

NMSU Employee Council
Employee Council Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2018
Milton Hall Rm. 85 at 2:30PM

Members Present In Person: Kim Albright, Linda Beavers, Adam Cavotta, Jennifer Chandler, Julie Correa, Tom Darden, Monica Dunivan, Anne Hubbell, Samantha Lisch, Keith Mandabach, Karina Pirtle, Louis Sandoval, Dario Silva, Ex Officio: Eva Hernandez

Members Present Online: Karla Volpi, Sam Smallidge, Tammy Chaffee, Sonia White

Alternates Present In Person: Milen Bartnick, Miley Grandjean, Marisela Marquez,

Alternates Present Online:

Guests: Armando Molina, HR; Ricardo Rel, AVP, Office of Government Relations

1. Call to order – Monica called the meeting to order.
2. Welcome to members and guests – Monica welcomed all.

Guests:

Ricardo Rel AVP, Office of Government Relations

Armando Molina from HR Benefits and Services

3. Approval of February minutes – Minutes were reviewed. Motion made and seconded. Minutes as written approved.
4. Ricardo Rel, Post Legislative Session debrief Presentation also with Tiffany Rivera

Review of the just completed session of the legislature. Good news: oil and gas revenues are up giving the state more money to work with. Ricardo had handouts with detailed information on the Appropriations bill including proposals for NMSU. The legislature agreed with Chancellor Carruthers and the Council of University Presidents to increase higher education appropriations. The Governor for the most part agreed with the legislature. The report also detailed the appropriations for each of the NMSU campuses. Also included are non-recurring funds appropriated to various projects.

The funding formula spreadsheet was also included in the report and Ricardo explained quite a bit of how that worked and how it had been impacted by funding cuts and showed how individual institutions had been impacted over the last few years because of the lack of new money. This really gave the legislators a good picture of the institutions in their districts. Ricardo mentioned that this became the “spreadsheet of the session” when it came to higher funding. This is a spreadsheet put together by his office.

General Obligation Bonds(for capital infrastructure) were the subject of another chart. Ricardo explained how the GO bonds worked in the legislature before they go to the community for voting. The proposed GO bonds have to go through different committees/reviews and then

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different recommendations are made. Ricardo explained further how different changes to the proposals came about through the leadership and discussions from Chancellor Carruthers and as a result higher education, public schools and libraries ended up with more funding. NMSU ended up with more funding than other entities – which is a big deal! The next page detailed what will go before the voters in November.

ASNMSU was very well represented and represented the university well. They requested and were awarded funds for more security cameras.

Other bills came up during the session including the Nurse Licensure bill which was passed expeditiously in a bi-partisan measure. The bill enabled licensed nurses to keep working in multiple states without getting licensed in each state. This would have impacted our nursing program and alum extensively.

The other bill that came up had to deal with the Lottery Scholarship and the change from a percentage based award to a set amount award. Ricardo explained the history of the Lottery Scholarship and how it work. He also explained how the new rules will impact parents and students.

Another memorial that came up during the session was to initiate a task force to find a way to better fund the dual credit programs across the state so that higher ed. institutions can get funding to provide dual credit courses.

5. Benefits updates – Cigna has bought out ExpressScripts, not yet known how that will impact benefits, but probably not much will change. New hire for Benefits unit. Have hired a retirement Specialist. Kim asked if there had been any consideration of review of VSP (Vision Service Plan). Armando answered that they are constantly looking at options for services, but sine he has only been here a month has not been able to do a deep analysis. Kim added that it seemed to be losing providers. Armando said that he will look into it. Someone added that NMSU previously had coverage through the county and the coverage was significantly worse than what VSP offers.
6. Recognition – Monica wanted to recognize Adam Cavotta for his exceptional leadership as EC Chair. The EC appreciates all his efforts and presented him with a plaque.
7. Founders Day Update (April 20, 2018) – Adam provided an update of the items that have been worked on so far. He also outlined some of the plans for the event. The theme will be the Music History of NMSU. The committee is working on determining the Aggie Legend is working with Sodexo on the menu and vegetarian and gluten-free options will be available. Gelato will be the dessert item. EC members will be needed to help at the event. Stay tuned for more

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information on the event.

8. Employee Council Election/Committee Update: Website/Marketing position

This position is open and Julie Correa has volunteered. Monica asked if anyone else was interested and no one was. Motion was made, seconded and approved. Julie Correa is the new Website/Marketing officer.

Committee Appointments – Adam is working on getting people into some of the committees. The nominations are open until March 17 for the Insurance and Fringe committees. There are about 11 nominees (some duplicates) and a minimum of 4 for each committee. Adam will send out another call for nominees. Adam explained a bit about the Insurance committee with regards to the tuition benefit. The nominees will be presented to the EC for voting at the next meeting.

9. Announcements:

Anne Hubbell - 100+ 5th graders coming from Sonoma Elementary to tour the dorms, eat at Taos and attend 3 classes. Be sure to say "hello" to them. They are very excited to come to NMSU. The J. Paul Taylor Symposium is next Thursday. Topics are Mexico/U.S. Borders issues. Exhibitions and information tables from various groups will be available. Posters and programs are available.

10. Committee Reports

Monica Dunivan – Chancellor's Quarterly: Discussed Founders Day plans and the 2% compensation increase. Dr. Jones (AVP HR) is working up options on how the 2% will be distributed. The Chancellor will involve EC when the options are available. Adam added more detail about the possible options; 1) across the board, 2) merit-based, 3) "bring up the bottom." He added that there had been some previous discussion in EC supporting option 3 and most at that time were in favor of that and that he had mentioned it at the Chancellor's meeting. Someone asked what "bring up the bottom" meant. Adam explained that those earning the least amount would receive the increase. He also outlined other increases others have received recent increases through the union or the Mercer study. Adam suggested that exempt employees had been left out of those increases, so those earning the least who had not received any kind of bump in pay. He also added that 2% would not be a retention offer or incentive. Also merit-based would be an accounting nightmare and usually not fair. Anne added that she did not agree with Adam's approach because most faculty did not receive a raise from the Mercer study. About 95% of faculty did not get the Mercer bump and also have not received other increases and they are leaving in droves. She felt the raise should be across the board and would oppose any proposal that would favor one group over another. More discussion ensued about the Mercer study and its impact. Others agreed with Anne's approach.

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Adam added that there may not be enough money to cover the 2% and where would those funds come from. Someone suggested not giving higher earning people the 2%. Someone else favored the across the board.

Milen added that Mercer did have some adverse effect on some employees both in wages and job titles. He suggested that there needs to be a deeper review of information.

All were concerned with people leaving the institution because of low salaries. Someone mentioned that it would be good if raises at least met insurance increases.

Board of Regents – With regard to the Athletic Review Committee’s proposal that was an agenda item at the BOR meeting, a memo drafted by the EC and was read at the meeting by Dr. Hubble. The BOR voted: not to award the \$1.1 to Athletics; extend debt repayment for five years; continue to review the proposal and present at the November meeting, especially with regard to KPI (Key Performance Indicators); BOR will do a 3 year review of the Athletics program. The objective is for Athletics to become self-sustaining.

Update on the search for the new Chancellor. They have had over 50 full applications and 10 candidates have been chosen for Skype interviews which will happen April 2-4. The plan is to have the new Chancellor in place by July 1.

Send reports by Friday, March 9, 2018

11. Adjournment – Motion was made, seconded and approved.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 12, 2018.