

October 16, 2018

To: UNM Board of Regents Members

From: UNM Faculty Senate presented by Faculty Senate President Pamela V. Pyle

RE: September 11, 2018 Board of Regents Meeting

In our most recent Board of Regents meeting we witnessed an unacceptable breach of professional decorum that we feel must be addressed.

Our institution's commitment to shared governance hinges upon respectful and professional communications between the Regents and duly elected representatives of the UNM faculty. As a Faculty we assume that the Board of Regents, as well as the upper administration of our University, will join us in condemning demeaning personal attacks in communications on campus in general, but especially at our Board of Regents meetings - public meetings where our leaders must be cognizant of the responsibilities entrusted to them as public servants, administrators, and teachers, not only within our academic community but as models for the citizens of our State.

On Tuesday, September 11, 2018, a particularly unfortunate exchange took place between the President of the UNM Faculty Senate Professor Pamela Pyle and Regent Thomas Clifford. During this heated public exchange, Regent Clifford claimed that the Faculty Senate President had acted cowardly for not making any public statements in support of the Regents' decisions regarding cutting certain athletic programs. Since the Faculty Senate was not included in the budget making decision process for athletics, this accusation is completely unfounded. While we must expect spirited discourse, as professionals we cannot allow matters to devolve to the point where any of us feel empowered to levy personal attacks.

We hasten to add that this concerning behavior is not reserved exclusively to communications between individual members of the Board of Regents and Faculty representatives. We have observed an alarming display of disregard for members of our Legislature, student body, and community, who themselves have voiced concerns about the dismissive rhetoric and condescending tone of this Board of Regents when its decisions have been questioned publicly. This discord is reflective of the fact that many crucial decisions are made prior to sincere consultation with all pertinent stakeholders.

The Faculty Senate condemns this verbal attack and would hope that at its first convenience, the Board of Regents would offer a formal statement regarding their commitment to shared governance and their efforts to build an inclusive and non-hostile work environment here at the University of New Mexico.