The
Faculty Assembly Meeting

MINUTES **March 14, 2025 12:30 PM ZOOM**

MEETING CALLED BY:	Dr. Carolyn Kuchera, Faculty Assembly President
MINUTES ASSEMBLED BY:	Andrew McFeaters, Faculty Assembly Secretary
FACULTY ATTENDEES:	Antoinette Abeyta, Karla Baldonado, Lowell Bautista, John Burke, Markos Chavez, Chris Dyer, Robert Encinio, Vanessa Ferguson, Niko Harrington, Yi-Wen Huang, Hasani Jayasinghe, Carolyn Kuchera, Jacob Lacroix, Tracy Lassiter, LD Lovett, Elvira Martin, Aretha Matt, Andrew McFeaters, Roseanna McGinn, Arun Muthaiyan, Sangam Pangeni, Shynal Robinson, Chathuri Sandamali, Kristian Simcox, Chad Smith, Kristi Wilson, Yuquing Zou
GUESTS:	Matt Mingus, John Zimmerman

ACTION APPROVAL OF AGENDA DR. CAROLYN KUCHERA

DISCUSSION

Move to modify the agenda to include Curriculum Committee items.

Motion: Dr. Antoinette Abeyta
Seconded: Yes
Discussion: None
Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carried: Yes

ACTION APPROVAL OF MINUTES DR. CAROLYN KUCHERA

DISCUSSION

Move to approve the minutes from the February 21, 2025 UNMG Faculty Assembly meeting.

Motion: Professor Roseanna McGinn
Seconded: Yes
Discussion: None
Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carried: Yes

INFORMATION	PRESIDENT'S REPORT	DR. CAROLYN KUCHERA

Dr. Carolyn Kuchera begins the meeting by conveying a message from the Faculty Assembly President at UNM-Valencia, Andisheh Dadashi. She is reaching out to the Faculty Assembly presidents at the branch campuses because she is interested in doing some social networking among branch campus faculty so that we can get to know each other better and to know each other's areas of interest. Another of her priorities is to see if we might help each other through the tenure process. Everyone may see further messages from her regarding that, but that probably won't take place until next year.

Dr. Kuchera goes on to remind everyone that the elections for the Operations Committee positions close at 5PM today. If anyone is considering nominating him, her, or themselves, or of nominating someone else, please do so before 5PM. The voting process will open at noon on March 28th and close at noon on April 11th.

Dr. Kuchera concludes her report and introduces Dean John Zimmerman to discuss the divisional reorganization. This will be a question-and-answer session.

DISCUSSION ITEM / Q&A ON DIVSIONAL REORGANIZATION / DEAN ZIMMERMAN

Dr. Tracy Lassiter asks what other options were considered beside dissolving one whole division.

Dean John Zimmerman answers that the goal is not to dissolve a division. That isn't how he sees the reorganization. He says that, over the last few months, they looked at a number of different ways to restructure Academic Affairs. They talked to the chairs of the divisions, noting the issues and concerns they have with the current structure. They went through multiple drafts, considering different ways to reorganize the division workloads. Even during their conversations with the faculty members who will be impacted by the reorg, other divisional structures were considered. Through those conversations, further revisions were adopted in order to incorporate faculty input. As they considered the whole thing, they noted a few entrenched and intransigent issues in terms of the current structure that they wanted to address. That's why they ended up with the current proposed divisional reorg. The goal is to address chair workload equity. There were inconsistencies in how faculty subject matters were distributed among the divisions. The goal is to distribute these subjects in a more logical manner. There were also inequities in terms of staff workload, particularly in the areas of administrative assistants. The proposed reorg is a plan to address these imbalances. Finally, with some of the partnerships with GMCS and the pathways, that's another reason why they want to move CCTE into its own unit. That way, all the dual enrollment and concurrent credit that we offer as an institution--that isn't the Academy and that isn't Middle College--are joined together. That way the expertise from those folks will support those cohorts. Dean Zimmerman emphasizes that he doesn't see it as dissolving a division because it's just about moving some people from one division to another division.

Dr. Lassiter then asks if there was any consideration of splitting Education and Health and Human Services into two separate divisions and adding chair positions.

Dean Zimmerman answers that that was not a consideration, adding that, by adjusting the workloads the way that they have, the reorg creates greater equity between the divisions and in terms of the compensation for the chairs. He does not want to add to the administrative cost of Academic Affairs. The preference is to be more efficient with the current resources. The savings produced by the reorg will benefit the institution as a whole.

Dr. Aretha Matt asks what Dean Zimmerman means by the imbalance of labor between the administrative assistants. Given how large her division would become, she asks if that would create an imbalance of labor for the administrative assistant in her division. She wonders if, also due to the size of the division, it would be difficult to gain access to the chair for evaluations. She mentions that Division Chair Matt Mingus suggested that faculty could take on some of that role. She asks about the legitimacy of asking faculty to perform those evaluations. Dr. Matt mentions that there had been faculty assistants to the chairs in the past, and those assistants fulfilled such duties.

Dean Zimmerman answers that the position was Assistant Chair. He first addresses Dr. Matt's question about administrative assistants by saying that, at present, there is a fulltime administrative assistant dedicated to the Nursing area because that was a recommendation by the Board of Nursing. They have their own administrative assistant. Then, in another division, there is an administrative assistant who helps about four or five faculty. Finally, one other administrative assistant serves two divisions. This has led to imbalanced workloads during specific times of the semester. The proposed reorg addresses this. Dean Zimmerman then goes on to address Dr. Matt's question about the assistant chair positions. He says that that had worked on some levels with varying success. It would depend on whether a chair would need that support. He says that he is open to the idea within reason. Given the size of the Humanities area, he can see the point. That being said, Dr. Mingus addressed that issue last month.

Dr. Matt says that she wants to clarify her question. She is concerned, given how large that division will become, the chair might find it difficult to give faculty the support that they need--conducting all of the teacher evaluations, for example. Then some faculty would need to fill the vacuum. Dr. Matt says that she is concerned about the legitimacy of faculty evaluations for the tenure process when a chair's evaluation has more weight to it.

Dean Zimmerman responds that he has no desire for faculty to stand in for a chair when evaluating fulltime faculty. That would probably take place for TPT and adjunct faculty. Senior faculty might evaluate them. Those evaluations might qualify as service. One advantage of this would be that the evaluator would work in the same areas as the TPT faculty.

Dean Zimmerman then addresses Dr. Matt's question about the workload of chairs. He says that he meets with the chairs on a weekly basis. They meet on Monday mornings. During those meetings, they talk about what is going on in their divisions. If, in the future, a chair has a concern about workload or brings up faculty concerns about accessing the chair, that will be addressed. The proposed reorg actually addresses an imbalance between chair workloads.

Dr. Chris Dyer remarks that having a senior faculty member offer an evaluation of a TPT faculty who shares the same specialization makes a lot of sense. Then Dr. Dyer asks Dean Zimmerman if he believes, should this reorg be implemented, that there will be adequate and useful administrative support for each of the divisions.

Dean Zimmerman affirms that the reorg would address the current inequities, better ensuring administrative support.

Dr. Lassiter says that she has three points to bring up. First, she says that she appreciates that Dean Zimmerman is mindful of the fiscal load that an additional chair would require, but adds that there currently are additional savings. For example, UNM-Gallup is no longer paying for a former campus administrator. His salary was large enough that a new chair position could be created. Second, she asks how the reorg will positively impact the students. Third, she asks, given the supposed need to shuffle the workload of the chairs, what are the chairs currently doing? She assumes that the chairs are very busy already. She iterates that this is why it is important to add chair positions.

Dean Zimmerman asks for clarification about what administrator she means.

Dr. Lassiter answers that she meant James Malm.

Dean Zimmerman responds that Malm's teaching has to be replaced somehow. Money will have to be used to hire his replacement, which means we can't rely on the savings that she mentioned. Regarding the impact that the reorg will have on students, Dean Zimmerman answers that he is not aware of any negative impact that the current structure has on students, and he is not aware of what negative impact the proposed reorg would have on students. The actual impact relates to chair workload distribution and to establishing a more logical divisional structure. That's why the changes have been proposed. Regarding Dr. Lassiter's third question, Dean Zimmerman emphasizes that this isn't about whether certain chairs are not doing certain work; it is about redistributing the workload in a more equitable manner. The goal is to spread the work out more evenly. He then adds that an objective would be to reevaluate the redistribution in a year in order to further improve the process. Additional changes can be made down the road.

Dr. Kuchera asks if there are any further questions.

Professor Elvira Martin asks if the chairs will receive raises to compensate them for increased workloads. She asks if those chairs with decreased workloads will experience a decrease in pay.

Dean Zimmerman says there is no plan to adjust compensation after redistribution of the workload.

Professor Martin follows up by asking what the point of the reorg is.

Dean Zimmerman iterates the reorg addresses existing inequities in the workloads for the division chairs.

Professor Martin follows up by asking who is benefitting from the reorg.

Dean Zimmerman responds that everyone will benefit on some level. While there will be savings, an additional benefit is that faculty will work alongside other faculty whose specializations overlap.

Dean Zimmerman thanks everyone for their time and hopes everyone has a relaxing spring break. He leaves the meeting.

Dr. Kuchera moves on to initiate the following action item.

ACTION ITEM __ METHOD OF VOTE FOR THE REORG ___ DR. KRISTIAN SIMCOX

Dr. Kristian Simcox starts by saying that, in order to ensure that all voting members of the Faculty Assembly have an opportunity to cast a vote on the proposed divisional reorganization, the Operations Committee is proposing to use an online voting platform. The one that has been selected is Opavote.com. It's been chosen for its security and anonymity. The Operations Committee has run a series of test ballots to ensure voting twice is impossible. Each faculty member's email is associated with a specific code. The voting is anonymous. It is possible to see who has voted but not what that person has voted for. Dr. Simcox makes a motion to adopt the Opavote platform for the divisional reorganization vote. If Opavote is selected, each faculty member will get an email with a ballot at the conclusion of today's meeting. Voting will remain open until 2PM on March 28th. Dr. Simcox shares on the screen what results would look like, thus ensuring the anonymity of the process.

Motion: Dr. Simcox
Seconded: Dr. Dyer
Discussion: None
Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carried: Yes

Dr. Kuchera introduces the next action item: voting on the divisional reorganization.

ACTION ITEM _____ VOTE ON THE DIVISIONAL REORG ________ DR. JOHN BURKE

Dr. John Burke moves to vote on the divisional reorganization of the Academic Affairs divisions as proposed by Dean Zimmerman and using the Opavote platform that was just approved.

Motion: Dr. Burke
Seconded: Professor Roseanna McGinn
Discussion:

Dr. Lassiter points out that the proposed divisional reorganization is not so simple. First, she states that the FAHSS has been requiring in-person attendance at the monthly division meetings. She says that faculty can't simply attend via Zoom. The Faculty Handbook requires attendance but does not specify a requirement for the modality of attendance. The second issue she addresses relates to the randomization of peer reviews in the FAHSS division. Faculty pushed back on that. Collectively, these two instances demonstrate how administration is chipping away at faculty power. Yet another issue is that few faculty are included in the UNM five-year strategic plan for UNM-Gallup's campus. When she looked at the website, she did not see any faculty members named. She recalls that, when Chancellor Sabrina Ezzell shared the website back in August during the development week, all of the committee chairs were members of staff. Dr. Lassiter says that she does recall any of them being faculty members. Dr. Lassiter then says, based on Dr. Kuchera's report on the divisional reorg, it is the Executive Team that came up with the proposal. Faculty were not consulted to come up with the plan. Faculty Assembly did not have any input on the divisional reorg. Dr. Lassiter then goes on to point out that, based on what is coming from Albuquerque through the UNM labor union, the President and Provost at main campus are trying to silence faculty in different ways and trying to limit First Amendment rights. Dr. Lassiter adds that, in addition to these issues, there was no long-term plan to replace Chair Lewis Gambill pending his retirement. Presumably, administration knew that he was going to retire, yet there was no consideration to grow faculty leadership by placing a faculty member into that chair position, giving them experience to review curricula and to oversee program reviews. Dr. Lassiter then emphasizes that the chairs are already busy and questions the logic of increasing their workload, stating that adding another chair would make much more sense. Dr. Lassiter points out that, the last time the divisions were reorganized, some faculty felt left out of the process. They were upset about that. When administration notifies faculty how a given plan is going to impact them, that is not the same as soliciting faculty for ideas and input during the process. Dr. Lassiter concludes that these trends collectively demonstrate a movement to centralize administrative power and to narrow faculty input. She says that this should be an opportunity to grow leadership. For these reasons, she advocates for voting against the proposal, pointing out that more time is needed to develop a plan that includes faculty input. She thanks everyone for hearing her out.

Dr. Kuchera asks if anyone would like to respond to Dr. Lassiter or make another point.

Dr. Dyer states that Dr. Lassiter has a lot of good points. He points out that the trend of administrations to consolidate power is nationwide in higher education. He suggests that, should the proposal pass, that it be treated as a pilot of sorts--allowing for adjustments as more is learned down the road. That would better reflect a model of shared governance.

Professor McGinn emphasizes that the vote is for or against. Faculty can choose to vote for or against the proposal. There is no trial period being proposed here. Perhaps it is possible for another proposal for reorganization down the road; but, this vote is for adopting or rejecting the current proposal.

Dr. Dyer stresses that Dean Zimmerman said that reevaluating the process down the road would be acceptable.

Professor Niko Harrington says that it would be beneficial to see who was involved in the planning behind the proposal. It would be concerning if no faculty were involved. She mentions that she is frustrated by the lack of clarity concerning staffing. The statements about that seem vague. More specifics would help to clarify that issue.

Dr. Huang asks for clarification regarding faculty distribution per division. She asks what the distribution is now and what it would be should the proposal pass. That would make the labor distribution for the chair clearer.

Dr. Matt asks if there is a plan B in mind if this proposal does not pass. She wonders, if the proposal doesn't go through, what is the plan for how to handle Division Chair Gambill's retirement. This should have been outlined in their plans.

Professor Harrington asks whether there will be an open-access document that lists the steps that will be taken. Something more concrete and specific would be useful.

Professor Kristi Wilson points out that UNM-Gallup has been through reorganization before. She adds that this and previous Faculty Assembly meetings exemplify faculty input in the process. Voting to vote is an expression of faculty voice. She points that the current administration has the best interest of faculty in mind. Professor Wilson says that the Fine Arts have been struggling because it doesn't have a fulltime administrative assistant. The proposed reorg would alleviate that problem.

Professor Karla Baldonado asks whether is possible to hold a vote on different parts of the proposal. She sees the commonsense of removing the CCTE from Division Chair Ann Jarvis' division now that dual-credit is growing, but she questions the logic of putting EMS, Phlebotomy, and MLT under Chair Jarvis' division when they could be under Director Jonathan Lumibao's division. It could be called Nursing and Allied Health. Then place Business in Applied Business and Tech. She asks whether it is possible to itemize the vote.

Dr. Kuchera responds that it would not be possible today. At present, the vote would be to approve or reject the proposal as a whole.

Professor Baldonado suggests that makes the process rigid.

Professor Vanessa Ferguson says that she appreciates everyone offering their input. This will help her to make an informed vote. She adds that it does seem as if faculty were not included in the development of the proposal. At present, this process seems rushed. More time would be helpful.

Professor Lowell Bautista says that, with regard to Nursing, the proposal offers an opportunity for growth. The Nursing Department has struggled to find faculty to teach nursing despite the fact that community partners are looking for nurses. The proposed reorg streamlines procedures for the Nursing Department.

Professor Harrington asks for clarification on what is being voted on at present.

Dr. Kuchera responds that this is a vote on the proposed divisional reorg. The voting ballot will be emailed to faculty following the meeting. At that point, faculty can vote to approve or reject the proposed divisional reorganization.

ACTION ITEM _ CURRICULUM COMMITTEE ITEMS __ DR. ANTOINETTE ABEYTA

Dr. Abeyta introduces the vote for Form Bs and Form Cs. These changes will align with New Mexico Higher Ed requirements. She makes the motion to approve them as a block.

Motion: Dr. Abeyta
Seconded: Dr. Lassiter
Discussion: None
Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carried: Yes

Dr. Abeyta says that over the year the Curriculum Committee has been evaluating the academic program review process. The committee is proposing a pause in the annual program review process. This will give the committee a year to adopt a new process that aligns with the process at central campus.

Motion: Dr. Abeyta
Seconded: Dr. Burke
Discussion:

Dr. Dyer asks if the new process requires more evaluation during certain milestones.

Dr. Abeyta answers in the affirmative.

Professor McGinn recommends that the committee look at the online programs and courses during the pause.

Dr. Abeyta says that falls under a different process.

Vote: Unanimous
Motion Carried: Yes

INFORMATION ITEM __ CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS ____ PROFESSOR MCGINN

Professor McGinn presents a reading of the proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws. The paragraph below is taken from the bylaws of the Committee on Teaching Excellence: We the Constitution and Bylaws Committee would like to make an amendment to the first sentence in the B Committee on Teaching Excellence Bylaws. The paragraph currently states that the committee shall consist of five members, with the maximum of two faculty members from any single division. We recommend having the first sentence say, "a minimum of" to read, "the committee shall consist of a minimum of five members with a maximum of two faculty members from any single division." This change is necessary because the amount required for quorum is four members including the chair.

Dr. Kuchera says that two readings are required before a vote can be held on changes. That is why this is an information item in the current agenda. It will be read again at the next Faculty Assembly meeting.

INFORMATION	COMMITTEE REPORTS	COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Dr. Kuchera asks for the committee reports.

UNMG Senator to ABQ: Dr. Simcox says that the Faculty Senate met most recently on February 25th. President Stokes referenced the state of the university in her report. Dr. Simcox adds a link to the recording in the chat. The Provost's report focused primarily on the recent federal executive actions, which are ongoing, and focused on UNM's strategy of response to those actions. He mentioned a number of possible impacts, including pretty significant funding cuts to the university. For NIH alone, this could amount to a 23 million dollar deficit per year. At present, it is staid. The provost reported that there currently is no plan to preemptively comply with orders that are vague, nor to change the way things are being done now. Only specific and actionable executive actions would motivate a response from the university. There was discussion on how funding cuts could impact professional development--for example, pausing or extending tenure clocks as well as providing bridge funding to students.

Dr. Burke adds that his tenure as chair at the BCCC meeting is coming to its conclusion. The BCCC voted to have cochairs, one of whom is Dr. Kristian Simcox. The other is Dr. Steven Romero from the Valencia campus.

Budget Review Committee: Dr. Andrew McFeaters mentions that the committee has asked Chancellor Sabrina Ezzell to speak at the last Faculty Assembly meeting of the year--as a sort of State of the Union. He adds that they asked Chancellor Ezzell about the status of the Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution grant. UNM-Gallup already received half of the grant, amounting to 1.5 million dollars. The other half is in limbo due to the current federal freeze on grants.

Committee on Teaching Excellence: No report.

Constitution and By-Laws Committee: Professor McGinn iterates that the reading was provided. The committee is discussing other issues, largely having to do with making the wording in the constitution and bylaws more consistent. If anyone has any proposals, please reach out to the committee.

College Assessment and Review Committee: Professor Bautiste reminds everyone to submit their artifacts by May 15th. If anyone needs assistance, please reach out to him. Ultimately the goal is for all faculty to participate.

Curricula Committee: Dr. Abeyta says that their next meeting is next week. The committee will get started on revamping the program reviews process.

Library Committee: Professor Harrington says that their next meeting has yet to be scheduled.

Strategic Planning Committee: Dr. Matt says that she is on the Strategic Planning Committee. They are working on collecting information from community partners. Anyone working with community partners, please send that information to her.

Distance Learning Committee: Dr. Dyer says that he had sent an article from *Chronicle of Higher Education* to Dr. Kuchera that summarizes the critical aspects of distance learning across the country. Dr. Kuchera forwarded that to everyone before the meeting. One of the key issues in the article emphasizes the importance of consistency in evaluation across the board. He says that he will develop a report on that for April.

Adjunct Faculty Affairs Committee: No Report.

UA-UNM, Faculty Union: Dr. Kuchera summarizes Dr. Keri Stevenson's report: the Union continues to bargain with administration. Administration wants to strike language related to protecting academic freedom and faculty's right to voice their opinions from the articles that were proposed. Administration has also refused to join the Union's resolution condemning the federal immigration authorities and arresting a Columbia University student. Lastly, the Union has now passed on all articles onto administration, awaiting their counteroffers.

INFORMATION ANNOUNCEMENTS VARIOUS

Professor Chad Smith of the Nominations Committee says that the nominations will be sent to main campus today. If anyone is thinking of nominating themselves or someone else, do so in the next couple of hours.

Dr. McFeaters mentions that, during the last Executive Team meeting, one of the issues that came up was the news on the deep and brutal cuts on the indigenous universities that are fully funded by the federal government. The question is whether UNM can play a role in alleviating some of those problems at Southwestern Indian Polytechnic University in Albuquerque. For example, could UNM supplement courses that were canceled there to help students continue work towards their graduation from SIPI? Dr. McFeaters asks faculty to send along any additional ideas to explore this idea.

Dr. Matt voices her support for the idea and offers up her own courses to any SIPI students. She is willing to take on additional students.

Dr. Lassiter brings up another issue, stressing how student plagiarism is becoming more and more of a problem. She mentions that not much has been done to address the issue at the college level. Articles show that this has become more prevalent across the country. Another issue that should be addressed this coming year are literacy rates. These are campus-wide issues that don't seem to gain traction.

ACTION ITEM **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn. **Motion**: Dr. Carolyn Kuchera **Seconded**: Yes **Vote**: Unanimous **Motion Carried**: Yes	
Meeting adjourned at 2:13PM by Faculty Assembly President Dr Carolyn Kuchera.	
Recorded by: Dr. Andrew McFeaters, Faculty Assembly Secretary, on March 14, 2025.	