

**MINUTES - NMSU Faculty Senate Leadership Committee**  
**Thursday, 30 April 2026, 4:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom( <https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/83656717192>) and Hadley Hall Rm 130**  
**PLEASE NOTE NEW LINK**

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 4:01 p.m.
  
2. Recognition of guests
  - Robbie Grant, Director of Academic Technology, Ranjit Koodali, Dean of Grad School and Assoc Provost of IDS, Karen Kopera-Frye, Associate Dean of Graduate School.  
Associate Dean of the Graduate School Karen Kopera-Frye reported that the university’s thesis and dissertation guidelines are now ADA compliant as of April 26, 2027. She explained that templates had been added to the Graduate School website to support compliance efforts. She noted that LaTeX templates were still in development because that format was being piloted within specific academic areas, including chemistry and innovation-related programs, and would be further tested now that additional time was available. Kopera-Frye stated that the Graduate School had been asked to provide an update on these templates and related forms. She also noted that the Doctoral Accelerated Program (DAP) had been discussed at a previous meeting and had subsequently moved to committee review, so it was not included on the current agenda.  
Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Provost of IDS Ranjit Koodali then provided an update on revisions to graduate examination and degree forms. He explained that the Graduate School had received concerns regarding the large number of forms used for examinations, theses, and non-thesis master’s programs, which created confusion for both students and faculty. After Associate Dean Rick Marlatt joined the Graduate School in 2024, opportunities to streamline the process were explored. Dean Koodali stated that Dr. Marlatt proposed the creation of an exams task force during an ADAC meeting in October 2024. The task force, led by Dr. Marlatt and composed of faculty representatives from all academic colleges, reviewed existing forms throughout fall and early spring and provided recommendations for revisions. Dean Koodali explained that the Graduate School team incorporated the task force recommendations and made minor changes to the forms. The project was temporarily paused during summer 2025 following Dr. Marlatt’s appointment as dean of HEST, but the work resumed in fall 2025. By late fall, the Graduate School had developed fillable PDF versions of the revised forms. These forms were presented to ADAC in January for additional feedback and revisions before being posted on the Graduate School website. Dean Koodali noted that updates had been regularly communicated to ADAC, the Graduate Faculty Council, and other groups throughout the process.  
Dean Koodali addressed concerns regarding the removal of physical signatures from the forms. He explained that the previous process required collecting signatures from multiple committee members through email and campus mail, followed by scanning and tracking paper documents. The new process eliminates physical signatures in preparation for transitioning to Slate forms, while maintaining checks and balances to preserve the integrity of the process. He stated that Graduate School staff verify the identities of faculty or administrative assistants submitting forms and confirm committee membership when questions arise. Dean Koodali emphasized that the revised system was designed to be student-centered, reduce delays, and support timely degree certification while maintaining procedural safeguards.

Kopera-Frye also reported that the Graduate Faculty Council had established an AI task force to develop guidelines and disclosure expectations related to the use of artificial intelligence in theses and dissertations. She explained that the task force was examining practices at other universities in response to concerns raised by ProQuest regarding AI-generated academic work. Kopera-Frye suggested that a representative from the Faculty Senate participate in the task force to strengthen collaboration and coordination between governance bodies.

Dean Koodali added that a motion would be presented at the upcoming Graduate Faculty Council meeting to amend the council's bylaws to include a Faculty Senate representative on the Graduate Faculty Council. He noted that the goal was to improve communication between the Faculty Senate and the Graduate Faculty Council, referencing previous periods of strong collaboration when individuals served in both bodies simultaneously. Discussion followed regarding whether the faculty senate representative should serve as a voting member or as an ex officio member of the committee. FSLC Chair Brown expressed support for the representative serving as a voting member, noting the importance of full participation in committee deliberations and decisions. Associate Dean Kopera-Frye and Dean Kooladi concurred with this position. Discussion concluded with the understanding that a Faculty Senate representative could be appointed, potentially through volunteer participation.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

Senate Leadership approved the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes of 26 March 2026 meeting (Attached)

Moved and second to approve the minutes.

Minutes approved and submitted.

5. Reports on Existing Legislation

- 09-25/26 – Updating the Names and Functions of the Faculty Senate Standing Committees. Sponsor (s): K. Finlator (Astronomy), C. Brown (Geography), K. Lopez-Gallagher (NMSU-A). **Assigned to University Planning.**

Senator Finlator explained that the bill changes the bylaws and Constitution to allow the names of the two standing committees to be updated. The bill only requires changes to the bylaws and revises the names and purviews of the Universities Planning and DEI committees to reflect their intended functions. The chair then asked if there were any questions for Senator Finlator before moving on, and no questions were raised.

- 11-25-26 – Request to Central Administration to provide resources to part time faculty. Sponsor (s): I. Villicana-Pedraza (DACC), Kim Lopez-Gallagher (Alamogordo), Jason Bengtson (NMSU Library), C. Brown (A&S, Senate Vice Chair), and other to follow.

**Assigned to Budget and Resources.**

No comments from the sponsors.

- 12-25/26 – Request for Faculty Senate to review DRAFT proposal for a Doctoral Accelerated Program submitted by the Graduate Faculty Council (GFC). Sponsor (s): C. Brown (A&S), O. Bello (ENG), D. Rutledge (HEST and GFC Chair), J. Tomaka (HEST), and others to follow. **Assigned to Curriculum and Planning**

FLSC Chair Brown stated that he was the lead sponsor on the bill because it came through ADAC, on which he serves. He noted that ADAC discussed the bill and supported moving it forward. The bill also went through Senator Bello's committee, which likewise

supported it. Chair Brown clarified that he moved the bill at the request of others and emphasized that he was neither advocating for nor opposing the measure, but was carrying it forward as part of his role. He added that a report from the standing chair of C&P, Senator Bello, would follow shortly.

FSLC Chair Brown then opened the floor for questions or comments regarding the bill. Chair Chaitanya expressed concern about the name “Accelerated Doctoral Program,” stating that it sounded like a separate doctoral program. Chair Chaitanya suggested that ADAC consider changing the name to something more meaningful. FSLC Chair Brown responded that the bill had gone through committee and received a do-pass vote. He explained that the appropriate time to propose an amendment would be during the Senate meeting when the bill is formally heard. He outlined that the bill would receive a first and second reading, after which discussion and amendments would be appropriate. He also noted that the deans would likely attend the Senate meeting to address any concerns raised. Chair Chaitanya acknowledged the explanation and thanked Chair Brown.

Senator Erickson then raised a question regarding Senate Bill 08-2526, noting that although it had been considered the previous month, it had been held over for an additional month of consideration. Senator Stephanie Walker confirmed this and stated that the University Planning Committee had deliberated on the bill at its last meeting and that it would be included in her report. FLSC Vice Chair Brown introduced Senate Bill 08-2526, Amendment to Article 6 to Change Requirements for Chair and Vice Chair, and asked Chair Walker to summarize the committee’s actions on the bill. Senator Walker explained that the bill added language stating that the current Faculty Senate Chair may not serve as a member of the NMSU-NEA leadership nor participate in negotiations between NMSU-NEA and the NMSU administration. She noted that the committee received a proposed amendment prior to the meeting that would have removed the language regarding participation in negotiations. The amendment was brought forward for deliberation, but no second was received, so the committee did not consider it. Senator Walker reported that the full committee then voted on the original bill, and by majority vote, the bill was voted down.

## 6. Other Business

- Discussion of progress of election of new Senators for 2026-2027 term and end of term caucuses – Vice Chair Brown, Chair Chaitanya, Chair Elect Finlator, and Recording Secretary Cisneros

FLSC Chair Brown opened discussion regarding the progress of the election of new senators for the upcoming term and the caucuses. FSLC Chair Brown reported that, despite extensive efforts that included maintaining records, repeated follow-ups, and outreach to individuals involved, six of the eight voting groups had successfully completed their elections and seated new members. The seventh voting group was scheduled to close voting on May 1, while the eighth group had not yet completed the process. FLSC Chair Brown stated that he had contacted the senior senator of the remaining voting group on March 13 and had repeatedly followed up, including suggesting assistance from the relevant college dean, but the process was still incomplete. He noted that according to the Constitution, the call for nominations must remain open for 10 business days, making it impossible to finalize the election before the scheduled May 7 meeting. FSLC Chair Brown initially expressed reluctance to publicly identify the remaining voting group but stated he would do so if the FSLC voted in favor of disclosure. A motion was made and seconded to reveal the identity of the voting group. Following brief discussion, the motion carried. Chair Brown then disclosed that the College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation had not yet completed its election process. He explained

that the college was having difficulty finding individuals willing to serve as senators, despite strong institutional support for shared governance from university leadership. Chair Brown stated that he would continue efforts to assist the college in completing the election process.

Senator Erickson stated that in previous years the Senate had proceeded with caucuses and leadership selections using the senators who had already been elected, even when some positions remained unfilled. He suggested that moving forward with the available senators would be preferable to calling a special meeting and acknowledged that any vacant seats for HEST could remain unfilled until the fall semester. Chair Brown outlined three possible options: calling a special meeting, proceeding with the currently seated senators, or disregarding constitutional procedures and proceeding with whichever senators had been elected by the meeting date. He stated that disregarding the Constitution and bylaws was the least acceptable option. Senator Erickson recommended that the Senate proceed with the currently seated senators and suggested that the FSLC provide an advisory recommendation to leadership. Senator Burkardt added that elections should still have occurred even if there were fewer candidates than available seats. Senator Erickson then formally moved that the Senate proceed with the caucuses and elections on May 7 using the senators who had been seated according to the Constitution and bylaws, without calling a special meeting. Senator Hanson seconded the motion.

During discussion, Senator Hanson thanked Chair Brown for clarifying that the issue stemmed from difficulty finding candidates rather than procedural neglect. He expressed concern that, despite increased engagement between the Senate and university administration, some colleges still struggled to recruit senators. Senator Cook asked whether the College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation would be allowed to caucus independently to select caucus leadership. Chair Brown explained that because the college lacked a full complement of senators, there were complications regarding quorum and participation in standing committee leadership votes.

Chair Chaitanya stated that the situation had become overly complicated and described the logistical difficulties of conducting a combined meeting involving outgoing senators, continuing senators, and newly elected senators with differing voting privileges. He explained that previous caucus meetings had already been difficult to manage and that the incomplete election process further complicated matters. Chair Chaitanya also raised concerns about the current structure of responsibilities assigned to senior senators and suggested that future constitutional amendments might be needed to address inconsistencies in representation and responsibilities.

Additional discussion followed regarding the role of senior senators, caucus participation, and representation within the FSLC. Senator Burkardt noted that if HEST could not seat all of its senators, the college would have reduced representation on the FSLC. Chair Brown acknowledged this concern but reiterated that leadership retained discretion regarding implementation.

Following the conclusion of discussion, the motion to proceed with the May 7 meeting and caucuses using the currently seated senators, despite HEST having an incomplete complement, was put to a vote. The motion passed. Chair Brown stated that the FSLC was formally recommending to the Chair and Vice Chair that the Senate proceed with the election and caucus process on May 7.

- Standing Committees Reports
  - Budget and Resources Chair, Stephen Hanson
    - Chair Hanson reported that the committee considered Bill 11-2526 regarding administrative support for adjunct faculty. He stated that the committee amended the

bill without changing its spirit or intent, explaining that the revisions were primarily editorial and intended to improve the wording of the measure. Chair Hanson noted that the committee was strongly supportive of the bill and recommended a do-pass vote, with one abstention recorded. During discussion, it was clarified that the bill did not specify a monetary amount for support. Chair Hanson explained that the committee found it difficult to determine a specific funding amount but agreed that it was inappropriate to expect adjunct faculty to teach without providing them with the necessary resources to succeed. The committee therefore urged the administration to provide adequate support to enable faculty to fulfill all assigned duties successfully. [Full BR report posted on the FS website.](#)

- University Planning Chair, Stephanie Walker  
Chair Walker reported that the committee met on April 10 and achieved quorum. The committee deliberated Bill 8 and Bill 9. Regarding Bill 8, Chair Walker noted that the committee discussed the bill and, by simple majority vote, voted it down. Chair Walker then summarized discussion of Bill 9. She stated that co-sponsors Christian Finlator and Christopher Brown attended the meeting to provide background on the proposal. The bill addressed the fact that standing committee names are currently codified in the Faculty Senate Constitution, meaning that any future committee name changes require a full university faculty vote. The proposal sought to remove references to standing committee names from the Faculty Senate Constitution in order to simplify and streamline future committee name changes. Chair Walker explained that amendments to the proposal were incorporated into the version reviewed by the committee. These amendments primarily involved removing the current committee names from the governing documents. Following deliberation, the committee approved the bill by majority vote and recommended that it move forward. Chair Walker noted that the bill would need to proceed quickly to the full Senate and then to a vote of the full university faculty in order to complete the process before the end of the semester. She concluded her report by stating that there was no new business. [Full UP report posted on the FS website.](#)
- Curriculum and Planning Chair, Oladayo Bello  
Chair Bello reported that the Curriculum and Planning Committee met on April 9 and achieved quorum. The committee reviewed Bill 12-2526 regarding the proposed Doctoral Accelerated Pathway Program. Chair Bello noted that concerns had been raised regarding the use of the term “accelerated,” but he continued using the terminology for purposes of discussion during the meeting. Chair Bello explained that Dean Koodali attended the meeting to present the rationale behind the proposal. He clarified that the bill itself did not seek final approval of the program, but rather asked whether the Faculty Senate believed the proposal warranted further development and review. The discussion centered on whether the Senate should support continued exploration of the proposal and eventual submission to the university’s formal program approval process. During the meeting, Dean Koodali described the proposed program as a pathway for high-achieving undergraduate students to move more efficiently into doctoral study while reducing the overall time and cost required to complete both undergraduate

and doctoral degrees. Chair Bello stated that the proposal was intended primarily to create opportunities for strong domestic students at a time when universities are facing challenges in graduate student recruitment. He noted that the proposal was originally advanced by Dean Pontelli and was modeled conceptually after the existing accelerated master's pathway programs.

Chair Bello reported that committee members discussed concerns regarding academic rigor and fairness to students pursuing traditional doctoral pathways. Questions were raised about how the university would ensure that the accelerated pathway maintained the same standards and rigor as traditional doctoral programs and how traditional students might perceive the new pathway. Dean Koodali emphasized that the program would be selective, limited to high-achieving students, and supported through careful advising and structured course planning. Following extensive discussion, the committee voted unanimously to pass the bill and support further development of the proposal. Chair Bello noted that committee support was contingent upon additional details being developed in the future, including GPA requirements, advising capacity, resource availability, and assurances that the program would maintain the rigor expected of traditional doctoral education. It was clarified during discussion that the bill did not constitute approval of the doctoral pathway itself, but rather endorsement of continued study and development of the proposal. If approved by the full Faculty Senate, the proposal would move forward to the University Program Approval Committee for additional review and development. [Full CP report posted on the FS website.](#)

- Research and Creative Activity Chair, Omar Holguin  
Chair Holguin reported that the RCA Committee met on April 21 and achieved quorum. During the meeting, the committee discussed updates regarding recurring meetings proposed by the Vice President for Research (VPR) with the chairs of the RCA Committee and the URC. Chair Holguin explained that the purpose of these meetings is to improve transparency and communication between the VPR's office and the Faculty Senate. The VPR's office elected to hold the meetings jointly with both committees due to the perceived synergy between RCA and URC. Chair Holguin noted that these meetings had already been scheduled and were expected to continue throughout the current month and into the summer.  
Chair Holguin also reported that the RCA Committee reviewed a draft memorial proposing that the university conduct a survey and gap analysis related to innovation and entrepreneurship. He stated that the proposal would likely be introduced as new business when the Senate reconvenes in August due to the limited time remaining in the current semester.  
Additionally, Chair Holguin shared that a committee member raised the idea of establishing a distinguished lecture series for the university. Because one committee member also serves on the URC, the proposal was brought to the URC's attention and would also be discussed with the VPR. Chair Holguin stated that the proposal appeared to have received a favorable response, although questions remained regarding organizational structure and implementation. [Full RCA report posted on the FS website.](#)
- Access, Opportunity, and Outreach Chair, Kim Lopez-Gallagher

Chair Lopez-Gallagher reported that the committee met on April 15 and achieved quorum. During the meeting, the committee discussed reconnecting with the Office of Land Grant Mission and exploring whether a university-wide committee would continue addressing issues previously handled under diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Chair Lopez-Gallagher noted that no legislation was formally referred to the committee during this period. However, the committee did discuss legislation relevant to its areas of concern, including Propositions 9 and 11. She concluded her report by stating that there was no additional business to report. [Full AOO report posted on the FS website.](#)

- Student Success Chair, Kristian Finlator  
Chair Finlator reported that the Student Success Committee met on April 16 and achieved quorum. During the meeting, the committee heard presentations from Dr. Tony Marin and Dr. Marissa Fowler regarding CPoS compliance. Senator Aguirre also reported that she had been representing the committee at ASNMSU meetings and provided updates on those activities. Chair Finlator further reported that the committee administered a survey to the deans of the academic colleges regarding the level of guaranteed financial support provided to incoming international graduate students. The survey results were compiled into a 13-page report, which has been posted online. [Full SS report posted on the FS website.](#)

## 7. Remarks and Announcements

- FS Chair, Vimal Chaitanya
  - Reminder about Standing Committee Chairs making year end reports at last Senate meeting.
  - Notice that onboarding of new Senators will be happening by end of term.  
Chair Chaitanya reminded committee chairs that, as the academic year was coming to an end, they should prepare brief final reports summarizing the accomplishments of their committees throughout the year. He noted that this had been a longstanding tradition within the Senate. Chair Chaitanya also informed members that onboarding materials and documentation were being prepared for newly elected senators and that there would hopefully be opportunities for discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair before the conclusion of the term.  
FLSC Chair Brown added that standing committee chair reports would be appropriate materials to include in annual performance reviews (APRs). He noted that committee chairs receive either course release or funding support and encouraged chairs to document their work so that department heads and deans would be aware of their contributions. Senator Finlator requested that committee chairs also include in their reports any unfinished work or unresolved tasks that should be continued by future committees so that incoming senators and committees could begin work efficiently in the fall semester. Chair Chaitanya clarified that the reports should therefore include both completed work and ongoing matters requiring future attention. No further comments were made.
- FS Vice-Chair / SLC Chair, Christopher Brown

- Pending issues with Central Administration
- Compliance issues for digital accessibility
- Heads up on VERY short updates from external committees at 5.7.26 Senate meeting
  - Dean's eval – Chuck and Kellie
  - AI TF – Chris and Kellie
  - OA Committee – John Sandstrom
  - Int'l student TF – Vimal and Kristian
  - FSLC – Kim Lopez Gallagher
  - PSP Ad Hoc Committee – Oladayo and Jonathan Cook

FSLC Chair Brown provided an update on pending issues with the administration and ongoing collaboration with university leadership. He noted that the Faculty Senate leadership had enjoyed significant access to central administration through regular Wednesday meetings involving the Chair and Vice Chair, which had resulted in productive discussions and substantial policy improvements. Chair Brown stated that he planned to prepare a transition document for the incoming Chair and Vice Chair outlining both completed work and unresolved matters that would require continued attention. Chair Brown identified several ongoing issues, including the FACT reboot process and the AI Task Force. He noted that recommendations from the AI Task Force had been forwarded to central administration for further consideration. He also announced that Deputy Provost James McAteer would begin serving as Acting Provost effective the following day and acknowledged that the provost's office was managing numerous priorities while continuing discussions on these matters. Chair Brown encouraged senators to notify leadership of any additional unresolved issues that should be included in the transition materials.

Discussion then turned to digital accessibility compliance requirements. It was noted that the deadline for dissertation and thesis accessibility compliance had been extended to 2027. Clarification was provided that the accessibility requirements would apply to all public and private course content, including Canvas materials, audio, and video components. Chair Brown stated that discussions with university leadership regarding implementation were ongoing and that the university would have approximately 11 months to complete compliance efforts. He emphasized that responsibility for accessibility compliance rested with the provost's office, while Information Technology staff would provide technical support. It was also noted that two applications were being evaluated to assist with video accessibility compliance.

Chair Brown further informed the FSLC that brief year-end reports would be requested from senators serving on external committees. He reviewed several committees and reports already received, including the Dean's 360 Evaluation Report, the International Student Welfare Report, the IDC Task Force Report, the Provost's Office SPAC Memo, and the Open Access Committee Report. Additional brief reports would still be needed from the AI Task Force, the Faculty Senate Library Advisory Committee, and the Program Sustainability Plan Ad Hoc Committee. Committee representatives were asked to submit written summaries before the next Senate meeting.

Chair Brown also acknowledged that the Senate had been unsuccessful in appointing an active representative to the Athletic Department Advisory Committee during the current term. He stated that this issue would be passed on to incoming leadership because the committee had become increasingly important. It was further noted that the new athletic

director had expressed interest in improving communication and engagement with faculty.

8. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

**Present:** FSLC Chair C. Brown, FS Chair V. Chaitanya, C. Erickson, O. Bello, K. Finlator, M. Burkardt, J. Cook, S. Hanson, F. Boutsen, C. Creusere, C. DeBlicck, K. Sharp-Hoskins, J. Bronstein, K. Knight, K. Lopez-Gallagher, L. Grant, M. Montañez, S. Walker, S. Johnson, Rec. Sec. M. Cisneros.

- **Guests:** Robbie Grant, Director of Academic Technology, Ranjit Koodali, Dean of Grad School and Assoc Provost of IDS, Karen Kopera-Frye, Associate Dean of Graduate School.

Revised and finalized by:

Vice Chair Brown 6/8/2026