



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
SPECIAL MEETING
June 6, 2025 at 3:00 PM**

Online and livestreamed 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

Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali called the special meeting of the NMSU Board of Regents to order at 3:04 PM MDT.

1. Confirmation of Quorum, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Adam Cavotta confirmed a quorum was present, and conducted a roll call vote. All listed Regents, Non-Voting Advisory Members, and University Officials were present.

Regents of New Mexico State University:

- Chair Ammu Devasthali (Present)
- Vice Chair Deborah Romero (Present)
- Secretary/Treasurer Christopher T. Saucedo (Present)
- Marisol Olivas (Present)
- Ricardo Gonzales (Present)

Non-Voting Advisory Members³:

- ASNMSU President Wyatt Ziehe (Present)
- Faculty Senate Chair Vimal Chaitanya, Ph.D. (Present)
- Employee Council Chair Donna Johnson (Present)

University Officials:

- President Valerio Ferme, Ph.D. (Present)
- Interim Provost Lakshmi Reddi, Ph.D. (Present)
- General Counsel Lisa Henderson, J.D. (Present)

Others Present:

- Adam Cavotta, Board of Regents Chief of Staff
- Scott Eschenbrenner, President of Aggie Development Incorporated
- Berta Zubiarte, University Architect
- Chris Kinsley, Interim Vice President for Administration and Finance
- Jose Loera, Director of Project Development and Engineering
- Justin Bannister, Chief of Staff to the NMSU President

2. Approval of the Agenda, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Romero moved to approve the agenda. Regent Olivas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted.

Regent Gonzalez: Yes

Regent Olivas: Yes

Regent Saucedo: Yes

Regent Romero: Yes

Regent Devasthali: Yes

The motion passed with 5 votes in favor. The agenda was approved as presented.

B. Consent Items, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**1. Ground Lease for Aggie Uptown (Blake's Lotaburger), President of Aggie Development Incorporated Scott Eschenbrenner**

Regent Saucedo moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Regent Olivas seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted.

Regent Gonzalez: Yes

Regent Olivas: Yes

Regent Saucedo: Yes

Regent Romero: Yes

Regent Devasthali: Yes

The motion passed with 5 votes in favor. The consent agenda was approved as presented.

C. Action Items

1. Alumni Pond Reconstruction, *University Architect Berta Zubiate*

- University Architect Berta Zubiate presented on the Alumni Pond Reconstruction project, noting the pond's original construction in 1970 and its significance to NMSU.
- In August 2023, a significant breach in the concrete liner caused rapid water loss, leading to the pond's draining and wildlife relocation.
- The structural failure was attributed to the deterioration of the 45-year-old pond liner.
- The project scope includes full excavation, demolition of the aging pedestrian bridge, regrading, installation of a new concrete liner with an automatic fill system, solar aeration, new fish habitats, ADA compliant shade structures with solar lighting, and new site furnishings.
- Design commenced in March 2024 and completed in December 2024. Construction is slated for July 2025, with substantial completion by March 2025, and the pond back online by year-end.
- The total project budget is \$1.3 million, funded by the FY2024 Building Renewal and Replacement Fund and the University's Instruction and General Fund.
- Enhancement elements (new pedestrian bridge, landscaping, lighting, benches, decorative brick walkway) are outside the current budget and require fundraising.
- Chairwoman Devasthali confirmed that core reconstruction is fully funded, and enhancements depend on private funding.
- Ms. Zubiate stated that fundraising for enhancements is in the planning stages.
- Regent Romero inquired about the use of Instruction and General (I&G) funds. Chris Kinsley clarified that it's related to the "general" component of the I&G funds and is permitted by HED.
- Regent Romero suggested reaching out to the City of Las Cruces and the Mayor for potential partnerships, noting Game and Fish has already agreed to help. President Ferme stated he has reached out to Justin and Clayton to connect with the Mayor.
- Chris Kinsley provided estimated costs for enhancements: a tree around \$1,000, a bench between \$5,000-\$10,000, a pavilion \$100,000-\$200,000, and the bridge up to \$500,000.
- Regent Romero expressed concern about the timing of the bridge construction and its integration with the main project. Berta Zubiate and Jose Loera explained that the new bridge foundations would be installed outside the pond area, allowing for later addition without interfering with the pond once it's full.
- Jose Loera confirmed that demolition of the existing bridge is included in the current construction cost.
- Chris Kinsley added that the original bridge's supports likely compromised the liner, and the new bridge design will avoid this issue.
- Regent Romero suggested recognizing the efforts of former Regent Mosley and another individual for their work on the pond project.

- Regent Saucedo commented on the need for the foundation to present a fundraising plan, particularly for naming opportunities. Chairwoman Devasthali agreed to ask the foundation to present a plan at the next meeting.
- Chris Kinsley joked about Regents Saucedo and Devasthali purchasing benches and committed to getting the summer campaign moving quickly.
- President Ferme noted that the CFO has already started conversations about pricing for enhancements.
- Wyatt Ziehe, ASNMSU President, highlighted the passion of former President and Regent Mosley for both the pond and the UREC facility.

Regent Gonzalez moved to approve the Alumni Pond Reconstruction Project as presented. Regent Romero seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was conducted.

Regent Gonzalez: Yes

Regent Olivas: Yes

Regent Saucedo: Yes

Regent Romero: Yes

Regent Devasthali: Yes

The motion passed with 5 votes in favor. The Alumni Pond Reconstruction Project was approved.

2. Aquatics Center Renovation, *University Architect Berta Zubiate*

Ms. Zubiate presented on the NMSU Natatorium and Aquatic Center, constructed in 1961 and last expanded in 2012. It is a 14,365 sq ft facility serving the university and community.

- The project addresses critical life safety deficiencies identified by the State Fire Marshal and State Pool Inspector, including non-compliant fire-rated construction, non-functional pool filtration systems, and outdated emergency signage.
- The scope includes replacing the roof, correcting structural and ceiling deficiencies to meet codes, replacing filtration systems for both indoor and outdoor pools, inspecting and replacing emergency lighting/exit signage, evaluating ADA compliance, and ensuring chemical storage safety.
- Design is scheduled for June-September 2025. Construction is estimated to begin in September 2025, with completion by June 2026.
- The total estimated budget is \$2.3 million. The primary funding request is from FY 2026 non-recurring Building Renewal and Replacement Fund, pending HED approval. Departmental funds will serve as the required match.
- Photos of current filter systems (from a manufacturer no longer in business) and ceiling issues from the fire marshal's report were shown.
- Regent Romero confirmed that \$1.95 million would be used from the general fund (non-recurring Building Renewal and Replacement).

- Regent Romero inquired about the identified and available \$375,000 match. Chris Kinsley confirmed it has been identified and set aside from non-recurring student fees, previously approved by the Board of Regents.

Regent Gonzalez moved to approve the Aquatic Center Renovation Project as presented. Regent Olivas seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was conducted.

Regent Gonzalez: Yes

Regent Olivas: Yes

Regent Saucedo: Yes

Regent Romero: Yes

Regent Devasthali: Yes

The motion passed with 5 votes in favor. The Aquatic Center Renovation Project was approved.

D. Informational Items

1. None.

E. Announcements and Comments, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

- Regent Romero suggested acknowledging the work of former Regent Garrett Mosley and former ASNMSU President Ala Alhalholi for their dedication to the pond project.
- Regent Saucedo requested a future conversation with the NMSU Foundation regarding their fundraising plan for pond enhancements, noting naming opportunities. Chairwoman Devasthali agreed to ensure the President and Justin follow up with the foundation.
- Chris Kinsley expressed appreciation for the approval of the two critical projects and joked about Regents Saucedo and Devasthali purchasing benches.
- President Ferme confirmed that the CFO has initiated pricing conversations for enhancements and noted past discussions about broader community and student involvement, including potential collaboration with "fish and life" (Game and Fish).
- Wyatt Ziehe added that former President and Regent Mosley were also passionate about the UREC facility and its developments.

F. Adjournment, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali

Regent Olivas moved to adjourn the meeting. Regent Saucedo seconded the motion.

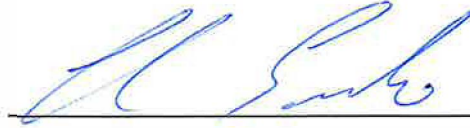
All in favor said "Aye."

The meeting was adjourned at 3:39 PM MDT.

Meeting Minutes Approved on August 18, 2025 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.



Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer