

Minutes Faculty Senate Student Success, October 17, 2024

Members Present: Chair T. Aguirre, M. Elshinaway, J. Rice, D. Magoc, M. Burkardt, K. Finlator, R. Gioannini, R. Figueroa, E. Oskey.

Members Absent: S. Smyth, K. Knight, S. Lynch

Guests: C. Erickson, R. Grant, S. Kollman, Chair V. Chaitanya, Vice-Chair C. Brown

Agenda Item # 1: Robbie Grant and Chancellor Kollman, Chegg Pilot Program NMSU Global

Mr. Grant stated that part of the goal of his office is to pilot new technology. He also said that most students are using AI and instead of fighting it, we need to embrace it. He provided the committee with a detailed history of the development of this pilot program. Included in the start-up steps were many attempts to involve faculty and many consultations with the legal department at New Mexico State University. He is interested in learning, what questions that students are asking in order to change the pedagogy to address those questions. He also stated one benefit from the partnership is their expertise in technology and research.

Senator Erickson stated that the issue with Chegg is there is an ongoing lawsuit alleging security fraud. As well as a cease and assist order from the FTC in relation to student cheating.

Robbie Grant responded that Chegg has agreed that Chegg agreed they have done some things inappropriately and they own it. He assured the committee that Chegg stated they want to do things the right way now. He also stated that NMSU hasn't publicized the partnership as of this date. First, he wants to look at the research. He went on to say that this is just a pilot program and if they learn that the risks are greater than the benefit, then they will pull out.

Senator Erickson emphasized that he thought the association is wrong. He asked the question, "if students feel they can use Chegg, are we telling them that it is ok to cheat?"

Chancellor Kollman let the committee know that Robbie had done his due diligence and this is a program that they have decided to go forward with. She also emphasized that this is a pilot program and they can pull out at any time.

Senator Burkardt mentioned that she did look at the Power Point slides about Chegg Study Pack that were provided and she felt that the Chegg Tutorbots were dumbing down the students. She provided the example of a physics problem for which the whole solution was on the Power Point slides and there was nothing asking the students for answers on an intermediate step, instructions based on their previous answers, or guidance on how to approach the problem-solving steps independently.

Robbie Grant's answer was that his end goal is to also see a step-by-step guide of how a student is to find an answer as well. He went on to say that the biggest thing is that he wants students to learn and not just have the answer shared.

Senator Finlator asked what the successful pilot outcomes look like?

Mr. Grant responded that one way is to look at two different classes – One that used the homework assistant and one that did not and compare the grades. He also shared that there were eighteen other metrics that his office was looking for to include engagement and retention. His office has also created a survey to learn more about the student experience with this platform.

Senator Magoc asked the question, “When students get their first job and they don’t have these tools, how does being successful come into play when they don’t have these tools?”

Mr. Grant responded that some instructors in the English department are changing their curriculum to integrate AI into the classroom. He also stated the employers are requesting that students have experience using AI in order to be employable.

After our guest left, we decided to put this item on the agenda for our next meeting and continue our conversation.

Agenda Item # 2 Approval of September 19 and October 3 Minutes.

Senator Gioannini motioned to approve the September 19 minutes. It was seconded by Senator Magoc pending minor edits discussed in the meeting. Unanimous vote yes.

Senator Burkhardt motion to approve October 3 minutes. It was seconded by Senator Elshinaway pending minor edits discussed in meeting. Unanimous vote yes.

Agenda Item # 3.) ARP 4.46 Authorized Absences from Class

There was a brief discussion and was tabled until next meeting.

Agenda Item # 4.) NMSU Students Taking Classes at NMSU

Chair Aguirre shared that this would be the first item at the next Faculty Leadership meeting and we will discuss it further at our next meeting.

Agenda Item # 5.) Financial/ Federal Aid Payment for Classes Going Towards Majors Only

Chair Chaitanya shared with our committee that after his meetings with the NMSU leadership, he is confident that they are going to invest in a software that is capable of handling this request. There was some discussion related to what faculty are expected to do in the interim. The committee and guests all agree that this is a very important issue and we will continue to have this discussion.