

Faculty Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2020 (via Zoom)

Faculty: **Maryam Ahranjani, George Bach, Reed Benson, Sherri Burr, Camille Carey, Lysette Romero Córdova, Barbara Creel, Elizabeth Elia, Scott England, Paul Figueroa, Veronica Gonzales-Zamora, Marc Tizoc González, Vinay Harpalani, Steven Homer, John Kang, Joshua Kastenber, April Land, John LaVelle, Jennifer Laws, Nathalie Martin, Serge Martinez, Alfred Mathewson, Jennifer Moore, Gabe Pacyniak, Mary Leto Pareja, Sergio Pareja, Sonia Gipson Rankin, Michelle Rigual, Leo Romero, Alexandra Siek, Joseph Schremmer, Laura Spitz, Sarah Steadman, David Stout, Carol Suzuki, Sherri Thomas, Cliff Villa, Peter Winograd, Jeanette Wolfley** (*20 needed for quorum; names that count toward quorum in bold*)

Staff: Beverly Akin, Krista Allen, Chad Covey, Bonnie Stepleton

Students: Victor Hall, Jessica Arreola

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Dean Pareja welcomed the faculty to the first Zoom faculty meeting and apologized for any glitches that may occur. Dean Pareja also announced that Vice Dean Camille Carey would be monitoring questions and comments.
- Dean Pareja announced that the university has extended its limited operations now to May 15th.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2020 Executive Session faculty meeting – Dean Sergio Pareja: A motion was made to approve the minutes and was seconded. The minutes were approved with six abstentions and one nay vote.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes from February 18, 2020 Faculty Meeting – Dean Sergio Pareja: A motion was made to approve the minutes and was seconded. The minutes were approved with two abstentions.

Request regarding final exams this semester – 2L Student Representative Jessica Arreola: Jessica Arreola thanked the faculty for allowing her to speak on behalf of the 2L class. Ms. Arreola expressed that the last few weeks have been extremely difficult, and tough readjusting to our new life. Ms. Arreola indicated that her classmates were very thankful to the faculty for working with students and providing accommodations to make sure that students are learning everything they had to learn for this semester. The student body has voiced concerns over upcoming exams. Ms. Arreola express concern that students with children and who are caregivers are at a disadvantage compared to other students when taking a timed exam. Ms. Arreola presented the faculty with an alternative that other professors are allowing, which is a 24-hour window for a timed exam. This would give parents and caregivers a fair shot at these exams. Ms. Arreola noted that

students understand that they can choose the credit/no credit option instead of a letter grade. Nevertheless, this puts some students at a disadvantage having to elect to take credit/no credit versus a grade, and being marketable with a credit/no credit on one's transcript. Dean Pareja thanked Ms. Arreola and indicated that the Dean does not have a say over how professors choose to run their exams, whether they are timed or open- or closed-book. He believes that it is inherently a faculty member's decision how to assess students. That said, the faculty as a whole could make decision to mandate no timed exams, but that would be by motion and vote. Dean Pareja opened the floor for discussion. No motion to change how exams will happen was presented.

Report on and discussion regarding graduation, bar exam, and fall semester – Dean Sergio Pareja: Dean Pareja noted that, although an in-person graduation is being delayed until it is safe to hold large gatherings, there are three possible things he is considering doing to celebrate the achievements of our 3Ls:

- First, in the late afternoon on Friday, May 8, 2020, we might have an Honors and Awards Ceremony via Zoom. We would invite any student who's receiving an award and invite all faculty members. We could ask faculty to “present” awards, even though we don't have an award to physically hand out. Awards will be mailed out later.
- Second, on Saturday, May 9, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., the day and time when graduation was supposed to happen, it might be nice to get together online and have around 10 to 12 faculty members read names of our graduating 3Ls. Each faculty member would begin by saying a few words to the class to congratulate them and then the faculty member would read 10 to 12 names of this graduating class. The event could be streamed through YouTube or something so that family and friends can watch it.
- Third, the Alumni Board and the state bar's Committee on Wellness have proposed to give gift packages to our graduates. The idea is to have graduating students arrive at the law school in their cars at a designated time. They wouldn't get out of their cars. They would pull into the law school parking lot from the Tucker entrance. Small groups of faculty would be there in shifts to cheer them on. They would then stop in front of the law school entrance, pop open their trunk, and the package would be put in their trunk.

Dean Pareja asked the 3L representative Victor Hall for his thoughts on these ideas. Mr. Hall stated that this has been a terrible time for the 3L class, with one of the most meaningful moments in their lives not happening. Option three would be very stressful, and it feels as if it is just lumped in with Honors and Awards as an afterthought. There was some discussion by the faculty, with some opposition to the drive through idea being expressed. It was suggested that students be surveyed regarding the first two options. Dean Pareja agreed to survey the 3Ls on those two options.

Dean Pareja gave a brief update on the bar exam and indicated that the NCBE has added a couple additional exams in September and October, but that he really do not know the status of the July bar exam in New Mexico. He has been in conversation with the justices on the Supreme Court who are thinking this through. They are seeking input from the NM Board of Bar Examiners. They have also heard from our students. They are very aware of our 3L's concerns, and they are making a thoughtful decision. Hopefully we will know their decision soon.

Dean Pareja then talked about the fall semester. He noted that there has been quite bit of talk about what our fall semester will look like. Is it going to be online? Dean Pareja has been advocating for starting the semester in person, if possible, with a great deal of social distancing rules in place. Dean Pareja stated we will lose incoming 1Ls if we start classes online. Starting law school in person is very important. One idea is to have faculty announce how they are conducting their classes on a month-to-month basis in the fall. We could stream all classes. Any students or faculty who do not feel comfortable being in class in person could remotely observe or teach a class (via Zoom). To the extent that somebody feels comfortable teaching it in person, it would go forward in person with a reduced number of students (those who are watching from home). Suppose half the class (about 20 students, say) want in-person classes. Half of those students (10) could attend in person one day a week, and they would watch from home the other day(s), with the other 10 appearing in person the other day. Students who appear in person could sit with empty seats (two or more) between them, and rows could be staggered. This is just one idea. Dean Pareja then opened the floor for discussion. Much of the faculty who spoke agreed that interactions outside of the classroom are at times more valuable than inside the classroom. The Dean stated that this discussion should continue at the next faculty meeting. It was also suggested that a task force be created to do contingency planning for the fall semester.

Report on and discussion regarding law school dean search – Provost James

Holloway: Dean Pareja introduced Provost Holloway to the law faculty virtually. The Dean informed the Provost that the he had told the faculty that this would be a very brief discussion regarding the dean search, but that we will have a fuller discussion when we can have an in-person meeting. Hopefully that will be in August or September. The Dean then turned the meeting over to Provost Holloway. The Provost stated that part of the genesis of this meeting was to talk to this group about the process of doing a dean's search and to start thinking about bringing in the next dean of law school. The law school will use the 2020-2021 academic year to do some strategic planning in anticipation of a dean search. The goal for the dean search would be to have a Search Advisory Committee assembled by early 2021. His thought is that the committee would be put together around February of 2021, and they would begin work preparing the position description and identifying potential candidates that semester. People would start applying in the summer, with interviews happening in the fall of 2021. The goal is to have the law school's next dean identified by December 2021. The person would ideally start at the beginning of July 2022. Think about what you want to see in the next Dean. It is a question of leadership style, a

question of the ability of the dean to be internally versus externally facing. The Dean has an interesting role. It is a leadership role. It's a management role. It's an external relations role. You never find a candidate who is perfect. Another item to start thinking about is who should be on a search Advisory Committee. A group of faculty is critical. In the case of law, there's this special role of judicial selection, which is pretty unusual for a dean.

Provost Holloway then stated just a little bit about what the search process will look like. The Search Advisory Committee, potentially with help from an external search firm, is charged with taking input from all of the constituents (faculty, staff, students, alums, external judicial stakeholders, etc.). They build a pool of possible candidates. It should be a diverse pool. Search Advisory Committee then also starts to vet those individuals and narrow it down to a smaller group. The diversity of that committee in every dimension is important. After those airport interviews, we get down to maybe three candidates who are going to come on campus to interview in a public way. Up to that point, the interviews are confidential.

Candidates spend a couple of days on campus meeting the faculty, students, staff, alumni, and the judicial community. We collect open forum feedback from that. The Committee on Governance requires structured feedback from the voting faculty. We generally ask the voting faculty to affirm yes or no if they think that a candidate could provide positive leadership for the school. In a second step, we ask them to rank the candidates. Then after all that, we also do reference checks. Then negotiations with the top candidate starts.

Dear Pareja asked what would be a normal participation on the Search Advisory Committee from the law faculty. Provost James Holloway stated there's no magic number. The dean search advisory committees we're running right now are about 10ish people each, and the majority need to be faculty. It's typically a mix of junior and senior faculty.

Associate Dean Sherri Thomas asked how the budget situation is affecting different searches. The Provost noted that, while no dean excels at everything, it is important that the dean have some understanding and ability to work within the budgetary system of their school. The dean is, after all, the chief academic officer, and you don't want the chief academic officer to make budget decisions based solely on input from a business manager. Associate Dean Thomas then asked if UNM is creating any type of training for new dean's regarding UNM systems, such as budgeting and human resources. Provost Holloway responded that with so many new deans coming in, we are really thinking about a dean school.

Discussion regarding summer grading – Dean Sergio Pareja: Dean Pareja indicated that the faculty will have a discussion and vote on how to grade summer classes in a couple weeks. There will be an additional faculty meeting in late July or early August via Zoom to discuss and vote on grading during the fall semester. Some schools are going back to letter grades this summer even though all classes are happening online. Other schools are utilizing a mandatory or optional credit / no credit system this summer. Dean Pareja sought input

from people who are teaching over the summer. Most have expressed a preference for what we're doing now: optional credit / no credit grading in which the faculty member would choose before summer session begins if the class is fully credit / no credit or any student could choose to make the class credit / no credit at any time before final exams begin. Associate Dean Serge Martinez mentioned that he wanted to say a few words about the Clinic. Professor Martinez stated that he had spoken to the folks teaching clinic this summer. They are going to be meeting soon, and they will express their preference regarding summer grading at the next faculty meeting.

Report on admissions – Emeritus Professor Peter Winograd, Acting Director of

Admissions: Professor Winograd announced that there was good news from admissions! As of April 20, 2020, there were 110 deposits, which is well ahead of last year. Last year at this time, we only had 73 deposits. The total number of applications at this point is exactly the same as what it was last year at 458. Out of the 458, only 191 are New Mexico residents, the rest (267) are non-residents. Professor Winograd gave a few statistics about the deposits: 81 of them (74%) are residents, 29 (26%) are non-residents. The median GPA is 3.48, and the median LSAT score is 155. There are seven who identify as American Indian or Alaskan Natives, 2 are Asian-Americans, 5 identify as Black or African American, and 31 identify as Hispanic or other Latino. There are 56 women and 53 men (one person did not answer the question). Although these numbers are quite good, there is a lot of uncertainty in the world now, and we could lose people. In particular, many of these people have indicated that they are waiting to see if legal education will be in-person or on-line in the fall. Professor Winograd acknowledged the hard work of the Admissions Committee and the wonderful staff support, especially Diana Reynoso and Krysta Madrid-Arrellano. Lastly, he thanked the faculty, who have been making personal phone calls to accepted applicants, trying to convince them to submit these deposits. He especially wanted to thank Professor Maryam Ahranjani for chairing this committee. Dean Pareja also thanked Professor Winograd for coming out of retirement to do this work.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- **ACTION ITEM: Vote on honors and awards – Professor Mary Leto Pareja, Chair of Honors & Awards Committee:** The compiled list was presented from the Committee for review and discussion. When voted on, it passed unanimously as presented.

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.