



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS  
REGULAR MEETING  
September 15, 2025 at 3:30 PM**

Jett Hall, CHME Student Commons, Room 178,  
1040 South Horseshoe Drive  
and Livestreamed for public viewing at  
<https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/82240874731>

**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**

**Posting of Colors and Pledge of Allegiance Led by NMSU Army ROTC**

Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali called the meeting to order at 3:33 PM, followed by the posting of colors and the Pledge of Allegiance, led by NMSU Army ROTC.

**1. Welcome, College of Engineering Interim Dean David Jauregui**

The Interim Dean of the College of Engineering, David Jauregui, welcomed attendees and thanked the Regents, administration, and advisory members for their dedication to NMSU. He highlighted key aspects of the College of Engineering, including its 14 bachelor's programs, 14 master's programs, and 6 PhD programs. Enrollment on the main campus is up 5% for both undergraduate and graduate students, while the global campus saw a 10% increase in undergraduate enrollment and a 25% increase at the graduate level. Dean Jauregui also noted that construction is progressing on the Thomas and Brown Replacement and the Ag Innovation Space expansion. Research expenditures have also been increasing, reaching over \$20 million in fiscal year 25, up from approximately \$19 million in fiscal year 24. The Dean then introduced several new faculty members from various departments, including Dr. Houqian Li, from Chemical and Materials Engineering, and Dr. Luis Guerrero from Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Dr. Raja Jayaraman from Industrial Engineering, Dr. Xianjue Deng from Civil Engineering, Dr. Mario Renteria Pinon from Electrical Engineering, Mr. Byron Calkins from Engineering and Technology Surveying Engineering (Geomatics), Dr. Venkata Siri Chirala from Industrial Engineering, and Dr. Francisco Torres Herrador from Aerospace Engineering.

**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**

**Introduction of Assistant Vice President for Auxiliary Services Jake Nevarez, Interim Vice President for**

*Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley*

Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley introduced Jake Nevarez, the new Assistant Vice President for Auxiliary Services. Mr. Kinsley noted that Jake has deep roots with the Aggie family and is a long-time director of the Corbett Center with a wide portfolio in auxiliary operations.

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

A roll call was taken, and a quorum was confirmed with Regents Gonzalez, Olivas, Saucedo, Romero, and Devasthali all present.

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

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

**B. Approval of Minutes**

**1. Special Meeting (Work Session) on July 30, 2025**

A motion was made by Regent Gonzales to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting (Work Session) on July 30, 2025, as presented, with a second from Regent Saucedo. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

**2. Special Meeting (Work Session) on August 5, 2025 (2:00 PM)**

A motion was made by Regent Gonzales to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting (Work Session) on August 5, 2025 (2:00 PM), as presented, with a second from Regent Olivas. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

**3. Special Meeting (Work Session) on August 5, 2025 (3:30 PM)**

A motion was made by Regent Gonzales to approve the minutes for the Special Meeting (Work Session) on August 5, 2025 (3:30 PM), as presented, with a second from Regent Olivas. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

**4. Regular Meeting on August 18, 2025**

A motion was made by Regent Olivas to approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting on August 18, 2025, as presented, with a second from Regent Gonzales. The motion passed, and the minutes were approved.

**C. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Sessions**

**1. Confirmation of Prior Closed Executive Session September 15, 2025**

The New Mexico State University Board of Regents held a closed meeting on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 1:30 PM.

The meeting was called to conduct the performance assessment of the President under his contract, as permitted under the personnel matters exemption of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, NMSA Section 10-15-1, subsection (H)(2).

Those board members who were present certified by roll call vote that only matters of that nature were discussed.

Regent Gonzales: Yes

Regent Olivas: Yes

Regent Saucedo: Yes

Regent Romero: Yes

Regent Devasthali: Yes

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

Associate Vice President Abby Butler confirmed that no one had signed up for public comment.

**E. Regent Committee Reports**

**1. Audit and Risk Committee Report, Regent Ricardo Gonzales**

Regent Ricardo Gonzalez reported that the committee met on August 28, 2025. They discussed the Clergy Act report and an internal audit update, and they approved the proposed audit plan and the minutes from the previous meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 23, 2025.

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

Regent Deborah Romero reported that the committee met on September 9, 2025. They approved several capital project requests and action items, which were moved to today's consent agenda and action items agenda.

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

Regent Christopher Saucedo reported that the committee met on September 11, 2025. They reviewed academic program proposals and enrollment updates. They moved forward with proposals for the Doctor of Philosophy in Human Dimensions of Agriculture, the Master of Applied Artificial Intelligence, and the Doctor of Philosophy in Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology. These programs are before the board as action items on today's agenda.

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

The consent agenda was approved with a motion from Regent Gonzalez and a second from Regent Romero. The motion passed, and all consent agenda items were approved as presented.

**1. Atkinson Recital Hall Lighting Replacement, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**2. Arrowhead Drive Multi-Use Path, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**3. Baseball Field Turf Installation, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**4. DACC Gadsden Campus Entrance Road, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**5. New Domestic Well #11, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**6. New Mexico Reforestation Center (Phase 1), University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**7. NMSU Alamogordo Townsend Library Roof Replacement, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**8. Women's Basketball Locker Room, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**9. Women's Volleyball Locker Room, University Architect Berta Zubiate**

**10. Proposed Repeal and Replacement of the Egg Inspection Fees Rule, Title 21, Chapter 34, Part 7 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (21.34.7 NMAC), Cabinet Secretary & Director Jeff Witte**

**11. Proposed Repeal and Replacement of the Seed Standards Classification Rule, Title 21, Chapter 18, Part 4 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (21.18.4 NMAC), Cabinet Secretary & Director Jeff Witte**

**12. Proposed Repeal and Replacement of the Pesticide Rule, Title 21, Chapter 17, Part 50 of the New Mexico**

**13. Long Term Retention Incentive Arrangement Resolution, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

**14. Memorandum of Understanding-AFSCME and NMSU, University General Counsel Lisa Henderson**

**15. Declining the request for NMSU to donate acreage located in Las Cruces on the east campus to the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum (the Museum), University General Counsel Lisa Henderson**

**G. Action Items**

**1. Human Dimensions of Agriculture (Education, Extension, Communication, & Innovation) - Doctor of Philosophy, Academic Department Head Richie Roberts**

Dr. Richie Roberts presented a revised proposal for the PhD program, which has been updated to include a data-driven approach and a hybrid online format. The program has two student pathways: full-time students and online professional students. The program focuses on agricultural education, communications, leadership, extension, and government research with a focus on social sciences. The median salary for graduates is around \$82,000. The program has a waitlist of 21 New Mexico residents and strong stakeholder support. There are no additional faculty, library, or facility resources needed. A motion was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Olivas to approve the program. The motion passed.

**2. Applied Artificial Intelligence - Master of Applied Artificial Intelligence (online), Dean Enrico Pontelli**

Dean Enrico Pontelli presented the proposal for the new online master's program, highlighting the increasing demand for AI-trained workers, with 15% of job postings at Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories requiring AI skills. The program is structured as an "AI Plus X" model, which combines a core AI curriculum with a concentration in a specific discipline (currently sociology, agriculture, or manufacturing and supply chain). The program requires a bachelor's degree and a foundation in mathematics. There is an emphasis on the ethics of AI in the core curriculum. The program is supported by 25 faculty members from various colleges. A motion was made by Regent Olivas and seconded by Regent Saucedo to approve the program. The motion passed.

**3. Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology - Doctor of Philosophy, Academic Department Head Martha Desmond**

Dr. Martha Desmond and Casey Pregler presented the proposal for a PhD program in this field, noting its importance to New Mexico's outdoor recreation industry. There are no similar programs in New Mexico or the Southwest, which presents a significant opportunity. The program has two pipelines: students with a master's degree (4.5-year average completion) and students with a bachelor's degree (6-year average completion). The department has 9 faculty members and over \$31 million in active grants to support students, with no additional costs needed. A motion was made by Regent Saucedo and seconded by Regent Olivas to approve the program. The motion passed.

**4. Chemistry Course Fee Requests, Operations Manager Lisa Osborne**

Lisa Osborne and Dr. Shelly Lucetti requested to increase the course fee for two entry-level chemistry courses from \$5 to \$10 per student credit hour, which is an increase from \$20 to \$40 per course. The increase is needed to cover the cost of 100% cotton lab coats and goggles, which are required to meet higher safety standards. A motion was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas to approve the fee request. The motion passed.

**5. Nursing Anesthesiology Program Fee Request, Academic Department Head Alexa Doig**

Dr. Alexa Doig requested to increase the semester-based program fee for the Nurse Anesthesiology Doctor of Nursing Practice program from \$1,000 to \$13,000. The fee increase will ensure students have access to essential resources, including a cadaver-based course, board certification preparation, and specialized equipment. Even with the increase, the program remains one of the most affordable in the nation. Graduating students can expect starting salaries of around \$300,000. A motion was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas to approve the fee request. The motion passed.

**6. Capital Funding Amendment Request, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance Chris Kinsley**

Interim Vice President Chris Kinsley requested to amend the capital funding request to add a \$15 million demolition project for the Cole Village. This funding, if appropriated, would complete the demolition of phases 3 and 4. A third-party estimate adjusted for inflation confirmed the cost. Regent Romero noted that unforeseen issues, such as asbestos removal and utility line concerns, have contributed to the increased cost. The motion was made by Regent Romero and seconded by Regent Olivas to approve the amendment request. The motion passed.

**H. Informational Items**

**1. None.**

**I. Report from the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to the Regents of New Mexico State University (Board of Agriculture), Deputy Director Les Owen**

Deputy Director Les Owen reported that the red imported fire ant quarantine in Doña Ana County was recently removed, a first for any area in the United States. He highlighted the collaboration between the department and NMSU scientists in achieving this. He also mentioned the success of the New Mexico State Fair and the "Get Your Fix, the Green Chili" campaign, which has promoted New Mexico's agricultural products across the country.

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

Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi presented the academic report, outlining the criteria for reviewing academic programs based on graduation and enrollment numbers. He noted that programs with low numbers will be reviewed to determine if they need assistance with recruitment and retention, or if they should be sunsetted. He showed data on some of the top-performing bachelor's and master's programs with high enrollment and graduation rates.

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

President Valerio Ferme gave a brief report, stating that the system is doing well, with enrollments increasing and fall-to-fall retention at its highest point. He concluded that the university is in a financially solid position.

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

**1. Good News for NMSU!**

Chairwoman Devasthali and Regent Olivas offered congratulations to the organizers of the Gratitude Walk Run, which had about 750 participants this year and has grown into a successful event. Regent Gonzales also commented on the New Mexico State Fair, expressing gratitude for the entire state and the good food.

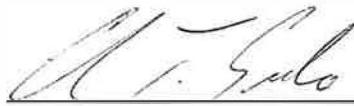
**M. Adjournment, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

A motion was made by Regent Saucedo to adjourn with a second from Regent Romero. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 5:15 PM.

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



Ammu Devasthali  
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo  
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer