

**Minutes - NMSU Faculty Senate Leadership
Committee Meeting 25 September, 2025, 4:00 p.m.
Zoom(<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/83656717192>) and
**Milton 185J PLEASE NOTE NEW LINK AND
NEW LOCATION****

1. Call to Order – Meeting to called to order at 4:04 p.m.

2. Introduction of guests - Deputy Provost James McAteer

Peer Institution Selection Update – Deputy Provost James McAteer

Deputy Provost McAteer provided an update on the process of identifying peer institutions for NMSU. The effort began in May with a task force on which Senate Vice Chair Brown participated. A survey was distributed to university leadership from the previous year to gather input on key attributes important for peer selection. While no single university shares all of NMSU's unique characteristics, several core attributes were prioritized: land-grant status, public designation, R1 (research-intensive), and HSI (Hispanic-Serving Institution) status.

An external firm, NCAMS, was engaged to assist. Using data from over 5,500 institutions, NCAMS produced a narrowed list of 283 institutions, which was further refined to 28 potential peers based on statistical similarity.

To incorporate qualitative input, a second survey was distributed to all Faculty Senators to gather feedback on the 28 proposed peers. Senators were asked to:

1. Identify any institutions from the list that do *not* resemble NMSU and explain why.
2. Suggest any institutions *not* on the list that should be considered, with justification.
3. Provide any other feedback.

Responses will be compiled into a document that will be shared with the President. Faculty Senate leadership is asked to add this survey to the meeting agenda for the next Senate meeting.

Additional groups—college leadership (Deans, Associate Deans), EID, VPR, and Government Relations—will also be surveyed to ensure broad institutional input.

The target date to submit the final report to the President is **October 20**.

Discussion:

- Vice-Chair Brown emphasized the importance of including shared governance as a selection attribute. A note in the survey references states (e.g., Texas) where faculty senates have been eliminated.
- Senator Kopera-Frye asked whether the 28 universities are ranked.
 - Deputy Provost McAteer clarified that the list is **not ranked**. The 28 peers represent a composite group—a “casserole”—meant to reflect a holistic similarity to NMSU, even if no individual institution is an exact match.
- Senator Lopez-Galagher inquired whether the inclusion of a university system with community colleges is considered.
 - Deputy Provost McAteer responded that this was a request from the President. While rare, the attribute was included where possible. The team also evaluated whether institutions had clear transfer pathways from community colleges to four-year programs.

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

Senate Leadership approved the agenda.

4. Approval of Minutes of 28 August 2025 meeting (Attached)

Moved and seconded to approved amended minutes.

Minutes approved and submitted.

5. Reports on Existing Legislation – N/A

6. Proposed Legislation

- Name change of DEI Standing Committee (bill to follow)

Chair of DEI, Senator Kopera-Frye, reported that the DEI Standing Committee discussed a potential name change in response to concerns raised following the termination of CAMP program's funding due to terminology in its proposal, particularly words such as "diversity." Senator Kopera-Frye explained that the committee considered alternative names to reduce unnecessary scrutiny while maintaining the committee's purpose. After polling members, two options emerged:

- NMSU Service and Engagement
- NMSU Engagement and Service

The committee voted in favor of "NMSU Engagement and Service" as a temporary name, acknowledging the need to act promptly while maintaining flexibility for future reconsideration.

The suggestion for a temporary name change also came from discussions at the President's Task Force on Executive Orders, where participants, including Vice President Scholz, expressed support for a swift interim change to avoid targeted attention linked to DEI terminology.

Discussion

Vice-Chair Brown summarized procedural implications:

- A formal name change would require amending the Faculty Senate Constitution, which involves an all-faculty vote.
- Bylaw changes must also be made to remain consistent with the Constitution, and these can be initiated sooner by the Senate.
- Alternatively, the committee could temporarily change the displayed name (on the Faculty Senate website and meeting calendar) without constitutional revision.

Vice-Chair Brown proposed bringing this temporary website and calendar name change to the Senate for informal approval at the next meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to support temporarily changing the DEI Committee name on Faculty Senate web and calendar listings.

- Opposed: Senator Bronstein and Senator Sharp-Hoskins.
 - Senator Bronstein stated opposition to "bending to external pressure."
 - Senator Sharp-Hoskins expressed preference for following the full constitutional process for any change.

- The motion carried by majority vote.

The item will be brought to the next Faculty Senate meeting for consideration.

Next Steps and Broader Discussion

Vice-Chair Brown outlined that a permanent name change will require:

1. A constitutional amendment to update the committee list, and
2. Corresponding bylaw revisions.

Senator Erickson suggested removing specific committee names from the Constitution altogether and instead referencing them in the bylaws to allow for flexibility as university

structures evolve. He offered to assist with this process.

Senator Burkardt expressed concern that the proposed name “Engagement and Service” does not clearly align with any existing university entities or offices and may not adequately reflect the committee’s mission related to inclusion and diversity.

After discussion, Vice-Chair Brown requested and received agreement to move the bill forward to the full Senate without the usual 48-hour posting period, assigning it to a standing committee for further refinement.

A motion to proceed as presented was made, seconded, and passed by majority vote.

This Proposition was assigned to University Planning.

- Senate Bill 01-25/26 - Request for an Internal Estimate of NMSU Students’ Textbook Costs (Attached)

Chair Kristian Finlator reported that the Committee on Student Success met last week with representatives from the Books for Success program. The committee had several questions, particularly regarding whether the program would offer actual cost savings to students.

Currently, it is difficult to assess potential savings because there is no comprehensive data on how much students are presently paying for textbooks and materials.

The only available estimate was provided internally by Follett, the vendor, which the committee found insufficient for making a data-informed decision. The committee recommended that NMSU develop its own internal list of current textbook and material costs, especially for high-enrollment courses. Once compiled, this information should be shared with branch campuses to allow for similar cost analyses at those locations.

Vice-Chair Brown added that the goal is to have an internal cost analysis conducted by the institution, not the vendor. The plan is for this topic to be introduced briefly at the next Senate meeting and then referred to the appropriate Standing Committee for further review and recommendations.

Discussion followed. **Recommendation from Senators to go to Curriculum and Programming.**

7. Standing Committees Reports

- Budget and Resources Chair, Stephen Hanson

Chair Hanson provided a brief report, noting that the committee recently held its first meeting of the year, which primarily served as a meet-and-greet and goal-setting session. A written report has been submitted online for review. [Full BR report on FS website.](#)

- University Planning Chair, Stephanie Walker

Chair Walker was unable to attend the meeting. Vice Chair Brown provided an update on behalf of the committee.

He reported that Deputy Provost McAteer sent an email to all department heads instructing them to convene their P&T committees to review current Promotion and Tenure guidelines, specifically to evaluate whether any existing requirements may be unreasonable given current federal funding challenges.

Departments have been asked to review their documents and determine independently whether changes are warranted. Vice-Chair Brown noted that there is strong support within both the Leadership Committee and the Faculty Senate that such decisions should reside at

- the departmental level. [Full UP report on FS website.](#)
- Curriculum and Planning Chair, Oladayo Bello
Chair Bello reported that the committee's primary focus has been to review the charge assigned to it, which is to informally review the Academic Program Sustainability Proposal. Chair Bellow also noted that today is the deadline for submitting suggestions or feedback regarding the proposal. [Full CP report on FS website.](#)
 - Research and Creative Activity Chair, Omar Holguin
Chair Holguin reported that the committee met on September 16th and had a quorum. The committee discussed several key topics, including the grant overhead rate, the launch and assessment of the Open Access Publication Fund, and support tools such as software packages available to assist faculty members in their research activities. The committee also considered reviewing the Promotion and Tenure (P&T) guidelines to ensure that entrepreneurial activities are appropriately recognized. As action items, the committee plans to invite guests from the Vice President for Research (VPR) Office and the Arrowhead Center to discuss these topics further and will request an update on the status of the Open Access Publication Fund. [Full RCA report on FS website.](#)
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair, Karen Kopera-Frye
Chair Kopera-Frye reported that the committee held a discussion and heard from a guest speaker regarding the Flex Program, Disability Access Services Department. Kim Lopez Gallagher brought this topic to the committee's attention, and the discussion provided some initial background on the program. The committee plans to meet with Dr. Trujillo, Director of Disability Access Services, to receive a more detailed overview of the Flex Program and its implementation. [Full DEI report on FS website.](#)
 - Student Success Chair, Kristian Finlator
Chair Finlator reported that the committee met on September 18th with all eleven members present. The committee heard a presentation from Deputy Provost McAteer regarding the Complete College America Accelerated Project. Members also discussed the Books for Success initiative at length and subsequently drafted related legislation, which was presented earlier in the meeting. The committee held two votes concerning whether the case for the initiative was strongly supported; both votes resulted in a "no." However, the committee did approve moving forward with a formal recommendation, which will be presented at next month's meeting. [Full SS report on FS website.](#)

8. Other Business

- Discussion of 2 October 2025 Faculty Senate Agenda Items – all
- Discussion of Provost proposal to move to 2.5 minimum GPA for UG admission (See attached) – Vice Chair Brown
Vice Chair Brown reported on the provost's proposal to move to a 2.5 minimum GPA for undergraduate admission. He shared the memo from the provost along with supporting data and clarified that the purpose was not to debate the merits of the proposal at this time, but to determine whether the Senate supports referring it for further review. Following discussion, the motion was approved to assign the proposal to the Student Success Committee for review. The committee will provide input to the full

Senate, offer suggestions, and potentially develop a draft bill for consideration.

- Request for Senate input on selection of NMSU peers – Deputy Provost McAteer
Deputy Provost James McAteer gave this adequate import about our peer study.
- Proposed changes to ARP 4.69 - Academic Rules for Distance Education – Vice Chair Brown

Vice-Chair Brown provided an update on the proposed changes to ARP 4.69. He explained that in March 2024, the Senate passed a bill establishing an online advisory committee, which was approved by then interim President Jay Gogue and accompanied by a memo, but the committee's existence went unnoticed until recently. It was revealed that the committee, which has been active for the past year, developed a proposed change to the ARP that has now entered the policy review process. The Senate was identified as a stakeholder but had no time to formally review the proposal because comments were due prior to this FSLC meeting. Vice-Chair Brown coordinated with John Sandstrom and Chris Erickson, sponsors of the original bill, to provide feedback, which was submitted to the policy office. The policy review process's first step is stakeholder identification, with about twenty suggested, including six key stakeholders. Vice-Chair Brown will attend the policy meeting in mid-October to review feedback, anticipating further input from other stakeholders. He has also communicated with Mark Lawrence, chair of the council, about Senate representation on the committee, noting that due to prior Senate inaction, the Senate was not represented. Efforts are underway to get the senate represented on this committee. Vice-Chair Brown emphasized the importance of this committee as a formal venue to address issues such as course rigor, instructor credentials, hiring and evaluation processes, and intellectual property (IP) ownership. He clarified current ARP language, which states that IP created as part of normal job duties using university resources belongs to the creator, whereas IP developed under contract (e.g., for course development) belongs to the university. He noted a union article addressing IP rights had been submitted to Central Administration but cautioned that contracts cannot be changed as easily as ARP policies. The formal policy review of ARP 4.69 on Academic Rules for Distance Education is ongoing, and he offered to share the document with anyone interested upon request.

9. Remarks and Announcements

- FS Chair Vimal Chaitanya
Chair Chaitanya could not join due to conflict with President Ferme's special meeting called to discuss AD finalists.
- FS Vice-Chair / SLC Chair, Christopher Brown
Vice-Chair Brown offered remarks and announcements, thanking everyone for attending the meeting, especially given the change of venue. He noted that future meetings are expected to return to Hadley Hall, room 130. He expressed appreciation for everyone's participation and wished all a pleasant evening.

At the end of the meeting, Senator Hanson requested a moment to share two brief items. First, regarding the Budget and Resources Committee, he noted that the Business Processes Committee is working on streamlining operations and seeking examples of budget or business process issues. Senator Hanson shared that he submitted a table of outstanding travel reimbursements dating back 2.5 months totaling \$8,000, as well as a key request form from July 14th that remains unfulfilled. He invited members to report on any processes they believe are not working

well and could be improved. Secondly, he mentioned that the Budget and Resources Committee plans to work with upper administration on budget realignment and addressing structural deficits, including discussions about bringing the Athletic Department onto a balanced budget. He thanked everyone for their indulgence in allowing him to speak beyond the scheduled time.

10. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Present: Vice-Chair C. Brown, K. Sharp-Hoskins, C. DeBlieck, L. Grant, S. Hanson, M. Montañez, C. Erickson, F. Bousten, O. Holguin, K. Knight, J. Bronstein, C. Creusere, K. Lopez-Gallagher, M. Burkardt, K. Kopera-Frye, J. Cook, O. Bello, K. Finlator, E. Karshmer.

Guest: Deputy Provost James McAteer.

Absent: Chair V. Chaitanya, RecSec. M. Cisneros, S. Walker, J. Sandstrom.

**Revised and finalized by:
Vice-Chair Brown and Chair Chaitanya on 10/23/2025**