

Faculty Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm by Dean Camille Carey, once a quorum was reached. The following people were present for at least some portion of the meeting.

Faculty: Maryam Ahranjani, George Bach, Camille Carey, Scott England, Paul Figueroa, Sonia Gipson Rankin, Allison Freedman, Marc-Tizoc Gonzalez, Vinay Harpalani, Steven Homer, John Kang, April Land, John LaVelle, Jennifer Laws, Alicia Lopez, Nathalie Martin, Serge Martinez, Alfred Mathewson, Jennifer Moore, Gabe Pacyniak, Nadine Padilla, Vanessa Racehorse, Michelle Rigual, Leo Romero, Joseph Schremmer, David Stout, Sherri Thomas, Samuel Winder, Peter Winograd (20 needed for quorum; names that count toward quorum in bold)

Staff: Krista Allen, Beverly Akin, Stephanie Grant, Renee Ferrell, Melissa Lobato, Bonnie Stepleton, Ernest Tafoya, Emilie McVay-Ash

Students: No students were present at this meeting.

Announcements:

Welcome New Faculty- Dean Carey: Dean Carey welcomed Vanessa Racehorse, Nadine Padilla, Allison Freedman, and Alicia Lopez to the faculty.

UNM School of Law Food Pantry- David Stout: The Food Pantry is widely used by our students. With current food prices and inflation, this trend continues. Thank you to all who contributed. Special thanks to George Bach, Jenny Moore, and Bonnie Stepleton for acting as conduits for the food cards.

Faculty Appointments- Maryam Ahranjani: The committee has interviewed 12 candidates and has more interviews scheduled. They hope to have a recommendation within the next couple of weeks. Thank you to the committee for their hard work: Sherri Thomas, David Stout, Serge Martinez, John Kang,

Barbara Brown Simmons- Sonia Gipson-Rankin: The Celebration of Life for Barbara Brown Simmons will be held in January. She was the first Black woman to graduate from UNM SOL and the first Black woman to become a member of the NM Bar. She was instrumental in the creation of UNM's Africana Studies Department.

Judicial Clerkships- Bonnie Stepleton: Scott England is chairing the committee this year. 16 students have been accepted for judicial clerkships at all levels. More than half of these students come from nontraditional backgrounds. The increased number of clerkships is due in part to the hard work of David Stout and the other members of last year's committee.

Natural Resources & Environmental Law Anniversary- Gabe Pacyniak: The NREL clinic celebrated its 5th anniversary. Thank you to the staff of the Utton Center and the faculty for assisting with this event. Jeanette Wolfley received a plaque in appreciation for her work to establish the clinic. Nadine Padilla was also introduced as the newest member of the NREL Clinic faculty.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of Minutes from April 15, 2022- Dean Camille Carey: Professor Sherri Thomas moved to approve the minutes. Professors Sonia Gipson Rankin and David Stout seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved with a vote of 17 yes, 0 no, and 5 abstentions.

Appointment of primary and secondary representatives to the Association of American Law Schools House of Representatives- Dean Camille Carey: In the past, AALS has offered a group rate for member schools who send multiple people to the annual conference. This year, it is the same rate for everyone so faculty who wish to attend the conference in San Diego in January should register separately. We do need to select a volunteer delegate and a second to attend the House of Representatives meeting.

Professor Sherri Thomas explained that the responsibilities include attending the meeting, listening to the business discussed, hearing next year's conference theme, and seeing the presentation of awards.

Professor Sonia Gipson Rankin expressed her willingness to be either the primary or secondary representative. Professor Gabe Pacyniak said he would also be willing to act in either role. Professor April Land moved that Professor Gipson Rankin be the primary representative and Professor Pacyniak be the secondary. Professor John LaVelle seconded the motion. The oral vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Admissions Report- Director of Admissions, Renee Ferrell: This was a challenging year for admissions. Applications were down nationwide. UNM SOL saw 10.5% fewer applications and 17.3% fewer applicants from NM residents. Overall, this means that there were fewer qualified applicants, especially NM applicants.

The current 1L class has 99 students. 78.8% are NM residents. 15.2% Identify as members of the LGBTQI community and 51.5% identify as a member of 1 or more minority groups. There has been a slight decrease in the number of Native American and Alaskan Native students as compared with previous years. The Median LSAT for the current class is 156. The 25th percentile is 152 and the 75th percentile is up from 159 to 161. The Median GPA is 3.5. The 25th percentile is 3.32 and the 75th percentile is 3.74. Admissions is now accepting applications for Fall 2023.

Professor Emeritus Peter Winograd explained that the New Mexico applicant pool was less than 250 and 200 of those students applied to UNM SOL. Three quarters of the class must be chosen from a group of 200. To increase the numbers of applicants, he suggested more visits to every degree granting school in the state. He also said that UNM SOL faculty and current students should be included in these visits.

Professor Maryam Ahranjani spoke briefly about the Marshall Brennan Constitutional Literacy Program. This year, there are 17 fellows working in local high schools. This program builds interest in the high school population.

Professor Sonia Gipson Rankin talked about her work with the directors of different centers and college enrichment programs on main campus. These groups are doing purposeful work to help students from underrepresented groups be more competitive for graduate programs.

Professor Scott England pointed out that the lower application rate is not a problem that is particular to New Mexico. Schools across the country are receiving fewer applications.

Professor Sherri Thomas suggested that we reach out to other programs to attract more targeted admissions. She suggested something like the Pathways program which involves faculty directly mentoring undergraduate students. It would require a considerable time commitment from the faculty who would work with the student all the way through the application process.

Dean Carey thanked the faculty for their ideas and engagement.

Community Relations & Communications Committee Report- Professor George Bach: The members of the committee are George Bach, Allison Freedman, David Stout, John Kang, and Melissa Lobato. The goal of the committee is to increase local legal engagement with the Law School. To that end, the committee would like to see a faculty presence at any and all events. If you know of an event happening within the state, please tell the committee. Please try to be available to attend events. The Law School can provide reimbursement for mileage. They hope to be more involved in areas outside the Albuquerque-Santa Fe area. The committee is also looking for ways to increase our national profile. Any ideas or suggestions are welcome.

Professor Sherri Thomas stated that she is happy to see the committee reaching out. Would this community involvement include attending educational summits and CLEs?

Professor Bach answered that it would. Anything that builds our engagement with the community is encouraged.

75th Anniversary Update- Dean Camille Carey: There are a number of events scheduled over the next year as the Law School celebrates its 75th Anniversary. The 75th Anniversary Steering Committee members are Dean Carey, Stuart Butzier ('89), Senator Joseph Cervantes ('91), H. Demetri Chambers ('90), Lisa Curtis ('93), Professor & Dean Emeritus Robert Desiderio, Cathy Goldberg ('75), Alicia Gutierrez ('86), F. Michael Hart ('88), Eric Knapp ('98), Professor & Dean Emeritus Alfred Mathewson, Randi McGinn ('80), Professor & Dean Emeritus Ted Parnall ('67), Faith Roessel ('81), Professor & Dean Emeritus Leo Romero, Professor & Associate Dean Emeritus Peter Winograd, and the Hon. Wendy York ('82). Members of the Steering Committee must commit to making a monetary donation and hosting an event.

There is also a larger group of Class Ambassadors made up of at least 1 ambassador from each graduating class.

The celebrations started with the Kick Off Fiesta on August 26th. More than 500 people attended the event. Many alumni said they really enjoyed the evening and felt more connected to the law school. The next event is the U.S. Senator Dennis Chavez Memorial Lectureship in Law & Civil Rights on September 22. Secretary of the Interior and School of Law Alumna Deb Haaland will be speaking. Attendance at the event will be capped at 500.

Future events include the Distinguished Achievement Awards Dinner on October 21; the John Field Simms, Sr. Memorial Lectureship in Law on February 23; and the 75th Anniversary Gala on April 14. The theme for the gala is Festive, Formal, and Fun.

The goal of these events is to provide opportunities for the community and alumni to feel more connected with the Law School.

Fundraising Update- Dean Camille Carey: Nickie Vigil has assisted in securing some large gifts to the Law School. In prior years, the fundraising goal was 1.5 to 2 million dollars. Since July 1, the Law School has received a 1.9-million-dollar estate gift from Eric and Dana Marie Knapp to the Peter A. Winograd Scholarship, a 2-million-dollar estate gift to a scholarship for trial advocacy, another 6-figure estate gift for the Peter A. Winograd Scholarship, and other contributions to the scholarship in honor of Phil Davis. Dean Carey expects an additional 2 million dollar gift in the next several weeks.

The majority of the donations are focused on scholarships. This is great for admissions, but does not help with some of the other budget constraints. Dean Carey acknowledged that there are many areas where the Law School needs additional funding, including staffing. She does plan to focus much of her time and energy on fundraising. The 75th Anniversary presents a unique opportunity to bring in the community and she plans to make the most of it.

Bar Passage- Dean Camille Carey: Bonnie Stepleton presented the results for the July 2022 exam. The overall passage rate was 75%. The passage rate for first time exam takers was 79%. The UNM SOL first time bar takers had a passage rate of 76%. 63 took the exam, 48 passed. 7 UNM SOL graduates repeated the exam and 6 passed it. They took a look at the individual students and then reviewed the recommendations of the 2016 Bar Passage Task Force. This test was particularly difficult for the Native American students. Dean Carey asked the faculty to consider the report generated by the task force and think proactively about ways to help students prepare.

In 2016 bar passage dropped to 68% and the faculty formed a task force to evaluate the problem and make recommendations. The members of this task force were Leo Romero, Marsha Baum, Robert Desiderio, Heather Harrigan, Serge Martinez, Jannette Mondragon, David Stout, and Kip Bobroff. The committee collected and analyzed the data. They advised additional bar courses, the creation of a specific 3 credit bar prep class, designing the schedule to better avoid conflicts and allow students the opportunity to take more bar classes, remove class size limits for bar classes, and provide more opportunities for closed book, timed exams. The July 2017 bar passage rate was 91%.

Dean Carey then opened the floor for discussion. Several Professors discussed their own teaching strategies to help students prepare for the bar and offered to share their practices with other faculty. Suggestions were made to raise the GPA at or below which students are required to meet with an academic advisor. Currently students with a GPA at or below 2.5 must meet with an advisor. No one in the 2022 graduating class had a GPA below 2.5. Raising the GPA would require more students to meet with student services.

UNM SOL is one of three law schools which have received funding from the NCBE to offer a bar study stipend to recent graduates. Last year, 5 students received assistance. 1 passed and 4 failed. This year 11 students received assistance. 7 passed and 4 failed. It is unclear how much time each of these students devoted to studying. There are other factors besides employment which can affect study such as living situations and family obligations.

A motion was made to form a one-year volunteer ad hoc faculty committee to look at the recommendations of the 2016 task force and pick up where the task force left off. Faculty serving on this committee would do so in addition to the current committee assignments. The motion passed with a vote of 22 yes, 0 no, and 7 abstentions. Dean Carey will send out an email asking for volunteers to serve on this committee.

Professors Sonia Gipson Rankin and April Land thanked the faculty and Dean Carey for the rich and engaging discussion.

The meeting moved into executive session at 3:55 PM.

EXECUTIVE SESSION (Order of the Coif faculty only):

ACTION ITEM: Vote on Order of the Coif for students from the Class of 2022 – Dean Camille Carey: Dean Carey read the names of the graduates of the Class of 2022 who qualify to be members of the Order of the Coif. A motion was made and seconded to seek membership for those graduates. It passed with 17 yes votes, 0 nay votes, and 0 abstentions. A motion was made and seconded to offer admission to the three new permanent members of the faculty. It passed with 17 yes votes, 0 nay votes, and 0 abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous consent at 4:01 pm.