

**NMSU Faculty Senate
Meeting**
February 6, 2025; 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. **Approval of Agenda**
Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.
Vice-Chair Brown proposes a friendly amendment to add two speakers to the agenda.
Moved and seconded to approve the agenda with the friendly amendment.
Agenda approved.

3. **Recognition of Guests-**
Vice-Chair Brown welcomed President Ferme and Amanda Blair, Operation Director for the Campus Health Center.

Amanda Blair

*Amanda Blair is representing the Aggie Health and Wellness Center to discuss a new telehealth service launched in April 2024. Initially available only to students, this service is now accessible to benefit-eligible employees as well. She shared the website link in the chat for virtual attendees. The service is completely free for anyone who has access to the platform, which provides various medical and counseling services, including psychiatry.

Employees do not need a code to access psychiatry services, unlike students. The service operates 24/7, providing immediate support for common health issues, allergies, and more. This ensures that both students and employees have access to care even during weekends or long breaks, when other services might be unavailable. In crisis situations, users can be connected with a licensed professional within about four minutes, which is faster than some local options.

The telehealth service enhances mental health support, making care accessible without the need for insurance. Employees can schedule counseling sessions and select their preferred providers based on factors such as gender or language needs. The service is available in all 50 states, making it useful while traveling. Timely care can also provide prescriptions, which is beneficial for those on the go.

While there are some limitations for employees compared to students regarding specific services like health coaching, the company has acknowledged the demand for wider offerings. Amanda emphasized the importance of sharing this resource with students and offered flyers for distribution. She encouraged everyone to download the app and familiarize themselves with it to better understand its benefits.

Timely care aims to be a helpful resource before a health crisis arises, promoting proactive engagement. Amanda is open to speaking at various departmental meetings or classrooms to increase awareness about telehealth services. She has plenty of print and digital materials to share and seeks help in getting this information to students and employees.

If anyone at the workplace encounters a colleague struggling, Amanda urged them to remember the availability of timely care, which remains free with no insurance requirement. The selection process for this telehealth service was rigorous, and Amanda believes it offers top-tier experience. She thanked everyone for their attention and provided her email for further questions regarding the service.

President Ferme

*President Ferme provided an update and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to speak and

hear feedback. He mentioned that there has been a consistent effort to clarify recent Trump Administration executive orders, including the reversal of some orders. Linda Scholz has participated in these discussions, addressing many questions raised by leadership. There are three main issues to discuss, and the first is about sensitive personal data. He explained that FERPA protects sensitive data for all students, including undocumented individuals, but there are special rules for certain international students on specific visas who might have violated their visa terms.

He stressed that personal information related to students should not be shared, and only specific information about international students' needs to be disclosed in certain situations, which will be detailed in upcoming documentation. Efforts are being made to create a website where information can be accessed. When asked about staff and faculty, he indicated that their data is also considered private and should not be disclosed.

Concerns were raised about posting sensitive information publicly, as it could lead to problems, such as someone taking a photo of it. Instead, he suggested sharing contact information for public safety and legal departments with everyone, encouraging individuals to store these numbers on their phones for easy access.

There was also a question about the school's stance regarding collaboration with deportation efforts for undocumented individuals. The response was that no collaboration would occur, as stated by both the Department of Justice and NMSU and City of Las Cruces police. Typically, classrooms and dorms are private spaces not open to the public.

He highlighted that recent changes have removed some protections for public spaces within educational institutions, allowing individuals to protest or enter certain areas more easily than before. This has made it necessary to redefine safe spaces within the school.

Ultimately, he reassured everyone that the Central Administration is working on a comprehensive statement to address these issues and will provide detailed information on legal protections through a new document being prepared. The importance of contacting public safety and legal departments was reiterated, and he advised the community to keep their contact numbers readily available.

The landscape of legal protection is constantly changing, and Dr. Ferme promised ongoing communication to keep the community informed. Overall, he aimed to provide clarity and support regarding the legal aspects impacting students, faculty, and staff in the current environment, emphasizing the need for vigilance and readiness to adapt to evolving situations.
**Discussion, questions and answers followed.

4. Approval of Minutes of January 9, 2025, meeting

Moved and seconded to revise the corrected minutes after recording secretary posts them on the Faculty Senate website. They will be approved at the next Faculty Senate meeting held on 6 March 2025.

Moved and seconded to approve minutes on the next Faculty Senate meeting held on 6 March 2025.

5. Reports of Officers

FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

FS Vice-Chair, Christopher Brown

Chair Chaitanya and Vice-chair Brown are meeting with President Ferme and Provost Reddi to discuss several key issues. Due to the winter break and travel for a legislative session, meetings have been limited. President Ferme did inform that NMSU has requested funds from the Legislature for establishing an AI Institute to study AI in research and teaching.

NM Legislative Finance Committee Chair George Muñoz has proposed that NMSU become the State online program coordinator for higher education. Ongoing discussions with other university leaders will provide more details soon. Concerns regarding the safety of NMSU students, faculty, and staff amidst executive orders have been raised, and the Central

administration is looking into how to respond in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Justice and the NMSU General Council.

There are also discussions about the office for international student support, and a task force has made suggestions for changes. Reorganization of the office of student success aims to enhance recruitment and retention. Provost Reddi has communicated details about this reorganization through a campus memo.

Other discussions included transitioning leadership within the Academic Dean's Advisory Council and policies regarding grade replacement for graduate students. There will be further discussions on both topics. Lastly, the Policy Steering Committee has seen limited engagement, prompting Chair Chaitanya and the Vice Chair to meet with Deputy Provost James McAteer and Provost Reddi to address this issue. [Full Vice Chair Report on FS website.](#)

6. Reports of Standing Committees

- Budget and Resources – Chair, Stephen Hanson
Chair Hanson reported that the Budget and Resources Committee met as planned. They had enough members present but no official business to conduct. They talked about goal setting and upcoming plans. In the next meeting, they will consider two draft memorials: one asking President Ferme to continue the admin versus faculty position study initiated by interim President Torres, and another supporting President Ferme in putting in place policy that would require balancing the NMSM Athletic Department's budget within a 3–5-year period. [BR report on FS website.](#)
- University Planning – Chair, Erik Lehnhoff
Chair Lehnhoff reported that the committee met but had no new business. [UP report on FS website.](#)
- Curriculum and Planning - Chair, Gustavo Piña
Chair Piña reported that the committee did not meet due to not having any new business, and their next meeting is set for 13 February.
- Research and Creative Activity – Chair, Paul Tian
Chair Tian reported that the committee met and discussed several topics as a continuation from previous semesters. First, they talked about the need for a technician in the Art Department, exploring various support options. However, they could not gather much detail from the Senator who proposed this, as she was absent during the discussion. Secondly, they continued discussing summer compensation from grants but decided to put this aside for more information from central administration. They recognized that summer salaries are low compared to peers, and talked about it for about 15 minutes, noting it as a bigger issue. Some senators suggested collaborating with the union for salary negotiations. Lastly, they discussed the importance of startup packages to attract good researchers. They mentioned needing more information from the college regarding these packages and planned to address this further in the February meeting. [Full RCA report on FS website.](#)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Chair, Karen Kopera-Frye
Chair Kopera-Frye reported that the committee met on January 20 and welcomed Senator Bronstein, who had been on Sabbatical. Nathan Brooks served on the committee during her absence. The group decided to delay the land acknowledgment until other pressing issues are addressed. Dr. Scholz has been invited to speak about the Know Your Rights campaign at the next DEI meeting on February 12. There is a request from gender and sexuality studies to create a memorial since their unit has been dissolved, and they will present their request at the next meeting. The group also discussed murals, but Senator Dylan was not present for an update. There's a call for more discussions on these matters at future meetings. [DEI report will be posted soon.](#)
- Student Success – Chair, Tawny Aguirre

Chair Aguirre reported the committee met on January 16th. They had a quorum. They discussed goals for the spring semester and secured 2 guest speakers for their next meeting on February 20th: Melissa Magnusson, Director of Financial Aid, and the Director of Study Abroad, to learn more about scholarships and funding for study abroad opportunities, and to see where they can help in those areas.
[SS report on the FS website.](#)

7. New Business

- **Proposition 09-24/25** – Memorial in Appreciation of Dr. Monica Torres for Serving as Interim President. **Sponsor(s):** T. Aguirre (DACC), K. Lopez-Gallagher (NMSU-A), C. Brown (A&S), O. Holguin (ACES), V. Chaitanya (Engineering), S. Hanson (ACES), M. Darapuneni (ACES), K. Grover (ACES), E. Lehnhoff (ACES), G. Duff (ACES), J. Hunter (A & S), J. Cook (A & S), J. Dalager (A & S), L. Hermanson (A & S), T. Conner (A & S), J. Bronstein (A & S), R. Obregon (A & S), K. Finlator (A & S), T. Cleveland (A & S), H. Baek (A & S), A. Ashley (A & S), I. Hanson (A & S), W. Walker (A & S), M. Furuhashi (A & S), H. Hampton (A & S), K.T. Manis (Bus), C. Erickson (Bus), F. Arslan (Bus), R. Rahman (Bus), Z. Shen (Bus), O. Bello (Engineering), M. Elshinawy (Engineering), R. Li (Engineering), H. Badawy (Engineering), R. Jayaraman (Engineering), T. Manz (Engineering), K. Kopera-Frye (HEST), L. Saiki (HEST), S. Lynch (HEST), J. Tomaka (HEST), J. Rice (HEST), C. DeBlieck (HEST), P. Smoak (HEST), F. Boutsen (HEST), W. Stem (HEST), D. Magoc (HEST), S. Walker (CES), S. Gordan (CES), K. Knight (CES), E. Gamboa (DACC), T. Price (DACC), G. Pina (DACC), L. Grant (DACC), T. Allred (Alamogordo CC), K. Lopez-Gallagher (Alamogordo CC), A. Romero (Grants CC), S. Elliss (NTT), M. Burkardt (NTT), R. Schumacher (NTT), R. Gioannini (NTT), C. Anaya (NTT), J. Sandstrom (NTT), D. Overstreet (NTT), I. Villicana Pedraza (NTT), E. Hetrick (NTT)

Sponsors request the Senate to consider this as Emergency Legislation.

***Moved and seconded to consider Proposition 09-24/25 as Emergency Legislation.**

Senate Vote

YES: 42 NO: -0- ABSTAIN: -0-

Senate voted in favor; proposition will now be moved to Unfinished Business as the first item.

- **Proposition 10-24/25-** Proposal for name change from the “Department of Civil Engineering” to the “Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.” **Sponsor(s):** Runwei Li (College of Engineering), Michaela Buenemann (College of Art and Science), Christopher Erickson (College of Business), Tawny Aguirre (Doña Ana Community College), Dylan McDonald (Library), Omar Holguin (College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences), Geoffrey Smith (College of Art and Science), Kristian Finlator (College of Art and Science), Jiayi Wang (College of Health, Education and Social Transformation), and Christopher Brown (College of Art and Science).

Assigned to Curriculum and Planning.

8. Unfinished Business-

Proposition 09-24/25 – Memorial in Appreciation of Dr. Monica Torres for Serving as Interim President. **Sponsor(s):** T. Aguirre (DACC), K. Lopez-Gallagher (NMSU-A), C. Brown (A&S), O. Holguin (ACES), V. Chaitanya (Engineering), S. Hanson (ACES), M. Darapuneni (ACES), K. Grover (ACES), E. Lehnhoff (ACES), G. Duff (ACES), J. Hunter (A & S), J. Cook (A & S), J. Dalager (A & S), L. Hermanson (A & S), T. Conner (A & S), J. Bronstein (A & S), R. Obregon (A & S), K. Finlator (A & S), T. Cleveland (A & S), H. Baek (A & S), A. Ashley (A & S), I. Hanson (A & S), W. Walker (A & S), M. Furuhashi (A & S), H. Hampton (A & S), K.T. Manis (Bus), C. Erickson (Bus), F. Arslan (Bus), R. Rahman (Bus), Z. Shen (Bus), O. Bello (Engineering), M. Elshinawy (Engineering), R. Li (Engineering), H. Badawy (Engineering), R. Jayaraman (Engineering), T. Manz (Engineering), K. Kopera-Frye (HEST), L. Saiki (HEST), S. Lynch (HEST), J. Tomaka (HEST), J. Rice (HEST), C. DeBlieck (HEST), P. Smoak (HEST), F.

Boutsen (HEST), W. Stem (HEST), D. Magoc (HEST), S. Walker (CES), S. Gordan (CES), K. Knight (CES), E. Gamboa (DACC), T. Price (DACC), G. Pina (DACC), L. Grant (DACC), T. Allred (Alamogordo CC), K. Lopez-Gallagher (Alamogordo CC), A. Romero (Grants CC), S. Elliss (NTT), M. Burkardt (NTT), R. Schumacher (NTT), R. Gioannini (NTT), C. Anaya (NTT), J. Sandstrom (NTT), D. Overstreet (NTT), I. Villicana Pedraza (NTT), E. Hetrick (NTT)

Senator Aguirre commented on the memorial for interim President Torres, thanking her for her service and noting her funding of \$100,000 for open access.

No Discussion followed.

Vote:

YES: 43 NO: -0- ABSTAIN: -0-

Motion passes; Proposition approved by the Senate.

9. Other Business –

Chair Chaitanya stated that the university leadership decided that all communication about current and future grants will only come from the Vice President for Research (VPR). Deans or department heads can still choose to purchase equipment or travel if it's urgent, but that involves taking a risk outside of the VRP's guidance.

Senator Finlator asked for an update on the President's Chief of Staff hire. Chair Chaitanya received a message from the President about the new Chief of staff that he was able to share, and the new Chief of staff is Justin Bannister.

10. Remarks and Announcements

FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Chaitanya made brief remarks highlighting several key points. He mentioned that the President invited the Faculty Senate Leadership Committee to participate in the search for a new Chief of Staff. He is also chairing the committee for the Vice President for Research, and they are making swift progress. The profile for the next Vice President for Research is already out. All committee members have completed their training, and they are waiting to review the applicants' credentials, which will be available on March 17th. The committee has 20 members, with a significant number being faculty. Chaitanya attended NMSU Day, which was held on January 31st, the day before Las Cruces day, in Santa Fe. The event was well-organized and featured a Mariachi Band, along with speeches from Senators Nathan Small and George Muños, Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) vice chair and chair respectively. They expressed support for NMSU and acknowledged its contributions to the state. Chaitanya also mentioned the U. S. President's executive orders, noting the ongoing confusion around them. He emphasized the need for calm as the situation evolves and reassured that another communication would be issued soon from the President, hopefully within the next day or two.

FS Vice-Chair / SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

NONE

11. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:04 p. m.

Present: FS Chair V. Chaitanya, FS Vice-Chair C. Brown, S. Hanson, E. Lehnhoff, M. Burkardt, J. Cook, K. Kopera-Frye, O. Holguin, J. Bronstein, R. Schumacher, S. Lynch, C. DeBlicke, G. Piña, G. Duff, F. Arslan, J. Tomaka, S. Gordon, K. Knight, Z. Shen, H. Baek, R. Li, S. Walker, D. Magoc, D. Overstreet, L. Saiki, K. Finlator, R. Conner, T. Aguirre, P. Smoak, A. Ashley, R. Jayaraman, R. Gioannini, I. Hansen, M. Darapuneni, T. Cleveland, H. Badawy, P. Tian, C. Bond, A. Romero, D. McDonald, M. Furuhashi, E. Hetrick, I. Pedraza, K.T. Manis, F. Bousten, T. Manz, J. Rice, J. Hunter, B. Hampton, E. Gamboa, K. Lopez-Gallagher, C. Garcia-Anaya, S. Elliss, C. Erickson, M. Elshinawy, O. Bello, O. Holguin, Parliamentarian LaPlue, RecSec. Cisneros.

Guests: President Valerio Ferme, Amanda Blair Operation Director for the Campus Health Center