

## Faculty Senate Statement - UNM General Faculty Meeting, 2/25/2009

I am speaking to you today as President of the Faculty Senate. While the Senate is a diverse body and Senators have a broad array of opinions about many of the issues that will be discussed at this meeting, we are united in our dedication to the Academic Mission of the University of New Mexico, our students, the public that supports us, and our research and creative endeavors. It is hard to convey the passion, the breadth of experience, and the sense of community shared by UNM's Faculty Senate. Some of us have been at UNM for more than 30 years, some of us are new. Some of us teach classes of hundreds of students while others spend many hours a week working one on one with other students. Some of us manage research labs filled with graduate and undergraduate students supported by multimillion dollar grants while others work within community organizations along side other dedicated students. But all of us are proud New Mexicans who share the belief that UNM ought to be a national leader in the creation, distribution, and application of knowledge via research, teaching and public service. We are also united in our concern that UNM is not reaching that potential and therefore we are here today – to voice our concern.

We are here because many of us feel there has been a prolonged and systematic weakening in UNM's ability to bring quality education to students through close contact with faculty. We are here because many of us feel there has been a prolonged and systematic weakening of UNM's ability to create new knowledge to fill the textbooks of tomorrow. We are here because many of us feel our previous efforts to communicate this concern and work collaboratively to restore the University of New Mexico have not been met with enthusiasm, support, and welcome by our administration. Some of us are here because we feel that the students, staff, faculty, and general public of New Mexico have been misled. Others of us might not make that strong a statement, but we are all here, once again, to help the University of New Mexico back on track.

Have some of us been misled? Our last General Faculty Meeting was called to examine the perception that an increasingly costly upper administration could not be sustained without diverting funds from activities directly supporting teaching, research and public service. We voiced concerns, presented examples, and requested an accounting of administrative costs. The administration convened a committee of administrators with faculty advisors and charged them to respond to the faculty resolution. The faculty representatives presented a plan of analysis designed to provide a report that would gain the trust and confidence of the faculty, and advised the committee that the report should include salary and all forms of compensation in its analysis. The administrative working group did not use the recommended plan of analysis, and decided to limit the compensation to base salaries and exclude allowances, deferred compensation, and bonuses, suggesting that those forms of compensation were inconsequential. Upon release, the final report has been viewed with mistrust by many members of the faculty. . Additionally, the report's potential authority has since been further undermined by news that the at least one member of the administrative committee received an increase of thousands of dollars in deferred compensation shortly before the administration

announced a hiring & raise freeze for Main Campus, and during the committee's work on the report..

Along with other examples, that may be mentioned at this meeting, this lack of transparency and openness has led to a sense of mistrust in the administration by many members of the Faculty Senate.

As we have frequently stated, the Faculty Senate is eager to re-establish a sense of community at UNM. We believe that the success of UNM depends upon a truly collaborative decision-making environment focused on academic programs and that the following changes could contribute to a recovery of confidence by the faculty in UNM's administration.

1. The executive structure of UNM should return to a focus on academic programs. Thus, there should be two executive vice presidents – the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Executive Vice President for the Health Sciences Center. Those offices should report to the UNM President. The office of Facilities and Finance should report to those two Executive Vice Presidents.
2. Currently only the faculty and Deans are regularly evaluated by both those they serve and their supervisors. That culture of “360 degree” evaluation should extend through the upper administration and the board of regents.
3. The center of policy development, implementation, and budget design needs to rest with the Deans and Department Chairs.
4. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs or a main campus faculty delegate and the Executive Vice President for the Health Sciences Center or an HSC faculty delegate should be voting member of the BOR Facilities and Finance Committee.
5. All searches for tenure-track faculty, Deans, Associate Vice Presidents and above should be national while encouraging applications from qualified members of the UNM community. (This would not apply to temporary positions, such as Chairs in some departments, that are filled on a rotational basis from within the UNM community).
6. UNM should establish an annual report of Faculty Retention and Loss that will clearly present numbers and types of faculty gained and lost by each department. Reasons for losses should be included as well as the details of vacant positions waiting to be filled within each Department.

In conjunction with other changes in administrative structure and practices that may be proposed at this meeting, implementing these suggestions could contribute towards a recovery of the faculty's confidence.

We realize that these may not be easy changes to implement and we are ready and eager to work collaboratively with the UNM administration to achieve them.