

**NMSU Faculty Senate
Chair's Report
September, 2008
Joe Pfeiffer**

Welcome to the 2008-2009 academic year! Hopefully everyone has had an restful and productive summer, and is ready to get back in the swing of things for this year. To the new senators: welcome. To everyone: as always, thank you for your service to NMSU.

It's been a very busy summer in many ways; in this report of the year I'd like to review some of the high points, and outline some of my hopes for the upcoming year.

A Regents Professor Task for was established toward the end of Spring to consider the events in the College of Health and Social Services last semester. That task force completed its work and made a number of recommendations; some of these recommendations involve changes in NMSU policy and so will be making their way through the legislative process this year.

As you are all aware, President Martin has moved on to Louisiana State University, and NMSU is in the process of searching for a new president. The faculty have several representatives on the search committee: myself as Faculty Senate chair, Stu Munson-McGee and Michele Shuster from the Las Cruces campus, and Rita Gonzalez representing Community College faculty. We'll do our best to see that faculty interests are a major consideration in the selection of our new president.

Before leaving, President Martin suggested the creation of a long-term plan to try to raise NMSU faculty salaries to levels more in line with our peer institutions. While he is now gone, it remains a good idea, so I've asked Vice Chair Erickson to establish a task force to investigate this issue. Chris has begun assembling this group.

Also, there were suggestions from several different directions regarding enhancements to our faculty rank structure. Two specific suggestions have been to create formal soft-money research faculty positions, and to either add steps within rank or ranks above Professor. I'll want to pursue that this year, and will be asking for help very shortly.

A very sad duty that arose during the summer has been the need to convene the Senior Senator Review Committee twice, to consider the appeals of two faculty members (one tenured and one tenure-track, one from the Las Cruces campus and one from a Community College) who have been dismissed. One of these committees has completed its work, while the other is still pending. In the course of these events, it was discovered that there is a problem in the Policy Manual, in that an unspecified committee is to review cases of termination of a continuous contract before the termination occurs; we will need to find a way to define that committee this year. We can consider ourselves fortunate that these cases are so rare that this problem has existed in the policy manual for roughly sixteen years before being noticed!

Vice Chair Erickson and I met with HED Secretary Reed Dasenbrock during the Domenici Conference; in the course of that meeting, he suggested that it would be useful to have an association of Faculty Senates in the state of New Mexico. Imagine my surprise to learn that such an association actually exists, though it has been moribund for several years. One of my tasks will be to try to re-establish contact with our fellow Senators, and revive the organization.

Once again, welcome to the new year. Let's make it a good one!

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph J. Pfeiffer, Jr.