

NMSU Pioneers Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 25, 2018, 10:00 a.m. Alumni Center

1. Call to Order

President Gregg Throneberry called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He introduced Armando Molina, NMSU Benefits Director.

2. Review and Approval of February 13, 2018 Minutes

A correction was made to the spelling of Denise Welsh's name. Anna Price moved to accept the minutes, and Emmitt Brooks seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

3. Benefits Update

Armando Molina began as Benefits Director in February 2018. The benefits specialist in the Benefits office who will handle retiree issues is Ashley Legaretta. She began July 1, 2018. The Medicare deductible for Part A increased. The Benefits Office is working with Blue Cross/Blue Shield on the proposals for the retiree plan for 2019. As soon as that is finalized, notices will be sent to all retirees. The retiree plan is on a calendar year basis.

4. Purpose of the NMSU Pioneers

Gregg Throneberry began the discussion of the role of the Pioneers. The Bylaws Article I states that "The objectives of the NMSU PIONEERS are to capitalize on the experiences of former employees...to translate those experiences into initiatives that will advance the objectives of the University and its employees." A copy of the bylaws will be given to each Board member. Gregg asked for input from the Board members.

Debbie Widger gave some history of activities in the past including working with oral histories. Originally the biannual meeting was called "Pioneer Day" and lasted from noon through the afternoon. Due to problems with driving in the dark, the meetings were changed to the luncheon format. The book scholarship was started. Joe Creed was interim vice president and worked with the President's Office as an advocate for retirees. The Pioneers organization acted as a liaison for retirees to help NMSU. She speculated that now people don't have the time. Some projects such as the Centennial Cookbook took a lot of effort. NMSU was smaller so there were closer connections among employees who retired. Many felt a relationship with President Thomas. Now information on NMSU is obtained via social media so perhaps Pioneers do not feel the need to attend the luncheons.

Helen Molina outlined other previous activities such as helping students move into dorms, fund raisers for KRWG, feeding students in the dorm during Christmas holidays, and volunteer work on campus. Fewer members took part in these activities, and attendance dwindled because it seemed that the Pioneers organization was not doing anything. Leslie Cervantes said that they have the same problem with alumni. More of them contact friends via social media.

Anna Price likes the idea of volunteer work. There are people who are looking to volunteer and might be guided. Denise Welsh suggested the call for volunteers could be put in the Pioneers

newsletter. Volunteers could be solicited for events such as the Employee Picnic, Giving Tuesday, and student interaction. Anna Chieffo suggested the use of name tags to identify the volunteer as a Pioneer. Mel Ortiz cautioned against putting out huge lists of volunteer activities but preferred that two or three be given focused attention. As they become successful, momentum might then build for additional activities.

Emmitt Brooks wants to preserve the history of NMSU and its employees, citing examples of historical records being discarded. The Pioneers can be influential in bringing the need to members' attention.

Debbie Widger recalled that the NMSU Archives staff members were previously more directly involved with the Pioneers with the oral history project and with "Who's This Pioneer?" presentations at the luncheons. There has been turnover in the Archives staff, but Danielle Gibbs will try to contact them. They will be invited to speak to the Board and perhaps at the luncheon. The archivists can be helpful in composing standard questions for volunteers to use. Mel Ortiz suggested that there could be an exit interview at the time of retirement when the retiree might be more willing to speak frankly.

George Abernathy shared that retirees may be more active just after retirement and become less active as time goes on due to having less energy.

Gregg summed up the discussion as falling into two themes: 1. Increased activity with events, students and staff. 2. Renew gathering of information to preserve the historical record.

5. Membership Committee

Dianna Gibson reported that the committee members have been contacting Pioneers via phone and email. The three members (Dianna, Denise Welsh, Anna Chieffo) have contacted approximately 66 people to date. By forwarding the luncheon invitation along with a personal email, those members will see it twice. This is an ongoing process with the goal of increasing participation via personalized contacts.

6. Scholarship Committee

Anna Price discussed the Scholarship Committee. Leslie Cervantes and Anna met to build a rubric for randomly choosing 15 applicants from approximately 3,500 students who met the Pioneers' criteria. The committee members (Anna, Emmitt Brooks, Denise Welsh, Debbie Widger, and Anna Chieffo) received blind packets on April 25 and chose the top four students with 3 alternates. All four accepted. The money is awarded in two parts for the Fall and Spring semesters. The students' names will be placed on the website and in the newsletter. The committee is now discontinued due to the new procedure established at the last meeting of the Board (see Item 8 below).

7. Financial Report

- a. The Scholarship fund had \$5,072 at the end of the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2018. Since then, \$4,000 has been awarded in scholarships leaving a balance of \$1,072.

- b. The Pioneers general fund had \$2,138.92 on June 30. The expenses for the luncheons exceeded the revenues. Getting additional attendees will help. One future activity will be to call those who make a reservation but do not attend or pay. They may not realize that the venue charges Pioneers for the number of reservations. Anna requested that future financial reports break out the revenues and expenses by each lunch date.

8. Pioneer Gift Agreement

Leslie Cervantes reviewed the new procedure for choosing book scholarship winners under the Current Use Agreement. A copy of the Agreement was provided to Board members. The recipients will be selected using computer rubrics that follow the Pioneers criteria. Gregg Throneberry will sign the Agreement on behalf of the Pioneers.

9. Luncheon Discussions

- a. For the August 14 lunch, the invitations have already been sent out via email. The Advancement Office will mail invitations to those who do not have email.
- b. The November 14 date was changed to November 13 since it is a Tuesday.
- c. The March 13, 2019, date was changed to March 12. The plan is to hold all future luncheons on Tuesdays if possible.

10. Advancement Update

Leslie Cervantes related that 79 percent of the fundraising goal of \$125 million has been raised to date. The plan is to raise the remaining amount by December 2019. This is the second year in a row the NMSU Foundation showed the highest level of donations. The football tailgate locations have been moved for the UNM and homecoming games to the Crimson Lot, SE corner of the Pan Am parking lot.

11. Other Business

- a. Gregg Throneberry recommended a letter be given to the scholarship recipients explaining the Pioneers Book Scholarship. He also asked that members interact with the students who attend the luncheon.
- b. In the past, the scholarships were designated in honor of past Pioneers Board presidents who have died. Debbie Widger will look at the lists to resume this practice.
- c. A list of "Fallen Pioneers" (those who have died) was once read at the luncheons. It has been difficult to get those names.

12. Adjournment

George Abernathy made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Denise Welsh. The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.