

Faculty Senate Vice Chair Report – Activities for January 2025 **Christopher Brown, filed 2.6.25 (apologies on late posting)**

Below, I share highlights of work I have completed as Vice Chair in January of 2025. As always, I am very happy to visit with anyone who would like to gain more data on activities reported.

Meetings with President Ferme and Provost Reddi – Chair Chaitanya and I continue to enjoy excellent access to members of the Central Administrators team through our weekly meetings, and I share data on issues discussed below. Meetings were limited during January due to the winter break and people needing to travel to Santa Fe for the Legislative session.

- **AI Institute** – President Ferme noted that NMSU was submitting an ask to the Legislative session for funds to establish an AI Institute at NMSU. Of note, Enrico Pontelli, Dean of Arts and Sciences, chairs a consortium of NM universities exploring AI in university research and teaching.
- **NMSU as state online program coordinator for higher ed** – LFC Chair George Muñoz is floating the idea that NMSU fill this role, and President Ferme, Provost Reddi, and Chancellor of Global Kollman are in discussions with other university leaders and members of the Legislature. More details to follow as discussions unfold.
- **Ideas to support the safety of NMSU students, faculty, and staff in light of Trump Administration Executive Orders** – Central is very aware of concerns we all have, they are working with the NM Department of Justice and NMSU General Council to explore how best to protect members of the NMSU community, and we can expect ongoing messages as they pursue the best options.
- **Potential changes to ISSS office** - An ISSS task force shared ideas on improving the functions of ISSS, and discussions are ongoing on how to form a new structure. Provost Reddi will get a message out to the campus soon, and this is going to happen in spring term.
- **Reorg of Office of Student Success** – we had several discussions with President Ferme and Provost Reddi on this, and the goal is to build a structure that will best meet our recruitment and retention efforts. Provost Reddi recently shared details on this reorg via an all-campus memo; please connect with me if you have questions on this reorg.

Meetings of the FSLC with President Torres and Provost Reddi – The FSLC met with President Ferme and Interim Provost Reddi, and I shared notes from this meeting under separate cover in email. Chair Chaitanya and I have asked that these meeting continue with Dr. Ferme taking the helm, and he has agreed to continue the meetings. Due to the Legislative session, we are still waiting to firm up the schedule.

Meetings of the Academic Deans Advisory Council (ADAC), University Program Approval Council (UPAC), and the Policy Steering Committee (PSC). I share highlights below: (some notes come directly from ADAC minutes – thanks to Rick Marlatt)

- **ADAC** – We met twice during January, and discussions have focused on the following:
 - Interim Dean Post has announced he will be leaving NMSU to accept the Dean position at California State Monterey Bay and that his departure may occur before

a new HEST Dean is named, which could involve an acting dean transition plan, more details to come.

- Name change from the Department of Civil Engineering to the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering was discussed. It will come to the Senate soon.
- Grade Replacement for Graduate Students was discussed. We are seeing a number of graduate students who are unable to graduate because their GPA is too low even when they have retaken and performed very well in courses that they had previously failed or received Ds and Fs. Concerns were raised regarding maintaining academic rigor and high standards across graduate programs. We saw support for a process to provide exceptions in some cases where a student can appeal their low GPA with specific criteria that can be taken into account on a case-by-case basis,
- **UPAC** – Several program proposals are moving through the review process and are at various stages, including the MA in BEST, Ph.D. in Computational Social Sciences, Ph.D. in Applied and Agricultural Biology, Master of Science in Systems Engineering, and Master of Science in Engineering Management. Finally, a Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence proposal has been heard as well. We discussed how proposals can be strengthened by highlighting the RoI for the State of New Mexico to address feedback from the BoR and political leaders in Santa Fe, along with next steps for certain proposals.
- **PSC** – We did not meet in January, and this was the latest of many PSC meetings that were cancelled. Of the 16 meetings we should have had in the last 8 months, we have only met 3 times. I see this lack of engagement on the policy review process as completely unacceptable. I will visit with Chair Chaitanya and Deputy Provost James McAteer to explore a discussion with The President and Provost about getting the policy review process back on track.