

NMSU Faculty Senate Meeting

February 5, 2026, 4:00 p.m.

Zoom and Hadley Hall Rm 130

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** - Meeting called to order at 4:03 p.m.

2. **Recognition of Guests**

- **Hunter Gonzales, ASNMSU**

Hunter Gonzales, Senator for the College of HEST, introduced himself as the new Student-Faculty Senate Representative. He shared that this is his first time serving in the role and stated that he plans to spend time learning the process and doing his best to contribute effectively. He also noted that he is majoring in Secondary Education with a focus on General Science.

- **Dr. Vanetta Busch, Director, Hazing Prevention and Organizational development, Student Life Division and Adjunct Professor, School of Business Management Department**

Dr. Vanetta Busch thanked the Senate for the invitation and referenced her previous visit to the Faculty Senate in the fall, when hazing prevention and faculty involvement were discussed. She noted that, based on Senate feedback, hazing prevention content has now been incorporated into the SET training so that all participants receive foundational information about hazing. She explained that the updated SET training provides an overview of hazing and that faculty and staff who complete the training will now receive this content.

Dr. Busch reported that additional student-focused initiatives have been implemented. In January, approximately 150 student leaders representing various clubs attended a student leadership conference that included hazing education. She shared that 62% of attendees indicated they knew what hazing was, which she described as encouraging. She also highlighted outreach efforts such as tabling events, during which students are engaged in conversations about hazing statistics and behaviors. She stated that these initiatives have increased student awareness and engagement.

Dr. Busch emphasized the need for greater faculty and staff participation, noting that while students are learning about hazing, it is unclear how comfortable faculty and staff feel discussing the topic. She proposed conducting listening sessions or focus groups within colleges, departments, and units after faculty completes the SET training to assess whether supplemental information is needed and whether faculty would like to review the student training materials. She shared that student training now includes pre- and post-assessments to measure learning outcomes. Students have also expressed interest in hearing real-life scenarios and perspectives from faculty and experts about how hazing was addressed or prevented. In response to a question from Senator Hanson regarding the possibility of in-person faculty participation in student trainings, Dr. Busch stated that students are interested in hearing directly from faculty, whom they view as

experts, even if hazing is not their primary subject area. She noted that partnering with the organization Stop Hazing has connected the university with a cohort of institutions, including Harvard University, that are collaborating to develop effective hazing prevention strategies. She explained that hazing has become a significant national issue and that institutions are working together to identify promising practices. She acknowledged that scheduling faculty participation may be challenging but welcomed the suggestion. Senator Kopera-Frye expressed interest in volunteering and suggested creating a list for faculty volunteers.

Dr. Busch also announced that a Stop Hazing survey, developed in partnership with University of Maine, will be launched to all students in the coming week. She noted that the survey is IRB-approved and that collected data will be analyzed to better understand student experiences and perceptions related to hazing. Dr. Busch expressed confidence in the student body's knowledge of hazing and shared that, in response to an open-ended question about non-hazing club activities, students generated examples that were reviewed and determined not to constitute hazing. She stated that these examples will be shared with students to reinforce positive organizational practices and concluded by expressing optimism about the campus culture surrounding hazing prevention. No further questions were raised.

- Dr. James McAteer, Deputy Provost, core values and a way forward Vice Chair Brown announced that Deputy Provost James McAteer was unable to attend the meeting. He noted that Deputy Provost planned to provide comments regarding software acquisition and efforts to prevent a recurrence of the Simple Syllabus situation, in which a tool was rolled out without the knowledge of the Provost and Deputy Provost. Vice Chair Brown stated that he would include brief remarks on this matter on his report.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

Senate approved the agenda.

Agenda was amended by Recording Secretary Cisneros to correct the dated listed for the approval of minutes, changing it from December 4 to January 15. Additionally, DEI committee had to be changed to its new name Access, Opportunity, and Outreach (AOO).

4. Approval of Minutes of January 15, 2026, meeting

Moved and seconded to approve the minutes.

Minutes approved and submitted.

5. Reports of Officers

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya Chair Chaitanya reported that his written report had been uploaded and encouraged senators to review it for additional detail. He noted that he would highlight selected items from the committees he attends. From the weekly "meeting of four," which includes the Chair, Vice Chair, Provost, and President, Chair Chaitanya shared concerns regarding graduate enrollment. He stated that there is apprehension about declines in applications, acceptances, and visa approvals for international graduate students. He explained

that recent federal actions restricting travel from 75 countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, and Iran—countries that traditionally supply international students—may significantly affect enrollment. In response, the Provost created a task force consisting of Chair Chaitanya, Senator Finlator (Chair of the Student Success Committee), Graduate Dean Koodali, Director of International Programs and Compliance Chair Derek Yu, and Deputy Provost James McAteer to address these concerns.

Chair Chaitanya also discussed the search for a permanent Vice President for Research (VPR). He and the Vice Chair communicated to the President, both verbally and through a written memorandum co-signed by the Chair of the Research and Creative Activity Committee, the importance of appointing a permanent VPR during this period. The President indicated that it is too late to complete a search this semester but plans to announce the formation of a search committee following the conclusion of the legislative session. The committee is expected to conduct its work over the summer and early fall, with the goal of identifying finalists for on-campus interviews and appointing a permanent VPR by January 2027.

The Chair emphasized the importance of transparency and open communication, referencing several recent initiatives that were communicated without prior faculty awareness, including third-party I-94 handling, Grammarly implementation, and Books for Success. He stated that leadership acknowledged the need for improved communication processes moving forward.

In his report from the Policy Steering Committee, Chair Chaitanya noted that multiple policies are advancing through the review process and encouraged faculty to consult the policy website when serving as stakeholders. He highlighted a policy concerning service animals and emotional support animals in classrooms, including guidance on when faculty may or may not request documentation. He noted that the policy is complex and encouraged faculty to review it carefully to avoid confusion in classroom situations.

From the University Systems Budget Committee, Chair Chaitanya referenced ongoing discussions regarding RPSP and encouraged members to review his written report for further details. Chair Chaitanya also provided an update from the Legislative Task Force, on which he serves as the Faculty Senate representative. The task force meets daily to review House and Senate bills and assess their impact on the university community. He summarized several bills of note. Senate Bill 177 proposes transferring \$111 million from the general fund to a special fund designated for research, development, and economic development initiatives. Companion universities are identified for specific focus areas, including quantum technology at the University of New Mexico, energy at New Mexico Tech, and aerospace and defense at New Mexico State University. As part of this initiative, the Physical Science Laboratory building at NMSU is expected to receive \$16 million for infrastructure improvements.

House Bill 307 addresses non-interference by Boards of Regents in institutional tenure decisions. Senate Bill 240C allocates \$5 million to student athletics at NMSU. House Bill 5 includes funding for major capital projects, including \$50 million for a multidisciplinary building on campus. House Bill 248 concerns general obligation bonds, which, if approved, would provide \$20 million for deferred maintenance across campus facilities. Additional proposed legislation includes \$100 million to support previously terminated research projects, with funds to be distributed through higher education institutions, as well as \$20 million in infrastructure funding for NMSU. Finally, the Legislative Finance

Committee (LFC) is currently recommending a 1% across-the-board raise for faculty. [Full Chair report is on the FS website.](#)

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown
Vice Chair Brown stated that the Chair had already addressed the VPR search and the legislative session, including the question of how the Senate will respond to House recommendations. He reiterated concerns regarding the rollout of Simple Syllabus and other software acquisitions affecting teaching. Vice Chair Brown reported that he communicated clearly to central administration that the Simple Syllabus rollout was handled poorly and that there was uncertainty about who authorized its release. He noted that both the Provost and Deputy Provost were unaware of the rollout until the January 5 email indicating that syllabi appeared overdue. He stated that he is working with the Provost and Deputy Provost James McAteer to improve the process for software acquisition and implementation. After reviewing the relevant bylaws and charge, he concluded that the current structure is not functioning effectively. He emphasized the need for improvement and expressed optimism that corrective action would occur soon.
Serving on ADAC, Vice Chair Brown reported raising concerns about the Simple Syllabus rollout and sharing information about efforts underway in the Provost's Office. He also noted a policy change regarding duplication of graduate degrees, indicating that graduate students who have already earned a degree elsewhere may not be permitted to earn the same degree again at the institution. He acknowledged that he did not support the change and advised senators with concerns to consult directly with the Graduate Dean.
Vice Chair Brown further reported progress in transitioning professional degree and non-thesis final exam forms from paper forms requiring wet signatures to an electronic workflow system. ADAC also discussed non-thesis master's degrees and voted to discontinue the requirement for an oral examination for non-thesis degrees, particularly in units conferring high volumes of such degrees annually. Regarding graduate enrollment, he noted ongoing efforts to improve declining numbers. A significant discussion occurred concerning numerical versus qualitative evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Several departments have requested a return to quantitative evaluations, citing concerns that graduate students completing Ph.D. degrees lack numerical data needed for job applications. However, changes to the ARP concerning faculty work conditions cannot occur until a new collective bargaining agreement is finalized. He added that concerns were raised that numerical evaluations may disproportionately penalize faculty of color and women, and further discussions are anticipated.
Vice Chair Brown stated that the assistive service animal policy is moving to the President's Cabinet for review. He also referenced SET training and encouraged successful completion. Additionally, a policy concerning graduate grade reports has been approved by all relevant entities and is advancing to the President's Cabinet for signature. The policy would allow graduate students to replace a previously earned grade above a failing mark in the GPA calculation, with a notation on the transcript indicating the course was retaken while removing the lower grade from GPA computation.
During discussion, Senator Finlator inquired whether the duplication of degree policy would prevent departments from awarding a second master's degree to students who already hold a master's degree, including those who leave a Ph.D. program early. Vice Chair Brown indicated that his initial interpretation suggested that awarding a duplicate degree with the same name would not be permitted but

reiterated that he did not support the policy and encouraged consultation with the Graduate Dean. Senator Cook added that in his department's understanding, applicants who already hold a master's degree with the same title (e.g., Master's in Computer Science) may be automatically denied admission and may not reach departmental review. Vice Chair Brown concluded by inviting senators with additional questions or concerns to speak directly with the Graduate Dean, noting that broader implications for Ph.D. students who do not complete their programs may require further clarification. Discussion followed by various Senators. [Full Vice Chair report is on the FS website.](#)

6. Reports of Standing Committees

- Budget and Resources Chair, Stephen Hanson
Chair Hanson reported that the Budget and Resources Committee met and that the committee's report has been filed and is available online. He stated that the committee used the meeting to set the stage for consolidating software procurement and related decision-making processes under a single, more coordinated structure at the upcoming meeting.
Chair Hanson noted that, as part of his committee service, he also attends additional committee meetings. He referenced ongoing discussions within the University Budget Committee regarding RPSPs (Research and Public Service Projects), describing the conversations as active and productive. He indicated that the discussions are moving in a positive direction and that more concrete updates may be available in the coming month.
He also reported on the IDC Task Force led by Deputy Provost James McAteer, on which several senators have served throughout the year. Chair Hanson stated that at the beginning of the year, the administration was transparent in sharing existing practices for handling IDC (Indirect Cost) funds, though the policies were somewhat flexible and undefined. With changes in the federal funding landscape, IDC usage has become more structured and codified, though the framework continues to evolve. He noted that at the next meeting, Deputy Provost McAteer intends for the task force to agree upon key communication points to share with the broader university community. Chair Hanson expressed confidence that progress is being made and that clearer guidance should be available within the next month.
Additionally, Chair Hanson reported that he is serving on an ad hoc committee with D'Anne Stuart focused on improving budget processes. He stated that the group has made significant progress regarding travel reimbursements and that revisions to the reimbursement system are expected within the next few months. The committee has also addressed procurement processes, particularly for software, and has reduced the procedural steps from eleven to seven, with additional improvements anticipated.
Finally, Chair Hanson noted that the committee plans to address concerns related to graduate student and general student reimbursements, particularly in cases where reimbursements are delayed due to funding source constraints. He stated that the goal is to identify solutions that prevent students from bearing university expenses for extended periods and to improve the overall reimbursement process for students. [Full BR report is on the FS website.](#)
- University Planning Chair, Stephanie Walker
Chair Walker reported that the University Planning Committee did not meet in January. The next meeting is scheduled for February 13 at 1:00 p.m. She

further stated that the committee has been assigned a bill supporting a joint resolution by CNM and UNM opposing the Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education, which will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

- Curriculum and Planning Chair, Oladayo Bello
Chair Bello reported that the Curriculum and Planning Committee met on January 22 at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum of eight members present; three members were absent. Visitors included Senators Erickson and Sharp-Hoskins, Vice Chair Brown, and a non-Senate guest, Professor Prescott from the Department of Astronomy, who attended due to interest in the bill under consideration.
The committee reviewed Bill 052526, which proposes the formation of an independent task force on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and pedagogy within the NMSU system. Senators Erickson and Sharp-Hoskins, along with Vice Chair Brown, presented their perspectives in support of the bill. During discussion, Senator Sandstrom questioned the need for an independent task force rather than utilizing the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT). Senator Erickson explained that prior experiences suggested FACT alone would not meet the objectives, and Senator Sharp-Hoskins cited specific instances supporting the need for an independent task force. Vice Chair Brown offered to provide further review of FACT's role. Following the departure of visitors, the committee discussed broader considerations regarding AI integration. Members emphasized that AI is a permanent and disruptive presence with both challenges and benefits and stressed the importance of incorporating AI into teaching and learning at NMSU. Discussions included strategies for implementation, student involvement, ethical training, development of policies and ARPs, and ensuring students gain AI literacy to remain competitive in the workforce. The committee agreed to add "whereas" clauses to the bill and to define charges for the proposed task force. It was also agreed that the task force should include representatives from every discipline across the NMSU system. The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m., and an electronic vote was held on January 28. The majority of committee members voted in favor of passing the bill with the proposed amendments. [Full CP report is on the FS website.](#)
 - The Senate moved and seconded to approve the Curriculum and Planning Committee report with the voted Proposition 05-25/26.
 - Senator Erickson moved to table the bill until the next meeting to allow distribution of a copy of the bill as reported out of committee, in accordance with the Constitution. The motion was seconded. The Senate voted and approved the motion to table the bill until the next meeting.
- Research and Creative Activity Chair, Omar Holguin
Chair Holguin reported that the Research and Creative Activity (RCA) Committee met on January 20 with a quorum present. The meeting included welcoming new Senator Marat Tlipov from Arts and Sciences, who is serving in place of Senator Amanda Ashley during her sabbatical leave.

The committee revisited prior discussions regarding university software access and engagement with the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT), concluding those discussions. Members also discussed AI-related software and potential AI committees, expressing interest in determining the appropriate level of RCA participation in future committees or meetings related to AI initiatives.

Under new business, the committee agreed that inviting the interim Vice President for Research to attend a full Faculty Senate meeting would be appropriate in order to provide updates on issues such as reduced IDC recovery and the status of federal grants that may be on administrative hold. The committee also plans to resume discussions at its next meeting regarding promotion and tenure policies related to innovation and entrepreneurship. Chair Holguin reported that Patricia McGregor-Mendoza, Provost Fellow, will attend the February meeting, along with a representative from the PTIE organization at Oregon State University who participated in an NSF-sponsored grant examining promotion and tenure policies related to innovation and entrepreneurship nationwide and offering recommendations. The next RCA Committee meeting is scheduled for February 17 at 4:00 p.m., and faculty are welcome to attend. [Full RCA report is on the FS website.](#)

- Access, Opportunity, and Outreach Chair, Karen Kopera-Frye
The committee meeting was canceled due to Chair Kopera-Frye being ill.
- Student Success Chair, Kristian Finlator
Chair Finlator called the meeting to order with a quorum present. The committee had no official business and used the meeting time to continue discussions on formalizing restrictions on digital device use in the classroom for inclusion on syllabi. The discussion was productive, with members identifying numerous pros and cons. Next steps were outlined, although drafts of related documents have not yet been finalized. Completion of these drafts is anticipated at a future meeting. [Full SS report is on the FS website.](#)

7. New Business

- 06-25/26 – Supporting CNM and UNM Joint Resolution Against the “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education.” Sponsor (s): Karen Kopera-Frye (HEST), Christopher Brown (A&S), and others to follow. **Assigned to University Planning.**

The Committee did not meet. Discussion of Proposition 06-25/26 is scheduled for the next meeting on February 13, 2026.

8. Unfinished Business

- 05-25/26 – Proposal to Establish Task Force on the Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Pedagogy. Sponsor (s) – C. Erickson (BUS), K. Sharp-Hoskins (A&S), and other to follow. **Assigned to Curriculum and Planning.**

Proposition 05-25/26 was tabled to allow Senator’s time to review the amended bill. It will be brought forward for a vote at the next Faculty Senate meeting in March.

9. Other Business –

- Updates from external committees on which Senate Leadership sit

Chair Chaitanya noted the need for better communication from senators serving on various committee. He observed that while many senators volunteer on committees, there has not been a structured way for them to provide updates on committee activities. Going forward, the Chair and Vice Chair plan to allocate a few minutes during meetings for committee updates. With seven to eight committees represented, updates will be shared on a rotating basis every other month, ensuring each committee has the opportunity to report to both Senate leadership and the general body of senators.

The first update was provided by Senator Erickson on the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology. Senator Erickson noted that while the committee functions well on technical matters, it has been less effective in addressing broader issues with significant impact. He cited the example of the Simple Syllabus, where intellectual property concerns were not raised, and the purchase order had already been signed before Senate review. Senator Erickson emphasized the rapid pace of technological change, including emerging AI tools that could dramatically impact programming and broader academic practices. He explained that Proposition 06-25/26 was proposed to help address these challenges proactively, as the current committee structure is not sufficient to manage them. No questions were raised following the update.

- Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT) – Senator Erickson
**Please see the Curriculum and Planning Committee report
- Int'l Graduate Students Task Force – Senator Finlator and FS Chair Chaitanya
Senator Finlator reported that the Task Force on International Student Climate was proposed on January 26th by Interim Provost Reddi. The Task Force is charged with evaluating current activities for orienting new international students, comparing practices at peer institutions, and making recommendations for improvements. It was also suggested that a survey of international graduates be administered to assess their experiences.
The Task Force has held two meetings. At the first meeting, the group planned its activities and decided to draft a survey with input from IPC Director Derek Yu. The Task Force membership includes IPC Director Derek Yu, Dean Koodali from the Graduate College, Chair Chaitanya, and Deputy Provost McAteer. Their focus is on advising orientation practices, identifying roadblocks to student matriculation and enrollment, and facilitating communication between incoming students and support resources.
At the second meeting on January 26th, the Task Force discussed draft survey questions and reviewed the status of the onboarding Canvas shell being developed by Dean Koodali to assist incoming international students prior to arrival. Since then, the survey has been finalized asynchronously and is ready to circulate, and the Canvas shell has received detailed feedback for further refinement. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for February 16th.
No questions were raised.
- Deans' Evaluation Working Group – Senator Sharp-Hoskins and Senator Creusere
Senator Creusere reported on the first meeting of the Dean Evaluation Committee. The committee reviewed the frequency of dean evaluations, which currently occur on a three-year cycle. Based on information provided by the Vice Provost and Associate Provost regarding practices at other institutions, the committee

determined that the three-year cycle is appropriate and will remain unchanged.

The committee's primary focus is now on modifying the evaluation survey to increase the response rate, which is currently low. Efforts include reviewing existing survey questions, reducing the total number of questions, and ensuring that questions are appropriately tailored for faculty and staff. The committee is considering creating separate surveys for faculty and staff to better align questions with respondents' experiences with the dean. The committee plans to meet again next week.

No questions were raised.

10. Remarks and Announcements

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Chaitanya made the following announcements:

He noted that February 9th is NMSU Day. Several members of the leadership team will be attending, and Chair Chaitanya will be representing the faculty. Faculty members interested in participating can contact the Government Relations and Community Relations Office, which, along with the Foundation, is organizing the event. Chair also shared insights from a recent program in Washington, D.C., funded by the NLSA, which he attended with colleagues from Los Alamos. He reported that faculty researchers can still meet with lobbyists and consultants in Washington to discuss their areas of expertise and receive guidance on funding priorities for agencies such as DOE, NSF, and DoD. He encouraged faculty who are in Washington, D.C., or interested in these opportunities, to reach out to him or their college ADR to arrange meetings and obtain guidance. He highlighted opportunities specifically related to Department of Defense research and noted that the relevant offices are available to assist faculty in aligning their research with funding opportunities.

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

Vice Chair Brown extended thanks to Senators serving on external committees. He noted that going forward, three committees will provide updates at each monthly Senate meeting, with advance notice provided, and expressed appreciation for timely submissions.

Vice Chair Brown summarized discussions from the chat, including degrees conferred by universities outside the United States, and requested that the relevant chat content be included in the minutes. Senator Joe Tamaka offered to share AI use guidelines with interested parties, and Senator Hogan shared a link to PTIE, which will also be included in the minutes. Vice Chair Brown noted that the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FAT) needs to be more robust. He provided an update on the Provost search process. Applications closed on January 20th, and the committee gained access to files on January 27th through a secure website. On February 10th, the committee will determine the long shortlist of candidates for Zoom interviews scheduled on February 16th and 17th. This process will generate a short list of four or five candidates for campus visits during the first two weeks of March. AVP of HR Bill Dial will distribute campus communications to encourage participation. Vice Chair Brown noted that 62 applications were received and acknowledged the search firm's efforts. Senator Finlator suggested reminding participants that chat content included in the minutes will be publicly searchable. Vice Chair Brown agreed and requested that he, Vimal, and Mari review and sanitize the chat to include only key points.

No questions were raised.

Chat Highlights

The following key points from the meeting chat are included for reference:

- Senator Tomaka offered to share AI use guidelines with interested faculty.
- Senator Holguin shared a link to PTIE for reference. <https://www.ptie.org/>
- Senator Bengtson, as a member of the Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology (FACT), suggested that faculty should take a more active oversight role with campus technology where possible.
- Senator Bronstein noted that not all disciplines need to integrate automated plagiarism detection tools into their courses.

11. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Present: FS Chair V. Chaitanya, FS Vice Chair C. Brown, K. Kopera-Frye, K. Finlator, J. Cook, M. Burkardt, S. Hanson, C. Erickson, K. Knight, L. Grant, R. Jayaraman, J. Klocksiam, K.T. Manis, R. Schumacher, V. Murga, G. Piña, D. Overstreet, K. Sharp-Hoskins, P. Tian, S. Way, T. Allred, J. Clark, J. Bronstein, C. Creusere, D. Magoc, R. Li, H. Baek, E. Oskey, K. Lopez-Gallagher, R. Ghimire. M. Darapuneni, H. Memon, J. Tomaka, R. Gioannini, T. Conner, C. DeBlicke, I. Hansen, J. Sandstrom, G. De Necochea, J. Bengston, L. Hermanson, R. Villegas-Arguelles, B. Hampton, S. Walker, C. Garcia-Anaya, O. Bello, P. Kemp, I. Pedraza, O. Holguin, Parliamentarian, L. LaPlue, Rec. Sec. M. Cisneros.

Guests: Dr. Vanetta Busch, Director, Hazing Prevention and Organizational development, Student Life Division and Adjunct Professor, School of Business Management Department, Hunter Gonzales, ASNMSU.

Revised and finalized by:

Vice Chair Christopher Brown on 3/4/2026