Faculty Senate Chair’s Report, March, 2007

There not many meetings during February, but some very interesting issues have been raised. At the Naming Committee meeting on Feb. 13, the committee rejected two proposals one of which named a facility for a deceased faculty member and one room honoring a recently retired staff member primarily because there were no significant gifts attached to the names. While I am sympathetic to the need for development, I think that an unintended consequence is to remove an important method for faculty and staff recognition. A suggestion was made that named scholarships could be endowed, but those start at $25,000 and after the campaign ends will go to $100,000. Even an endowed book fund starts at $10,000. The committee does realize the problem, and I hope that it will devote some attention to finding a solution soon.

Administrative Council met the same day and was chaired by Ben Woods in the absence of the President and the Provost. The meeting consisted mostly of announcements, and I think the following are of importance. The University has adopted a communicable disease preparedness response plan to be implemented in case of pandemics. The plan is available on the Health and Safety website. Christina Chavez Kelley presented a planned mandatory online training module on sexual harassment developed by New Media Training. All employees will be required to take and pass with 80% an online examination as part of the training. The purpose is to provide NMSU lawyers with evidence that the University has provided training in this area and is not negligent in its approach to sexual harassment, which remains the largest category of harassment complaints at NMSU. Therefore, even if you have recently participated in on-campus training in this area given by our Office of Institutional Equity, you will need to complete this exercise. The current plan is to have people renew their training every 3 years. It is unclear whether completion of the training will be a condition of employment at the University. The GLBTQ (GayLesbianTransgenderedQuestioning) Resource center will be moving to Regents Row and employ a GA. Finally, NMSU will be doing travel reimbursements by electronic funds transfer for those employees who receive their pay by direct deposit. There will still be a paper advice sent to the department, which will continue to submit documentation for reimbursements as in the past. During the summer, Payroll also expects to eliminate the paper pay stubs individuals with direct deposit receive. There will be electronic notification instead, and detailed information will be available on Banner as it is now.

Academic Deans Council met on Feb. 20. I introduced the proposed P&T policy to the ADC, which will set up a special meeting in the next week or so for the academic deans to discuss the policy. This means that the ADC will be considering the policy during some of the time FS does. If the Council makes changes, we should be able to incorporate them before the bill’s final consideration by the Senate. The College of Extended Learning introduced the proposal for a Bachelor’s degree in Creative Media, to be located in the CMI in the College of Extended Learning. Most of the ADC agreed that the degree was a good idea, but some members found problems with the lack of tenure-track faculty positions in the proposal, the stated need to get the program on track before UNM, and the location of the degree in CEL rather than in one of the six academic
colleges. After much debate, the Provost tabled the motion and asked that the Dean of CEL meet with the Dean of A&S to discuss a School of Creative Media. I think that the major needs to be based in Arts & Sciences or the College of Engineering. Sonya Cooper presented a well-constructed proposal for a bachelor’s degree in Information Engineering Technology. Since the members of the ADC had not seen the proposal before the meeting, they will vote on it at a later meeting. There was a condensed presentation of the IT audit that had been made to Admin Council by Diana Hidalgo, and Jennifer Taylor and Vimal Chaitanya discussed what was happening to the approximately 8 individuals in the colleges with the title of Contracts Administrator. I suggest you consult your deans on this point, because I am not sure about the conclusions reached or the schedule for their implementation. Jennifer Taylor also presented a new process for the approval of instructional positions. For one-to-one replacements of a faculty position, there will be three options, with three different colors. 1) If the department in question has been increasing its student credit hours for the last three years, the position may be filled without justification. This is color green (for “Go”). 2) If the department has had fluctuating SCH for the last three years, a justification for filling the position will be necessary. This is color yellow. 3) If the department has had declining SCH for the last 3 years, the position returns to the Provost’s central pool for reallocation, possibly to another college. This is color red. Application for the allocation of new positions is divorced from loss of a position. So there is no guarantee that a college’s lost position will come back to it. Bill Eamon discussed the impact that the emphasis on SCH is having on honors college courses, which are at risk with their relatively small enrollment when so much pressure is being put on colleges over SCH. To mitigate the problem, all SCH from honors courses will be assigned to the department of the faculty member teaching the course. This situation is an example of unintended consequences of the emphasis on SCH upon for retention and recruitment of students and faculty.

The Plan2Plan Committee had its first meeting on Friday, Feb. 23. The group, chaired by Michael Hites, is to develop a process for strategic planning at NMSU. There are no VPs or Deans in the group other than the chair and the VP for Research. Instead, the committee consists of faculty members, department heads, non-academic administrators, and students. Past Senate Chair Jack Thomas is a member, along with Chris Erickson and me. The group’s deadline is July of this year, so we will be busy. One of the major tasks is getting everyone clear on the difference between planning the process and creating the strategic plan. It should be interesting. The group will meet for 2 hours on two Fridays a month. And Chris Erickson and I were wondering what to do now that our Friday 2-5 p.m. promotion and tenure task force meetings were done!

If you have not done so, please vote for next year’s Chair and yes or no on the constitutional amendment. Please remind your constituents to do the same.

Larry Creider, who has three Senate meetings left.