

Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee Preliminary Report on Draft Employee Handbook

- The committee has reviewed feedback from various sources and solicits further feedback.
- We've reviewed 4 hot-button issues
 - **News Media** , p. 77
 - **Response to a Reference Inquiry** , p. 78
 - **Personal Appearance**, p. 71.
 - **Students as employees?**

News Media, p. 77

- “The official spokesperson for New Mexico Tech is the President, or the person designated by the President to speak to the news media. Employees receiving inquiries from the news media with regard to any matter regarding New Mexico Tech are to refer the inquiry to the President’s office. No employee, with the exception of those persons designated by the President, may speak with the news media. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.”

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News Media, p. 77

- Revised version (today) from HR: “The official spokesperson for New Mexico Tech is the President, or the person designated by the President to speak to the news media. Academic, research, and other related topics are excluded from this policy.”
- Recommendation: New Mexico Tech will not abrogate the First Amendment rights of its employees. (or simply delete this section)

Response to a Reference Inquiry,

p. 78

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- **Recommendation: Delete entirely.**

Personal Appearance, p. 71

- “Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees, and affect the professional image that New Mexico Tech conveys to those persons who come in contact with this Institute. During business hours and at any New Mexico Tech function, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance, and to dress according to the requirements of their positions and the function. Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed may be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire.”

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- **Recommendation:** Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of all employees, and affect the professional image that New Mexico Tech conveys to those persons who come in contact with this Institute. During business hours and at any New Mexico Tech function, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance, and to dress according to the requirements of their positions and the function. ~~Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed may be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire.~~

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- “This handbook applies to all employees with the exception of students employed through the Financial Aid Office.” P. 1 and elsewhere in the draft Handbook.
- Recommendation: The distinction between employees and students should be clarified. For example, grad TAs and RAs are not employed through the Financial aid office and thus appear to be covered by the Employee Handbook.

Final recommendation:

- NMT employees and students, as well as the committee, need more time to review the draft handbook and to make further recommendations.
- We understand the desire to have this in place for the HLC review, but we suggest that a thoughtful review by all stakeholders will reflect better on NMT than an expedient, top-down adoption of policy.
- We recommend further discussion at the April Senate meeting and thus postponement of presentation to the Regents.