

Faculty Senate Curriculum and Planning Committee Report

Submitted by Chair: Oladayo Bello

Introduction

Purpose of the Meeting

The first meeting of the subcommittee was held on September 11, 2025. The primary focus was to consider the charge given to the committee, which is to informally review the Academic Program Sustainability Plan (APSP) proposal developed by the University Planning and Analysis Committee (UPAC). The review is intended to provide faculty perspectives and constructive feedback on the proposal prior to broader Faculty Senate discussions. Faculty Senate Vice Chair Christopher Brown participated in the meeting in order to provide context on the proposal's development and current status.

Discussion

Visit by Vice Chair (VC) Christopher Brown

Vice Chair Christopher Brown provided an overview of the Academic Program Sustainability Plan, explaining its purpose, history, and current status. The plan is designed to identify low-yield academic programs and establish strategies to support their long-term sustainability through improved enrollment and resource alignment. Its ultimate goal is to ensure that NMSU can allocate resources efficiently, strengthen campus growth, and promote both program viability and overall student success.

He explained that the proposed viability metrics currently focus on enrollment and degree completion rates. However, he clarified that no immediate program eliminations are planned. Instead, the emphasis is on using data to guide departmental discussions and develop action plans. Faculty feedback was highlighted as critical in shaping the proposed three-year implementation timeline.

VC Brown charged the committee with reviewing the proposal and providing an informal critique. Specifically, members are asked to outline concerns, questions, benefits, limitations, and also recommend ways to strengthen the plan's implementation. The committee's output will form an informal response document to be shared with the Faculty Senate and the Provost's office.

During the discussion, a question was raised about whether the plan applies across the entire NMSU system or only to the Las Cruces main campus. VC Brown agreed to seek clarification from the Provost and Joe Lakey on this issue.

Committee Review and Discussion

The committee began its initial conversation on the sustainability proposal document, expressing concern that the viability metrics were too narrowly defined. Members noted that relying solely on headcount and completion rates could be detrimental to certain academic programs. Such programs, while essential to workforce development in specialized industries, naturally operate with lower enrollment. To address this, members suggested broadening the metrics to include additional factors such as community engagement and faculty productivity.

After this exchange, the committee agreed to concentrate its review on the “action plan” section of the proposal (pages 4–9). Each member will conduct an informal review, noting any concerns, questions, or disagreements with the implementation processes outlined, and upload their feedback to the shared drive by September 25. A copy of the proposal will also be uploaded on the shared drive to ensure all members have full access.

In addition to these overarching considerations, several specific areas of deliberation emerged. The first concerned data analysis and review strategy, where members underscored the need for updated data from the Provost’s office and raised questions about the narrow definition of “sustainability.” Debate followed on whether a SWOT analysis should be part of the review process, with consensus that, even if the proposal’s structure is largely fixed, faculty can and should suggest refinements.

The second area focused on enhancement strategies for low-yield programs. Members emphasized the importance of improving such programs rather than eliminating them, suggesting that action plans should be refined to better account for external factors, such as the impact of financial aid changes on enrollment and graduation timelines. Two members volunteered to make phone calls to collect additional information in support of this analysis.

The third area of discussion addressed exceptions to the proposed academic program metrics. Members argued for including exemptions for low-cost programs that may not meet enrollment thresholds yet serve important institutional or community needs. Questions were raised about how required electives and general electives are classified for financial aid purposes, with the committee agreeing that further clarification is necessary. The group reiterated its responsibility to serve as the “voice of reason” in evaluating sustainability standards.

Finally, the committee considered the student success feedback initiative. An emphasis was on the urgency of submitting meaningful faculty feedback within the semester, noting that such input would directly inform decisions at both the Board of Regents and central

administration levels. The committee recognized the significance of its role in this process and acknowledged the transparent, participatory nature of the proposal's development over the past 18 months.

Next Steps

The committee agreed that all members will conduct individual reviews of the APSP proposal, with particular attention to the action plan section. As part of this process, members will prepare questions and provide detailed feedback, especially on whether the proposed sustainability metrics should extend beyond enrollment and degree completion to capture a broader understanding of program viability. Their input will highlight both the strengths and limitations of the plan while identifying opportunities for refinement.

To support this work, VC Brown will seek clarification from the Provost and Joe Lakey on whether the plan applies across the entire NMSU system or is limited to the Las Cruces main campus. Committee Chair Dr. Bello will take responsibility for compiling the assessments into a comprehensive document that reflects the committee's collective perspective. This document will then be forwarded to the Faculty Senate, which will present the committee's feedback to the Provost, ensuring faculty voices directly inform the next stage of the plan's development.

Conclusion

In closing, the committee reaffirmed its vital role in providing faculty perspectives on program sustainability, recognizing that its feedback will shape how the proposal is refined and ultimately implemented. Members emphasized the importance of offering balanced input that not only addresses concerns but also strengthens the plan in ways that reflect the diverse needs of NMSU's academic programs. By serving as the faculty voice in this process, the committee highlighted its commitment to ensuring that decisions about program viability are grounded in both data and the broader values of the university community.

The committee also confirmed the working timeline for its review. Individual feedback on the sustainability proposal must be submitted by September 25, allowing sufficient time for the chair to compile a comprehensive assessment. The consolidated findings will then form the basis for a focused discussion at the October 2 Faculty Senate meeting, ensuring that the committee's analysis is shared promptly and can inform the Senate's dialogue with the Provost.