



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF
REGENTS REGULAR MEETING
May 14, 2026, at 1:00 PM**

Corbett Center Student Union, Senate Chambers
NMSU Las Cruces, International Mall, Las Cruces, NM

Regents Present:

Chair Ammu Devasthali, Vice Chair Deborah Romero, Secretary/Treasurer Christopher T. Saucedo, Marisol Olivas, Ricardo Gonzales (All members present in person).

Advisory Members:

ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe, Faculty Senate Chair Vimal Chaitanya, Employee Council Chair Sonia A. White.

Officials Present:

President Valerio Ferme, Acting Provost R.T. James McAteer, 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 1:05 PM. She welcomed attendees and noted that conduct disrupting the meeting's business or interfering with the educational process would not be tolerated, and individuals engaging in such behavior would be escorted out to maintain an orderly proceeding.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairwoman Devasthali invited Air Force ROTC Cadet Klawiter to lead the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the pledge, Cadet Klawiter shared that she is a graduating senior who will commission in one week as an intelligence officer in the United States Air Force. Her first duty station will be Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas. Chairwoman Devasthali congratulated her and thanked her for her attendance and service.

B. Welcome, Bryan Ashenbaum, Dean of the NMSU College of Business

Dr. Bryan Ashenbaum, Dean of the NMSU College of Business, formally welcomed the Board of Regents to the campus. He thanked the Regents for spending time earlier that morning with his leadership team and faculty over lunch. He highlighted the college's unique Professional Golf Management program embedded within the marketing degree, describing a tour given to the Regents of the specialized Trackman Golf Simulator Lab on the third floor of Guthrie Hall where students refine their business and physical skills.

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

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister confirmed that no elected officials or members of the media were present at the meeting.

D. Introductions

a) Introduction of incoming ASNMSU President Carina Frisch,
ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe

ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe introduced the incoming student body president, Carina Frisch. He noted that she is a rising senior from Silver City, New Mexico, studying environmental science with aspirations to attend law school for environmental law. She currently interns with the Office of the State Engineer, has spent two years as the Director of Public Relations within ASNMSU, and serves as president of the Alpha Xi Delta sorority chapter. President-elect Frisch expressed her enthusiasm for continuing the positive momentum of student governance alongside the board.

b) Introduction of incoming Faculty Senate Chair Kristian Finlator,
Faculty Senate Chair Vimal Chaitanya

Faculty Senate Chair Dr. Vimal Chaitanya introduced the incoming Faculty Senate Chair, Dr. Kristian Finlator. Dr. Finlator addressed the board, sharing that he joined NMSU's astronomy department in 2015 after earning his academic degrees from the University of Arizona and completing postdoctoral fellowships in Santa Barbara, California, and Copenhagen, Denmark. Elected to the Faculty Senate in the 2021-2022 academic year upon submitting his tenure portfolio, Dr. Finlator emphasized his dedication to shared governance, highlighting his work on several committees and leading five successful propositions to synthesize faculty and student concerns into administrative recommendations.

E. 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 in person. Advisory members President Ziehe, Chair Chaitanya, and Chair White were also confirmed present, alongside administrators President Ferme, Acting Provost McAteer, General Counsel Henderson, and Vice President Bottorff.

F. Approval of the Agenda, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Chairwoman Devasthali proposed two modifications to the published agenda: the removal of the Sunflower Community Center Project informational item due to a scheduling conflict, and shifting Consent Item C (the Integrated Digital Enterprise Accelerator Lab) from the consent calendar to action items. On a motion by Regent Christopher Saucedo, seconded by Regent Deborah Romero, the modified agenda was approved unanimously.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

A. **Regular Meeting on April 28, 2026**

The minutes of the regular Board of Regents meeting held on April 28, 2026, were presented for consideration. Regent Romero requested a correction on page 6 of the documentation to clarify that ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe, rather than Regent Romero, highlighted the national performance of the American Marketing Association team. Regent Romero moved approval of the minutes as amended, Regent Marisol Olivas seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

III. **Awards and Recognitions**

A. **Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Vimal Chaitanya as Faculty Senate Chair, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthal***

Regent Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali read the proclamation as follows:

WHEREAS, Dr. Vimal Chaitanya will conclude his distinguished service as the Chair of the Faculty Senate and as an advisory member of the New Mexico State University Board of Regents at the conclusion of the 2026 academic year; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Chaitanya brought a wealth of academic and administrative expertise to this role, drawing from his background as a Professor in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and his previous ten-and-a-half-year tenure as the Vice President for Research, Graduate Studies, and International Programs; and

WHEREAS, he has served as a vital leader and a primary voice for the NMSU faculty to the Central Administration, ensuring that the principles of shared governance remained at the forefront of institutional decision-making; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Chaitanya's commitment to the university system was demonstrated through his active participation on the Presidential Search Committee, the Policy Steering Committee, the NMSU Systemwide Budget Committee, the President's Cabinet, and his collaborative work within the "Group of Four"; and

WHEREAS, under his thoughtful and intelligent leadership, the Faculty Senate achieved significant milestones, including the formation of task forces to improve dean evaluations, analyze the pedagogical impact of AI, and enhance the climate for international students; and

WHEREAS, working with members of the University Program Approval Committee, he has been instrumental in advancing institutional sustainability and faculty support through the launch of the Program Sustainability Plan Ad Hoc Committee; and

WHEREAS, working with members of Senate leadership, he helped develop and launch the Open Access Publication Fund Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Chaitanya has consistently demonstrated "positive intent" for the university, earning a reputation for being both a pleasure to work with and a steadfast advocate for the faculty and students of New Mexico State University; and

WHEREAS, President Valerio Ferme said, "Dr. Chaitanya has been a consistent and effective advocate for

faculty needs and shared governance. I've enjoyed working with him in this role representing the faculty viewpoint and am grateful for his insights, which have helped me navigate the important relationship between the President's Office and the Faculty Senate;" and

WHEREAS, Regents Chair Ammu Devasthali said, "I've truly appreciated the perspective that Dr. Chaitanya's varied experience at NMSU has brought him and the way he's applied that knowledge to amplifying faculty voices. I'm grateful for his contributions to the board."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED in official session, that the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University thanks and commends Dr. Vimal Chaitanya for his dedicated service, his visionary leadership, and his unwavering commitment to the Aggie community.

PROCLAIMED this 14th day of May 2026 at Las Cruces, New Mexico.

B. Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Wyatt Ziehe as ASNMSU President,
Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali read the proclamation as follows:

WHEREAS, Wyatt Ziehe will end his term as President of the Associated Students of New Mexico State University on May 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Ziehe dedicated his time and service to the students at NMSU where he ensured every student's voice was heard and represented in the highest manner; and

WHEREAS, in his undergraduate journey, Ziehe was a long-time member of Airforce ROTC where he consistently moved up in rank as time went by. He is contracted to be an officer in the Airforce upon graduation and will be a pilot; and

WHEREAS, he was committed to advocating for the student body, working with members of ASNMSU and other programs across campus. He collaborated with many other students, staff, and faculty outside of ASNMSU; and

WHEREAS, during his time in ASNMSU, he started as a College of Engineering Senator and served a one year term before running for ASNMSU President. In his term as Senator, he led all other College of Engineering Senators in total dollars reimbursed for the year; and

WHEREAS, he vocalized student voice and opinion as a member of the NMSU Provost Search Committee; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, along with the ASNMSU Department of Governmental Affairs, a department that went through a director transition just weeks before the State Legislative Session, he continued to advocate for students in Santa Fe. At the 2026 Legislative Session, ASNMSU received \$1.955 million for a campus safety initiative, setting the ASNMSU record for a 30-day session; and

WHEREAS, Ziehe saw a need for more WEPA Printers towards West Campus seeing that they were mostly only in the Corbett area and advocated for printers to be installed for students in Gerald Thomas Hall and the Engineering Complex, which can now be found in those exact locations; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, along with the ASNMSU Department of Elections, voter turnout doubled from the previous semesters; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, along with the NMSU Athletics Department, student attendance at sporting events nearly tripled from the semesters before; and

WHEREAS, Regents Chair Ammu Devasthali said, "The thing that has really struck me about Wyatt is just how well-read and well-informed he is about anything and everything. He truly has a passion for learning and I've been so impressed with him and what he's brought to the board and to the students he represents. Students like Wyatt give me great hope for the future, and I appreciate the opportunity I've had to get to know him;" and

WHEREAS, President Valerio Ferme said, "Wyatt has brought so much to his time as ASNMSU president, and I appreciated the work he has done on behalf of all NMSU students. He's got a bright future ahead of him, and I look forward to seeing what he's able to accomplish next."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED in official session, that the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University thanks and commends Wyatt Ziehe for his dedicated service.

PROCLAIMED this 14th day of May 2026, at Las Cruces, New Mexico.

C. Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Rolando Flores Galarza as ACES Dean,
Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali read the proclamation as follows:

WHEREAS, Rolando A. Flores Galarza served with distinction as Dean of the New Mexico State University College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences for nearly a decade, beginning his tenure here in August 2016; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, he was instrumental in bringing in tens of millions of dollars in state and voter-approved funding to drive the modernization of NMSU's Ag District, resulting in new buildings with state-of-the-art technology and laboratories that have helped elevate NMSU's research efforts; and

WHEREAS, under his leadership, the Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems was established in 2019 with a mission to build a resilient agricultural economy in New Mexico, and has emerged as a key driver of innovation and economic development in the state's agricultural sector; and

WHEREAS, in the most recent fiscal year, research expenditures in the College of ACES were associated with direct employment impacts of more than 500 jobs, labor income of more than \$37 million, and contribution to state GDP of more than \$45 million; and

WHEREAS, when the COVID-19 pandemic reached New Mexico, faculty and staff in the College of ACES and Cooperative Extension Service responded to community needs throughout the state through Extension offices in every county, expanding training opportunities and offering resources to help communities weather challenges from internet access for rural schoolchildren to navigating the pandemic financially; and

WHEREAS, President Valerio Ferme said, "Rolando lives and breathes our land-grant mission, and has made an indelible mark on the state of New Mexico through his leadership. I'm grateful for his contributions to the communities we serve and the industries that drive New Mexico's economy forward;" and

WHEREAS, Regents Chair Ammu Devasthali said, "I'm incredibly grateful to Rolando and the College of ACES for their help during the presidential search process. When we wanted to ensure that our new president understood the scope of our work across the state, Rolando's leadership team put together an eye-opening tour that helped better-inform not only President Ferme, but other campus leaders – myself included – about the impact NMSU has across New Mexico."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED in official session that the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University thanks and commends Dean Rolando A. Flores Galarza for his dedicated service and wishes him great success in his future endeavors.

PROCLAIMED this 14th day of May 2026, at Las Cruces, New Mexico.

D. Proclamation Recognizing the Service of Sherry Kollmann as NMSU Global Chancellor,
Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali read the proclamation as follows:

WHEREAS, Dr. Sherry Kollmann has served New Mexico State University with distinction since 2020, when she joined the university as vice provost for digital learning, later becoming Chancellor of the New Mexico State University Global campus; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure, Dr. Kollmann has secured \$17 million in state appropriations, expanded online enrollment to more than 3,500 students, and generated more than \$30 million in tuition revenue, helping stabilize and strengthen the overall NMSU system budget; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her leadership and statewide impact, the New Mexico Legislature selected Dr. Kollmann to lead the New Mexico Online Hub initiative, bringing together four year institutions across the state to drive the growth of accessible, coordinated higher education in New Mexico and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kollmann worked to elevate NMSU's digital learning initiatives to the highest level of the institution's strategic goals, setting up focus areas that built on quality online education, operational capacity and excellence, innovative solutions, and sustainable growth; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Kollmann leaves NMSU to take on an exciting new role as system Vice Chancellor and President of Vermont State University, a powerful reminder that NMSU develops leaders of real consequence who are professionals sought out by peer institutions across the country; and

WHEREAS, President Valerio Ferme said, "Dr. Kollmann has had a truly transformative impact on NMSU and has made a name for NMSU Global among our peers nationwide. We are thrilled for her success and look forward to continuing the momentum she helped create for our online programs;" and

WHEREAS, Regents Chair Ammu Devasthali said, "Dr. Kollmann took NMSU Global to a level that even we didn't expect it to reach so quickly and we are very grateful. In her 6 years here, she has also become a good friend. I'm personally so proud of her, and I wish her absolutely the best in her new role."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED in official session that the Board of Regents of New Mexico State University thanks and commends Chancellor Sherry Kollmann for her dedicated service and wishes her great success in her future endeavors.

PROCLAIMED this 14th day of May 2026, at Las Cruces, New Mexico.

IV. Regent Committee Reports

A. Real Estate Committee, *Regent Ammu Devasthali*

Chairwoman Devasthali reported that the Real Estate Committee held an organizational meeting on April 29, 2026, to evaluate several informational parameters. She indicated that no actionable items emerged from the session requiring board consideration at today's regular meeting.

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

Regent Romero reported that the New Mexico State University Board of Regents Financial Strategies, Performance, and Budget Committee met on May 5, 2026, to address several significant capital projects and fiscal reports. During the session, the committee unanimously approved four major capital requests, including the Integrated Digital Enterprise Accelerator Lab and renovations to the Aggie Memorial Stadium press box. Other approved infrastructure improvements included a multipurpose band practice field and HVAC renovation for the Corbett Center. You will see the items on today's consent agenda. Additionally, the committee approved a new strategic five-year capital plan for the Las Cruces and community college campuses, prioritizing the multidisciplinary academic building and a new aquatic center to replace the current failing facility. This item will be presented as an action item for the Board's consideration at today's meeting.

The meeting also included critical updates regarding the university's property and financial standing. The committee approved the disposal of capital property, which featured the sale of the university's airplane and a decommissioned police vehicle. This item is also listed on today's consent agenda.

Finally, the committee reviewed the temporary investment report and the transfer of uncollectible debt to inactive status as informational items.

V. Advisory Member Reports

A. Associated Students of NMSU Report, *President Wyatt Ziehe*

President Wyatt Ziehe highlighted that students are completing final examinations. He celebrated 16 internal ASNMSU student employees who are graduating, demonstrating how structured on-campus engagement actively increases student retention rates. He noted that the student senate successfully utilized its complete legislative fiscal allocation for the spring semester, rebounding from a mid-year \$100,000 deficit. He concluded by thanking the NMSU Foundation for co-hosting the Senior Walk from the Miller Gates to the Pan American Center and the annual ring ceremony.

B. NMSU Faculty Senate Report, *Chair Vimal Chaitanya*

Dr. Vimal Chaitanya offered informal reflections on his two-year tenure, expressing gratitude to the regents and administrative leadership for sustaining high positive intent. He noted that his primary institutional goals centered on rebuilding mutual trust between general faculty lines and central leadership, and emphasizing the value of shared governance. Over the past academic year, the senate processed 17 to 18 distinct legislative items, memorials, and resolutions, and successfully deployed faculty representatives across campus task forces including the Faculty Advisory Technology Committee and Athletics Oversight.

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

Chair Sonia White thanked the Office of the President for extensive administrative support in preparing and executing NMSU Founders Day. She noted that today marked the final council session of the spring semester, as operations pause over the summer months. She announced that the highly anticipated annual employee Halloween-themed picnic is scheduled for Friday, October 30, 2026, and invited NMSU faculty and staff to attend.

VI. Affiliated Entity Reports

A. NMSU Foundation Inc. Report, *NMSU Foundation CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta*

Ms. Debra Marks presented the foundation report on behalf of CEO Sylvia Acosta, who was absent due to an unexpected conflict. Key highlights included:

- **Fundraising Volume:** The foundation secured \$20,498,169 as of May 4, hitting 84% of its annualized operational target ahead of schedule.
- **Assets Under Management (AUM):** Socioeconomic fluctuations induced a temporary reduction in March asset balances to \$480,325,612. However, asset valuations had exceeded \$500,747,000 in February, and current preliminary April tracking lists project a return past the \$500 million threshold. This capitalization places NMSU significantly above the national \$200 million median compiled within NACUBO indexing reports.
- **Minutes of Giving:** The '1888 Minutes of Giving' campaign held on April 21–22 raised \$286,301 across 309 discrete contributions, achieving 107% of its target across 10 strategic priority funds. Annualized giving segments experienced robust expansion across five years, climbing from \$85,000 in FY21 to \$965,000 in FY25.
- **Board Appointments:** At its spring meeting in Houston, Texas, hosted by alumnus James Holland, the board confirmed incoming directors Raquel Bone, Lyndon Armstrong, and Paul Gutierrez, while honoring departing members Christopher Dulany, Frank Seidel, and Joel Granger. New officers taking effect July 1, 2026, include Margaret Hardin (Chair), Carol Smallwood (Vice Chair), Eric Powell (Treasurer), and Amy Hummer (Secretary).

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

Dr. Winnie Lee, Interim Director and CEO, delivered updates on regional economic development and commercialization benchmarks:

- **Soundstage Facility:** Building on an initial \$15 million state appropriation, Arrowhead secured an additional \$8 million during the February legislative session via the support of Senator Steinborn and Representative Small. To balance internal architecture costs, Arrowhead secured matching \$1.3 million funding commitments from Doña Ana County and President Ferme's office, with a final matching request undergoing active review by the Las Cruces City Council. Physical construction is scheduled to commence in early June 2026, targeting full structure closeout within 10 months and final inside design tracking completion by Q3 of 2027.
- **Site Readiness Designation:** The New Mexico Economic Development Department officially selected Arrowhead Park as a Strategic Economic Development Site Readiness location, projecting a subsequent localized economic output expansion exceeding \$100 million.
- **Intellectual Property & Licensing:** Dr. Misra's Advanced Cybersecurity Resilience Lab received the 2026 IP Innovation Award, and Dr. Misra was named the first Innovation Fellow for the center. Arrowhead finalized a high-profile commercial licensing compact for its proprietary quantum platform with CyberCatch, a specialized startup recently acquired by Philadelphia-based DataVault AI. Dr. Lee concluded by noting NMSU manages 56 active patents, including 9 new awards finalized between 2025 and 2026.

C. Aggie Development Inc. Report, CEO Scott Eschenbrenner

Mr. Scott Eschenbrenner provided structural status highlights for real estate ventures. Following the retirement of Dean Flores, the board is initiating search sequences for a replacing academic representative. Dr. Alen Bottorff will officially assume the duties of corporate Treasurer. He noted that a localized EV fast-charge initialization behind Starbucks encountered federal regulatory funding roadblocks, but has stabilized a recovery path and is clearing historical back-rent lines. Negotiations with the city are underway to bring 2.7 acres back into university holdings to construct a 125-room secondary hotel behind the existing Marriott Courtyard. First-quarter hotel metrics indicate an 8% climb in revenues, a 6% increase in daily room averages, and sustained regional occupancy exceeding 80%, contributing significant lodgers and property tax yields. The property currently sustains internships and full employment paths for multiple Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management (HRTM) students.

VII. Public Comment, Associate Vice President Abby Butler

Associate Vice President Abby Butler opened the public comment by iterating standard procedural rules limiting comments to three minutes per speaker. Mr. Jeremy Doniger, a graduate mathematics student and regional steward for the Graduate Workers Union, addressed the board regarding active wage bargaining sessions. He contextualized local wage needs against a wider structural global crisis, citing International Energy Agency reports on energy disruptions in the Hormuz Strait and Bureau of Labor Statistics data documenting a 21.9% cumulative surge in consumer costs from January 2021 through March 2026. Doniger emphasized that graduate workers bear disproportionate burdens within the current affordability crisis and urged the Board of Regents to display systemic moral leadership by deploying enhanced asset allocations toward graduate funding line items.

VIII. Consent Items

The remaining items on the consent calendar were approved collectively on a motion by Regent Romero, seconded by Regent Marisol Olivas. The motion passed unanimously, finalizing the following actions:

- A. Multipurpose Field and Band Tower Improvements, Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- B. Corbett Center HVAC Renovation, Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- C. Stadium Press Box Improvements, Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- D. Disposition and Deletion of Capital Property, University Controller Ross Justus**
- E. Appointment of Outside Director to the New Mexico Consortium Board of Directors, Chief of Staff Justin Bannister**
- F. Resubmission of the Applied Artificial Intelligence - Master of Applied Artificial Intelligence (Online) Program Proposal, Associate Dean Joseph Lakey**
- G. Board of Regents Staffing Changes, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

IX. Action Items

- A. Integrated Digital Enterprise Accelerator Lab, Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner**

Mr. Scott Eschenbrenner presented a revised capital modification request for the lab. He apologized for a clerical variance in the initial agenda packet, which listed an outdated funding projection. He explained that through the persistent grant compilation efforts of Dr. Lavrova, Dr. Misra, and Vice President Patricia

Sullivan, NMSU secured significant external funding enhancements, elevating the total project capitalization from \$18 million to \$31 million. President Ferme commended the research group, noting that both the Department of Energy and the New Mexico Department of Economic Development identified the facility as a high-value regional asset. Regent Romero stated the Finance Committee reviewed the expanded context and firmly endorsed its execution. On a motion by Regent Olivas, seconded by Regent Romero, the item passed unanimously.

B. Authorization for Conferral of Degrees and Certificates, Acting Provost R.T. James McAteer

Acting Provost R.T. James McAteer presented the official request to confer degrees and certificates for the Spring 2026 commencement across NMSU's four regional campuses. The authorization is contingent upon satisfactory course completion and validation of thesis originality. Dr. McAteer highlighted a graduation pool comprising 2,137 total degree applicants from the main campus (including 557 graduate degree targets) and 696 candidates from community college campus centers. He praised the cohort's exceptional grit, noting they navigated systemic high school interruptions during COVID-19, transitioned into online landscapes, and adapted to emerging AI paradigms.

Chairwoman Devasthali and the Regents expressed immense institutional pride, stating each diploma represents profound hard work, sacrifice, and socioeconomic mobility capable of breaking generational poverty cycles. President Ziehe and Regent Gonzales echoed these sentiments, celebrating the faculty lines that supported the students. On a motion by Regent Marisol Romero, seconded by Regent Gonzales, the conferral was officially approved with a unanimous vote.

C. Capital Request for Fiscal Year 2028, Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner

Mr. Scott Eschenbrenner presented the university's unified Five-Year Capital Plan, emphasizing that the compilation prioritized collaborative inputs from the executive team, branch chancellors, athletics, housing, and government relations. The institutional plan must be submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) by June 1, 2026, ahead of formalized summer hearings scheduled for August 4 at the Fulton Center. Key structural elements of the multi-year request framework include:

- **FY 2027–2028 (Severance Tax Bond Cycle):** Prioritizes a \$35 million request to finalize construction on the Multidisciplinary Academic Building. It includes early design and engineering funding lines to initiate renovations for Campus IT Infrastructure and structural tracking for a new Natatorium and Aquatic Center replacement. It incorporates a \$5 million allocation for strategic campus-wide demolition targeting 54,000 square feet of obsolete space to balance state square-footage mandates.
- **FY 2028–2029 (GO Bond Cycle):** Targets specialized construction execution paths, including a \$31 million request for Campus IT modifications and \$34 million for the Natatorium replacement. It incorporates a \$15 million allocation for campus-wide mechanical, HVAC, and central cooling asset corrections, alongside a \$5 million electrical grid infrastructure upgrade to transition obsolete lines up to modern 25 KV standards. It specifies an \$8 million demolition allocation centered on Milton Hall.
- **Out-Year Projects (Years 3 to 5):** Earmarks funding placeholders for the relocation of broadcasting facility KRWG, comprehensive infrastructure remediation for the end-of-life chemistry building (estimated at \$23 million for HVAC systems alone), Gerald Thomas Hall renovations, and updates for Facilities and Services complexes constructed in 1962.
- **Branch Campus Frameworks:** Incorporates localized priorities compiled alongside Chancellor Monica Torres and Kelly Brooks, including a \$2.5 million boiler/chiller for Alamogordo; sewer line

modifications for Grants; and an East Mesa Academic Resource Building roof replacement (\$2 million) and physical plant construction (\$4 million) for DACC.

- **Auxiliary Priorities:** Integrates a Student-Athlete Wellness and Performance Center championed by Athletic Director Joe Fields, and strategic campus housing renewals managed by Jake Narvaez. Housing requests have grown urgent due to a 216-student spike in incoming first-year residential applications, necessitating the design of long-life structures to replace temporary units.

CFO Dr. Alen Bottorff addressed the board, explaining that the five-year layout acts as essential 'sheet music' that will directly integrate into an upcoming year-long Comprehensive Campus Master Plan driven by data parameters. He stated that state agencies (HED, LFC, and DFA) explicitly requested a unified long-term capital roadmap to optimize state appropriations. Regent Romero advised the board that future state legislative tracking may require four-year universities to produce institutional matching funds, similar to community colleges that possess local bonding authority. On a motion by Regent Romero, seconded by Regent Gonzales, the Five-Year Capital Plan was approved unanimously.

X. **Informational Items**

A. **Sunflower Community Center Project, *Michael Bursum***

This informational item was postponed.

XI. **NMSU System Report, *President Valerio Ferme***

President Valerio Ferme delivered system updates and administrative actions:

- **Emergency Response Commendation:** President Ferme extended formal appreciation to Robbie Grant, the marketing team, and Acting Provost McAteer for their agile, coordinated response to a severe platform outage involving Instructure/Canvas during the final week of classes. Rapid communication minimized student anxiety and allowed faculty to extend deadlines efficiently.
- **Enrollment Projections:** Summer registration metrics indicate clear positive growth, with undergraduate enrollment climbing by 386 students across physical and digital campuses, and graduate student enrollment increasing by 70. Aggie Welcome Orientation confirmations are up by 196 students year-over-year.
- **Interim Leadership Appointment:** Following the departure of Chancellor Sherry Kollmann, Dr. Ferme announced that Tony Morin will step in as Interim Leader of NMSU Global to guarantee structural continuity in online student success configurations.
- **Doña Ana Community College (DACC) Successes:** In alignment with requests to amplify community college metrics, Dr. Ferme recognized several achievements: Hilary Avitia, Department Chair for Administrative Technologies, received the ACBSP Region 6 Associate Degree Teaching Excellence Award and is nominated for an international award in Phoenix. Dr. Elmer Gonzalez received the prestigious World Dental Hygienist Award from the Sunstar Foundation, making him the first academic selected from New Mexico, and will represent NMSU at an international symposium in Milan, Italy. Additionally, 16 DACC students secured awards at the State SkillsUSA competition, with 10 gold medalists advancing to national finals in Atlanta. Royal Jones will receive an honorary degree at an afternoon reception in the Barbara Hubbard Room.

XII. **Report from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to the Regents of New Mexico State**

University (Board of Agriculture), Secretary Jeff Witte

Secretary Jeff Witte presented updates on statewide agricultural coordination and development:

- **ALERT Conference:** NMDA successfully hosted the 20th annual Agricultural and Livestock Incident Response Team conference in Socorro, training private veterinarians alongside the National Guard in field necropsies and disease diagnostic techniques. Secretary Witte presented the Secretary's Agriculture Legacy Award to program founders Dr. John Wenzel (retiring Extension Veterinarian) and Dr. Tim Hanosh (former Vet Diagnostic Lab Director), noting the program is recognized by the USDA as a national model for animal disease containment.
- **International Officer Delegation:** NMDA partnered with the British Embassy to lead a delegation of 17 elite 4-H and FFA student officers on an educational tour of the United Kingdom to establish cross-continental agricultural youth collaboration programs.
- **Soil and Water Testing (SWAT) Lab Reopening:** Secretary Witte announced a major institutional partnership with the College of ACES to officially reopen NMSU's Soil and Water Testing Lab, which had been closed since 2012. Backed by a multi-year \$1 million allocation drawn from NMDA's share of the state's Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund endowment, the lab will resume active operations shortly after July 1, 2026, to support statewide agricultural soil testing without requiring direct legislative funding requests.

XIII. Announcements and Comments

1. Good News for NMSU!

Members of the Board of Regents and administrators highlighted several student and faculty achievements:

- Regent Romero announced that the NMSU Men's Rodeo Team achieved a #3 national ranking. Eight students qualified to compete at the College National Finals from June 14–20: Kaden Miranda (Bronc Riding), Cade Griego (Bull Riding), Billy DeLong (Bronc Riding), Payton Levine (Breakaway Roping), Damian Padilla (Steer Wrestling/Team Roping), Kade McKnight (Steer Wrestling/Team Roping), Brette Tully (Goat Tying), and Lucas Cruz (Tie-Down).
- President Ferme highlighted major research distinctions, celebrating engineering professor Dr. Gloria Zhang and astronomy professor Dr. Ju Shetty for securing prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Awards amid highly competitive national funding pools.
- Regent Gonzales recognized golfers Emma Bunch and Javier Delgado for advancing to the NCAA Tournament on behalf of their respective teams. He also highlighted the structural integration of three incoming athletic coaches and a formal contract extension for head coach Bowen under Athletic Director Joe Fields.
- Chairwoman Devasthali celebrated the NMSU Model United Nations team, which received the highest institutional honor, the Outstanding Delegation Award, at the National Model UN Conference in New York City.

XIV. Adjournment

Sensing no further business before the board, Chairwoman Devasthali called for a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Regent Marisol Olivas, seconded by Regent Deborah Romero, the regular meeting of the NMSU Board of Regents was officially adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Meeting Minutes Approved on July 2, 2026 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.



Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer