

University of New Mexico School of Law
Faculty Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2007

Present: Norman Bay, Barbara Bergman, Barbara Blumenfeld, Kip Bobroff, Michael Browde, Sherri Burr, Denise Fort, Eileen Gauna, Erik Gerding, Laura Gómez, Em Hall, Steven Homer, April Land, John LaVelle, Antoinette Sedillo Lopez, Nathalie Martin, Alfred Mathewson, Mike Norwood, Ted Occhialino, Sergio Pareja, Leo Romero, Suellyn Scarnecchia, Carol Suzuki, Gloria Valencia-Weber, Peter Winograd, Christine Zuni Cruz

Students: Esteli Juarez, Brendan O'Reilly, Ed Perea

Staff: Sandra Bauman, John Feldman, Susan Mitchell, Bill Uher

The meeting was called to order at 3:38 p.m. on Tuesday, March 6, 2007.

I. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the February 21, 2007, faculty minutes were unanimously approved with one correction.

II. Announcements

A. Dean Scarnecchia made the following announcements:

1. Carol Parker was approved during the last faculty meeting for contract renewal and promotion to Associate Professor of Law. She has also agreed to continue to serve for another two year term on the UNM faculty senate. The SOL faculty members agreed that she should continue to represent them.
2. During a brief update regarding the law suit by the Governor against the 5th Judicial District Nominating Commission, Dean Scarnecchia announced that Maureen Sanders has agreed to represent the commission. The Governor has been granted a stay in appointing a judge to the vacancy pending the suit. She invited anyone with questions to let her know.
3. The search for a new director for the Utton Center continues this week with one remaining candidate. While this is an appointment made by the dean, she is looking for input, feedback and observations from the faculty that would aid her in making this decision.
4. Since Ed Perea won the SBA presidential election, he will not continue to be a student representative. Josh Alison will replace Ed as the 3L rep. next school year.

B. 1L Rep. Esteli Juarez announced she had tickets for sale for this week's *Monologues* performance.

C. Associate Dean Antoinette Sedillo Lopez announced that, with the LITC tax grant was cut by \$10,000, adjustments will have to be made to the program.

III. Faculty Appointments Update

Professor Barbara Blumenfeld offered a quick update on the Legal Research and Writing search. The committee received over 50 applications, which they were able to narrow down to nine semi-finalists. They have been conducting telephone interviews and will meet tomorrow to decide who to invite for an on-site evaluation after Spring Break. Each candidate's visit will include a lunch presentation which will be practice related rather than scholarly. While this is another dean-appointed position, in consultation with the committee, input from the faculty would be greatly appreciated. Students will also be invited to the presentations. Dean Scarnecchia thanked the entire committee.

IV. Student Affairs – 1L Work Experience

A. Assistant Dean John Feldman first provided an overview of the most recent NALP survey data, which was due last week. Of the 115 people for whom OCSS was reporting, all were employed except three seeking a degree full-time and two studying for the bar. This represents a 95.7% employment rate at the four-month point. There has been a real increase in students finding employment through the efforts of the Office of Career and Student Services.

B. Asst. Dean Feldman continued with a report on the progress of the 1L work rule change. Since this is strictly a follow-up report at the faculty's request he doesn't think any action is required. After providing a brief description of the change in the work rule, he described the OCSS initially speaking with 16 1Ls, a couple of whom were dissuaded from working after the discussion. Based on the results of a survey given to those who were working, it appears some have either tapered off their work hours or have stopped completely. He listed some of the reasons students gave for working during the first year of law school. None of the population of working students would have been considered 'at risk.' The average GPA for the students who worked was not very different from that of the general 1L population for first semester (2.8592 vs 2.8362). He gave a breakdown of where these students fell by quartile in comparison to the entire 1L population, and suggested that those near the bottom were not necessarily there due to work, but rather other factors in their lives. Esteli Juarez spoke regarding her personal experience and provided additional student feedback. Asst. Dean Feldman then read one specific student's response having been given her permission to do so. He received questions asking for clarification and some additional detail, as well as some more student feedback. Dean Scarnecchia thanked him for his work.

V. Natural Resource Program/Certificate Update

Professor Denise Fort thanked the committee. The committee will wait to do additional strategic planning until the Utton Director hire is finalized. She briefly described the proposed change to the program (requiring fewer hours and allowing more courses to meet the requirement, which will make the achievement of both the NR and Indian Law certificates possible). She also briefly reviewed the reasons for the proposed change. Students have received an e-mail describing the proposed changes asking for their feedback, and Professor Fort asked for additional faculty comments as well.

VI. Admissions Committee

- A. Dean Scarnecchia briefly described the procedural structure for the next portion of the meeting. The Admissions Committee's proposal was presented at the last faculty meeting and there was initial discussion at that point. An updated/modified proposal was described in a distributed handout, which is attached to these minutes.
- B. Professor Laura Gómez highlighted the proposed changes to the policy based on prior discussions. She then spoke on behalf of the committee presenting the motion to amend the admissions policy as is currently presented in the attached handout.
- C. A motion to vote by secret ballot was made and seconded. Discussion ensued. Upon a vote the motion to vote on the admissions policy by secret ballot carried.
- D. Discussion of the admissions committee's motion began.
- E. A motion was made by Ted Occhialino and seconded by Erik Gerding to amend the first paragraph by adding the words "of viewpoints" to read: *The faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law is committed to excellence and diversity OF VIEWPOINTS in its student body. Indeed, we believe that diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in the student body help to insure a dynamic, productive, and positive learning experience.*
 - 1. Discussion of this motion ensued. A motion to call the question failed for lack of a second.
 - 2. A friendly amendment offering to move the word "viewpoint" to the second sentence following the word "experiences" was made and accepted
 - 3. A second motion was made and seconded to call the question. When voted on by secret ballot the motion failed.
- F. A motion to amend the committee's recommendation by striking the parenthetical statement in the second paragraph that reads: *(including those related to race, ethnicity and/or national origin)* was made by Ted Occhialino and seconded by Erik Gerding. Discussion ensued. A motion to call the question was made and seconded but failed upon a vote.
- E. Due to time constraints and the potential loss in continued attendance by the faculty beyond the originally scheduled meeting time, the second proposed amendment and the original committee's motion will be revisited and voted on at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Bauman
Administrative Assistant to Dean Suellyn Scarnecchia

The University of New Mexico School of Law ADMISSIONS POLICY

Changes Proposed by 2006-07 Admissions Committee for Faculty Consideration

(Laura Gómez, chair; Marsha Baum; Susan Mitchell; Leo Romero; Stephan Vigil, 3L)

February 2007

The faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law is committed to excellence and diversity in its student body. Indeed, we believe that diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives in the student body help to ensure a dynamic, productive, and positive learning experience.

In seeking to achieve diversity, the admissions committee is instructed to consider a wide range of factors in evaluating applicants for admission, including but not limited to the following: demonstrated intellectual capacity; academic achievement in undergraduate and/or graduate studies; employment history; life experiences (including those related to **race**, ethnicity and/or national origin); **tribal affiliation**; academic and personal motivation; commitment to public service; **leadership potential**; the extent to which the applicant has overcome educational **and/or socioeconomic disadvantages**; other indicia of the applicant's potential success in legal studies and potential to make a significant contribution to the law school community and **legal profession**.

Applicants are evaluated for their potential for academic success in law school and their potential to contribute to an enriching educational environment at the law school. In deciding which students from among a very talented and qualified pool will be admitted, we consider the applicant's undergraduate grade point average (UGPA) and score on the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Unlike some law schools, however, the University of New Mexico does not rely presumptively on any combination of UGPA and LSAT scores. While high UGPA and/or LSAT scores are positive factors and low UGPA and/or LSAT scores are negative factors, UGPA and LSAT scores at one extreme or the other do not automatically grant or preclude admission.

Applicants are advised that important documents in this evaluation are letter(s) of recommendation, their academic transcript(s), their LSAT score(s), their personal statement, their résumé, as well as any other relevant information the applicant provides. Applicants are well advised to give considerable attention to each of the required documents to ensure that the completed application fully and accurately reflects the applicant's individual background, qualifications and goals. These documents provide important information which allows the admissions committee to reach its decisions. The Law School does not grant personal interviews as part of the evaluation process.

Admissions decisions at the UNM School of Law are made by a five-person admissions committee, which includes three faculty members, the assistant dean of admissions, and a third-year student elected by the student body. Each member of the committee evaluates all applications submitted by residents of New Mexico, as well as a large number of applications submitted by non-residents. All non-resident applications are prescreened by the dean of admissions, and a substantial number of these applications are forwarded to the committee for

review. After each member of the committee has engaged in a holistic review of the applicant, the committee then meets to discuss candidates and make collective decisions.

The UNM School of Law is a public law school and the only law school in New Mexico. While we welcome non-resident applications, we give a preference to applicants who are New Mexico residents. Among resident applicants, we take into account geographic diversity within the state.

Applicants with relatively low undergraduate grades and/or LSAT scores, but with overall records demonstrating that they can succeed in law studies, may be admitted conditioned on their successful completion of an approved pre-law program.

It has been our experience that a large percentage of the applicant pool is qualified to be admitted to law school and, if admitted, would succeed in law school. Given the small size of this law school and the size of the applicant pool, however, many qualified applicants are regrettably denied admission.

The School of Law adheres to the equal opportunity policies of the University of New Mexico and makes appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

This policy shall be subject to review by the faculty every five years or at an earlier date as requested by the dean.