

In light of the recent firing of UNM football coach Mike Locksley requiring a large contract buyout, the UNM Faculty Senate wishes to voice its concerns regarding expenditures for the football program. Because of the poor economic conditions in New Mexico, UNM faculty, staff, and administrators have been required to “do more with less” in the last few years. We urge the Athletics Department to exercise financial restraint in hiring the next football coach.

Regarding the hiring of the next coach, the Faculty Senate requests the following:

1. The University should hold frank and open discussions about UNM’s place in the football world. Vice President for Athletics Paul Krebs has stated that UNM should “compete at the highest level.” However, given the current realignment of athletic conferences and the relatively small size of UNM’s fan base and television market, we are not confident that it is reasonable for UNM to attempt to compete at the highest level. The Athletics Department should provide cost and revenue projections showing that UNM has the resources to compete with powerhouse college football programs.
2. The University should carefully consider buyout clauses for future coaches. UNM has paid millions of dollars for coaches who no longer work for us over the past several years. Even though state funds have not been used to cover the contract buyouts, that money could be used for better purposes. The Faculty Senate would like to know the legal responsibility of the university if the Athletics Department is unable to raise sufficient funds to fully pay for current and future contract buyouts.
3. The University should review or create policies regarding off-field behavior. Consequences for not following those policies should be clearly delineated in future contracts.
4. The University should consider a “pause and hold strategy” in hiring the next football coach, waiting until the new President is in place before initiating the hiring process.
5. The University should explore the ranks of successful coaches from less prestigious football programs in order to obtain a good coach for a reasonable salary.

Rather than spending exorbitant amounts of money on a football team with no guarantee of becoming a football power, we encourage the University to spend its athletic funds on supporting academic access to UNM for a wide range of men and women athletes through athletic scholarships, allowing as many students as possible to participate in healthy, competitive experiences through extramural and intramural sports, fostering a sense of belonging and school spirit for UNM students, staff, and faculty, and connecting UNM with the wider community through entertaining sports programming.