



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
REGULAR MEETING
April 1, 2026, at 1:30 PM**

Educational Services Building, Regents Room
1780 East University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM
LIVESTREAMED AT <https://regents.nmsu.edu/regent-meetings/>

Regents of New Mexico State University

Chair Ammu Devasthali, Vice Chair Deborah Romero, Secretary/Treasurer Christopher T. Saucedo, Marisol Olivas, Ricardo Gonzales

Non-Voting Advisory Members - ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe, Faculty Senate Chair Vimal Chaitanya, Ph.D., Employee Council Chair Sonia A. White

University Officials - President Valerio Ferme, Ph.D., Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi, Ph.D., Vice President for Administration and Finance Allen Bottorff, P.E., Ph.D., General Counsel Lisa Henderson, J.D.

MINUTES

A. Call to Order, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali called the regular meeting of the NMSU Board of Regents to order at 1:32 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by MS3 Cadet Eva Carney. Cadet Carney shared that she is originally from El Paso and expects to be commissioned as a lieutenant in the Army in one year.

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

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister confirmed no media members or elected officials were present.

2. Introductions

Kristian Finlator was briefly introduced as the incoming chair for the Faculty Senate.

3. Confirmation of Quorum, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Five voting members were present: Chair Devasthali, Vice Chair Romero (remote), Secretary/Treasurer Saucedo, Regent Olivas, and Regent Gonzales.

4. Approval of the Agenda, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

The agenda for the April 1, 2026, meeting was approved as presented, with Regent Olivas moving approval and Regent Gonzales seconding.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting on March 9, 2026

The minutes from the regular meeting held on March 9, 2026, were approved as presented, with Regent Gonzales moving approval and Regent Olivas seconding.

C. **Regent Committee Reports**

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

Chairwoman Devasthali presented the report on behalf of Regent Romero. The committee reviewed and recommended the capital projects and action items appearing on the day's agenda. Budget progress will be brought back for full board approval on April 28th.

D. **Advisory Member Reports**

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

President Wyatt Ziehe reported on the Activity Center ribbon-cutting and ongoing elections for his successor. He highlighted Sexual Assault Awareness Month (teal ribbons on campus) and progress on safety funding from Santa Fe. A survey is currently assessing the need for modernized classroom seating.

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

Chair Vimal Chaitanya reported the formation of an ad hoc committee for program sustainability. He noted progress on recommendations for international graduate student onboarding and the formation of a committee to study the impact of Artificial Intelligence on pedagogy.

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

Chair Sonia White announced Founders Day on April 15th at Traders Plaza. This year's "Aggie Legend" award recipient is Garrey Carruthers.

E. **Public Comment**, *Associate Vice President Abby Butler*

Associate Vice President Abby Butler confirmed there was no public comment for this session.

F. **Consent Items**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

The following capital projects were unanimously approved on the consent agenda, with Regent Gonzales moving approval and Regent Romero seconding the motion.

1. **Atkinson Music Building Roof C Replacement**, *Interim Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner*

2. **Genesis A Renovations and Pilot Lab Expansion**, *Interim Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner*

G. **Action Items, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

1. NMSU Alamogordo Books4Less \$4 Per Credit Hour Increase,

NMSU Alamogordo Campus Executive/Academic Officer Mark Cal

Dr. Mark Cal presented a proposal to increase the Books4Less fee from \$24 to \$28 per credit hour.

Dr. Cal reported that the increase is driven by book price inflation (4-8%) and the addition of a nursing program, which carries higher material costs. The program offers an average 65% savings to students and ensures that materials are available via Canvas by the first day of class.

A motion to approve the \$4 per credit hour increase was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas. A roll call vote was taken and all were in favor.

- Gonzales: Yes
- Olivas: Yes
- Saucedo: Yes
- Romero: Yes
- Devasthali: Yes

2. Dining Rates Increase of 3.7% to Premium and Voluntary Student Meal Plans

Auxiliary Services Assistant Vice President Jacob Nevarez

Mr. Jacob Nevarez presented a 3.7% increase in premium and voluntary student meal plans.

The effective blended rate increase is 2.7%, as dining dollars are not subject to the CPI increase. There is no increase to the "Hometown Aggies" plan to maintain an affordable option.

Mr. Navarez noted that the Platinum plan includes 21 swipes per week, KiwiBot deliveries, and a "wash and fold" laundry service.

A motion to approve the Dining Rates Increase of 3.7% to Premium and Voluntary Student Meal Plans was made by Regent Gonzales and seconded by Regent Olivas. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.

- Gonzales: Yes
- Olivas: Yes
- Saucedo: Yes
- Romero: Yes
- Devasthali: Yes

3. Tuition & Mandatory Fees for All Campuses,

Chief Budget Officer Kim Rumford

Chief Budget Officer Kim Rumford presented a proposal for 0% increases to tuition and fees across all campuses. Fees were shifted internally to provide better transparency for IT and athletics.

President Ferme noted that NMSU has removed fees for military and veteran programs to better support our veteran community. For the current year, the administration will cover these funding gaps. This change underscores our long-term commitment to community engagement.

President Ferme and several Regents expressed serious concern that a fourth year of 0% tuition increases is not sustainable. Secretary/Treasurer Saucedo noted that other institutions are increasing tuition, allowing them to receive more funding per student from state scholarships than NMSU.

A motion to approve the 0% increase to tuition and mandatory fees for all campuses was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas. A roll call vote was taken, and all were in favor.

- Gonzales: Yes
- Olivas: Yes
- Saucedo: Yes
- Romero: Yes
- Devasthali: Yes

H. Informational Items, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

1. None.

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

The NMSU System Report began with significant leadership news as President Ferme announced the appointment of Dr. Joe Bull as the new provost. Dr. Bull joins the university from Portland State University, where he served as the Dean of the College of Engineering. In tandem with this announcement, the President expressed sincere appreciation for Lakshmi Reddi, thanking him for his work in stabilizing the office during his time as interim provost and wishing him well as he transitions to a permanent role at UNLV.

Addressing recent campus activity, the President acknowledged that a group of students, faculty, and community members recently delivered a document of demands to his office. He clarified that the university is currently following New Mexico Department of Justice guidelines regarding the presence of federal agents on campus. While the administration is actively supporting students and staff with food and financial assistance to meet basic needs, the President stated that the university will not declare the campus a sanctuary. He explained that such a designation could jeopardize the safety of the campus community and potentially harm the most vulnerable employees and families. The administration plans to continue assessing the environment as it develops.

The university's strategic direction continues to be anchored in its land-grant mission. This framework revolves around the three fundamental pillars of student success, the growth of research and innovation, and an increased commitment to public service. To further align the campus with this vision, the President announced a plan to visit every academic department between now and the fall semester. These visits, organized by his executive assistant, are intended to provide an opportunity for the President to hear directly from faculty regarding their concerns and departmental needs.

Finally, the report highlighted positive trends in recruitment and enrollment. Following successful outreach events in Albuquerque and Las Vegas, New Mexico, the President commended the recruitment and advising teams for their extensive efforts outside of regular working hours. He also specifically recognized Phame Camarena, Dean of the Conroy Honors College, for his personal engagement with prospective families. Current data shows that Aggie Welcome and Orientation numbers are slightly ahead of schedule, and student housing requests are showing strong growth. The President noted that landing a strong incoming class remains vital for the university's financial stability and its ability to enhance institutional programs.

J. **Announcements and Comments, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

1. **Good News for NMSU!**

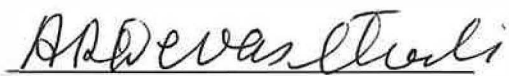
Regent Gonzales reminded the Board that nominations for Distinguished Alumni Awards are open until May 15th. Regent Gonzales also noted that five new Greek organizations are joining the campus, bringing the total to 19 active organizations and over 700 students.

Regent Devasthali reported that the NMSU Trap and Skeet team recently performed well at the College Nationals in San Antonio, surprising their better-funded competitors.

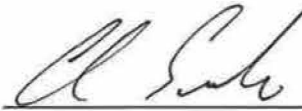
K. **Adjournment, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Regent Olivas with a second from Regent Gonzales at 2:40 PM.

Meeting Minutes Approved on April 28, 2026 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.



Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer