (C&C) and is studying regional pay. C&C guidelines are also being reviewed for the first time since 2019. Searches for a Chief Audit Officer, Chief Data Officer, and two Deans will be starting soon. Managerial training will be “re-invigorated” and employee recognition is to be re-thought.
- Assoc. VP Admin & Finance D’Anne Stuart: external audits are wrapping up, and an integrated budget request is under development.
- Employee Council Chair Sonia White: planning the Employee Picnic 10/30. (Note, we are all employees...)
- Exec. Searches: all three are on schedule. Save-the-dates for in-person interviews will be on Hotline.
- HR added that they’re clarifying resources for hiring, internal hiring, and promotion, and working with CLPD to help hires succeed.
- Dr. Scholz: Admin has visited 12 of 23 nations/tribes/communities. Data are being crunched, MoU’s are being updated, cultural barriers to success are being identified; and the role of internships for native American students are being evaluated.
- Dr. Bull added that there is an idea of scheduling a pow-wow at NMSU. These are common on campuses nationwide.
- President Fermé added that further steps are being taken to build relationships with tribal/native American leadership and support their students. He then pivoted to NMSU Forward, which will be reviewed by the Executive team in November. Send comments up ASAP (we’re doing that, so thank you Senators Sievert, Burkardt, and Erickson!)

7. NMCHES

The New Mexico Council for Higher Education Senates met on 9/9/2026 to develop bylaws. Many questions were addressed. At the end, the remaining questions were, “How many representatives should be from each institution?” and, “How should it be decided which institutions are included?” These things were not completely resolved in the next meeting either, which Chair Finlator missed.

8. IT Governance

This did not meet in September.

9. Campus Development

This did not meet in September.

10. Employee Recognition

Associate Vice President for Human Resource Services Dr. Bill Dial has begun standing up a new systemwide council for redefining employee recognition. The goal is to embed employee recognition in the NMSU culture

in a new way. The council should include representation from faculty, staff (via the Employee Council), Community Colleges, students, and administration. ARP 9.18, RPM 2.30, and NMSU's neglected websites addressing recognition (there are several) were cited.

10. Meetings with Faculty

Chair Finlator has met with three groups of faculty over September to "spread the word" about Faculty Senate.

- Kinesiology 9/18/2026
- ACES Department Heads 9/25/2026
- TPAL 9/28/2026

11. Administrative Searches

Three national administrative searches are underway where Faculty Senate is involved:

- VPR: co-chaired by Chair Finlator
- VP for Global: co-chaired by Vice Chair Bello
- Associate Provost: co-chaired by Senator O. Holguin

All three searches are on schedule. FSLC members - please make a reasonable effort to attend candidate interviews in person. Dr. Dial will work to open up hybrid participation for CC and Extension/Outreach senators, but the purpose of in-person interviews is to go beyond that.

12. Faculty Senate Elections

Prof. Michael Webb has stepped up to represent NMSU-Grants as a non-tenure-track professor. Senator DeBlieck is close to identifying the next tenure-track senator from HEST. These two decisions will complete the 2026-2027 Faculty Senate elections.

13. Legislative Tracker

Number	Name	Committee	Status
01-26/27	A Memorial in Honor of Dr. Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza	n/a	passed
02-26/27	Open Access Publication Fund Allocation Committee Award Rules Amendment	RCA	Recommend do pass
03-26/27	A Bill to Amend Proposition 05-23/24 to Establish a Voting Faculty Senate Seat on the NMSU Global Faculty Advisory Council	AOO	Recommend do pass
04-26/27	Resolution Establishing a Task Force on Dual-Career Recruitment and Retention	Budget & Resources	Recommend "do pass as amended"
05-26/27	Resolution Establishing a Faculty Task Force on Promotion, Tenure, and Faculty Evaluation Related to Innovation and Entrepreneurship	UP / FS	Recommend "do pass as amended"

Number	Name	Committee	Status
06-26/27	Review of Proposed Revisions to ARP 4.65	C&P	Recommend do pass
07-26/27	"Amending NMSU Forward to Strengthen the Role of Research and Creative Activity"	(Emergency Legislation)	