NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS REGULAR MEETING
August 18, 2026, at 1:00 PM

Educational Services Building, Regents Room
1780 E. University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM

Regents Present:	Chair Ammu Devasthali, Vice Chair Deborah Romero, Secretary/Treasurer Christopher T. Saucedo, Marisol Olivas, Ricardo Gonzales
Advisory Members:	ASNMSU President Carina Frisch, Faculty Senate Chair Kristian Finlator, Employee Council Chair Sonia A. White.
Officials Present:	Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs Joseph Bull, Vice President for Administration and Finance, Allen Bottorff, General Counsel, Lisa Henderson.

MINUTES

I. **Call to Order**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali called the regular meeting of the New Mexico State University Board of Regents to order at 1:00 PM.

A. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by NMSU Army ROTC Cadet Karmen Yousif. She is a biology major starting her second year at NMSU.

B. **Introduction of the Media and Elected Officials,** *Chief of Staff Justin Bannister*

Julia Gentin from *The Santa Fe New Mexican* was recognized as present.

C. **Introductions**

a) **Introduction of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Joseph Bull,** *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

Dr. Joseph Bull was officially introduced as the new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for NMSU effective July 13, 2026.

D. **Confirmation of Quorum**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

The roll was called to verify attendance. All five voting members of the Board of Regents were verified as present online. Advisory members President Frisch, Chair Finlator, and Chair White were also confirmed present, alongside administrators Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Bull, General Counsel Henderson, and Vice President Bottorff. President Ferme was not present at the

meeting.

E. **Approval of the Agenda**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

Regent Olivas moved the approval of the agenda as presented and Regent Romero seconded. The agenda was approved as presented.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

A. Special Meeting on July 2, 2026

The minutes of the special Board of Regents meeting held on July 2, 2026, were presented for consideration. Regent Gonzales moved approval of the minutes, Regent Saucedo seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

III. **Awards and Recognitions**

A. **Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Adam Cavotta as Chief of Staff to the New Mexico State University Board of Regents,** *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

Chairwoman Devasthali read the proclamation as follows:
WHEREAS, Adam Cavotta has provided exemplary service to the New Mexico State University Board of Regents for more than 8 years, ensuring that board members are given extraordinary support ; and

WHEREAS, Regent Rico Gonzales said, "Adam Cavotta has served the NMSU Board of Regents with exceptional dedication, strategic vision, and steady leadership as Chief of Staff, leaving a lasting and positive impact on our university community. Personally, thank you for guiding me through every step of becoming a Regent; your steady mentorship and wisdom have been invaluable as I navigated this learning process. Wishing you the absolute best!"; and

WHEREAS, Student Regent Marisol Olivas said, "Adam has been my closest confidant, and words can't fully express my sincere gratitude for his unwavering support and guidance. Throughout my entire term, your wealth of institutional knowledge, wisdom, and thoughtful counsel have been invaluable. Your unwavering service to the Regents has left a lasting impact, and I will always be grateful for having the privilege of working alongside you.";

WHEREAS, Regent Chris Saucedo said, "His exceptional knowledge, unwavering dedication, and trusted counsel made him an indispensable resource for the Board of Regents and for me specifically. He anticipated what I needed to be an effective Regent, thoughtfully accommodated the demands of my professional career, and worked seamlessly with my staff. His dedication to supporting the Board and advancing the mission of the university will be missed."; and

WHEREAS, Regent Deborah Romero said, "As Chief of Staff for the NMSU Board of Regents, Adam consistently anticipated my needs before I even recognized them myself. There was never a time when I needed his support that he did not make himself available, and he always followed through with care, professionalism, and reliability."; and

WHEREAS, Regents Chair Ammu Devasthali said, "It has been a distinct pleasure to work

with Adam during my seven years as Regent. His unwavering dedication, integrity, attention to detail, and steadfast loyalty have made him an exceptional Chief of Staff. I am deeply grateful for his continued commitment in helping onboard our new Chief of Staff, and I wish him every success in all his future endeavors."; and

WHEREAS, President Valerio Ferme said of Adam, "He has been a force to be reckoned with in his advocacy for the Board of Regents throughout his career, and has ensured that the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed when it comes to the correct and accurate running of all Board matters. He and his family have also been incredibly attentive to the needs of my own family as we spent time getting to know the university and Las Cruces. I honor his service and thank him for helping all of us."

NOW, Therefore, Be It Proclaimed in official session that the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University expresses its deep gratitude to Adam Cavotta for his years of dedicated service and wishes him great success in his future endeavors.

Proclaimed this 18th day of August 2026, at Las Cruces, New Mexico.

IV. **Regent Committee Reports**

A. **Audit and Risk Committee,** *Regent Ricardo Gonzales*

Regent Gonzales reported that the Regents Audit and Risk Committee met on June 11, 2026. During this meeting, the committee received a comprehensive update on completed internal audits from Interim Chief Audit Officer John Frye, as well as held the entrance conference with the external independent auditor, Baker Tilly.

During the briefing, Mr. Frye provided details on completed audits, the Training, Leadership, & Management Audit, HR – Employment & Compensation Audit, and the Q3 FY 2026 EthicsPoint Update. An update on the Moran Technology Audit was also provided. The committee reviewed the current status of the FY 2026 audit plan and approved the minutes from the February 2026 meeting.

B. **Real Estate Committee,** *Regent Ammu Devasthali*

Regent Devasthali reported that the Regents Real Estate Committee met on July 29, 2026. The committee approved the Sunflower Center access easement that was placed on the consent agenda as item VII A on today's agenda. The committee also received updates on pending real estate transactions and agreements and a revised Real Estate Transaction List. Following the Real Estate meeting, an Aggie Development Incorporated meeting was held.

C. **Financial Strategies, Performance and Budget Committee Report,** *Regent Deborah Romero*

Regent Romero reported that the Regents Financial Strategies, Performance, and Budget Committee met on August 13, 2026, to address several significant capital projects and fiscal reports. During the meeting, the committee unanimously approved five capital requests including NMSU Alamogordo Townsend & Pro Tech Exterior Improvements, demolition and new greenhouse at the Agricultural Science Center in Artesia, shop demolitions and construction of new lab at Agricultural Science Center at Alcalde, new Leyendecker administrative office building, and the reroof of Hadley Hall. The committee also approved the disposition and deletion of capital property and the FY26 Research and Public Service

Projects funding requests.

Additionally, the committee approved the New Mexico Higher Education Department 4th Quarter Financial Certification report and the FY28 Research & Public Service Projects and Special Appropriations.

The committee discussed the recent update to the New Mexico Administrative code (NMCAC 5.3.10.8). This update raises the threshold for capital project requests for HED staff approval.

V. **Advisory Member Reports**

A. **Associated Students of NMSU Report,** *President Carina Frisch*

President Frisch reported that on August 17th ASNMSU had their orientations for the executive and legislative branches. Aggie Beginnings was very fun even with the unfortunate rain delay. ASNMSU will have a couple of events happening this week to welcome students back to campus!

Each of our departments are looking at new ways to increase student involvement on campus. Keep State Great is planned for October 24, 2026, each year our turnout increases so President Frisch was hopeful to continue to see that upward trend. The hours for Pete's Pickup, our safe ride on campus, have been extended to run from 6-11, Monday-Thursday. President Frisch reported that ASNMSU switched the contract for the Airport Shuttle to run through Uber and is working on expanding the service to provide safe rides back to campus as well.

The ASNMSU legislative branch will have their first senate meeting on August 27th.

The ASNMSU judicial branch is working on their fall activities and parking appeals will be beginning soon.

B. **NMSU Faculty Senate Report**, *Chair Kristian Finlator*

Faculty Senate Chair Finlator reported that the Faculty Senate leadership has had a productive summer in preparation for the 26/27 Academic year. Faculty Senate is currently pursuing five initiatives.

Senator Manis has drafted a resolution that will amend the bylaws to the Global Faculty Advisory Council so that the Faculty Senate Chair, Vice Chair, or their appointed delegate will have a voting seat. This codifies the status quo and clarifies an ambiguity that was created when President Gogue amended the original resolution that created the Council.

Senator Holguin has drafted a resolution formally requesting a systemwide task force that will study how acknowledgment for faculty innovation and entrepreneurship can be incorporated into promotion and tenure. Following national recommendations, the task force will begin with a “Gap Analysis” and then formulate recommendations for College-Level Functions and Criteria documents. At present, the envisioned committee will include representation from the University Research Council, the VPR’s office, Arrowhead, and the Faculty Senate, but the resolution will likely see further amendment before final passage.

Senator Holguin has separately drafted a resolution requesting a systemwide task force to consider dual-career issues for faculty. Anecdotally, this is widely acknowledged to be a serious impediment to

recruitment and retention of excellent faculty, but no systemwide support framework is available to Department Heads who need a solution.

Senator Abdelkefi and Prof. Arslan have drafted a resolution that will adjust and clarify the eligibility requirements for the Open Access Publication Fund. This fund, which President Ferme and Provost Bull have generously supported, provided $44,895 during its pilot year enabling 28 underfunded faculty to publish original research in Open Access journals. With better publicity and eligibility requirements, we hope to do even better over the upcoming year.

Senator Pimentel and Deputy Provost McAteer have drafted a memorial acknowledging the first Faculty Success Faculty Fellow for her foundational work.

In addition to these initiatives, Faculty Senate will consider modifications to General Education Course Certification Process, coursework accommodations for tribal students, and the duration of the beginning-of term shopping period. Faculty Senate will also be following up on bills that were passed last year related to topics including non-tenure track faculty, the AI taskforce, and undergraduate student success.

C. **NMSU Employee Council Report**, *Chair Sonia A. White*

Chair White noted that the first Employee Council meeting is on Thursday, August 20, 2026. The council will be working to plan the upcoming Employee Picnic that typically occurs in October each fall.

VI. **Affiliated Entity Reports**

A. **NMSU Foundation Inc. Report,** *Vice President of Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Relations Debra Marks*

Vice President of Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Relations Debra Marks provided an update on the NMSU Foundation's fundraising and events. For Fiscal Year (FY) '26, the NMSU Foundation raised $52,586,649 as of June 30, 2026. This includes all pledges as asked by Regent Devasthali. As of July 30, 2026, $7,290,028 has been raised for FY27.

The NMSU Foundation Board will hold its first board meeting of the fiscal year virtually on August 28th.

The NMSU Foundation held two events so far in August: Always an Aggie Webinar "from Student to CEO" and Delaware/Maryland/Virgina Mixer & Chile Roast. Upcoming events include NMSU Football home game tailgates in partnership with Athletics.

Regent Romero asked if the NMSU Foundation had provided any funding for any amenities around the recently opened Alumni Pond. Vice President Marks indicated that the initiative to fundraise for the Alumni Pond would be kicking off within the next month.

B. **Arrowhead Center Inc. Report**, *Interim Director & CEO Winnie (Yu-Feng) Lee*

Interim Director & CEO, Dr. Winnie (Yu-Feng) Lee, provided a report on Arrowhead Center, Inc. The Soundstage Project design is 100% completed and the constructions is underway. Dr. Lee thanked the NMSU President's office and Doña Ana County for committing supplemental funding of $1.3 million each. An agreement with the City of Las Cruces is pending. The pre-lease phase for the proposed for the future multi-purpose office buildings continues. As part of the Arrowhead Park Master Plan, construction of the multi-purpose trail along Arrowhead Drive, funded by the New Mexico Department

of Transportation and Arrowhead Center Incorporated is underway.

Since April, the 2026 NMSU Intellectual Property (IP) Award was presented to the Advance Cyber Security Resilience Lab team. Dr. Satyajayant Misra was also named the inaugural NMSU Innovation Fellow. Currently Arrowhead Center Inc. has 56 active patents and 26 patents pending. Arrowhead Center, Inc. is currently working with the Vice President of Research office to develop an IP strategic plan and modernization proposal.

On the agenda for the board meeting is to approve the bylaw amendments to align position names. This was agenda item number VII C.

C. Aggie Development Inc. Report, *CEO Scott Eschenbrenner*

CEO Eschenbrenner provided a report on Aggie Development, Inc. The board met on July 29, 2026 where the members heard from Treasurer Allen Bottorff regarding the finances and Aggie Development activities. Election of officers were held, and the approval of the officers are VII B on the consent agenda. CEO Eschenbrenner recognized the contributions from Dean Rolando Flores Galarza, who is retiring. The board also had discussions about a potential second hotel location and reviewed ADI funding scenarios.

VII. **Consent Items**

The following items were approved on the consent agenda, with Regent Gonzales moving to approve and Regent Olivas seconding. Regent Gonzales abstain from voting on item VII.A., Sunflower Center Access Easement and NMSU Access Easement. The motion passed and the consent agenda items were approved as presented.

A. Sunflower Center Access Easement and NMSU Access Easements, *Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner*

B. Aggie Development, Inc. Board of Directors Officer Appointments, *CEO Scott Eschenbrenner*

C. Amendment to the Bylaws of Arrowhead Center, Inc. to Update Position Director Titles, *Interim Director & CEO Winnie (Yu-Feng) Lee*

D. Philanthropic naming of The Covarrubias Family Legacy Lobby located in the Expansion of O'Donnel Hall, 1st floor, *Vice President of Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Relations Debra Marks*

E. Philanthropic naming of The Bradbury Stamm Commons in John Whitlock Hernandez Hall, room #114, *Vice President of Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Relations Debra Marks*

F. NMSU Alamogordo Townsend & Pro Tech Exterior Improvements, *Associate Vice President of Facilities and Services Scott Eschenbrenner*

G. Agricultural Science Center Artesia – Residence Demolition and New Green House, *Associate Vice President of Facilities and Services Scott Eschenbrenner*

H. Agricultural Science Center Alcalde – Shop Demolitions and Lab, *Associate Vice President of Facilities and Services Scott Eschenbrenner*

I. Agricultural Science Center Leyendecker – Office Replacement, *Associate Vice President of Facilities*

and Services Scott Eschenbrenner

J. Hadley Hall Reroof, *Associate Vice President of Facilities and Services Scott Eschenbrenner*

K. Disposition and Deletion of Capital Property, *Comptroller Ross Justus*

L. FY26 – Research and Public Service Projects, *Vice President for Administration and Finance Allen Bottorff*

VIII. **Action Items**

A. **None**

IX. **Informational Items**

A. Summary of Revisions to the Administrative Rules and Procedures of NMSU (ARP) for the period March 1, 2026 – July 31, 2026, *University Policy Officer Donna Ottaviano*

University Policy Officer Ottaviano provided a summary of Administrative Rules and Procedures (ARP) actions approved by the President between March 1, 2026 through July 31, 2026. These included revisions to ARP 16.12 – Cleary Act Compliance, ARP 16.79 – Programs Involving Minors, ART 3.45 – Assistive, Service and Companion Animals on University Premises, ARP 3.40 – Process for Disability Accommodation, and ARP 7.20 – Staff Overtime Pay or Comp Time. ARP 7.66 – Reductions in Force – Non-Bargaining Unit was created to simply the reductions in force process without conflating it with other organizational employment actions. ARP 18.85 – Interfaith Council was repealed as the council has not been operational for 6 years.

X. **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Report,** *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Joseph Bull*

Dr. Joseph Bull detailed his initial priorities as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, emphasizing outreach to New Mexico's Native American tribes, evaluating academic operations in alignment with NMSU's land-grant mission, and overseeing upcoming dean searches for the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences and the College of Engineering. The Academic Affairs office is coordinating with MARCOMM to meet federal ADA compliance deadlines for course materials by April 2027.

XI. **Report from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to the Regents of New Mexico State University (Board of Agriculture),** *Secretary Jeff Witte*

Secretary Witte was not available to provide his report at the meeting. His report was provided in the meeting materials.

XII. **Announcements and Comments**

A. **Good News for NMSU!**

Regent Devasthali celebrated the inaugural graduation of 21 Doctor of Nursing Practice Nurse Anesthesiology students from the College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation and noted the progress on the Alumni Pond.

XIII. **Adjournment**

With no further business before the board, Regent Romero moved to adjourn the meeting. Regent Saucedo seconded the motion, and the regular meeting of the NMSU Board of Regents was officially adjourned at 1:48 PM.

Meeting Minutes Approved on September 8, 2026, by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.

Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair

Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer