

NMSU Faculty Senate Chair Report for February 2025

Weekly Meetings with President Ferme and Interim Provost Reddi: Vice Chair Brown and my meetings with the leadership have been interrupted primarily because President Ferme has been busy traveling back and forth from Santa Fe in connection with legislative session. Partially, also because the Provost's and President's availability does not match. We are now back on track for weekly meetings, and we have decided to hold these meetings even if all of us are not available. We did meet on **February 3rd, 6th, and 13th** in specially called meetings to deliberate upon the impact of executive orders from the White House on research, University operations, and faculty life.

SLC Meetings with NMSU Administrative Leadership: We did not have any meeting this month but these monthly meetings between FSLC and NMSU administrators are now on everyone's calendar through the summer of 2025.

NMSU on-line Advisory Committee Meetings: We met on **February 4th**. The agenda included Global Programs and faculty advisory updates, U.S. News and World Report Rankings, Operations update, and Global as on-line platform for NM education.

Faculty Senate Meeting: We met on **February 6th**. The meeting was conducted by vice chair Chris Brown as I was otherwise occupied with an event involving President Ferme. I was able to join towards the tail end of the meeting to give an update of my activities and provide remarks. Minutes of the meeting are available on the NMSU faculty website.

Enrollment Management Committee Meeting: We met on February 28th. President Ferme attended the meeting and discussed the importance of enrollment, retention, and graduation. Various steps to improve performance were discussed. Some of the suggested steps were lowering of admission GPA to 2.5 from 2.75, focus on transfers from community colleges, transfers from Global, use of extension offices in every county, and marketing of new programs. Later Dean Post presented the enrollment picture of the college of HEST.

Academic Affairs Council Meeting: This is primarily the meeting of academic Deans with the Provost, which used to be called Dean's Academic Council meetings previously. We met on **February 11**. Various topics were discussed such as Federal Eos, re-organization of the student success offices, office of enrollment management, and update on International Services Office. The former ISSS and now ISO (?) will no longer be under the graduate school but a unit reporting directly to the Deputy Provost for now. Steps are underway to identify and improve services for international students and scholars.

University System Budget Committee: We met on **February 24th**. Various topics were presented such as status of legislative support, federal funding, student fee request, and Las Cruces campus five-year plan. Two items were voted in. Student minimum wage was increased to \$12.65 in tune with Las Cruces city wages. And DACC was authorized to continue with an integrated access program offered by Follett.

IT Governance Committee: We met on **February 6th**. During the meeting, IT Governance framework was explained, CIO provided the update, Cybersecurity update and Technology Support Service updates were provided.

Board of Regents Student Success Committee Meeting: This occurred on **February 25th**. I was unable to attend this meeting. The sole agenda for this meeting was to approve the undergraduate degree program in AI. I have already expressed my support for this degree program at the regular Board of Regents meeting in Santa Fe on January 30th. The program was easily approved by the regents committee.

Santa Fe visit: I visited Santa Fe from **January 30 to February 1** to celebrate NMSU day at the capitol building. This was a well-organized event by the Foundations office and the office of Government and Community Relations. Different colleges and Divisions had set up their display table. Many alumni visited including three former student Regents. BOR chair Ammu Devasthali and President Ferme gave a speech followed by the legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Chair, George Munoz and vice chair, Nathan Small, who both emphasized the importance of NMSU as the land grant institution of the State and offered their support to President Ferme. The secretary of Higher Education also gave a complimentary speech. In the evening, I attended the alumni reception and breakfast on **February 1**, well attended by State legislators.

FSLC Meeting: The FSLC met on **February 27th** to conduct its regular business. The minutes of the meeting are available on the NMSU Faculty senate web site.

Strike Force Legislative Session 2025: We met daily in the morning at 7:30 am for most of the month. A strike-force was set up to look at the house and senate bills coming up for discussions and the Office of Government and Community Relations provided links for each bill and committee meetings late evening. Next morning we met briefly to categorize the bills into three: no impact, watch, and requiring impact reports. The impact reports were submitted to the Office of Government relations and to legislatures.

Administrative Searches: The VPR search, Chair is well under way, we expect to conduct zoom interviews early April and invite finalists to the campus from the week of April 29th. Next the search for VP of Finance and Administration will get underway led by the current interim Chris Kinsley. The Search for the Provost is put on hold for the time being due to the difficulty of logistics of simultaneous senior level administration searches. Other searches underway or will be soon underway are permanent Head of HR, Dean of HEST (vice chair Brown is involved in the search committee) and others.

Fun Activities: On February 6th, a new ice cream flavor was unveiled and dedicated to President Ferme. The flavor was named Ferme Paradox. The event was celebrated at HRMT's 100 W Café and developed by Professor Sergio of The Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems (CESFAS) led by Senator Omar Holguin. CESFAS is looking at the suitability of selling various flavors to NMSU community.