

Office of the President

Policy Development at New Mexico Tech

Effective Date: July 1, 2004

Policy Category: Administration

Approved by: University President

Introduction

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines “policy” as “a plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, or business, intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters.” The purpose of this policy statement is three-fold:

- To define “policy” as it pertains to processes and procedures formally approved by the New Mexico Tech Board of Regents;
- To distinguish “regent policy” from “administrative policy”, and to distinguish “policy” from “procedure”;
- To articulate the process through which policies can be developed and adopted.

Intradepartmental procedures do not meet regent or university policy criteria, and therefore are *not* considered university policy. Please refer to the following section to distinguish among them.

Policy Types

1. **Board of Regents Policies.** Board of Regents policies generally deal with the university as a whole by providing guidelines and rules to which the university must adhere. Regents policies are intended to be enduring, rather than a response to a particular issue. Examples of Regents policies include, but are not limited to: Appointments, Promotion and Tenure, Sabbatical Leave, Travel Funding, and Cost Share Guidelines for Sponsored Programs.

Policies to be considered by the Board of Regents as *regents policies* will be identified as such. If and when such a policy is approved, it will be adopted as a formal regents policy. Amendments to regents policies also require Board approval. The Office of Budget and Analysis maintains a chronological record of all policies approved by the Board.

(Note: Not all actions taken by the Board of Regents are policy actions, but they still may be of critical importance to New Mexico Tech. Examples include approval of a university budget, selection of a president, and approval of a particular doctorate program.)

2. **Administrative Policies.** Administrative policies, also called university policies, are needed to operate New Mexico Tech in accordance with state and federal legislation,

such as campus health and safety standards, records retention, financial operations, and rules governing student behavior on campus. The scope of university policies is extensive, ranging from rules governing the university as a whole, to individual departments or offices, including those off-campus.

- 3. Administrative Procedures.** An administrative procedure is a process, as opposed to a formal rule. For example, the steps a student must take to receive financial aid, or to register for classes online, or to drop or add a class, are all governed by internal procedures. The New Mexico Tech Student Handbook outlines procedures relevant to students, as well as university policies. The Academic Affairs website provides information of interest to incoming or current faculty, such as how to arrange for travel fund reimbursement and the student evaluation process, as well as those policies that govern the collegiate division. Administrative procedures can be amended or revised following changes in personnel or a reorganization of departmental/office duties as the university and its functions develop. Clearly, Board of Regent approval for procedural revisions would not be necessary, although the Board may be notified of any significant changes.

Conflicts

- 1. Administrative Policies.** If a policy or portion of a policy approved by the Board of Regents is found to be in conflict with administrative policy, Board of Regents policy takes precedent
- 2. State or Federal Law.** If a policy or portion of a policy approved by the Board of Regents is found to be in conflict with state or federal legislation, or if legislation is passed which conflicts with a regents policy, it is the position of the Board of Regents that such policy, or portion of policy, shall no longer be in force. This provision is in effect when New Mexico Tech's legal counsel or other authority notifies the board chair of the conflict. *If no policy exists regarding a particular issue, the university must defer to state or federal law.*

Process

The Office of the President has adopted the following procedure for developing administrative or university policy. The President has the authority to determine if a particular policy requires Board of Regents' approval.

1. Concept agreement: Receive approval on the concept and determine, with the department chair/director/immediate supervisor, all constituent(s) impacted by the policy being developed.
2. Seek input from all affected parties, perform research, and document.
 - The President shall appoint a committee comprised of university constituents affected by changes in administrative policy. Members should include, but not be limited to, representatives from the President's Cabinet, the New Mexico Tech

- Student Association, Faculty Council, Council of Chairs, and New Mexico Tech staff. The proposed policy should be aired before the person(s) who proposed the policy, subject matter experts, potential users of the proposed policy, and representatives of groups affected by the policy.
- One example of the process is the revised Visa policy for non-U.S. citizens which was vetted before the constituent groups affected by its ramifications before going to the Board of Regents for approval.
 - Example two: if the New Mexico Tech Faculty Council wants to establish an academic honesty policy, the Council would have to meet with all affected parties, including the Dean of Students, faculty and student body representatives, as part of the process to develop the policy.
- Conduct research: Search websites for similar policies at other universities, and for state and federal laws relevant to the proposed policy.
 - Document the process.
3. Write a draft policy using the policy template posted on New Mexico Tech's website at www.nmt.edu/~policy.
 4. Route the final draft for review by the President's Policy and Procedures Committee to ensure the appropriateness and readability of the proposed policy. The Committee can return the draft policy with recommendations for modification, or can meet with policy supporters for clarification.
 5. The President's Policies and Procedures Committee will forward the proposed policy to the appropriate university officer for review. The officer will determine if legal assistance is required before forwarding the proposed policy to the President.
 6. The President determines whether or not the proposed policy requires Board of Regents' approval. The President has the option of remanding the proposed policy to the originating party with recommendations for revision.
 7. Once approved by the President or the Board of Regents, information pertaining to the new policy is disseminated throughout the campus community through a news release posted on New Mexico Tech's website, and/or through an email message or Presidential memorandum.
 8. The President's Policies and Procedures Committee must ensure that the new policy is accessible to all affected parties, in both electronic and hard-copy format.