

FACULTY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 DEAN OF INSTRUCTION REPORT
- 2 MECS DIVISION UPDATES
- 4 HUMANITIES DIVISION UPDATE
- 6 LIBRARY NEWS
- 9 BIT UPDATE
- 9 NEXT STEPS UPDATE
- 10 MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT
- 11 FEBRUARY 2026 FA DRAFT AGENDA
- 12 NOVEMBER 2025 FA MINUTES

DEAN OF INSTRUCTION REPORT

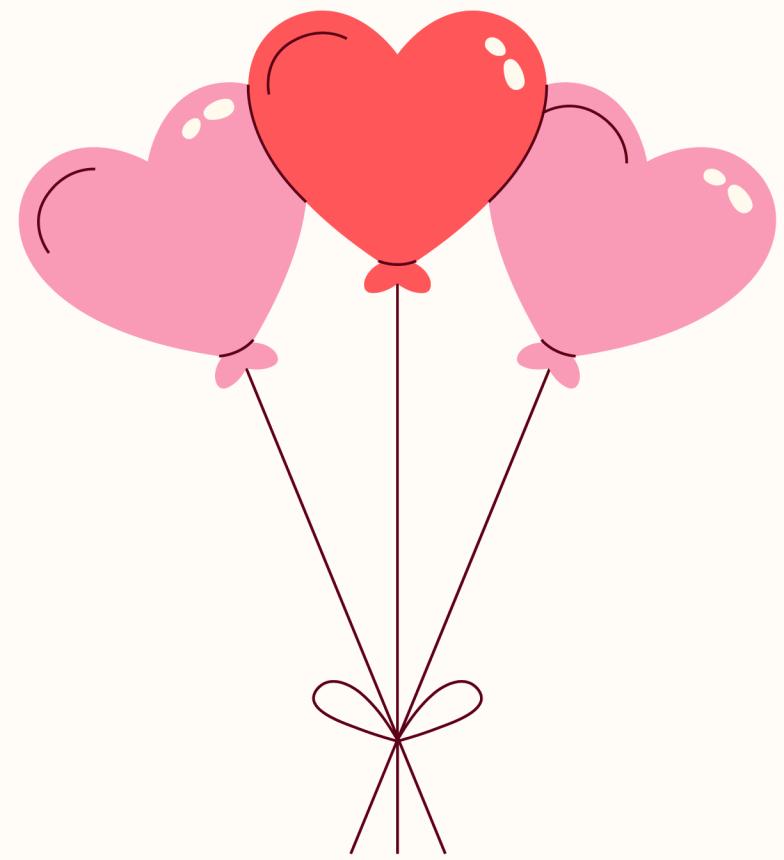
Dr. Laura Musselwhite

Hello everyone, and welcome to spring semester! Thus far, we are in the swing of things and classes are running smoothly. Thanks to everyone for the role you play in the running of our academic endeavors.

I am back in the classroom for the first time since 2022, and it is a great experience so far! It's good to get back to teaching and remember why we are in our crazy business – I just hope the students are having as much fun as I am! It is also time to start planning for summer and fall classes, so be on the lookout for communication from your division chair. With the advent of advising moving to Academic Affairs, we are fortunate to be receiving more "real time" feedback from students that can provide insights into scheduling, programs, etc. that will add nuances and key information to our schedule planning.

I want to commend the Library, the Pasos Resource Center, and the Writing Center for their collaboration and extra efforts during this time when we are missing the librarian and educational specialist positions. Everyone is doing yeoman's work to provide services for students, and those areas deserve some extra praise and recognition.





MECS DIVISION UPDATE

Andy Taylor

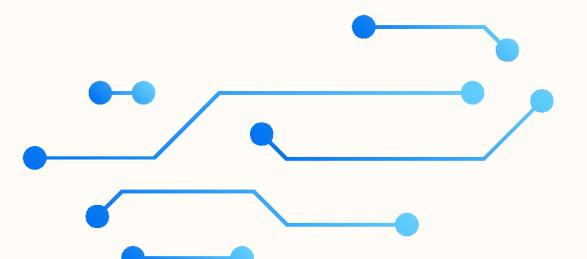
New MECS faculty:

New adjunct faculty joined the MECS division in SP26: Michelle Godfrey (welcome back, Michelle!) teaching Introductory & Intermediate Algebra, and Dr. Saulo Orizaga (welcome, Saulo!) teaching Calculus 3 and Introduction to Engineering Computing

Conference Activity:

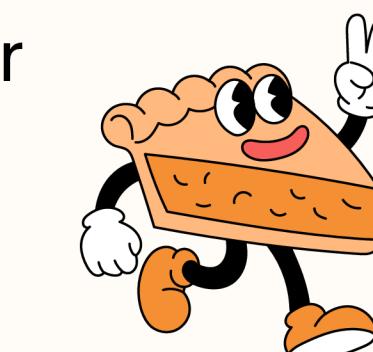
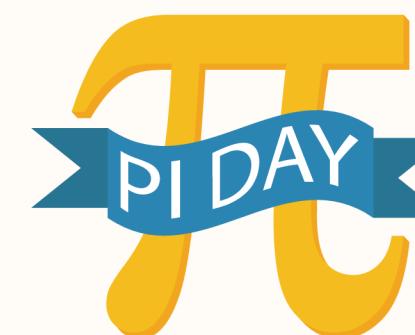
Precious Andrew presented "Seeing our Cultures through the Lens of Algebra: An Innovative College Algebra Assignment," at the CNM CTL Conference in January. Precious will attend the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) Spring Conference in Indianapolis, IN, February 11-13.

Upcoming Certificate Program (Fall 2026):
24-credit Artificial Intelligence/Data Science undergraduate certificate launching Fall 2026, created by Dr. Andisheh Dadashi and Hamim Adal



Upcoming Events:

Pi Day: Wednesday, March 12th, from 11:30am-1pm in SCC, running alongside the Wellness Fair



HUMANITIES DIVISION UPDATE

Ana N. June

I'm at the start of my second semester as Division Chair, and still working to find my equilibrium. The dumpster fire that is the world makes it even harder than normal to focus. I am teaching creative writing this semester, and am blown away by how deeply my students are thinking and writing about what's happening right now. It gives me hope even as it adds depth and dimension to my sadness.

Also giving me hope: Our wonderful colleagues. **Liz Axelrod**, MFA—Adjunct English Professor, Co-Chair of the Adjunct Committee and Black Cat Enthusiast—has been busy balancing teaching, writing, admin and leadership across UNM Valencia and beyond. In early January she presented at the CNM Center for Teaching and Learning Conference on ethics in the AI-supported classroom, focusing on transparency, equity, and increased student learning outcomes.

This spring, she will also be collaborating with **Anicca Cox** as Adjunct Committee Co-Chair to strengthen and enhance meetings, with the goal of building connection, and sharing support for UNMV adjunct faculty, and she will also be working with the CNM Creative Writing Committee on updating and editing a couple of chapters in the Poetry OER. In addition to her pedagogical work, Liz has been working for over two decades as a part-time grants administrator and is currently program manager for a K-12 educational equity initiative on Long Island, NY - now entering its fifth year. In summer 2025, she had the title poem from her upcoming manuscript *The Princess Manifesto* published in *Maintenant 19: A Journal of Contemporary Dada Writing and Art*, and she's honored to have had several poems requested and accepted for publication in late spring.

Patricia Gillikin conducted an improv workshop at the CNM Conference on Teaching and Learning January 9.



Play, Joy, and Engagement: An Improv Workshop

*CNM Conference on
Teaching and Learning
January 9, 2026*

Patricia Gillikin she/her
Professor of English and Writing
Center Director
UNM-Valencia

Justin Bendell is on sabbatical this semester, and writing many words. He just got back from Florida where he took this photo of a creature made from sea sponges:



HUMANITIES DIVISION UPDATE

Ana N. June

Leslie Jernegan is working on some creative projects—essays and something, dare she says, more book-leaning? She looks forward to seeing the shape it takes, but thinks naming an intention can help give it some oxygen. Leslie also traveled to Hong Kong and Taiwan over winter!



Our newest part-time English instructor, **Pooya Jamaly**, is a PhD candidate in English at the University at Albany, SUNY. His research focuses on modernist literature and theory. He has taught courses in composition, world literature, postcolonial studies, and globalization. He is pleased to join UNM-Valencia this year.

This semester, professors **Dominique Rodriguez** and **Anicca Cox** are partnering with the community at the Tomé Land Grant. Pairing an Advanced Spanish Course and an Intermediate writing course, students are learning histories of New Mexico, and Valencia county and research methodologies like archiving and oral history. In collaboration with our community partner, we will be building relationships between our campus and this local community to strengthen our regionally responsive curriculum and service learning engagement. Photo shows our first in-service day with the elders at Tomé where they shared a three hour history of their community.

Please reach out to either Dominique or Anicca if you would also like to be involved in future semesters!



Finally, what also gives me hope: The small people who brighten my days. Clementine, who is 3 now, is a proud big sister to Marceline Primrose Lea, born on December 23. She is the daughter of Graysen and Link, current and former PASOS Peer Mentors, respectively. Grandbaby number 4 (!!) will join the family in May, and Ollie, who turned 2 on Christmas Eve, will be the best big brother!



Above: Clementine holding Marceline on Christmas Day; Below: Ollie holding Marceline in February



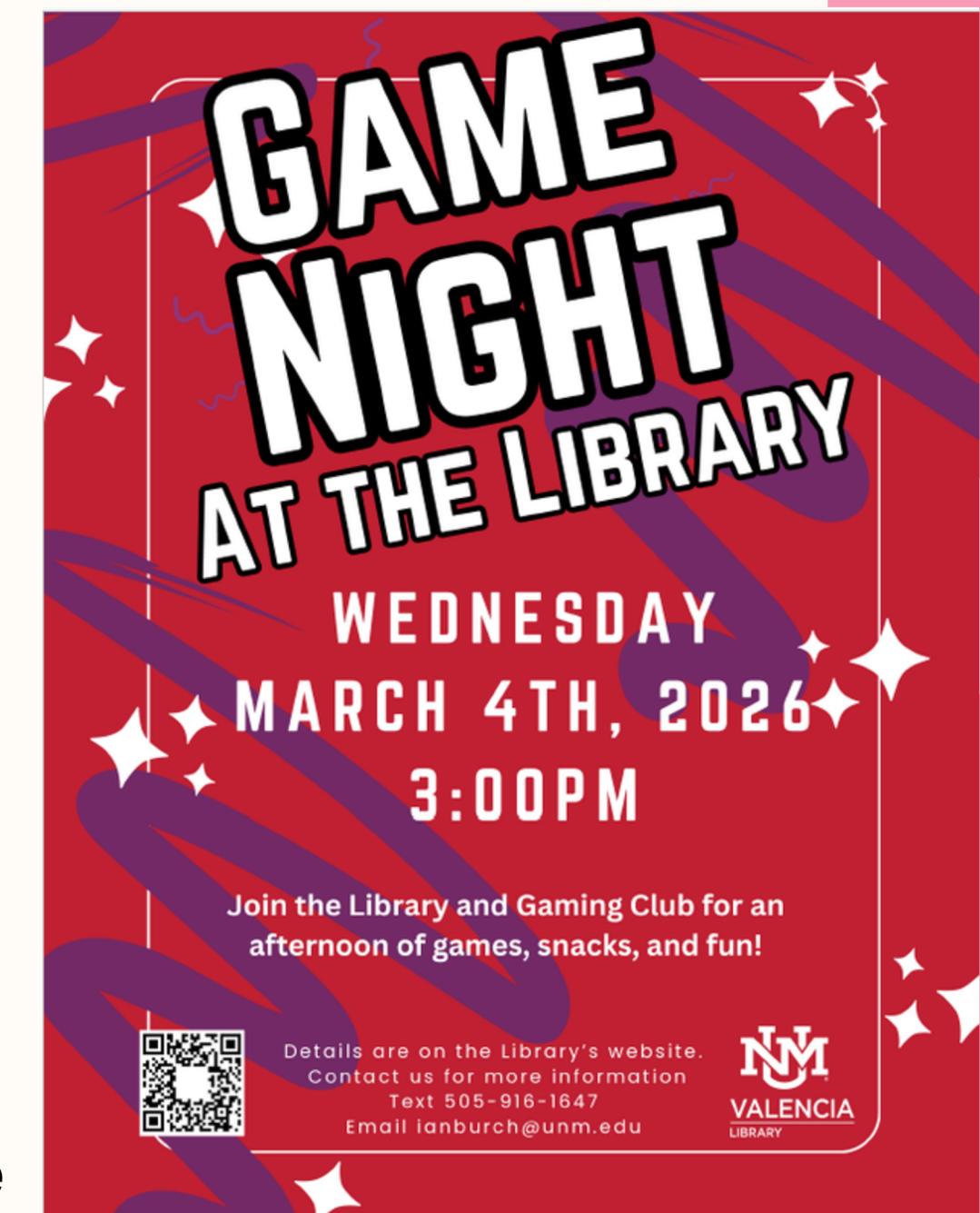
**Reduced hours
Library hours for Spring
2026 will be Monday
through Friday from
8:00am to 5:00 pm. Staffing
shortage may require
further reduction in hours
or closures throughout the
semester.**

Game Design Program. Students, faculty, staff, family, friends, and community members are all invited to gather in the Library for a few hours of board games, video games, laughter, and friendly competition. We'll have a variety of games available—and you're welcome to bring a favorite to share. Enjoy delicious snacks, enter our scholarship raffle, and compete for prizes throughout the event. Bring your friends, bring your family, invite your neighbors, and come enjoy a little mid-week merriment with us!

LIBRARY NEWS

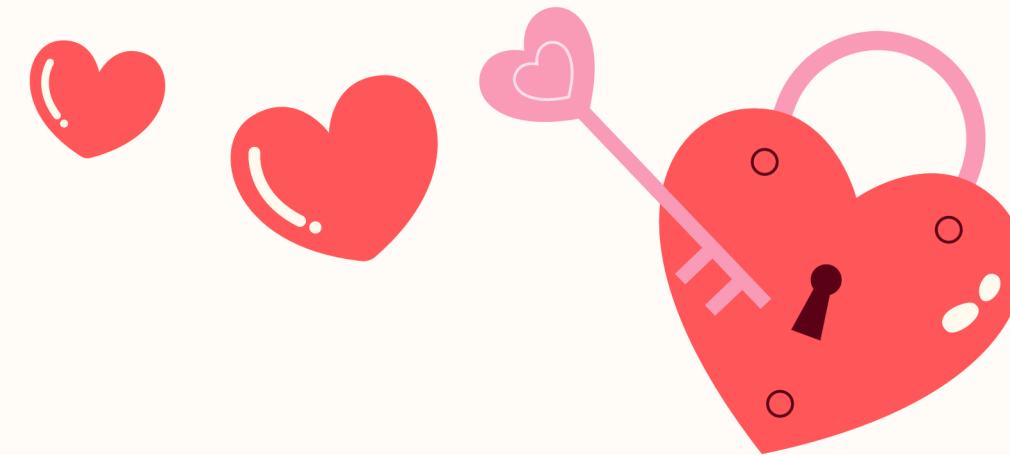
Dr. Barbara Lovato

Community Game Night
Wednesday, March 4 • 3:00 p.m. – 5:00
p.m. • UNM-Valencia Library
Join us for an afternoon of fun and
connection at our Community Game
Night, a recurring collaboration with the



The ASL Socials program returns this semester in support of students enrolled in Introduction to American Sign Language.

Through a collaborative partnership between ASL instructors and our ASL-fluent Librarian, students meet weekly in a relaxed, community-centered environment to practice ASL and build language confidence. The program is a unique model within New Mexico higher education and has contributed to improved student pass rates and successful entry into the ASL Interpreting bachelors degree program at Central Campus.



SPRING 2026

ASL SOCIALS

@ the Library

Voice-off Study Group for Intro to Sign

A weekly voice-off ASL conversation group for our Intro to Sign Language students and surrounding signing community. Join us at the Library to practice in a safe social setting.

Come See!

<http://valencia.unm.edu/library/>



BIT UPDATE

Melinda Schwartz

New BIT Faculty:

Two new adjunct faculty members joined the BIT Division in Spring 2026: Adam Gutierrez, who is teaching Welding, and Eric Longoria, who is teaching Concrete and HVAC.

Upcoming Programs (Fall 2026)

Three new 30+ hour certificate programs are launching in Fall 2026:

Plumbing Trades

HVAC Trades

Electrical Trades

Congratulations to Melinda Schwartz, UNM-Valencia Division Chair for Business and Industrial Technologies who was named Emerging New Professional by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) at their recent national conference in Nashville, Tennessee.





Our High School Equivalency program just had our January New Student Orientation and enrollment numbers increased from last fiscal year at this time.

Our next New Student Orientation is the week of March 16th! Students can register online in our website for High School Equivalency and English as a Second Language Classes, here: <https://nextsteps.nmdelt.org/>

Adult Education has moved to the B&T Building. Thank you to everyone that helped coordinate our move.

We will attend Adult Education Day at the Capital in Santa Fe on February 11th! Three of our students will receive outstanding student awards.

Wishing everyone success this Spring Semester!!

MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year, and welcome to the Spring 2026 semester! I hope you had a restful and rejuvenating break. I'm excited about the opportunities ahead and grateful for the incredible work you do every day. As we begin this new term, I want to thank you for your continued dedication to our students and campus community. Let's carry forward the momentum of last semester's successes as we work together toward another meaningful and productive semester. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the Faculty Executive Committee if we can support you in any way.

With appreciation,

Dr. Andisheh Dadashi

Faculty Assembly President

vfacpresident@unm.edu





Faculty Assembly Meeting Draft Agenda
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 (12:00 – 1:15 PM)
Zoom Meeting URL: <https://unm.zoom.us/j/96311052245> (Passcode: Feb26).
In-person Meeting in H101

1. Call to Order (1 min)
2. Acceptance of Agenda (1 min)
3. Approval of Minutes (1 min)
4. Chancellor's Report – Dr. Sam Dosumu (10 min)
5. Dean of Instruction's Report - Dr. Laura Musselwhite (10 min)
6. Treasurer's Report – Dr. Piotr Filipczak (1 min)
7. Committee Accomplishments for AY 25-26 (3 min per)
 - Faculty Professional Development Committee
 - Faculty Online Teaching & Review Committee
 - Curriculum Committee
8. Faculty Senate Report (5 min) Call for Senate Candidate
9. nominations and vote (15 min) Pedagogical Partnership
10. Program – Dr. Julia So (10 min)
11. Student Safety on Campus – Veronica Salcido, Armando Bustamante, and Leut. Killinger. (15 min)
New Business / Announcements
12.
 - New Faculty Checklist (Faculty Resources)
 - UNM Cross Campus Branch Faculty Town Hall (**April 3rd at 1:00–2:30 PM**)
13. Adjournment

Faculty Assembly Meeting Draft Agenda
Wednesday, November 19, 2025 (12:00 – 1:15 PM)
Zoom Meeting URL: <https://unm.zoom.us/j/91070894832> (Passcode: Nov25)
In-person Meeting in H101

1. Call to Order (1 min)

12:01: Andisheh Dadashi

2. Acceptance of Agenda (1 min)

Cheryl Bryan motions, Ana June seconds

3. Approval of Minutes (1 min)

- Julia So requested an update to the minutes to relocate her page-seven statement to the correct section/speaker.
- Content of the statement is accurate; the issue is placement only.
- Andisheh acknowledged updated newsletter distribution and confirmed minutes also need revision.
- Cheryl Bryan noted formatting problems in the regular minutes (spacing and disorganization) that require cleanup.
- Group agreed to proceed with corrections.

Motion to accept minutes with updates made by Cheryl; seconded by Ian Burch.

4. Chancellor's Report - Sam Dosumu (10 min)

- Andisheh: No Chancellor's report, he is out of town.

5. Dean of Instruction's Report - Laura Musselwhite (10 min)

- Laura Musselwhite highlighted a recent newspaper article featuring Piotr and his mentee, Rosa, and proposed creating a recurring newspaper series on faculty-student mentoring success stories.
- She invited faculty to volunteer mentor-student pairs (current or recent former students, roughly within the last two years), noting that student consent is required.
- Discussion affirmed that featuring past students could showcase successful outcomes and campus impact.
- Laura asked faculty to email her if interested in participating in the article series.

- She reminded faculty to reach out with questions regarding grading deadlines, noting that some key dates are not listed on the main campus calendar.

- Laura reported discussions with Los Lunas High School about expanding dual credit options using High-Flex modalities and will seek faculty input on benefits and challenges.

- Faculty discussed High-Flex issues, including student attendance expectations, scheduling conflicts, and the need for school-side structure and supervision.

- Laura indicated the initiative would require detailed coordination but aligns with moving students through programmatic cohorts rather than random class selection.

- Andisheh shared experiences of mixed success with high school students' participation and emphasized student motivation as a factor.

- Laura also reported attending a listening session related to the UNM presidential search, noting the goal to appoint someone by May and identifying the branch campus representative on the committee (from Gallup, Joe Kee).

6. Treasurer's Report - Piotr Filipczak (1 min)

- Piotr Filipczak reported current financials: faculty fund balance of **\$460.72** and snack fund balance of **\$58.85**.

- Lighthearted discussion noted the snack fund could cover approximately six burritos.

- Andisheh mentioned expenditures occurring that day and suggested postponing burrito purchases to next semester, joking about "burrito slices" in the interim.

- Instead of burritos now, funds will support hot chocolate and cookies for the Christmas decoration gathering.

- Ana June requested availability of **gluten-free options** for cookies; Andisheh agreed to check with the cafeteria and pursue adding this option.

- Reminder of the **Christmas decoration/tree-decorating gatherings** in the courtyard on **December 1-3**, with hot chocolate and cookies planned on December 1 and 2.

7. Committee Plans (2 min per)

• EIRG

- Dominique Rodriguez provided an EIRG update following a recent meeting with Dr. Nahid Othmano-Gracia from UNM upper administration regarding diversity, inclusion, community, and equity (DICE). Discussion focused on strengthening cross-campus collaboration on DEI initiatives and improving communication between Valencia and Albuquerque campuses. The group reviewed processes to qualify courses to meet the **General Education requirement for Critical Analysis of U.S. and Global Cultures**.



with plans to submit eligible courses in the spring so transferring students receive credit.

- A subcommittee is working on programming **cultural events** and continuing collaboration with **Pasos** on related activities.
- Faculty Handbook Committee
12:19 Andisheh: I'm the member, but we haven't had an update yet.
- Faculty Communication Committee
 - Precious Andrew reported continued work on the faculty newsletter, faculty resource page, and listserv; members also helped facilitate the cross-campus town hall organized by Andisheh, which went well.
 - Ana explained that she and Michael share newsletter duties and will implement a new, streamlined procedure in the spring to improve efficiency and submission processes.
 - The goal is to make submissions easier for faculty and improve adherence to deadlines.
 - Discussion explored creating a centralized repository (or living document) for text, photos, and other materials rather than relying on scattered email submissions.
 - Ana emphasized that a single living document would reduce repetitive copying and pasting from multiple files and simplify layout work.
 - The team plans to work through operational details and launch the new process in the spring, expecting minor issues but overall improved workflow.

Faculty Online Teaching Review Committee

- Kat Gullahorn reported two primary updates.
- First, initial course reviews have been completed; selected faculty participated, and reports will be distributed in the coming weeks.
- Second, the OTeX conference will be merged with the Albuquerque Spring Teaching Conference through CTL to consolidate presenters, reduce duplication, and improve attendance; the goal is to maintain strong Valencia participation in the unified event.
- Piotr noted (via chat) the suggestion of a shared OneDrive folder for uploads regarding the previous discussion; Ana confirmed support for this idea.



8. Union Contract Update- Scott Kamen (5 min)

- Scott Kamen reported that bargaining has officially reached **impasse**.
- A **bargaining impasse town hall** is scheduled for Friday; RSVP links were shared in the Zoom chat. The purpose is to explain the impasse process and encourage faculty participation in upcoming mediation sessions (tentatively December 9th and 15th).
- Cheryl asked about contentious items; Scott explained that many articles remain unresolved, with the largest sticking points being **workload policies** and **pathways from adjunct to lecturer positions**.
- If mediation does not resolve all issues, unresolved articles go to **arbitration**, where the arbitrator must choose either the administration's package or the union's package entirely.
- Scott explained the concept of "**trimming**" **proposals**, meaning both sides compromise to avoid extreme positions before arbitration.
- Arbitrators are selected from lists submitted by both parties, similar to a jury selection process.
- Faculty questions were addressed to clarify the process and expectations for mediation and arbitration.

9. UNM Valencia to sign Union Letter Vote - Justin or Anicca (10 min)

- Justin and Anicca presented an **open letter on academic freedom** developed by the Academic Freedom Working Group, with support from the union, Graduate Student Workers, Social Justice Committee, and Justice and Palestine Group.
- Purpose: to address federal and institutional actions affecting academic freedom and put pressure on UNM administration to protect faculty rights.
- Two faculty assembly asks were presented:
 1. Approve the **Branch Campus Council (BCC) signing on** to the letter.
 2. Approve the **UNM Valencia Faculty Assembly endorsing** the letter.
- Discussion clarified that this is a **collective, not individual**, vote; a separate petition campaign for individual faculty may occur later.
- Votes were administered via paper ballots (and Zoom for remote participants):
 - **First question (BCC sign-on):** Yeas—17, Nays—0, Abstain—5
 - **Second question (Valencia Faculty Assembly endorsement):** Yeas—17, Nays—0, Abstain—5
- Both motions were approved.
- A **third vote for the Senate representative** will occur later and is not related to the letter.
- Justin and Anicca indicated no additional items to address at this time.



10. Faculty Senate Report (5 min)

Our agenda is Senate report. Do we have our senators here? Justin and Steven.

- Justin provided additional Faculty Senate updates.
- **Open letter:** Already addressed; he noted continued involvement with BCCC.
- **MADSI resolution follow-up:** In response to the April faculty senate MADSI resolution, Valencia faculty are collaborating with CNM faculty to draft a **joint resolution opposing President Trump's "loyalty compact"**, which would tie funding to ideological compliance. The goal is to maintain academic integrity. Draft has been reviewed by the Ops committee and is expected on the Faculty Senate agenda in **January**; Justin will share via LISTSERV.
- **Presidential and provost search recommendations:** The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee has submitted **faculty-driven recommendations** for the presidential and provost searches, uploaded to the official feedback portal, and promoted to Ops and the Faculty Senate to ensure faculty voices are considered.
- Justin concluded by noting these are the main active Faculty Senate campaigns affecting Valencia and other campuses; no questions were raised.

11. Call for Senate Candidate nominations and vote (15 min)

- The Faculty Assembly discussed the need to select a **new Senate representative** for the spring semester, as Justin will not continue.
- Roles and responsibilities were clarified:
 - Two-year term, ideally staggered with another representative.
 - Attend **two meetings per month**: Faculty Senate (main campus) and Branch Campus Council/Community College group.
 - Involvement provides leadership experience beneficial for promotion/tenure.
 - Open to full-time faculty; adjuncts are generally not eligible.
- **Nominations:**
 - Anisa declined.
 - Andy Taylor self-nominated.
- **Vote:** Cheryl motioned, Ian seconded.
- **Result:** Unanimous approval; **Andy Taylor** will serve as Valencia Faculty Assembly Senator/representative for the spring semester.

12. New Business / Announcements

- **Town Hall:** Andisheh thanked facilitators and participants; survey feedback was very positive. The next town hall is planned for **April**, and faculty are invited to suggest breakout room topics or volunteer as facilitators.
- **Suggestion Box:** Faculty are encouraged to submit comments via the FEC-associated email. Andisheh will meet with Dr. Musselwhite to review submissions and address concerns in the next semester's Faculty Assembly meeting.
- **Staff & Faculty Art Exhibition:** Scheduled **today, 4–6 PM** at the campus Art Gallery. Notable faculty participants include Scott Kamen (two paintings).



- **Reading New Mexico Event:** Scheduled **today at 7 PM**, online via Zoom.
- **Artist Collective Luminaria Art Market:** Open call for vendors; \$10 booth fee goes to the student club, proceeds from sales go to vendors. Open to faculty, staff, students, and community members. Participation has increased, with many new voices and installation works this year.
- **All Campus Academy / Teaching Awards:** Faculty interested in teaching awards should attend the **Friday 10 AM session** to learn about updated award categories and submission process.
- **Faculty Christmas Tree Gathering:** Scheduled **December 1–2, 12–3 PM** with hot chocolate and cookies. Decoration removal is **December 8**, optional, without refreshments.
- Andisheh thanked attendees, apologized for sound issues, and wished everyone happy holidays, noting the next Faculty Assembly meeting will be next semester.

13. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 1:07 pm

Attendance

Andisheh Dadashi	KatGullahorn
Piotr Filipczak	ScottKamen
Laura Musselwhite	Precious Andrew
Precious Andrew	Michael Gonzales
Michael Gonzales	Justin Bendell
Justin Bendell	Jonathan Sims
Jonathan Sims	Hamim Md Adal
Hamim Md Adal	Andy Taylor
Andy Taylor	Barbara Lovato
Barbara Lovato	Cindi Goodman

Ana June
Dominique Rodriguez
Cheryl Bryan
Susan Yasenka
Ian Burch