

Faculty Senate Vice Chair Report – Activities for March 2026 **Christopher Brown, filed 3.31.26**

Below, I share highlights of work I have completed as Vice Chair in March of 2026. As always, I am very happy to visit with anyone who would like to gain more data on activities reported.

Group of 4 Meetings with President Ferme and Provost Reddi – During February, Chair Chaitanya and I attended two Group of 4 Meetings on 3.11.26 and 3.18.26. I share data on issues discussed below.

- **Need to review and renew international grad student health insurance** – In March, we learned that the international grad student health insurance policy needs to be rebid and renewed; Will Waller will be attending the 4.2.26 Senate meeting and sharing details.
- **NMSU compliance with US DoJ decision on accessibility of online data sharing** – In March, we also learned that MarComm has been working hard with departments and other campus units to meet a 4.24.26 deadline issued by the USDoJ that all public facing NMSU websites must be ADA compliant. The initial draft of a memo Provost Reddi shared implied that this also applied to all course content pages. Yes, NMSU will need to comply with ADA requirements for online course materials, but Central accepted that this is impossible by the 4.24.26 deadline. Vimal and I will be working with Deputy Provost McAteer and Academic Technology to develop a plan to work towards compliance, with work beginning in fall 2026. We will in turn hand this off to Chat elect Finlator and the Vice Chair to come from the May caucus of the FSLC.
- **Launch of the Program Sustainability Plan** – with Senate action on this completed, as co-chair of UPAC, I am working on putting in place an ad hoc committee to advance this plan, with work beginning in April. Oladayo Bello and Jonthan Cook will be representing Senate Leadership on this committee, and I thank John Sandstrom and Chris Ericskon for their willingness to serve. Committee composition is as follows:
 - Ceclia Hernandez – Assoc Provost, Office of Institutional Effectiveness,
 - 2 members of Faculty Senate Leadership – Oladayo Bello (College of Engineering) and Jonathan Cook (College of Arts and Sciences),
 - 2 department heads – Martha Desmond (College of ACES) and Hari Sankaran (College of Business),
 - 1 member of UPAC – Beth Apodaca will represent UPAC, and
 - Sashidihar Chintalapati will serve as Provost’s data support person.
- **Status of leadership of NMSU Global** – as I believe you all know, Sherry Kollman has accepted the position of Vice Chancellor and President of Vermont State University. I believe that she will be in post at NMSU until June or July, and President Ferme has advised he will be conducting a national search for this position.
- **Efforts to reboot FACT** – Provost Reddi has tasked Deputy Provost McAteer with starting discussions on how to see that FACT is more effective at vetting s/w which impacts faculty,

especially pedagogy. Deputy Provost McAteer is meeting with FACT Chair Paul Hamilton, and we can expect to see some changes as we wrap up spring semester.

Meetings of the Academic Deans Advisory Council (ADAC), University Program Approval Council (UPAC), and the Policy Steering Committee (PSC)

- **ADAC** – We met twice during March, 3.9.26 and 3.23.26, and discussions have focused on the following issues (some of this detail comes directly from ADAC minutes, with permission of ADAC Chair Ben Widmer):
 - **Articulation and MOU Process [Carley Casey]**
 - **Adobe Sign Workflows:** All academic agreements (MOUs, articulations, international agreements) have been digitized via Adobe Sign to expedite approval, which now takes approximately two weeks.
 - **Signature Authority:** Associate Deans were reminded **not** to sign these agreements personally; all signatures must come from the Provost’s Office.
 - **Agreement Tracking:** A SharePoint site contains records of agreements processed since 2021. Carley Casey will ensure all Associate Deans have access to this tracker.
 - **Internship Policy:** Discussion occurred regarding the necessity of MOUs for individual internships (e.g., Golf Management or Raytheon). Casey and Cecilia Hernandez will consult Legal to clarify requirements for credit-bearing vs. non-credit internships and the associated liability risks.
 - **Graduate School Updates [Karen Kopera-Frye]**
 - **ADA Title II Mandate:** All theses and dissertations must be ADA compliant starting April 24, 2026, this being related to the US DoJ directive noted above. The Graduate School will be working with units on campus to see that guidance and tools are in place. I made the point that this is a Graduate School responsibility, and Academic Technology is only a support unit.
 - **Commencement Policy:** A draft "Grad Degree Completion Deferral Request Form" was introduced for students wishing to walk in commencement before final graduation (e.g., walking in Summer, graduating in Fall). This will be sent out for feedback with the meeting minutes.
 - **Stackable Credentials:** The Graduate School is exploring a shift from 15-credit minors to 18-credit graduate certificates to improve student social mobility and marketability.
 - **Proposal for Doctoral Accelerated Program** - Assoc Dean Kopera-Frye shared a proposal for a DAP that is modeled after the MAP. I worked up a Senate bill asking the Senate to review this, and it will get a first read in the Senate on 4.2.26. Please

note, I am just asking the Senate to review this, and I am NOT advocating that we approve or provide a favorable read, simply provide a critical review.

- **UPAC** – UPAC did not meet in March, but co-chair Joe Lakey, Dean Roodali, and I met with an ACES faculty member to strategize on how to move a proposal for a PhD in Agricultural Education, Communications, and Workforce Development forward. This proposal has been rejected 2 times by external review bodies, and the goal of this meeting was to develop ideas to make the next and last attempt successful. UPAC will see a revised proposal in the fall submission cycle.
- **PSC** – The PSC met twice in March, 3.11.26 and 3.23.36, several changes to the ARP are proposed, proposals are in various stages of the review process, and details are provided at the NMSU Policy Hub - <https://policy.nmsu.edu/>. Donna Ottaviano continues to post changes in play in Hotline, and interested parties are encouraged to review progress, provide input to changes that are in process, and also submit proposed changes at The Policy Hub. Below are policy changes currently in play:
 - **ARP 16.69, Programs with Minors** – PSC has reviewed this previously, it was headed to the President’s Cabinet, issues were raised as regards anonymous reporting via Ethics Point, changes were made on which the PSC did not have issues, and it is headed back to the President’s Cabinet
 - **ARP 16.12, Cleary Act Compliance** – this policy deals with campus safety related to the requirements of the Jeanne Clery Campus Safety Act (US law). Very minor changes were made as this moved through other campus review parties, hazing was added to issues that the revised policy would address, and the PSC signed off on the changes and sent it back to the Presidents’ Cabinet for review and a vote.
 - **ARP 3.40, Process for Disability Accommodation** – this was posted for community review, no comments were received, a very minor grammatical change was proposed, and the PSC sent it to the Presidents’ Cabinet for review and a vote.
 - **ARP 7.65, Reduction of Force** – this received a first review by the PSC in March, and I confirmed that this did NOT apply to students, post docs, or faculty (this was confirmed at both meetings in March). With this being confirmed, Chair Chaitanya and I did not feel it needed to come to the Senate for review.
 - **ARP 4.69, Distance Ed** – we are still waiting for a revised version from Global, we have a Senate bill ready by which we can move this in Senate, and we are just waiting for a revised policy to come our way.