For a month in which there were relatively few meetings, a great deal happened during March. There was no Administrative Council meeting. The Academic Deans Council had a special session on March 6 to discuss the proposed promotion and tenure policy. The participants made a number of good suggestions that have been incorporated as friendly amendments. You will receive a revised version of the proposal that also included changes suggested by the University Affairs Committee in the next day or so. The Board of Regents met on March 12. The Regents approved the major in Agriculture and Community Development, the geographic areas of responsibility for the NMSU community colleges, the ground lease for the convention center property, and a resolution supporting the Spaceport America. President Martin’s report concentrated on the legislative session and the WAC tournament. Since those have been covered elsewhere, I won’t discuss them here. He also addressed the topic of union negotiations and stressed again the fact that the Regents have the final say on any contract from the University side. Regent Gallagher spoke to the last point, emphasizing that the Regents can disapprove the contract, that the main issue remains compensation, and that there are some things the Regents will not agree to, particularly elements leading to different economic packages for union and non-union employees. Regent Gallagher challenged the negotiating groups to complete the negotiations in time for the April 13 Regents meeting. Dean Carruthers presented a report on the Living the Vision goals, progress in meeting them, and building them into NMSU’s budgeting process. The new President of the Board of Regents is Laura Coniff, with Vice-President Bob Gallagher, and Secretary/Treasurer M. Steven Anaya.

The University Budget Committee met on March 20 and mostly discussed the role of the committee in the strategic budgeting process. Accomplishing this will involve changes in the way the committee considers requests and how it prioritizes them. VP Jennifer Taylor, who led the meeting, favors the establishment of a strategic goal performance fund, directing funding towards management enrollment growth (hence the reallocations) benchmarking academic support costs with that of our peers to make economies where possible and appropriate, paralleling the equipment repair replacement process to that of the building repair and replacement, and a number of other items. Among her suggestions was that the Provost should bring one set of priorities agreed upon by the ADC rather than have each college present proposals. All of this sounds very useful and is intended to strengthen academic input into the setting of budget priorities, but I worry that the proposed processes will actually result in the Budget Director or the VP making calls on programs and equipment within those priorities. In other words, there are still a few details to be worked out. We will need to elect two representatives to the UBC at the April meeting, one for a shortened term of one year and one for a full two-year term.

The Academic Deans Council held its regular meeting on March 27. The council approved the promotion and tenure policy, so its fate is now in the Senate’s hands. It also approved the bachelor degrees for the Creative Media Institute and the Information Engineering Technology major in the Bachelor of Engineering Technology degree. VP
Jennifer Taylor presented a summary of the discussions at the Budget Committee meeting and her plans in this area. She also announced the creation of a Human Resources Services Department under D’Anne Stuart that will handle all processing of HR transactions with a five-day turnaround time for employment matters requiring HR input. This was announced in a memo distributed on the ABCD e-list. Members from the Math Success Center provided materials on the redesign of the basic mathematics course sequence, changes in pedagogy, and early results. Progress is being made, and the department is putting a lot of effort into making those changes. “Mastery” sections have been eliminated. Dean Moulton and Senator Erickson presented the draft workload policy, which was approved by the ADC. Honors College Dean Eamon presented a revision of the Viewing the Wider World component of General Education, and this will be presented as a bill at our next meeting. There was a brief discussion of merging the annual performance evaluation and promotion and tenure schedules, but it is too early to say how that will turn out. The Provost announced that the next meeting of the ADC will be devoted to budget priorities. The Plan2Plan group, which is devising a strategic planning process for the University, met twice in March. Senator Erickson, several faculty members, and myself are on the group. Since the minutes of the meetings are available on the group’s website, I will refer you to it. The latest meeting took a long time discussing the core values of the University and how to express them. Discussion has been lively and informative while remaining civil.