

NMSU Employee Council  
Employee Council Meeting Minutes  
February 11, 2021

Attendees:

Executive Council: Letty Gallegos (Chair-A), Joseph Almaguer (Chair-Elect-V), Sonia White (Past-Chair), Vandeen McKenzie (Secretary/Treasurer-A), Dacia Sedillo (Recording Secretary-V), Marissa Fowler (Web Master-V)

Voting members - Cortney Castle-Chavez, Erin Wahl, Gary Bond, Gaylene Fasenko, Humberto Morales, Hwiman Chung, Karena Pirtle, Kathy Landers, Kim Allbright, Lucinda Banegas-Carreon, Luis Velasco, Marisela Marquez, Nicole Sack, Polly Wagner, Rosa de la Torre-Burmeister, Sandra Lujan

Alternate members – Jagdish Khubchandani, Jamie Bronstein, Julie Correa, Karla Volpi, Krystal Espinoza (voting for Cynthia Pelak), Sandra McKay

Absent:

Executive Council:

Voting members – Cynthia Pelak (alternate Krystal Espinoza), Monica Dunivan,

Alternate members - Randi Bolding, Ryan Armendariz, Seth Miner, Susanne Berger

1. Call to order 2:33 p.m. by Letty Gallegos, Past-Chair
2. Welcome guests: Valerie Davis, Donna Ottaviano, Leticia Phetteplace, Celeste Martinez, David Chavez, Christina Schaub, Paulo Oemig, Bill Byhower, Gena Jones
3. Roll Call
4. Confirmation of Quorum (20 of 21 voting members)
5. Approval of January minutes  
Gaylene moved / Kim A. seconded – approved with no changes
6. Benefits Update – Celeste Martinez  
Kicking off America Saves campaign 2/22 – 2/26: recommend all employees review their ERB and/or ARP statements. Also look at deferred compensation plans (430B and 457B). Even students can invest as little as \$7.50 per pay period to begin saving for retirement.

HR is conducting a complete review of paid leave legislation and policies.

Reminder: Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) is available on the Benefits website (<https://benefits.nmsu.edu>). All employees are encouraged to take advantage of these valuable services.

7. Introduction of new members - Letty Gallegos  
Welcome new and re-elected members, terms begin at the Feb 2021 meeting and end after the January 2024 meeting. Newly elected representatives are:

Voting:

Erin Wahl – Library  
Humberto Morales – Carlsbad  
Lucinda Banegas-Carreon – Ag Extension  
Marisela Marquez – Undergrad Admissions and Orientation  
Nicole Sack - Athletics

Alternates:

Jagdish Khubchandani – Public Health Sciences  
Jamie Bronstein – History Dept  
Karena Pirtle – NMSU Police Dept  
Karla Volpi – Carlsbad  
Letty Gallegos – Center for Academic Advising and Student Support  
Seth Miner – Undergrad Admissions and Orientation  
Susanne Berger – Facilities and Services  
Vandeen McKenzie – University Financial Aid and Scholarship Svcs

8. How council works - Letty Gallegos

Explanation of the difference between voting members and alternate members. Active participation by all attendees, including guests, is welcomed. Alternate members are expected to attend every meeting, just as voting members are. An Alternate will serve as a voting member, when a voting member is unable to attend. **Voting members are expected to inform the group they are unable to attend and identify an alternate to vote in their place. The Chair and Recording Secretary should be informed of this arrangement so it can be documented for quorum and attendance taking.** There are many opportunities to serve on sub-committees, event planning, and as a EC representative on University Boards and committees. Employee Council is an important representation of the employee voice and the members take that responsibility seriously.

9. Election of 2021 – 2022 officers

Marissa Fowler prefaced the voting with a message of thanks to Letty for the great leadership in a very different (virtual) world over the past year.

Clarification: based on the revised by-laws, approved December 2019, non-exempt staff represented by the bargaining unit, as listed on the HR website, can serve as members of Employee Council but cannot serve on the Executive Council.

- **Web Master: Gary Bond** self-nominated, no other nominations. Vote to approve.
- **Secretary Treasurer: Sandra Lujan** nominated by Marisela, no other nominations. Vote to approve.
- **Recording Secretary: Dacia Sedillo** self-nominated to continue in role, when no other nominations were received. Vote to approve.
- Chair- Elect: several nominations, no nominee accepted. Tabled for next meeting.

10. Dr Gena Jones – Great Universities to Work For Survey

Gena prefaced her remarks by thanking Letty, as EC Chair, and Sonia, as EC Past-Chair, for their leadership and active involvement in representing the employees of NMSU. Congratulated Joseph on his new position, as next Chair, and indicated she looked forward to working with him.

NMSU has partnered with a vendor called Random Think, to participate in “Great Universities to Work For”. The vendor will conduct a targeted survey of a random sampling of NMSU employees (surveying all staff was cost prohibitive). The analysis and, subsequent, report will focus on both institutional characteristics and the survey results. The institutional characteristics that the vendor will be looking at include: morale, stability, and crisis response. Those characteristics will be benchmarked against other participating Universities.

Gena asked that we inform employees that they may be receiving a request to participate between March 8 and April 2. If they do receive the invitation, seriously consider participating as they will be representing not just themselves but their colleagues at NMSU. Confidentiality is being ensured by having the Office of Institutional Analysis pull a random sample of all employees and sending only the email addresses to the vendor. The vendor will send the survey invitation to those emails and then delete the emails so there is no connection between the recipient and the response. Greater participation will provide better information about employees perception of NMSU as an employer.

In addition to a national ranking among participating institutions and potential recognition in the Sept 17<sup>th</sup> issue of The Chronicle for Higher Education, the report from Random Think will provide detailed information on gaps that the University has struggled to address in the past, due to the nebulous nature of some concepts (ex. “Communication is a problem” ....what does that mean, exactly?).

11. Committee Reports

Climate Survey - tabled

Diversity Council - tabled

Others - tabled

12. Announcements

Virtual passing of the Gavel from Chair Letty Gallegos to Chair-elect Joseph Almaguer. Actual transfer will occur, in-person, on Friday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>.

13. Adjournment 3:56 p.m. by Letty Gallegos, Past-Chair

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 11, 2021 @ 2:30**

Items for next meeting:

Aggie Fit membership cost increase