



To: GES Faculty

From: Maria Lane, Chair, Department of Geography & Environmental Studies

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Maria Lane'.

Re: Chair's Policy on family members

Date: 15 August 2018

In spring 2018, I notified the Dean that we were not able to develop faculty consensus about moving forward with a spousal/family policy as he had requested. I recommended instead that A&S consider taking this up at the College level, to avoid putting the burden of policy development on a single department. In the meantime, I will continue as chair to implement what I consider best practices for healthy departmental communication and function when the GES faculty includes multiple members of a single family. To ensure transparency, these expected practices are listed below.

Overview:

A strength of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies is its family-friendly approach to faculty, including when family members are also UNM faculty members. These practices are intended to prevent conflicts of interest when two or more family members are also faculty members within the department, and to establish guidelines to fortify collegiality and promote effective communication amongst all faculty members when the faculty includes members of a single family. For purposes of this document, “family member” refers to any spouse, domestic partner, sibling, parent, or child.

Practices:

As Chair, I will implement the following practices:

1. All faculty members will be addressed and treated as individuals, rather than as part of a “family unit.” No colleague will be expected to speak or act on behalf of a family member.
2. In cases where all caregivers from a single family have teaching assignments in GES, family members will not be assigned to teach in the same exact time slot on any given day, to avoid the potential for teaching disruptions due to unexpected caregiving needs.
3. I will not nominate or appoint two family members to service assignments where they would constitute a voting majority on an official faculty committee or sub-committee. Likewise, no faculty member will be appointed to serve on a committee that is chaired by his/her family member.

4. I will ensure that proper recusal practices are followed to ensure that faculty members do not participate in any faculty vote and/or discussion of a faculty vote that would directly and individually impact their family member's career advancement, service load, merit determination, or any other material condition of their employment. This does not apply to faculty votes and/or discussions of faculty votes that will apply to the faculty as a whole, or a substantial portion of the faculty as a whole beyond the relevant family member colleague.
5. I encourage any member of GES to contact me directly to discuss or seek clarification on (a) expectations for family members, (b) treatment of family members by the dept chair, staff, faculty colleagues, students, etc, (c) implementation of these practices, or (d) any other issue related to family members on the GES faculty.