



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
REGULAR MEETING
August 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM**

ASNMSU Center for the Arts, 2nd Floor Rehearsal Hall and
Livestreamed for public viewing 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 Donna Johnson

University Officials - President Valerio Ferme, Ph.D., Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi, Ph.D., General Counsel Lisa Henderson, J.D.

MINUTES

A. Call to Order, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM by Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali.

Pledge of Allegiance and Introduction of 4-H State Leadership and Department Head Jaime Castillo

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, the New Mexico Pledge, and the 4-H Pledge led by Dr. Jaime Castillo and the 4-H leadership. Dr. Boren introduced Dr. Castillo, highlighting his return to NMSU after a 20-year career with the U.S. Border Patrol and noting the positive impact of the 4-H program on youth. Dr. Castillo then introduced the 4-H leadership, Ms. Lacey Knight, Mr. Chamberlain, and Ms. Nadya Neparko, as examples of the program's success.

1. Welcome, College of Arts & Sciences Dean Enrico Pontelli

Dean Enrico Pontelli of the College of Arts & Sciences welcomed the board and introduced six new faculty members: Julia Soares (Psychology), Yashoda Latkar (Art), Efren Lopez Morales (Cybersecurity), Thea De Armond (History), David Ruth (Physics), and Mason Linscott (Biology).

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

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

3. Introductions

a) Introduction of Dean of the College of Health, Education and Social Transformation Rick Marlatt, Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi

Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi introduced Dr. Rick Marlatt, who has been with NMSU for nine years and previously served as Director of the School of Education and Associate Dean for the Graduate School.

- b) **Introduction of Associate Vice President of Marketing and Communications Abby Butler, Chief of Staff Justin Bannister**

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister introduced Abby Butler, who joins NMSU from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

- c) **Introduction of Associate Vice President of Human Resources Bill Dial, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley**

Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley introduced Dr. Bill Dial, formerly the VP for HR at the College of DuPage.

- d) **Introduction of Associate General Counsel Isaiah Herrera, General Counsel Lisa Henderson**

- e) **Introduction of University Policy Officer Donna Ottaviano, General Counsel Lisa Henderson**

General Counsel Lisa Henderson introduced Isaiah Herrera, the new Associate General Counsel, and Donna Ottaviano, the new University Policy Officer.

4. Confirmation of Quorum, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

A quorum was confirmed with Regents Ricardo Gonzales, Marisol Olivas, Christopher Saucedo, Deborah Romero, and Ammu Devasthali present. Advisory members and university officials were also present.

5. Approval of the Agenda, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

The agenda was approved as presented by a unanimous motion.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Regular Meeting on May 8, 2025

2. Work Session on May 9, 2025

3. Special Meeting on June 6, 2025

The minutes for the regular meeting on May 8, 2025, the work session on May 9, 2025, and the special meeting on June 6, 2025, were all approved as presented by a unanimous vote.

C. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Sessions

1. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Session August 4, 2025 (1:30 PM)

2. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Session August 4, 2025 (3:30 PM)

3. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Session August 6, 2025

4. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Session August 18, 2025

The board confirmed by roll call vote that only permitted topics were discussed during the closed sessions on August 4, 2025 (1:30 PM and 3:30 PM), August 6, 2025, and August 18, 2025.

D. Public Comment, Chief of Staff Justin Bannister

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister stated that no one had signed up to provide public comment.

E. Regent Committee Reports

1. Real Estate Committee Report, Regent Ammu Devasthali

Regent Ammu Devasthali reported that the committee met on June 12 and held an email vote in August to approve several items on the consent agenda, including a Memorandum of Understanding for the DA Move Trail and lease agreements with White Sands Federal Credit Union and the United States Postal Service.

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

Regent Deborah Romero reported that the committee met on August 12 and approved several action items on the consent agenda, including property disposition, various capital projects, and DACC local bond authorization. The quarterly financial report was also approved.

F. Advisory Member Reports

1. Associated Students of NMSU Report, President Wyatt Ziehe

President Wyatt Ziehe reported that all 29 executive positions had been filled and that the new ACES windmill, funded by the ASNMSU Cardinal Account, was completed¹⁶. He also mentioned that KRUX 91.5 FM, a student-run radio station, invited regents to tour the station. He concluded by noting the success of the most recent first-year walk, with over 1,000 students participating.

2. NMSU Faculty Senate Report, Chair Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Vimal Chaitanya provided a brief report stating that no official business was conducted over the summer, as most faculty are on a nine-month contract. He noted that the new academic year will begin with 12 new senators and that the top priority remains seeking true shared governance.

3. NMSU Employee Council Report, Chair Donna Johnson

Chair Donna Johnson reported that the council did not meet in June and July. She announced that the annual Employee Appreciation Picnic is scheduled for Halloween, October 31, 2025, and that nominations for the 'A' Mountain Staff Award will be announced soon.

G. Affiliated Entity Reports

1. NMSU Foundation Inc. Report, CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta

CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta reported that the foundation raised \$23.457 million last year and is on track to exceed its goal this year, with \$2.7 million raised to date. She discussed hiring for key positions, a new strategy for regional philanthropic giving officers, and the success of the annual giving program, which has grown to raise over \$550,000 across two events. She also mentioned an upcoming crowdfunding campaign for the alumni pond.

2. Arrowhead Center Inc. Report, Interim CEO and President of Arrowhead Center Inc. Dana Catron

Interim CEO and President Dana Catron reported on progress in leadership, finances, and governance. The

soundstage project, with \$15 million in state support, is set to break ground in September, and a 30,000-square-foot technology development facility is being explored. She highlighted the successful licensing of drought-resilient alfalfa cultivars to Mountain View Seeds.

3. Aggie Development Inc. Report, CEO Scott Eschenbrenner

CEO Scott Eschenbrenner announced that Jake Redfern joined the board and that a proposed ground lease with White Sands Federal Credit Union was approved. He also shared a conceptual site plan for Aggie Uptown, which includes space for a large retail or medical office tenant. He concluded by noting a letter of intent had been received for a second hotel, an extended-stay Marriott.

H. Consent Items, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Romero moved approval of the Consent Items as presented, with a second from Regent Saucedo. Regent Gonzales abstained from voting on items H4 and H5, El Paso Electric Easement – Magdalena Peak and El Paso Electric Easement – Arrowhead Park, respectively. The motion passed unanimously.

- 1. Memorandum of Understanding for the DA Move Trail – Las Cruces Lateral next to the Convention Center, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- 2. Ground Lease Agreement – White Sands Federal Credit Union, ADI President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- 3. Lease Agreement – United States Postal Service (USPS) at Corbett Center, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- 4. El Paso Electric Easement – Magdalena Peak, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- 5. El Paso Electric Easement – Arrowhead Park, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner**
- 6. Appointment of Non-Position Directors to the Arrowhead Center, Inc. Board of Directors, Interim CEO and President Dana Catron**
- 7. Arrowhead Center, Inc. Change to Corporate Bylaws, Interim CEO and President Dana Catron**
- 8. Disposition/Deletion of Property, Associate Vice President for Administration and Finance, D’Anne Stuart**
- 9. Golf Course Learning Center and Driving Range, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 10. Biomedical Research Expansion, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 11. Campus Wide Drainage Repairs, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 12. Campus Wide Lighting Improvements, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 13. Chemistry Building HVAC Renovations, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 14. Zuhl Library 3rd Floor Flooring Replacement, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 15. Jett Hall Structural Repairs, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 16. Aggie Health & Wellness Flood Remediation, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**
- 17. Cole Village Demolition, University Architect Berta Zubiarte**

18. Softball Field Scoreboard Improvements, University Architect Berta Zubiarte

19. Appointment of NMSU Representatives to the NMC Board of Directors, Chief of Staff Justin Bannister

I. Action Items

1. NMSU – Doña Ana Community College District Obligation (Limited Tax) Bonds, Series 2025, Chancellor of NMSU System Community Colleges Mónica Torres

Bond advisor Erik Harrigan and Bond Counsel Katherine E. McKinney presented a request to approve the issuance of \$6 million in voter-approved general obligation bonds to be used primarily for an expansion at the Sunland Park campus. Following a discussion and motion to approve the request by Regent Gonzales, with a second by Regent Romero, the bonds were approved by a unanimous vote.

2. FY 27 RPSP Requests and Other FY 27 Funding Requests, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley

Interim Vice President Chris Kinsley presented a request for \$11.4 million in additional Research and Public Service (RPSP) funding, including \$2.3 million for agriculture entities and almost \$9 million for non-instructional and general activities. Regent Romero noted a discrepancy in the summary slide, which Mr. Kinsley acknowledged. Regent Romero moved approval of the RPSP and Other FY 27 Funding Requests, with a second by Regent Saucedo. The proposal was approved by a unanimous vote.

3. Mandatory Student Fees Restructure Proposal, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley

Interim Vice President Chris Kinsley and Dr. Amber Burge presented a proposal to separate student technology and athletics fees from the mandatory student fee. The change is revenue-neutral and aims to provide transparency and a reliable funding source for these key areas. Following a motion by Regent Romero to approve the proposal and a second by Regent Olivas, the proposal was approved by a unanimous vote.

J. Informational Items

1. None.

K. Report from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to the Regents of New Mexico State University (Board of Agriculture) – Deferred until the next Regular Meeting, Cabinet Secretary & Director Jeff Witte

L. NMSU Academic Report, Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi

Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi provided a report on academic program assessment, including a new process for annual reviews and a document outlining criteria for program sustainability. He stated that the goal is to be more data-informed and that a new group of "data trustees" will ensure data consistency.

M. NMSU System Report, President Valerio Ferme

President Valerio Ferme reported on the completion of the 33-county extension tour. He also announced a new initiative to look at the reallocation of permanent and recurring funds to address a structural deficit and reinvest in areas of excellence. He praised the success of the recent convocation and the launch of the 1888 Leadership Initiative.

N. Announcements and Comments, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*


1. Good News for NMSU!

ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe announced that the Homecoming Parade would be on November 8 at 8 AM and that the theme would be released at an evening event.

O. Adjournment, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

A motion to adjourn was made by Regent Gonzalez and seconded by Regent Olivas. The meeting was adjourned by Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali at 3:37 PM.

Meeting Minutes Approved on September 15, 2025 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.



Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer