

NMSU Employee Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 11, 2021

Attendees:

Executive Council: Joseph Almaguer (Chair-V), Susanne Berger (Chair-Elect-A), Letty Gallegos (alternate for Polly Wagner / Past-Chair-A), Sandra Lujan (Secretary/Treasurer-A), Dacia Sedillo (Recording Secretary-V), Gary Bond (Web Master-V)

Voting members - Cortney Castle-Chavez, Cynthia Pelak, Erin Wahl, Gaylene Fasenko, Humberto Morales, Hwiman Chung, Karena Pirtle, Kathy Landers, Kim Allbright, Lucinda Banegas-Carreon, Luis Velasco, Marisela Marquez, Marissa Fowler, Nicole Sack, Rosa de la Torre-Burmeister,

Alternate members – Jagdish Khubchandani, Jamie Bronstein, Julie Correa, Seth Miner, Vandeen McKenzie

Absent:

Executive Council:

Voting members – Monica Dunivan, Polly Wagner (alternate Letty Gallegos),

Alternate members - Karla Volpi, Krystal Espinoza, Randi Bolding, Ryan Armendariz, Sandra McKay,

1. Call to order 2:33 p.m. by Joseph Almaguer, Chair
2. Welcome guests: David Chavez, Valerie Davis, Linda Beavers, Letty Phetteplace, Christina Schaub, Celeste Martinez, Donna Ottaviano
3. Roll Call
4. Confirmation of Quorum (20 of 21 voting members)
5. Approval of February minutes  
Moved: Marissa Fowler                      Second: Gaylene Fasenko                      Approved with no changes

6. Benefits Update – Celeste Martinez  
Flexible Spending Account changes (see March 2<sup>nd</sup> email and Benefits website). COVID accommodation will allow carryover and extensions that are not normally allowed. Many carriers are providing new initiatives and incentives including free gym memberships, meditation breaks, wellness opportunities.  
As a reminder, employees should be checking their @nmsu email address for official information.  
Annual leave carry forward balances will return to the standard 240 hour limit as of June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Joseph proposed that Employee Council create a Benefits sub-committee. Rosa recommended that Employee Council partner with existing CSAT (Climate Survey Action Team) efforts that are already underway.

7. Election of 2021 – 2022 officers
  - Chair- Elect: Susanne Berger self-nominated. No other nominations received.  
Approved by acclamation.

## 8. Constitution and Bylaws

Joseph provided clarification on the Constitutional limitations on non-exempt bargaining unit eligible staff members from serving on the Employee Council Executive Committee. Per General Counsel, non-exempt bargaining unit eligible staff members can be members of Employee Council, as of December 2019 revision. However, because they are already represented by the union (AFSCME), they would have direct access to both AFSCME management and University management, which creates a conflict of interest.

There is a list of non-exempt staff positions that are not eligible for representation by the bargaining unit due to the confidential nature of their position (HR, supervisors, assistants to University administrators, etc).

It is recognized that the Constitution and By-laws are not as clear as they need to be, so Joseph is going to call for a volunteer subcommittee to rewrite, in consultation with University General Counsel. Will revisit at the April meeting.

### SIDE NOTES:

Hwiman called for all employees to join together under one Union / Bargaining Unit contract.

Kathy Landers pointed out that she and other Ag Extension Agents are classified, by HR, as being located in Dona Ana County but they are, by the nature of their job titles and duties, located in every other county except Dona Ana.

## 9. Increase in AggieFit fees

AggieFit fees increased from \$9 to \$27 per month. There has been a waiver of all AggieFit fees during COVID and inability to access the facilities.

Questions: what was the basis for the fee increase? Was a comparative analysis of the local competition/market performed? How many employees are enrolled in AggieFit?

Joseph will prepare a set of questions and invite the AggieFit leadership to address those questions at the next meeting.

## 10. Committee Reports

Climate Survey: Rosa reported that she, Gena Jones and Jagdish are co-chairing the Climate Survey Action Team (CSAT), with one of its goals being to collaborate with other councils, including Employee Council, on recommendations and solutions.

Question: what's the difference between the Climate Survey and the new "Great Colleges to Work for" survey? Why are we paying for another survey when CSAT just presented its recommendations and is starting to work on identified gaps?

Diversity Council: Vandeen reported that the group changed the day of its standing monthly meetings, so the information she is reporting on is almost a month old. Topics of discussion were seeking a sanctuary campus statement from the University's Executive Leadership and the interviews for the VP EID candidates. A successful candidate has not been named, yet. Other

issues of concern discussed included the former POTUS Executive Orders concerning a ban on diversity and inclusion trainings in public higher education.

Others: Gary requested that some attention be paid to the Employee Council Committees webpage. It is very outdated. He's not sure all the committees still exist and he knows many of the EC reps listed are not even EC members any more.

#### 11. Announcements

Sandra: new member Employee Council shirts have been ordered.

Joseph: "A" Mountain awards will be announced at the next Town Hall and posted on the Employee Council webpage. Plaques / trophies have been ordered.

Both basketball teams are currently competing in the WAC tournament. Many other teams are now able to play on-campus, at 25% capacity, effective immediately. Tickets are available on-site one hour prior to game time. Ticket Office phone number is 575-646-1420.

#### 12. Adjournment 3:39 p.m. by Joseph Almaguer, Chair

#### **Next Meeting: Thursday, April 8, 2021 @ 2:30**

#### Items for next meeting:

Follow up on Aggie Fit fee increase

Committee for Constitution and By-laws Revision/Update

Question for President Floros, should we plan for Fall Employee Picnic?