



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
REGULAR MEETING
March 9, 2026, at 1:30 PM**

Wooton Hall, Room 105
2995 Knox Street
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Recording located 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 Devasthali called the regular meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Pete DeLeon from the NMSU Army ROTC. Mr. DeLeon, a recipient of a four-year National Army Scholarship, shared that he is currently in his second year (MS2) at NMSU.

1. Welcome, Nick Webb, USDA-ARS Jornada Experimental Range

Dr. Nick Webb welcomed the Regents to Wooton Hall, the headquarters for the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Range Management Research Unit. He highlighted the long history of collaboration between the "Jornada" and NMSU, noting that their high-profile research projects in precision ranching and agrivoltaics contribute significantly to the university's R1 status.

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

Chief of Staff Justin Bannister reported that no media or elected officials were in attendance.

3. Introductions

a) Introduction of the newly elected chair of NMSU Employee Council, Sonia A. White, President Valerio Ferme

President Ferme introduced Sonia A. White as the newly elected chair of the NMSU Employee Council. Ms. White, a three-time NMSU graduate and Instructional Technology Administrator, noted it was exactly six years to the day since she previously concluded a term as chair of the council.

4. Confirmation of Quorum, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

A roll call was taken, and a quorum was confirmed with Regents Gonzales, Olivas, Saucedo, Romero, and Devasthali all present. Regent Saucedo joined via Zoom.

5. Approval of the Agenda, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

A motion was made by Regent Gonzales and seconded by Regent Romero to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Special Meeting on February 18, 2026

A motion was made by Regent Olivas and seconded by Regent Gonzales to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting on February 18, 2026. The motion passed.

C. Regent Committee Reports

1. Audit and Risk Committee Report, Regent Ricardo Gonzales

Regent Ricardo Gonzales reported the committee met on February 26 to receive an internal audit update from John Fry.

a) 2024 2025 Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025, Lisa Todd (Baker Tilly)

Lisa Todd (Baker Tilly) presented the FY25 audit results. NMSU received an unmodified (clean) opinion for the financial statements and federal single audit. A material audit adjustment of \$1.6 million was noted for the Arrowhead component unit due to lease reporting errors, though this was not considered material at the university level.

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

Regent Deborah Romero reported the committee met on March 3 to approve capital projects and a course fee request.

3. Student Success Committee Report, Regent Christopher Saucedo

Regent Christopher Saucedo reported the committee met on February 25 to review two new academic program proposals and graduate enrollment trends.

D. Advisory Member Reports

1. Associated Students of NMSU Report, President Wyatt Ziehe

President Wyatt Ziehe reported that ASNMSU secured approximately \$2 million in legislative funding for campus safety and field improvements. He also noted that student fees will remain flat for the next cycle.

2. NMSU Faculty Senate Report, Chair Vimal Chaitanya

Chair Vimal Chaitanya highlighted the ongoing Provost search and the creation of a task force to improve the international student experience. He also announced Kristian Finlator as the chair-elect for the next semester.

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

Chair Sonia A. White announced the new executive team and shared that Founders Day is scheduled for April 15.

E. Affiliated Entity Reports

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

CEO Sylvia Acosta reported that the Foundation has raised \$18.5 million so far this year and is nearing a "large foundation" status with nearly \$500 million in total assets.

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

Interim Director Winnie Lee announced an additional \$8 million in state appropriation for the soundstage project.

3. Aggie Development Inc. Report, CEO Scott Eschenbrenner

CEO Scott Eschenbrenner provided updates on new construction for White Sands Federal Credit Union and Blake's Lotaburger and reported interest from a developer for a senior retirement community at Aggie Uptown.

F. Public Comment, Associate Vice President Abby Butler

Associate Vice President Butler noted that nobody had signed up for public comment.

G. Consent Items, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

The consent agenda was approved, with Regent Gonzales abstaining from Item G4.

1. 2026 Annual Open Meetings Notice Resolution, University General Counsel Lisa Henderson

2. Confirmation of DACC Spring 2026 Honorary Degree Recipient Selection, NMSU Community Colleges Chancellor Mónica Torres

3. City of Las Cruces Right of Way Easement - Natural Gas Pipeline, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner

4. El Paso Electric Easement – Office of Emergency Management Building, Special Assistant to the President Scott Eschenbrenner

5. DACC Electric Boilers Conversion, Interim Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner

6. Piñon Hall Roof Repair, Interim Associate Vice President Scott Eschenbrenner

7. Disposition and Deletion of Capital Property, University Controller Ross Justus

8. Philanthropic naming of Motion Capture Lab located in Milton Hall, Room #189, the "Kevin Andrew Long Motion Capture Lab", NMSU Foundation CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta

9. Philanthropic naming of Conference Room 253A in the Pan American Center, the "Shari Jones Conference Room", NMSU Foundation CEO Sylvia Y. Acosta

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

Due to scheduling constraints, Chairwoman Devasthali changed the presentation order of the action items to begin with the Anthropology Course Fee request.

1. **Anthropology Course Fee Request, Academic Department Head Lois Stanford,**

Assistant Professor Katie Richards

Professor Katie Richards presented a proposal to raise the fee cap for the Archaeology Field School from \$1,500 to \$2,000 to account for inflation since 2016. A motion for approval was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas. Motion passed.

2. **Computational Social Science - Doctor of Philosophy, Rick Marlatt, David Ortiz Canseco**

David Ortiz Canseco presented this new interdisciplinary degree blending social sciences with machine learning and AI. A motion for approval was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Gonzales. Motion passed.

3. **Artificial Intelligence Technician - Associate of Applied Science, Shannon Bradley, Jon Juarez**

Shannon Bradley and Jon Juarez presented this 60-credit workforce-ready degree. A motion for approval was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Gonzales. Motion passed.

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

The following officers were elected by acclamation for the coming year:

- Chair: Ammu Devasthali
- Vice Chair: Deborah Romero
- Secretary-Treasurer: Christopher T. Saucedo

I. **Informational Items, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

1. **Summary of Revisions to the Administrative Rules and Procedures of NMSU (ARP) for the period December 1, 2025 - February 28, 2026, University Policy Officer Donna Ottaviano**

Donna Ottaviano provided a summary of policy revisions from Dec. 2025 through Feb. 2026.

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

President Ferme reported that spring 2026 census numbers were 831 students higher than the previous year. He also announced that Supreme Court Justice Briana Zamora would visit campus on March 24.

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

Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi presented data on state workforce needs and alumni retention, noting that approximately one-third of NMSU graduates remain in New Mexico.

L. 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 discussed Senate Bill 143, which updated fee caps for the department, and highlighted international trade successes for the pecan and dairy industries.

M. Announcements and Comments, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

1. Good News for NMSU!

- Regent Olivas and former Regent Garrett Mosley were selected for the 2026 Western Governors Leadership Institute.
- Regent Olivas was accepted to present research in Ireland this summer.
- Regent Gonzales highlighted national recognition for student workers at the NMSU radio station (KRUX 91.5).

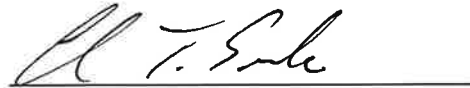
N. Adjournment, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

A motion was made by Regent Olivas to adjourn at 3:40 PM. Motion passed.

Meeting Minutes Approved on April 1, 2026 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.



Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer