Faculty Senate Chair’s October Report

The Board of Regents met the morning after our first Faculty Senate Meeting. The first action item concerned the request by the administration for the Regents’ approval of continuing talks on the Convention Center. You’ve probably read about what happened. I read the Senate memorial aloud to the Regents and those present (I had given copies to the Regents, President and Provost earlier that morning) and then explained that I found myself in the somewhat difficult position of presenting a memorial with which I disagreed. I outlined my disagreements, there was some more discussion, and the Regents ended up approving the administration’s request 5 to 0. Ben Woods has promised more communication and has specifically offered to come and present the campus master plan to the Faculty Senate and answer any questions. I will ask him to do this at a regular meeting of the Senate or, if that is not possible, on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m. The Regents also approved the NMSU Real Estate Policy, which will ensure that all real estate agreements go through one central location and are examined to ensure their compatibility with University policy. The gender equity and minority opportunity plan for Athletics was presented by Athletic Director McKinley and approved by the Regents. The Board of Regents finally approved the changes to the NMSU Policy Manual adopted through last May. Among other things, this means that we have a post-tenure review policy.

The next day the NMSU Board of Regents and the UNM Board met in a joint session. I attended and found the dynamics, both in interpersonal relations and in policy, very interesting. You’ve undoubtedly heard something about this first joint meeting, but among the agenda items were a joint ratification of the NMSU.UNM cooperative pharmacy program and an agreement on legislative priorities for the two major research universities in the state. If this collaboration can continue, it could be good for both institutions and help the universities in the state present a more united front to the politicians. In a very small parallel to this, the Faculty Senate Chairs of the 4-yr institutions of higher education in NM will be meeting again this fall with Secretary McClure of HED to discuss common measures.

Sept. 12 brought the Naming Committee meeting, which approved a plan for naming opportunities for the University Library, and Administrative Council. Provost’s Council did not meet in September. There was neither new business nor decisions taken at the Sept. 12 meeting of the Administrative Council, but there were a presentation on NMSU’s Affirmative Action plan, presented by Jerry Nevarez, head of the Office of Institutional Equity and a number of announcements of upcoming events. Frankly, it was a pleasant change after the Regents meeting. On Sept. 19, Lynn Kelly and I met with Cynda Clary to discuss general education issues. Since Lynn is more involved with that issue than I, I will leave the description of what we talked about to her.

Academic Deans Council met on September 27. The Council approved a policy change to Academic Appeals procedures that will come to Faculty Senate at next month’s meeting. The College of Extended Learning asked approval of majors and minor for the Creative Media Institute. These majors and minors would be within the existing Bachelor of Individualized Studies and Bachelor of Applied Studies degrees. In my opinion, the academic requirements are appropriate, but some people (myself included) had questions about putting these majors under those degrees when degrees in those
subjects are in process. The proposal was sent to ADAC for input, but may not need to
go there according to the Policy Manual. After updates on our internationalization efforts
by Edward Egginton and the results of the August Leadership Summit on the first year
experience presented by Cynda Clary, new business was discussed. There was a draft of
the 2007-2008 Academic Calendar, and one suggestion was that having faculty report on
a Monday could save energy rather than the previous Thursday as has been traditional.
This would have 9-month faculty report on August 20 instead of August 16 in the fall.
We’ll see what happens. There will also be a proposal for more flexibility in scheduling
summer sessions coming from ADAC (Associate Deans Advisory Council). New ESL
(English as a Second Language) guidelines to accommodate changes in the TOEFL test,
accommodate the primary test used in Britain and former Commonwealth countries
(IELTS), and provide flexibility and ways to avoid having to take the NMSU Language
Proficiency Examination were presented. There is considerable unnecessary bureaucratic
complication in the way NMSU handles English language proficiency for graduate
students. This matter cannot be completed until there is input from Communications
Studies, which administers the LPE. Cynda Clary spoke about a proposal to change the
required upper division courses that must be taken for an undergraduate degree from 52
to 44. It was stated that this would not effect existing degree requirements for other
majors, but the language of the proposition is unclear. This passed the ADC and will be
coming our way. There were also brief reports on changes in administrative codes for
new degree programs, the announcement of a recruiter/editor position for the Graduate
School, a referral to web pages on copyright that would have been improved by
consulting with other NMSU players in the copyright and plagiarism areas, the Intel
International Science & Engineering Fair next year in Albuquerque and a report by Dean
Carruthers on Goal IV of Living the Vision and related objectives. In my brief report, I
commented that FS Propositions 02 and 03 had received committee approval and
expressed faculty unhappiness with the Graduate Dean’s memo on the editing of
dissertations. We will be devoting some attention to this issue at the October Senate
meeting.
The Promotion and Tenure Policy Task Force has broken into subcommittees revising
sections of the draft, and we are on schedule for a November unveiling for comment.
Anne Meek is continuing her training in web maintenance, and we hope to have an
updated Faculty Senate website that uses the NMSU patterns sometime soon. I
appreciate the help Michael Hites and Laura Padilla of ICT have been giving in this area.

Vice Chair Kelly and I met with President Martin on Sept. 29 and discussed proposed
changes in the academic misconduct procedures in the Student Handbook.

Larry Creider