

Minutes

InterFaith Council Fall Orientation Meeting - Corbett Center
September 3, 2009

The meeting was opened by IFC President, Sam Cluff. All introduced themselves.

Following introductions, Acting NMSU President Manuel T. Pacheco gave an opening statement:

Expressed delight that IFC is here. In experience at 6 universities finds that here there is exceptional commitment at NMSU to serving campus community spiritually. It is important to take the message to our students that it is acceptable to hold our individual beliefs while respecting those of others. How we address ourselves to others in a civil manner is important in the context of our many views on deity and our missions at the university. We can disagree, but always in a respectful manner. IFC can count on him to be supportive within the need to preserve separation of religion and state.

Opportunity was given to ask Pres. Pacheco questions.

Mary Berry notes that pres. Pacheco has had experience in student services, and has supported the need for student and faculty ethics. Shared the "Code of Professional and Etical Conduct for Cooperative Education Studets.

Brad Pelton asked what were the differences Dr. Pacheco has noted here vs. other schools regarding InterFaith. Pacheco: This meeting today, the fact that IFC is organized, the fact we have gathered us together to learn from each other is very significant.

Jerry Kain mentioned that we have invited other groups to join us which have not elected to participate, reminded of what was done at 9/11 by IFC.

Jeannie Lutz expressed our gratitude for Dr. Pacheco's attendance today

Pacheco: It was a wonderful the way in which I was invited, and I felt it was valuable to attend. Jeannie: UNM has interfaith group but she doubts if university president there supports them as our president does here.

David Richman asked about what it was like in Arizona.

Pacheco: Many active groups participate individually there but doesn't remember an InterFaith group there.

Dr. Carmen Gonzales is ill and unable to attend, Scott Moore spoke on her behalf. She is cancer survivor and needs to take extra precautions. NMSU enrollment is up especially in transfer students. New Veterans benefits now available is resulting in increases in veteran's enrollment. Jerry Kane: Is enrollment up in on-line students?

Moore: Yes, but majority of increase is in on-campus students.

Julie Webber, Housing and Residential Life: Told how last Sept. her mom passed away, and finally her dad ventured out into a singles group and eventually ended up engaged to be married. She expressed gratitude she knew of our group and could contact Jeannie for help in making wedding arrangements. Jennie put her in contact with members of IFC who could help, but in meantime her dad couldn't wait and eloped to he courthouse. Nonetheless she felt it was wonderful she could turn to this group. Reminded us she is the landlord of IFC office space in Garcia and reminded us of her desire to help us more bring this space alive. Enrollment is high, therefore housing is over capacity. Overcrowding adds challenges to her staff in helping students resolve conflicts and make adjustments. Also, student family housing is a high priority for housing which wishes to pull these folks more into the campus experience, especially the children.

Jerry Kane: What about the community garden?

Webber: We have two community gardens which are very successful. Hoping to add a third in Spring semester.

Nan Archey: How can we get word to campus residents on activities we are doing?

Webber: Send an e-mail or bring your flyers or table top tents and housing will happily distribute them.

Moore: Introduced ASNMSU Pres., Travis Dulany.

Dulany: We work hard for Student Safety. We provide as much entertainment as possible. This year we are lobbying for more funding for work study. We have a new Aggie Transit program to make it possible to park anywhere on campus and get to anywhere else promptly via bus.

Susan Waldo: Campus Activities appreciates ASNMSU.

Jan Archey: We have concerns about the massive increases in cost of food from campus concessionaire. Is ASNMSU involved in working on this issue?

Dulany: We have a student senator on food advisory committee. This committee doesn't meet often enough so we are trying to approach this in other ways.

Archey: Changes in concession policies make it much more difficult for clubs to use event concession sales to raise funds. Must have at least 13 persons in a booth and fine is \$100 a person short. It appears they are actively trying to discourage groups from these activities.

Dulany: Worth putting some attention to this.

From the Student Success Center, Tony Marin: At Hardman we have a learning assistance center. It helps students develop time management, note taking, text book reading skills, etc. Provides services by appointment, walk in, and also outreach. We house an ITC computer lab inside both centers. We offer a freshman year experience course - an orientation, academic responsibilities, balancing social with academics... we use peer educators to co-teach the course with the instructor. Credit is offered for the course. We also offer mid-semester courses for students bogged down to help them continue successfully.

Kane: One pressure on students is finances, is that part of freshman course?

Marin: Yes, there is a whole unit on it. The student center at Zuhl assists with advising and campus tutoring. We have a Quick Connect early intervention program which allows us to respond quickly to request from faculty if a student is missing classes, etc. we act as a safety net. We do outreach activities into the community like Upward Bound. Also Educational Talent Search program, in middle and high school as well as university. We assist with study skills, higher ed prep, financial aid searches, etc. Also, Trio Support services program offers peer tutoring and other assistance. These three programs receive some federal funding.

Tony Marin offered to come back and provide a more in depth presentation to our group if desired.

Sal Melendrez: If a student comes to us and we find they have learning or other disabilities, how can we make a connection for them?

Moore: Michael Armendarez is contact in the area that provides assistance to students with disabilities. That office doesn't do a lot of outreach, the student with special needs must make the contact.

Sarah Heartsong: If we note a student who is struggling academically how do we make contact?

Marin: Contact info is in all the brochures we have provided to you.

There was some discussion about where is best point of first contact and whether it is best to start with Counseling and let them make a referral. It was suggested to start in any of the offices that appeared to be positioned to help and any of the offices would make a referral to another office as needed.

There was some discussion of whether students coming to NMSU having already had to deal with learning disabilities should refer themselves right away. Comments were made that some students may not want to do this to avoid being labeled. Others assured that services are confidential.

Brandon Pelton: It would be good to have more in depth presentations from some of you to help train us more fully in helping students "on the edge."

Kane: We have had some training in the past from professionals in counseling. It might be helpful to do something similar again.

There was some discussion on the need for such programs and/or training.

Moore: Expressed thanks to group, needed to be excused to other responsibilities.

Karen Shaefer, Counseling center: We take walk-ins, student or faculty. After hours, we have the “Call” - trained volunteers who provide phone crisis listening services. This center provides crisis services to the whole southern part of the state. Volunteers are needed, training is at least 40 hours. We can provide individual counseling and therapy as well as group therapy. There is a decline in use of the group therapy. So we’ve established some personal growth groups, men’s groups, etc. WAVE (Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education) is also available. We now have a new program in which social workers are available to supervise bachelors and masters level training in counseling. Primary need for services comes from depression and anxiety. We are also happy to refer people with spiritual needs to IFC members. We also provide services in Spanish and English and can on occasion provide Italian.

There was a period of discussion with the group following the presentation.

Albert Parra, Student Health Center: Due to higher enrollment we are very, very busy plus Dr. Meyer is retiring. We are in same location. A main focus right now is on Swine Flu (H1N1). We currently have a display in the Corbett art galley on H1N1.

There was a period of discussion.

Mary Berry:, Career Services Office: - A centralized career service to all majors. Believe it or not we still have 100's of employers coming to recruit at our campus... sometimes recruiting for future possible opportunities. 3 fairs coming up, people from the community can attend. All career fairs held at Corbett Center. Career expo is 22nd & 23rd of Sept., 9 am - 3 pm - Business /Casual attire. Over 125 employers coming. Oct. 30 Graduate School fair - over 40 graduate schools from all over country recruiting for graduate programs. In Nov. Borderland Public Service Career Showcase, government entities recruiting.

A period of discussion followed.

Cluff: Expression of thanks to our visitors - short break.

Business Meeting:

We all introduced ourselves again in a bit more detail.

Brief discussion of IFC purposes and goals. Sam Cluff referenced our purpose from the constitution. There was discussion of, “A. Provide for the spiritual needs of the University Community” - Jerry Kane asked if we were still involved with convocation. Jeannie Lutz says she was contacted last year, arranged to do an invocation, then was informed that the invocation had been cancelled. Jerry Kane felt we should try to get an explanation. After some discussion it was agreed that Jerry would investigate the status of our future involvement in convocation.

Sam Cluff noted we all provide for the Spiritual needs of our own students, but do we do enough in our our collective activity in these matters. Jeannie Lutz mentioned that Lutheran Campus Ministry is sponsoring an InterFaith activity called “See You at the Pole” in association with the InterFaith Council. Jan Archey mentioned that in the week of Sept. 24 or so, they will be doing their “Empty Bowls” activity again. InterFaith council has provided monetary support to this effort in the past. Will try to do a volunteer fair in conjunction with it this year. Susan Waldo pointed out that ASNMSU events are often a good opportunity for on-campus service.

Discussion of, “B. Foster mutual cooperation among the various member organizations.” Jeannie Lutz gave a report on plans for this year’s interfaith student dialog. Main need now is for students to serve on planning

panel. Sam Cluff ask if we should we continue to hold interfaith dialog among ourselves in a portion of our meetings? A significant discussion ensued.

It was agreed to try and invite Karen Shaefer from counseling to present to the group at next meeting.

Susan Waldo gave us an update from her office.

Sam announced that since Paul Citrin has withdrawn as president elect/vice president, that an election for that position will be held next meeting in Oct.

Jim Ficklin moved that the host organization provide a “devotional” in association with the invocation at each meeting. They would provide a spiritual insight, a faith text, or other topic besides offering the prayer. They can invite another to contribute to the “devotional”. It should be brief. It was also moved that we identify a time to meet together to share faith traditions in more depth - perhaps a retreat. Jan Archey seconded. Motion carried.

Jerry Kane moved that IFC contribute funds again to “Empty Bowls.” of \$ 150. Seconded by Sal Melendrez, motion carried.

Benediction: Jeannie Lutz

In Attendance:

Sam Cluff, LDS

Susan Waldo, NMSU

Jim Ficklin, LDS

David Richman, Friends

Mitchell Dowalgo, CBGS, Newman

Jerry Kane, Hillel

Mary Berry, NMSU

Nancy Anderson, Unitarian

Michael LaTorra, Zen

Albert Parra, NMSU

Sid Druen, RUF

Bob Watt, Community of Christ

Brandon Pelton, [Cru]

Sal Melendrez, Newman

Ron Catherson, Holy Family

Jeanne Lutz, Lutheran

Karen Schaefer, NMSU

Travis Dulany, ASNMSU

Tony Marin, NMSU

Sarah Heartsong, Unitarian

Jan Archey, Wesley