

Jan 10 2023

Hello All:

This report is a bit long: sorry about that. The most important TLDR is that the faculty senate is being stonewalled on our submitted policy change 10.50 (faculty misconduct and discipline).. Last year when we collectively wrote the policy on policies, former Senate chair Julia Parra and I were very emphatic that the rules should NOT allow for a member of the administration to singlehandedly freeze consideration of a policy change. The administrators on the nascent PSC agreed to this at the time. But at the meeting on Monday, the administrators at the meeting reneged on that agreement, which is why there is a Policy Steering Committee item on the agenda for Thursday the 12th.

Other things:

I don't know if I ever reported out the revised seat allocation for senate. Since the Constitution and Bylaws now enable certain contingent faculty to vote and serve, they are incorporated into the new allocation. Also, Carlsbad is gone.

Tenured and Tenure-Track:

ACES: 6 seats

A&S: 18 seats

BUS: 5 seats

ENGR: 7 seats

HEST: 10 seats

Dona Ana Community College (5 seats)

NMSU-Alamogordo (2 seats)

NMSU-Grants (1 seat)

Cooperative Extension Service (3 seats)

University Library (1 seat)

Non-Tenure-Track:

2 from Dona Ana Community College,

1 from NMSU-Alamogordo,

1 from NMSU Grants

1 from the Cooperative Extension Service,

5 from the Las Cruces campus's colleges,

with the following stipulations: a) no more than 1 non-tenure-track representative from any department may serve at the same time, and b) no more than 2 non-tenure-track representatives from any of the senate electing groups as defined in Article VI, Section 1, may serve at the same time.

Grand total of 68.

Elections will be announced to the senior senator from each voting group soon.

Meetings I attended

In December, there were not as many meetings, but they all happened on the same day again.

Space Committee meeting, 12/12/2022

1. The committee is going to be undertaking a review of all university research space, starting with the college of arts and sciences, to see to what extent spaces are underutilized.
2. Various rooms were assigned to various entities, including the Office of Institutional Equity and the English department.
3. The Journalism department is combining with Creative Media and this combo is taking back a room in Milton because faculty should not have to walk so far from their offices. A long discussion ensued during which it was acknowledged that the pendulum is swinging back from centralized scheduling of all rooms via Ad Astra to departments being able to control rooms.
4. During the discussion, it came up that the College of Business gets priority scheduling over Business Complex, Guthrie, and Domenici Hall, and that the reason is that they raised most of the money for Domenici. Thus, "central scheduling" is modulated by influence created by who donated the money for what. Arts and Sciences doesn't really have control over any classrooms (maybe the geology lab) which is why Arts and Sciences faculty are shunted all over the place for their classes.
5. Then there was a pretty long discussion about where the proposed prayer room for Muslim students should be located. Kate Terpis said that a temporary space for this purpose is being built in the stacks on the second floor of Zuhl Library.

ADAC: 12/12/2022

1. The new associate dean of Engineering is David Jauregui, the department chair of Civil Engineering, who is a Grant County native.
2. Opportunity Scholarships: Financial aid should come in to speak to us in January.
3. Anne Hubbell said that mental health services ARE provided to NMSU students for free but that the office is just understaffed. Graduate students also get these services and need to be reminded that this support is available.
4. Carol Flinchbaugh said it's her understanding that the collective bargainers came to an agreement on Friday. [And in fact an agreement WAS reaching with the grad union. It wasn't really what the students wanted, and NMSU could have done a lot better. –ed.]
5. Retention issues: We need to make sure that we have enough course capacity for our students. Some had to go to DACC in the fall because there were not enough courses offered. There was a big discussion about how maybe each college should have an associate dean of retention or a VP of retention, because of course what we need to do is to hire another person making six figures to not teach classes. The faculty senate student success committee probably has a role to play in retention so perhaps that is something we should discuss.
6. David Smith is retiring at the end of the year. He has been the vice president for articulation and curriculum and he is retiring at the end of the school year. His main goal has been liaising with HED. Someone from NMSU needs to be on the gen ed committee for the state until his position can be replaced. The meetings are all held on zoom and there are 4 meetings a year.
7. International grad students should not buy health insurance because it can impact their taxes and also their visa status, but domestic students should definitely be buying their health insurance on the BeWell.com exchange.
8. There was a discussion about whether any of the meetings of ADAC should move to in-person or hybrid.
9. The VPSS search for Alamogordo failed, so they are going to be putting out a job search ad.

Despite the revised draft of policy 10.50 having been submitted to the policy revision system in due form, VP of Policy Ermelinda didn't follow up because she thought that maybe we wanted to wait for a new provost to come in. I said that no, we didn't want to wait and that the Senior Associate Provost had signed off on it entering the process. Deedee hadn't looked at it yet though.

The meeting was mostly dedicated to Ermelinda explaining the policy flowchart and saying she is going to be making a checklist for policy crafters. Policy crafters are going to have to do some legal research to figure out what laws will be impacted and how much impact a given policy or lack of policy will have on the university.

Gaylene asked about how policies will be enforced when people in various departments or positions of power are not following policy or following procedure.

12/16/2022

On this day I attended a presentation by Linda Scholz and Sherry Kollman about DEI and online learning, which are two new goals being added to LEADS 2025. [Who knows how long LEADS 2025 is going to be around given the pending leadership change though. –ed.]

Linda: The traditional college student has certain advantages that our students might not have— they have not had the chance to go on vacations with family; people may not have been able to help them with homework; school districts are underfunded. Students may not know how to talk to faculty. However, they also have certain advantages, like being bilingual.

NMSU is 73% BIPOC students across all campuses, with 64 percent being Hispanic. This is in comparison with the population of the state as a whole, in which 51 percent of students identify as Hispanic.

There is likely to be a Director of Undocumented Students hired.

The area in which NMSU lags the most in terms of faculty hiring is indigenous faculty. 11 percent of the students are indigenous but only .09 percent of the tenured/tenure-track faculty.

Linda talked about decolonizing the curriculum: there will be some central scrutiny of syllabi to make sure that everyone is sufficiently decolonizing. This part makes me a little nervous . . .

NMSU-O: The average NMSU-O student is a woman in her thirties, but Sherry expects that age to go down. She expects the campus to move in the direction of Hy-Flex classes. I said that I hate hybrid classes and think they are terrible, especially for first-generation students. But Xeturah

Woodley said that Hy-Flex classes are working well for faculty and students at DACC. The existing high-flyers in online education at other schools bought a for-profit platform and used that. NMSU decided not to do that and we are attempting to build from the ground up.

Some departments have created a service assignment to be the online education troubleshooting person for the department.

Policy Steering Committee 1/9

One of the changes underway is that all retiree benefits provided by NMSU will be listed on the HR website rather than in the APR. This essentially means that none of these benefits are guaranteed. I asked about this in the meeting and was told that these benefits could always be changed on a moment's notice and that none of them have ever been guaranteed.

Personally I think these kinds of issues should be more clearly explained during employee onboarding.

Anyway, my main concern at this meeting was our proposed policy 10.50, which I addressed at the beginning of this document. Despite the fact that Gaylene and I both advocated forcefully for the policy to move forward through the process since supposedly the policy catalogue should be undergoing constant revision, Deedee said she didn't feel comfortable allowing it to move forward. This is NOT how the policy flowchart is supposed to work, not what we agreed to last year, and does not actually bode well for shared governance. I will get with Mariah Ortiz from the General Counsel's office and with Ermelinda to see what, if anything, we CAN move forward with about this, but in the meantime, let's chat about this collectively on the 12th.