

General Faculty Meeting, 30 April 2008

The brief comments I am about to make come from fairly lengthy and diverse experiences at UNM. For most of my career at UNM I have worked on behalf of faculty rights and effective shared governance, and I believe those things are central to today's considerations.

I believe that events and developments during the past year in the realm of university finances and allocation of resources have undermined authority and decision-making at the College and department levels, and have ignored faculty governing structures that connect budgetary, personnel and programmatic matters – specifically recruitment and retention of faculty and our ability to offer a required and desired menu of courses for our students.

I appreciated Vice President Harris's praise for the quality of our faculty in his remarks in yesterday's *Journal* – but the fact that our faculty are being wooed by others is only half of the story. Besides receiving the offers, faculty also are accepting them – to the detriment of our educational mission, as previous speakers have pointed out. In the past month in my own department, in Mathematics, and in Spanish and Portuguese we have lost faculty who offer courses that are central to undergraduate majors. The reality is that UNM has to work hard to attract and keep good faculty, and over the

past few years, colleges, like A@S, have developed clear guidelines for hiring plans, suggestions for recruitment, and procedures for counter-offers. We need to reinvigorate those efforts not ignore, limit or reinvent them.

Retention of faculty -- like initial hiring -- necessitates individual negotiations that require flexibility and outyear commitments at college and department levels -- but this seems less and less possible in this era of “harvesting of surplus balances” in order to counter “deficit balances in the Core Research area.”

It is important to point out that those surpluses are not free and clear, unencumbered funds. For example, in the College of Arts and Sciences funding for essential part-time instruction meets slightly less than 10% of the actual cost -- the remainder must come from our “surpluses” -- i.e. vacant lines, leave accounts and such. Equally important -- where are the deficits, and why -- since the academic units seem to be fiscally responsible -- are we over and over again asked to “loan” funds to help correct some other units mistakes.

The future of UNM rests on enthusiastic and committed faculty, healthy departmental environments, and support and guidance from our Colleges. We are the ones who deliver the credit hours and we should be

instrumental in decisions about programs and who teaches in them