

Farmington Town Hall Meeting
August 29, 2007

Gary Hathorn convened the meeting at 10:15 a.m. The San Juan County Extension faculty and staff, the Agricultural Science Center at Farmington faculty and staff, and dean and associate deans were introduced. Dean Catlett opened the floor to questions and comments.

Margaret West of the Agricultural Science Center expressed concern that there was not an adequate, visible presence for NMSU academic programs in the San Juan College complex or a clear point of contact for prospective students. (Wes Holley said he would give a number to a new employee of his who would assure follow up for prospective students.)

Carol Cloer a farmer and educator noted that the 30th Street complex of San Juan College was supposed to have universities presence there for San Juan College and that there was more presence from Highlands and UNM than NMSU. There had been talk of an admission's counselor being stationed there from NMSU, but that had not transpired. She said it would be worthwhile having a full-time person from NMSU, there. She noted that with the presence of NAPI, there was a tremendous potential for agricultural curricula. She noted that NMSU outline curricula and see if there is a market for it before committing resources to local teaching in the four corners area. She said to consider using ITV, augmented by local science teachers and consider joining with other universities to offer programming. She also complimented NMSU for responsiveness to her needs as a farmer. She noted that there were 128,000 people in San Jun County. (Dean Catlett said it was his intention to work as a partner with other higher ed institutions.)

Jack Root, an Extension and Research Support Council member, suggested that NMSU place a kiosk in the San Juan College student union to promote academic programs. He also asked for assistance from NMSU to rural individuals in evaluating broad-band access alternatives. He noted he was still on dial-up service.

Mick O'Neill of the Agricultural Science Center, noted that San Juan College, Navajo Prep, Diné College and Navajo Tech all have expressed interest in curriculum guidance and teaching input in agriculture. He wondered if it would be considered to have a full-time teacher from NMSU service some or all of these institutions. He noted that adding teaching load to existing research faculty was not preferred or practical. (Wes Holley noted that the university was giving \$100,000 college-wide to pursue creative ways of addressing teaching needs at a distance. Paul Gutierrez said it was his hope that extension and research faculty could add value through labs, rather than take on full teaching roles.)

Rick Arnold, of the agricultural science center, raised the issue of need for updated equipment and concern for how long it takes to fill positions. (Dean Catlett said President Martin was concerned about the time it took to fill positions and said it must be speeded up.)

Theresa Showa, a small-scale farmer from Ganado, Arizona expressed disappointment with responses from land-grant institutions to her needs. She called for more programming aimed at helping new small-scale farmers and to encourage young people on the Navajo reservation to rediscover farming. She suggested that NMSU have an MOU with the Farm Board officials of the Navajo Nation. (Several staff from the Agricultural Science Center offered assistance and pointed out programming that was oriented to her needs. She toured the science center following the meeting.)

The meeting was adjourned for informal interchange and lunch at 11:45 a.m.