



PROFESSIONAL SENATE MEETING MINUTES

6/6/2025

9:00 AM MDST | LRC 121 (Flex Room)

ATTENDANTS

- **Officers Present:** David Castro, Juan Hernandez, Sarahi Diaz
- **Senators Present:** Carmen Short, Chris Shuster, Vanessa Martinez, Vanessa Borunda.
- **In Person Attendees:** 10
- **Virtual Attendees:** 8

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Call to Order at 9:00 AM by Juan Hernandez

II. Approval of Agenda

David Castro presented the agenda to the attendees and motioned for an approval. Vanessa Borunda seconded the motion. The meeting agenda was approved.

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

David Castro presented the previous meeting minutes to the attendees and motioned for an approval. Carmen Short seconded the motion. The meeting agenda was approved.

IV. Introduction of New Senators

David Castro announced the election of the new senators: Carmen Short, Chris Shuster, Vanessa Martinez, and Vanessa Borunda. Each senator then introduced themselves and their department. David then explained the duties and responsibilities of the senators. Senators are to act as a voice for their respective areas. They are to attend the meetings and vote based on the needs and wants of the professional staff in their designated areas. He encouraged all professional staff senate members to seek out their senator if they have any concerns or ideas to be brought up at the next senate meeting.

V. Announcements

David Castro announced the upcoming updates to the webpage. He stated Greg Tripp will be overseeing an upgrade to the senate webpages that will include the agendas and minutes of the professional senate meetings. Current senate webpage has not been updated since 2020. Updates to come on this project.

VI. Open Discussion

- **Proposed Bylaw changes-** David Castro presented the proposed bylaw changes to the attendees. One of the items presented was to include hybrid (virtual and in person) meetings to make the meetings more accessible. Kim Rodriguez asked who is allowed to attend the professional senate meetings. David Castro answered her question stating, anyone who is classified as professional staff is allowed to attend the meetings. He also added that he will be sending a current list of professional staff and it will be updated regularly. These documents will be available in the new Professional Senate Teams files along with all other Professional senate documents.
The next proposed change was to include an article or section outlining how to rebuild the senate in the event of a collapse.
The proposed changes will be voted on in a future meeting.
- **Funds-** The Professional Senate was provided with a \$2,000 budget to be used by December 2025. Some of the proposed activities for the funds include: leadership training, filtered water dispensers, and a professional staff picnic. Romo Villegas suggested collaboration with the Support senate on professional development and stated we could use the NMMI facilities for this collaboration. Ignacio Madril suggested a

collaboration with other departments for a picnic in which we can give away donated prizes. Kim Rodriguez suggested a team building day at the Assurance Home.

Andrea Warton asked for the stipulations to use the funds. David Castro stated we were not given any parameters but that he would bring up the question to Dr. Powell. Ignacio Madril stated it may take some trial and error to have a project approved.

The proposed projects will be voted on in a future meeting.

- National Air Races- Chris Shuster voiced his concern about the procedures for remote work during the air races. David stated he will bring up the subject at the next admin council to try and get some clarification. Heidi Weeaks announced that she is looking for people to volunteer at the STEM booth. Anyone interested in volunteering will need to contact Heidi. Kim Rodriguez stated that there will be opportunities for students to receive scholarships to the aviation program. More information can be found at the National Air Races website. Updates on the National Air Races will be provided at future meetings leading up to the event.
- Future of the Professional Senate- The Professional Senate is looking at electing 4 more senators in 2026. The current 5 senators will serve in their positions for 3 years. The current council members will serve in their positions for 2 years. When it is time for the council members to step down the 5 current senators will be eligible to run for Professional Senate President. At that time the remaining 4 senators will be eligible to run for Professional Senate Vice President. Carmen Short asked if the term lengths can be reduced. David answered her question by stating it would be something that needs to be voted on and changed in the constitution.
- Logo- Romo Villegas suggested contacting Martha Staab to assist in creating a logo for the Professional Senate. David stated it is something we could look into.
- Senate Accomplishments- Kim Rodriguez asked for examples of the previous accomplishments of the Professional Senate. David provided the examples of the tuition waivers for family and spouses, half day Fridays, and the allowed 20-minute breaks. Romo Villegas stated that the professional senate was a way to collaborate on committees to make the staffs voices heard. Kim Childress stated that in 2017 the professional senate helped change the classifications of many employees from at will to professional which allowed people to speak their minds.
- Core Staff- Heidi Weeaks asked who is classified as core staff. Andrea was able to provide a list of employees who are considered core staff.

VII. Adjournment

Juan Hernandez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vanessa Martinez seconded the motion. The Professional senate meeting was adjourned at 9:30 AM.