



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS  
REGULAR MEETING  
March 10, 2025 at 1:00 PM**

Educational Services Building, Regents Room  
1780 East University Avenue, Las Cruces, NM  
Webcast at the following address: <https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/82240874731>

**Regents of New Mexico State University**

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

**Non-Voting Advisory Members** - ASNMSU President Ala Alhalholy, 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 regular meeting of the NMSU Board of Regents was called to order at 1:13 p.m. on March 10, 2025, by Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Air Force ROTC cadet Andrew Vanlandingham led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

There were no media or elected officials present.

**2. Introductions**

Sylvia Acosta, CEO of NMSU Foundation, introduced Larry Mirabal, the new CFO of the NMSU Foundation.

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

Regents Devasthali, Saucedo, Gonzales, and Olivas were present in the board room. Regent Romero joined the meeting via Zoom.

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

A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Gonzalez. The motion passed.

**B. Approval of Minutes**

**1. Regular Meeting on January 30, 2025**

A motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 30, 2025, was made by Regent Saucedo, and seconded by Regent Olivas. The motion passed.

**C. Public Comment, Chief of Staff Justin Bannister**

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister reported that no one had signed up for public comment.

## **D. Regent Committee Reports**

### **1. Audit and Risk Committee Report, *Regent Ammu Devasthali***

Regent Devasthali reported that the Regents Audit and Risk Committee convened on February 27, 2025, to discuss key audit updates on the status of completed audit reports and those that are pending. The meeting included an external independent auditor search and selection update presented by Ross Justus and a comprehensive internal audit update by Interim Chief Audit Officer John Frye. This internal audit update included the FY 2025 audit plan status, and specific audit reviews regarding succession planning, enrollment, and financial aid. The Moran Technology IT report follow-up was discussed as well as IT quarterly updates. The committee had no items on today's meeting agenda.

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

Regent Romero reported that the Regents Financial Strategies, Performance and Budget Committee met on February 26, 2025, to discuss several action and informational items.

Several action items were approved, including the disposition of property which you see as item G-1 on the consent agenda. The DACC integrated book fee, Required Student Fees, and Housing Rate increase proposals were also approved and you will see these as action items on today's agenda. The committee also approved the Alamogordo Local Bond proposal, which will provide funding for various capital improvements at the Alamogordo Branch. That item is G-3 on the consent agenda. The committee also received informational updates on temporary investments.

Some items were tabled or postponed, including the proposed meal plan rate increases, and the parking rate increases. The committee requested additional information on several items, including information requests about campus housing, such as work order statistics, information on deferred maintenance spending, and details about the capital plan for housing. The Quarterly Financial Report to HED was approved and submitted to HED. She noted that the Board of Regents has delegated authority to the chair of the Finance Committee to approve the report on behalf of the Board of Regents.

### **3. Student Success Committee Report, *Regent Christopher Saucedo***

Regent Saucedo reported that the Regents Student Success Committee convened on February 25, 2025, to discuss several agenda items, including the approval of a new Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence (BS-AI) degree program. The proposal was presented by Dean Enrico Pontelli, Dr. Son Tran, and Dr. Huiping Cao. The program aims to meet the increasing demand for AI professionals in New Mexico and nationally, equipping students with a robust foundation in AI principles and applications. The curriculum will encompass core courses in computer science, AI, machine learning, data mining, human-computer interaction, and ethical considerations.

The BS-AI program is designed to prepare students for careers in various industries, including information technology, management information systems, healthcare, finance, and national security. The program's emphasis on responsible AI principles, combined with hands-on experience through research projects, internships, and industry collaborations, aims to produce graduates who are well-prepared for the evolving AI field. The program is expected to launch in the fall of 2025, pending approval from the Board of Regents.

In addition to the BS-AI degree proposal, the committee also received an informational presentation on Central Advising. The presentation provided an update on the services offered by the Center for Academic

Advising and Student Support (CAASS), including academic advising, retention outreach, and graduation planning. The committee also discussed the organizational structure of CAASS and its partnerships with other departments on campus.

**E. Advisory Member Reports**

**1. Associated Students of NMSU Report, *President Ala Alhalholy***

President Ala Alhalholy provided an update on ASNMSU initiatives, including lobbying efforts, upcoming events like the Big Event, spring elections, and the It's On Us campaign.

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

Chair Vimal Chaitanya discussed the faculty senate's activities, primarily focusing on the impact of executive orders on the institution, faculty life, and student success, including potential impacts on federal grant opportunities, administrative burden on faculty, and indirect costs.

**3. NMSU Employee Council Report, *Chair Donna Johnson***

Chair Donna Johnson's report, submitted in advance, detailed the employee council elections, representation at the NMSU at the Capitol function, and plans for the 2025 annual NMSU Founders Day.

**F. Affiliated Entity Reports**

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

CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta reported on the Foundation's investments, fundraising progress, alumni engagement efforts, and gift administration activities, and introduced Larry Mirabal, the new CFO.

**2. Arrowhead Center Inc. Report, *Interim Director & CEO Dana Catron***

The report was included in the meeting package, with Interim Director & CEO Dana Catron absent.

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

CEO Scott Eschenbrenner reported on a new ground lease for Blake's Lotaburger restaurant, a letter of intent for a branch bank facility, and upcoming board member changes.

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

A motion to approve the consent agenda items as presented was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Gonzales. The motion passed.

**1. Disposition/Deletion of Property, *University Controller Ross Justus***

**2. Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence Proposal, *Dean Enrico Pontelli***

**3. NMSU -Alamogordo Branch General Obligation School Bonds, Series 2025, *NMSU System Community College Chancellor Mónica Torres***

**4. Item left intentionally blank**

**5. 2025 Annual Open Meetings Notice Resolution, *University General Counsel Lisa Henderson***

**6. Access to Classified Information Resolution, PSL Facility Security Officer Chris Scott**

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

**1. Housing Rates Increase Request, Interim Vice President Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley**

Interim Vice President of Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley presented the amended proposal for a 3% housing rate increase for fiscal year 2026, with additional revenues dedicated to deferred maintenance. The proposal was approved upon a motion by Regent Romero, seconded by Regent Saucedo.

**2. Required Student Fees, Chief Budget Officer Kim Rumford**

Chief Budget Officer Kim Rumford presented the student fee requests as approved by the Student Fee Review Board. The proposal for a 3% increase in student fees was approved upon a motion by Regent Romero, seconded by Regent Saucedo.

**3. DACC Integrated Access Program (Books4Less), NMSU System Community College Chancellor Mónica Torres**

NMSU System Community College Chancellor Mónica Torres and Kelly Brooks presented the request to increase the integrated book services fee at DACC. The proposal was approved upon a motion by Regent Romero, seconded by Regent Gonzales.

**4. Election of Officers, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

Regent Ammu Devasthali was elected chair by acclamation.

Regent Deborah Romero was elected vice chair by acclamation.

Regent Christopher Saucedo was elected secretary-treasurer by acclamation.

**I. Informational Items, Chair**

**1. None.**

**J. NMSU Academic Report, Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi**

Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi presented the academic report, highlighting an act of kindness by students, the upcoming Research and Creativity Week (April 23-29), and data on the university's persistence and retention rates.

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

President Valerio Ferme provided the system report, acknowledging individuals, announcing an upcoming bus tour to visit extension offices across the state, and discussing task forces addressing enrollment management, hazing, and the impact of federal directives.

**L. Announcements and Comments, Chair**

**1. Good News for NMSU!**

Chairwoman Devasthali congratulated the men's and women's basketball teams.

Other good news included Sylvia Acosta being named a New Mexico History Maker, and an ice cream flavor named after President Ferme.

**M. Adjournment, Chair**

The meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Regent Saucedo, seconded by Regent Olivas. The board adjourned at 2:46 PM.

**Meeting Minutes Approved on April 1, 2025 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.**



Ammu Devasthali  
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher T. Saucedo  
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer