

**NMSU Faculty Senate Meeting**  
September 4, 2025; 4:00 p.m.  
Hadley Hall Rm 130 and [Zoom](#)

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m.**

**2. Recognition of Guests**

- Dr. Bill Dial, Associate Vice President, Human Resources  
Dr. Bill Dial, the new Chief Human Resources Officer, introduced himself to the Senate, sharing that he has been in the role for nearly a month and brings close to 25 years of experience in higher education HR. He emphasized that HR exists to support employees, particularly faculty, who are at the core of the university's mission. His priorities include building a supportive work culture, recruiting and retaining top talent, and creating a workplace where employees are both successful and valued. He expressed a commitment to improvement within HR and welcomed open communication from faculty and staff.

**Comment from Senator Burkardt**

Senator Burkardt raised a concern about communication from HR, noting that faculty and staff are subject to different policies and timelines, yet faculty often receive broad "all-employee" emails that do not apply to them. She mentioned this causes confusion and frustration, citing examples like leave policies and evaluation timelines. She suggested that separating email communications for faculty and staff could reduce unnecessary confusion.

**Response from Dr. Bill Dial**

Dr. Dial agreed and acknowledged the concern, stating that it makes sense and is something he could likely address by working with IT. He indicated that setting up more targeted communication lists for faculty and staff should be a manageable solution.

**Question from Senator Boutsen**

Senator Boutsen asked about the independence and autonomy of HR, specifically in making disciplinary decisions—even in cases involving deans or other administrators.

**Response from Bill Dial**

Dr. Dial responded that HR walks a very fine line, balancing the interests of the institution with the rights of employees. He emphasized HR's responsibility to ensure ethical, legal, and policy-driven decisions, whether the issue involves a faculty member, staff member, or supervisor. He noted that no situation is one-size-fits-all, and HR's role includes working with both employees and supervisors to resolve issues fairly. Dr. Dial acknowledged the perception in some institutions that HR favors administration but clarified that he does not operate that way. Instead, he sees his role as ensuring equitable processes, guided by values, policy, and ethics. He added that maintaining integrity in HR can be a difficult and often solitary responsibility, but one he takes very seriously.

- Dr. Cecilia Hernandez, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness  
**Associate Provost Cecilia Hernandez – Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation Update**

Dr. Cecilia Hernandez, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, shared an overview of her office’s responsibilities, which include overseeing accreditation and assessment processes to ensure compliance with Higher Learning Commission (HLC) standards. Her office supports continuous improvement through faculty-led assessment, curriculum alignment, and college-level reporting.

Dr. Hernandez introduced her team:

**Carley Casey** – Communications and committee support

**Laura Grant** – Watermark Faculty Success Administrator and interim assessment support

**Kerry Forsythe** – Lead researcher supporting data collection and analysis

She noted she assumed her role in November 2024 and is actively working to streamline assessment and reporting structures in preparation for NMSU’s 10-year HLC review, which includes a site visit in Fall 2027 and the submission of the Assurance Argument ahead of that.

#### **Discussion:**

**Chair Chaitanya** asked how Institutional Effectiveness affects faculty roles. Dr. Hernandez explained that her office manages the Annual Performance Review (APR) and assessment processes. Faculty are central to program-level improvements, and her team ensures those efforts are supported and documented appropriately for accreditation purposes.

**Chair Chaitanya** also asked how often HLC reporting occurs. Dr. Hernandez responded that HLC follows a 10-year cycle with a 4-year midterm review. NMSU completed its last midterm review in 2022 and is now entering the full review cycle. The university is also participating in a Quality Initiative focused on data practices, a requirement of the HLC’s Open Pathway.

**Senator Bronstein** asked how the accreditation process will be structured moving forward.

Dr. Hernandez responded that a writing team structure is already in place, consisting of approximately 26 members from across the university, HLC recently revised its criteria from 5 to 4 main criteria, and each writing team is assigned to one. Students will be invited to participate in these teams this semester. In Fall 2025, the teams will develop draft outlines. In Spring 2026, drafts will undergo review by an executive writing team and other stakeholders. Final writing and revisions will occur throughout the year. The broader university community will be invited to review and provide feedback on the Assurance Argument. The final submission is due by August 1, 2027, after which HLC will have 60–90 days to respond and schedule the site visit, likely in Fall 2027, with a final HLC report expected in Spring 2028.

- Mr. Jim Stanfill, IT Chief info Officer

Jim Stanfill provided a brief overview of recent developments and initiatives in the IT department: IT Reorganization: The IT reorganization is complete, and most positions are now filled, including the new Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Dennis Coryell. Identity and Access Management (IAM): A new IAM solution is in final review, expected to be selected by the end of the month. This is part of the move toward a Zero Trust security model and will improve onboarding/offboarding, door access, and overall security.

**Data Architecture:** IT is evaluating a new institutional data platform and architecture to enhance reporting and data management. A presentation to the Senate is anticipated in the future.

**Customer Support Redesign:** IT has restructured its customer support model to improve responsiveness for students, faculty, and staff. Dr. Madrigal will lead this area.

**Monthly Newsletters:** IT will begin distributing monthly updates starting at the end of September.

**IT Acquisition Process:** The acquisition process is being redesigned for greater efficiency and simplicity. A draft of the new process is under review.

**Cybersecurity Insurance:** The university is in the process of acquiring cybersecurity insurance. The president has approved a third-party expert retainer for incident response.

**Data Modeling:** A comprehensive data modeling initiative will begin soon, aimed at integrating institutional data and breaking down data silos.

**IT Funding Review:** Efforts are underway to better understand and modernize how IT is funded, particularly given the complexity of current finance systems.

**Fraud Mitigation at NMSU Global:**

Fraudulent enrollments were discovered and addressed at NMSU Global. IT implemented the third-party application Plaid to stop fraudulent financial aid disbursements. A new application, SAFE, will be integrated with Slate to enhance identity verification and will be piloted in Global before considering broader implementation. ERP Contract Savings: IT has renegotiated major contracts, saving approximately \$360,000 on the Banner ERP renewal. Proof of Concept with IBM: A successful proof of concept was completed using IBM tools for ETL (Extract, Transform, Load) as part of the data platform project.

**Senator Questions and Discussion**

Senator Bronstein asked whether the NMSU Global fraud issue was publicly known. Response: Stanfill indicated it may not have been widely communicated, but the issue was real and is now contained. He emphasized this is a widespread problem across institutions in North America. Senator Kopera-Frye raised concerns about the lack of communication with Faculty Senate, especially since many programs operate through Global, and inquired about funding for new security measures. Response: Stanfill acknowledged that better communication is needed. Some one-time funds in the IT budget are being used this year, but recurring funding will be required and is under discussion with finance and the president. Senator Boutsen asked under whose authority the IT budget is managed and over what timeline. Response: Stanfill explained that IT has a base budget

(ING), but it does not cover all modernization needs. A longer-term funding strategy is being developed with the executive team to better support critical IT initiatives.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

Agenda approved.

### **4. Appointment of Parliamentarian and Recording Secretary**

Moved and seconded to appoint Lawrence LaPlue as 2025-2026 FS

Parliamentarian.

Faculty Senate approved appointment.

Moved and seconded to appoint Maria Cisneros as 2025-2026 FS Recording Secretary.

Faculty Senate approved appointment.

### **5. Approval of Minutes of May 1, 2025, meeting**

Moved and seconded to approve minutes.

Senator Kim Lopez Gallagher requested a friendly amendment to the attendance list, noting that her name was inadvertently omitted and should be included among those present. Senator Gladys De Necochea also proposed a correction to her name as recorded in the minutes. Her surname was truncated and should be correctly listed as “De Necochea” (with a space between "De" and "Necochea") in the Individuals Present section.

Moved and seconded to approve minutes with the friendly amendment.

Minutes approved and submitted.

### **6. Reports of Officers**

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

The Chair briefly reported that both the Chair and Vice Chair (Chris Brown) remained actively engaged over the summer, participating in approximately 12 to 14 different committee meetings. Key meetings included weekly sessions with the President and Provost, as well as monthly meetings of the Senate Leadership Committee. Several important issues and potential resolutions were discussed during this time. A written report will be uploaded in the coming days. No questions were raised.

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

The Vice Chair noted that a written report will be submitted by early next week. Over the summer, both the Chair and Vice Chair met extensively with the central

administrative team on a range of issues. A key highlight was the revitalization of the policy review process, now under the leadership of newly appointed Policy Officer Donna Ottaviano. The process is running efficiently, with well-organized agendas and timely distribution of supporting documents. The Vice Chair also referenced recent updates in the Hotline regarding active policies and the reopening of the Policy Hub. Additionally, the Books for Success program generated significant discussion over the summer and will be addressed later in the meeting.

No questions were raised.

## **7. Reports of Standing Committees**

- Budget and Resources  
Chair Steve Hanson reported that this is his second time leading the committee and anticipates a busy year ahead. The committee will begin by engaging in the ongoing re-budgeting exercise and identifying ways for the Faculty Senate to contribute. Additionally, the committee will support a central administration initiative focused on identifying low-hanging fruit in university business processes to improve operational efficiency. Members were encouraged to email any suggestions. Other items were deferred in the interest of time.
- University Planning  
Stephanie Walker introduced herself as the incoming chair of the University Planning Committee. The committee has not yet met, but its first order of business will be to revisit Proposition 12-24-25, which proposes the creation of a task force to assess and reconsider faculty performance, promotion, and tenure evaluations in light of recent federal funding cuts and a reduced IDC rate.
- Curriculum and Programming  
Oladayo Bello introduced himself as the new chair of the Curriculum and Planning Committee. The committee has not yet met and had no updates to report at this time.
- Research and Creative Activity  
Omar Holguin introduced himself as the new chair of the RCA Committee. The committee is currently planning its agenda for the upcoming September meeting. A key focus will be identifying emerging needs among faculty and exploring how the committee can offer support based on that input. Holguin expressed enthusiasm for the work ahead and for collaborating with colleagues.
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Karen Kopera-Frye announced she will be serving a second term as chair. The committee has not yet met, but the next meeting will include a guest speaker to address issues related to flexible spending for student textbooks, raised by Senator Kim Lopez Gallagher. Additionally, Kopera-Frye has been appointed to the Presidential Task Force for Equity and Inclusion and invited input from colleagues to help shape the committee's contributions. Input can be sent to her at [kfrye@nmsu.edu](mailto:kfrye@nmsu.edu)

- **Student Success**

Senator Kristian introduced himself as the Student Success Chair and member of the Astronomy Department. While a written report has not yet been submitted, he shared that the Graduate Council collected data over the summer regarding the experiences of international graduate students. The results and recommendations were compiled and forwarded to the administration, and the Council looks forward to seeing how that conversation develops. Additionally, the Council has been asked to review the Books for Success initiative, as well as recent changes to DIS procedures, both of which are expected to be addressed in the fall.

## **8. New Business – N/A**

## **9. Unfinished Business – N/A**

## **10. Other Business -**

- Referral of Books4Success proposal from Central to Student Success  
The Books for Success proposal by central administration, which would have established a flat fee for all main campus students' textbooks regardless of actual usage, is now on hold until Fall 2026. The issue will be referred to the Student Success Committee for further investigation. Those with data or concerns about the program are encouraged to contact Senator Kristian Finlator, chair of the Student Success Committee.
- Referral of Implementing Task Force on P&T issues related to Trump Eos to University Planning  
Regarding faculty performance and promotion and tenure (P&T) issues related to Trump executive orders, it was agreed that rather than forming a new task force, the existing University Planning Committee will review the matter and provide recommendations.
- Referral to Program Sustainability Proposal to Curriculum and Planning  
The program sustainability proposal, initially developed under Alan Shoho, was extensively worked on during Summer 2024 and submitted to the Provost. Although progress was delayed, the proposal has since been shared with relevant university groups and is expected to be formally sent to the Curriculum and Planning Committee for review. Vice Chair Brown emphasized that no academic programs are currently "on notice" for immediate action. Departments with low

enrollment and completion rates will be invited to develop improvement plans with a three-year implementation timeline.

Discussion. Senator Karen Kopera-Frye noted concerns about the Books for Success flat fee structure and suggested that Senator Sandstrom's personal experience could be helpful. Both Chair and Vice Chair reiterated that any anecdotal or data-driven feedback should be directed to Senator Finlator and the Student Success Committee, who will develop a Faculty Senate recommendation on the issue.

## **11. Remarks and Announcements**

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya

The Chair announced that ASNMSU has appointed Mr. Kevin Dhanapal as the student senator representative to the Faculty Senate. While the student senator does not have voting rights per the Constitution, they are able to participate, share views, and engage in discussions. Additionally, the Chair noted that ASNMSU appointed Saul Hernandez to the Library Faculty Senate Advisory Committee. The Chair will coordinate with the committee's current representative to ensure communication flows smoothly. Senator Kim Lopez Gallagher has graciously agreed to chair the Library Faculty Senate Advisory Committee. Members have been notified, and a meeting poll is underway. The Vice Chair expressed confidence in Senator Lopez Gallagher's leadership. Senator Karen Kopera-Frye thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair and confirmed she will serve as secretary for the committee, with meetings being scheduled soon. The Chair shared that the administration is considering lowering the undergraduate admission GPA requirement from 2.75 to 2.5. Noting that peer institutions like New Mexico Tech and UNM already admit students with a 2.5 GPA, the Chair highlighted that the interim provost has data on student success rates and the potential impact of this change. This topic is expected to come before the Faculty Senate, at which point a standing committee will be appointed to review it in detail. Additionally, the Chair provided updates on several key university leadership searches currently underway:

**Athletic Director Search:** The Chair is a member of the search committee, which has identified 12 finalists to be interviewed via Zoom, with campus visits planned for the top candidates.

**Provost Search:** A search committee has not yet been assigned, but the Vice Chair, Christopher Brown, and Interim Vice President for Research Patricia Sullivan will co-lead the process. The interim provost has served for over a year; it is unknown if he will apply.

**Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Search:** The Chair is also on this committee, chaired by current CFO Chris Kinsley.

All these searches, particularly the Athletic Director and CFO, are expected to conclude by the end of the semester.

- FS Vice-Chair/SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

Vice Chair Chris Brown confirmed he has agreed to co-chair the Provost Search Committee, alongside Interim Vice President for Research Patricia Sullivan. A draft prospectus was received from the search firm, Professional Executive Searches Inc., and both co-chairs have reviewed it thoroughly. Delays occurred due to the late appointment of co-chairs and Sullivan's absence over the summer, prompting a request for a revised search timeline. Vice Chair Brown emphasized the importance of developing a robust position description, noting that the original draft timeline lacked provisions for input from the search committee. He stressed that the position description is a critical document where values such as shared governance must be clearly articulated. Comments have been submitted to the executive team, and a finalized contract is expected soon. The committee will be built thereafter, with an emphasis on strong academic and faculty representation.

Discussion – GPA Admission Requirement Proposal: Senator Kopera-Frye inquired whether the proposal to lower the undergraduate admission GPA requirement from 2.75 to 2.5 would be vetted under a new provost. The Chair clarified that the proposal is not on hold and will proceed through Faculty Senate review, starting with the appropriate standing committee. Vice Chair Brown added that he has formally requested a proposal and supporting data from Interim Provost Reddi, as well as a similar request regarding the program sustainability proposal.

The Chair welcomed newly elected senators and thanked returning senators beginning their second terms. He expressed optimism for a busy but productive academic year.

A motion to adjourn was made.

## **12. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.**

**Present:** FS Chair V. Chaitanya, FS Vice-Chair C. Brown, M. Montañez, S. Lynch, J. Rice, Z. Shen, T. Aguirre, S. Walker, Z. Klein, V. Murga, E. Oskey, D. Overstreet, T. Conner, T. Allred, A. Cox, K. Lopez-Gallagher, I. Pedraza, C. Anaya, B. Hampton, O. Bello, G. Piña, R. Figueroa, R. Li, L. Hermanson, L. Grant, H. Baek, K. Knight, M. Darapuneni, S. Hanson, A. Ashley, R. Jayaraman, M. Elshinawy, J. Tomaka, C. DeBlieck, F. Boutsen, K. Sharp-Hoskins, S. Mikkelsen, R. Gioannini, I. Hansen, M. Furuhashi, P. Kemp, D. Rutledge, M. Burkardt, D. Magoc, J. Cook, J. Bronstein, O. Holguin, R. Schemacher, J. Hunter, K. Finlator, P. Tian, K. Kopera-Frye, G. De Necochea, Parliamentarian L. LaPlue, RecSec. M. Cisneros

**Guests:** Dr. Bill Dial, Dr. Cecilia Hernandez, Mr. Jim Stanfill, Interim Provost Reddi, Deputy Provost McAteer, Kevin Donald.

**Revised and finalized by: Vice-Chair Brown on 9/30/2025 & Chair Chaitanya on 10/1/2025**