

Reasons for the current design of FS Proposal 19: Nontenure-Track (NTT) Representation on Faculty Senate

In developing the specifics of FS 19, the authors considered numerous options, finally settling on the proposal in its current form. Discussed below are our reasons for deciding against those other possibilities.

Why not just redefine regular nontenure-track faculty as faculty and allow them to run and vote for FS seats along with tenure-track and tenured faculty?

The purpose of this bill is to secure representation of NTT faculty on the Faculty Senate. Although these faculty perform many of the same functions as tenure-track faculty and are often long-term employees of the university, their positions within the university have some significant differences that merit representation.

Given that most colleges have fewer seats than departments and that tenure-track faculty must demonstrate leadership, it seems likely that nontenure-track and tenure-track faculty would periodically compete for seats, often resulting in too few NTT senators to adequately represent the concerns of this category of faculty.

Why not secure nontenure-track representation by requiring Colleges to elect 1 regular nontenure-track faculty member out of their current allotment of FS seats?

This solution would result in a direct loss of representation on the faculty senate for tenured and tenure-track faculty, eventually up to 10% fewer seats. NTT faculty do not want to take away representation and opportunities for leadership from tenured and tenure-track faculty.

This requirement would also result in disproportionate NTT representation for some Colleges. Business and Engineering, for example, are each presently allotted 6 FS representatives, but their NTT faculty comprises only 10% and 6 %, respectively, of their total faculty.

Why 6 regular nontenure-track representatives?

6 NTT representatives would be nearly one per college, which would allow most NTT members to be elected by the same group that selects their tenure-track representatives. With the number of FS members increased from 54 to 60, 6 NTT members would comprise only 10% of the FS, even though NTT faculty comprise over 18 % of NMSU faculty FTEs. Adding 6 NTT representatives to the Faculty Senate would allow them a broad distribution of representation among the colleges while maintaining a modest but significant role in faculty governance.

Why should regular nontenure-track faculty receive 6 representatives for 170 FTEs when branch campuses currently receive a total of 4 representatives for 168 tenured and tenure-track faculty?

This bill is concerned with obtaining meaningful representation for NTT faculty. Faculty senators from main campus are determined via apportionment; senators from Community Colleges (one from every CC) and CES (three reps) are not. The Doña Ana Community College has nearly 8 times as many tenure-track faculty as the Grants Community College, yet they are each allotted one representative by the FS Constitution.

Why not use the same system for distributing representatives between colleges that is supplied in the FS Constitution for distributing tenure-track representatives?

Because we are proposing only 6 regular NTT faculty representatives, using the same system outlined in the FS Constitution Article III: Section A would not allow some colleges, such as Engineering with just over 3% of the total main campus NTT FTEs, to have NTT faculty representation on the Faculty Senate. Only NTT faculty in Arts & Sciences and the Cooperative Extension Service would be guaranteed regular representation.

Why not elect part or all of the nontenure-track FS representatives campuswide rather than apportion them to specific colleges?

This suggestion would go too far in designating NTT faculty as different from tenured and tenure-track faculty. Although the categories of faculty differ in their positions, there is also much overlap. Regular nontenure-track and tenure-track faculty work together within departments and colleges and are likely to align with faculty in their discipline on many issues. Further, an at-large election of NTT representatives could preclude the election of NTT members from Business, Engineering, and possibly other colleges.

To promote collegiality, awareness, and investment in the process, we also prefer that NTT continue to vote on tenure-track representatives to the Faculty Senate (as has been the case in Arts & Sciences and some other colleges) and that tenure-track faculty vote on NTT representatives. This would be difficult under an at-large system of NTT representation.

Why put the Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and CAHE in the same electing group?

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is one of the major arms of CAHE (Research, Teaching, Extension, and Service). Therefore, it makes sense that CAHE and CES share an NTT representative. This representative could be rotated between research/teaching and CES, if desired.

Why does your option of adding only 4 NTT members to the Faculty Senate assign one member to the College of Arts & Sciences and allow the rest to be elected at large?

The purpose of this is to keep the College of Arts & Sciences NTT faculty from having too great an influence in the Faculty Senate. Since Arts & Sciences NTT faculty comprise more than 1/3 of all NMSU NTT FTEs, it is possible that only Arts & Sciences NTT representatives would be elected if there were no restrictions.

Your plan for 4 NTT members on the menu of options prohibits NTT faculty from voting for TT representatives and vice versa, unlike your proposal for 6 NTT members. Why the change?

Because NMSU has 6 major colleges (counting CES as part of CAHE) plus 4 branch campuses, the option of having only 4 NTT representatives precludes the idea of electing NTT representatives from college-based electing groups, our preferred option. 4 NTT representatives would be presumed to represent the needs of a category of faculty above the needs of their colleges, so their selection should not be influenced by TT faculty but by the NTT faculty they represent. This option would give NTT faculty a voice in the Senate, but it could also reinforce divisions and/or distinctions between categories of faculty, which we do not believe to be in the best interest of the university as a whole.

Is there support for this proposal and willingness to serve on the faculty senate among the nontenure-track faculty?

Though we've only received feedback from approximately 15 nontenure-track faculty members, the response has been unanimously favorable.