NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS
SPECIAL MEETING
July 21, 2023 at 8:00 AM

The online meeting will be Webcast at the following address: https://regents.nmsu.edu/regent-meetings/

Regents of New Mexico State University

Chair Ammu Devasthali, Vice Chair Christopher T. Saucedo, Secretary/Treasurer Garrett Moseley, Dina Chacón-Reitzel, Deborah Romero

Non-Voting Advisory Members - ASNMSU President Citlalli Benitez, Faculty Senate Chair Gaylene Fasenko, Ph.D., Employee Council Chair Susanne Berger

University Officials - Interim Chancellor Jay Gogue, Ph.D., Provost Alan Shoho, Ph.D., Associate General Counsel Scott Field, J.D.

Minutes

A. **Call to Order**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

The Board of Regents met via Zoom.

Chairwoman Devasthali called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM.

Chief of Staff, Adam Cavotta confirmed the quorum and took roll.

Present virtually: Regent Dina Chacón-Reitzel, Regent Garret Mosley, Regent Christopher Saucedo, Regent Romero, and Regent Devasthali, ASNMSU President Benitez, and Employee Council Chair Berger, President Gogue, Provost Shoho, Scott Field

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

Regent Mosley moved to approve the agenda and Regent Dina Chacón-Reitzel seconded.

All were in favor, roll call vote must be taken for on-line meetings.

Regents Romer, Chacón-Reitzel, Mosely, Saucedo, and Devasthali were all called on and all voted yes.

Motion passed.

C. **Consent Items,** *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*
Regent Mosley moved to approve consent items as presented.
Regent Saucedo seconded the motion.
Roll call vote must be taken for on-line meetings.

Regents Romer, Chacón-Reitzel, Mosely, Saucedo, and Devasthali were all called on and all voted yes.
Motion passed.

1. **Disposition/Deletion of Property,** *Associate Vice President D'Anne Stuart*

2. **NMHED Quarterly Financial Certification Report,** *Chief Budget Officer Kimberly G. Rumford*

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

1. **ICT Network Infrastructure Funding Proposal,** *Chief Information Officer Thomas Bunton*

Thomas Bunton, "Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the board, President Gogue and Provost Shoho."

"First, thank you very much for everybody's time, this is an exciting opportunity that I look forward to presenting to you today. WE have a rare opportunity to request approval from the board for the purchase and financing of a small amount of money, at least in general terms, for the bigger project. To complete the wired and wireless upgrades across campus. But if I may first, I want to say I very much appreciate the work of our police department and fire department. I do not know if people were aware of the house fire that took place on the other side of A mountain yesterday, that was my neighbor's house. If it were not for the campus police department and the campus fire department, our house and all our property would have been lost. I certainly share my significant appreciation there. So, thank you very much for the teams and dedication. So, with that said I will start my presentation, thank you for allowing me to say that."

"So, IT is requesting funding, requesting approval to purchase and fund a network project upgrade. As a little bit of background, campus has 150 buildings. We have about 48,000 wired connections across campus. We have been fortunate with Federal funding over the past few years of HERC funding and COVID relief funding. We have been able to invest 9.1 million dollars. I also want to recognize Dr. Ducos and Carlos Herrera with ACES, secured a 1.6-million-dollar grant that permits us to upgrade our south campus area, which is the student housing area.   So that project is well underway, and it will take about 2 years to complete. But what we are dealing with is we have an insufficient funding model for the network. The funding that we recover internally to the department just covers the core network. The building owners which happen to be the Dean's Department Heads of the building are ultimately responsible for upgrading the network in their building, and obviously you can understand sometimes that funding is just never prioritized to the point that it would get upgraded and it certainly causes issues on campus because one campus buildings might be upgraded in newest technology, whereas in other campus areas it wouldn't be upgraded. So, to put this in perspective, we spent 9.1 million, we are asking for about 1.2 million more. The areas in red are the areas that still do not have coverage, and you can see it is a patchwork quilt, meaning as students and our faculty move from building to building, their experiences drastically differ. The red represents 26 percent of our buildings that still have not been upgraded. What we are dealing with is a significant amount of legacy hardware. This hardware is really designed for about a lifespan of about 5 ½ years, much of that hardware is over 21 years old. It is 10/100 connectivity, so if you think of your connectivity at home if you happen to have a cable modem or fiber. In some cases, you could be on a service that is ten times as fast, and I went back to the closet and tried to understand, like, how old is this technology? This is a blackberry, the network we run in these buildings is the age of this blackberry and you can see it is a monochrome screen. But from a security perspective, from an update perspective, the ability of research to do innovative research does not exist. So, here is where we are at, and I say it is an exciting time, because Cisco has been a tremendous partner of campus. We have invested a significant amount with them, and they understand we are so close to the finish line we need to get done. So, what we need to buy is 245 switches and one router. We will deploy this in an efficiency-based model, meaning that if the port is in use today, we will wire it up tomorrow. If the port is not in use today, we will not light that port up just to make sure we get complete coverage across campus and make the best use of our dollars."

"Cisco has come back to us a couple of times and we have negotiated a 67.5% discount. That discount is reflective of about twenty-five million dollars annual commit or annual spend with that company. And they recognize where we are at, they recognize what we can do, they recognize that they help us. The challenge is, we do not have 1.2 million. Internally we have done some creative things. The Regent's Risk and Audit committee has heard us talk. We are eliminating duplicate services, we're trying to better leverage our

contracts and licensing, and ultimately, we need to come back to campus for a small amount of money, D'Anne Stuart and myself are continuing those conversations but we feel very committed we can come up with an annual lease payment that will fulfill this need."

"Cisco's end of year is the end of July, which is why the aggressive discount, which was why we had a request for this group to meet and ask questions and seek approval. We had negotiated with Cisco for an all-cash option and a lease option, and we negotiated with several leasing companies. We got the best bang, they gave us an all-cash option at the lease rate, and that is the cost on the right-hand side. What it provides us, it is that modern technology that researchers expect from us, it is that ubiquitous service that students want to have from us. It is that consistent wireless services as you come from building to building, whereas we plug in our android phones, we do not have to use injection type devices to get power on it. And the long-term plan we must develop that strategic, sustainable model, and I feel extremely comfortable we are going to do that. And with that said, I could not end the presentation without showing you the team. This group of amazing individuals is half the network team. This is the operations team. This group keep 20-year-old technology alive for our faculty, staff, and students all the while helps building out a modern network on the other hand."

"So, that's it for the presentations, and I certainly welcome questions."

Chairwoman Devasthali, "20-year-old technology, that's pretty scary. So, did I understand you correctly that you are looking to lease and not purchase?"

Thomas Bunton, "We are looking for a lease because internally, we know we can make the lease payment. We simply cannot produce the 1.2 million dollars today."

Chairwoman Devasthali, "I understand payments will be realized from savings the second part, if you could elaborate about campus communication rate or central one-time support?"

Thomas Bunton, "That rate was established almost 10 years ago prior to really wireless becoming what it is today. They envisioned that something had to change, but they really did not know how to focus or change that rate. So, we recover internally to my organization, we could recover enough money to pair for the core technology, everything up to the building. But everything within the building is that building owner's responsibility to pay for. It's a model that might have looked okay back in the day, but I think as we sort of reflect on that in hindsight's 2020, it's that model doesn't work, but what happens is you have wealthy departments or departments that want to prioritize the network because that research, the students get and amazing experience. But the non-wealthy departments do not. So, what we need to do is figure out how do we adjust that rate?"

"So, in 5-8 years, when this equipment goes end of life, and we know the wireless will go end of life before the wired because the technology changes so fast. How do we make sure that in 5 years we do not need another pandemic to replace the hardware?"

Chairwoman Devasthali, "I was pleased to see what your future plan is to fund any upgrades on new equipment that will be needed in the future, and your timeline you have presented when that becomes necessary. I do think that it is a good idea to always keep in mind, and I am addressing D'Anne and Kim in this, that we have to be really aware of when we need to start on our budget process, taking these expenditures into consideration."

Thomas Bunton, "Madam Chair, I appreciate that it is absolutely true, and I would further say, this is almost a utility. We really need to have honest conversations on campus. Is this really an opt in service that people can say I prioritize this over something else? I think if we look at the digital future of our campus, and certainly NMSU Global and what they are trying to do, technology is at the heart of that."

Dina Chacón-Reitzel was recognized, and commented positively on the presentation and the different budgetary item she was made aware of during the presentation and how they will need to look at a new

model for the campus that work in unison and work on the budgetary issues by presenting to the audit committee where they could present them with other options.

Regent Romero was recognized, and asked a couple of questions, "How much of this in on I&G and how are you going to prioritize the projects that need to be worked on?"

Thomas Bunton, "Good morning, so madam Chair and Regent Romero, what we have done is prioritize the installation of this equipment, based on the old, the age of the equipment. So, the oldest equipment or the most impactful equipment was replaced first. So, what happened was the stadium was built in about 2004, which was 2 years after some of the oldest equipment that was in there. So, that is why it is prioritized a little lower. Usually what will happen is if the switch fails, we will sort of daisy chain those switches band and forth to move them around. I think your other question or related question was, what is the impact of I&G and NON-I&G, I would have to defer to D'Anne Stuart on that. I believe that Com rate across campus is shared to every department."

D'Anne Stuart, "Yes, madam chair, Regent Romero, Thomas is right. So again, this is the infrastructure up to the facility as well. So, then what the needs are within the facility would be shared by athletics or whoever else is using it. So, the communications rate that we are talking about, if it is developed, and this is our initial plan, what we would do is built in, again, treat it like a utility and build in the depreciation and the ability to charge out the replacement cost, and that gets charged across all the units. So, I&G would be charged for their component and then all the other users, whether that be auxiliary or athletics or other non-I&G users would be charged their share of that rate. So that is how that would work."

Regent Romero, "Thank you, the last question I have is what is the timeline for completing this project?"

Thomas Bunton, "That is a particularly good question. We will go as fast as we can. Most of this hardware will ship very, very, quickly and our team is completely a building every few weeks. Keep in mind, these are smaller buildings or smaller deployments, so they may occur a little bit more rapidly, but I suspect it will be about a building a week."

Dr. Fasenko, "Good morning, everyone, distinguished leadership, and guests. Madam Chair, thank you. These things often spider web into other issues. And one of the things I think of is when I have students that come to me who say, I am in student housing and if 2 of my roommates are online, I can't get online. So, I must walk to the library. As a parent of a young woman who is going to college, I do not want them having to walk to a different building at night. But the big question I have for you Thomas is, does this impose a greater risk to cyber security, having this ancient equipment?"

Thomas Bunton, "Madam Chair, and Gaylene, it absolutely increases the risk. Primarily because much of this hardware is end of support, end of life, when it dies, we typically must buy replacement parts of third party or resellers. There are no updates to it, so there are no security patches. Many of these vendors in some cases are no longer in business. So, the challenge, I think, going back to the budget model, is when we get this done right and we are close, and we are really excited about it. We must then change focus, to now understand, we have 5 years to prepare for that next thing. So, we can collaborate with our vendors and understand we might get 8 years on the switches. But typically, what you are going to see is the reliance on this only increases because of many of the security-type features we can enable on the new switches. They are only available if we license them or if we have support in that hardware."

"So, the older hardware is why the user experiences in some cases is poor, because there is not modern technology on there. We have a layer of 20-year-old technology that modern devices can now connect to a wireless network seamlessly, but we do not have the underlying network. So, there is a huge security risk, and a huge user experience as well. So, when you relate to students it's an opportunity when they get here is it that service like they have at home? Is it something that they do that is faster that's better that drives them back to say, this is what I need on campus experience?"

Dr. Fasenko, "Does this make us more susceptible to ransomware, to vulnerabilities in that area?"

Thomas Bunton, "Well, that is a tough question, anything like this will increase our ransomware and I say that because the faster the connections the more modern the connections. Certainly, the more connected devices people will bring to campus. We want that but we also need to protect that. So, I think it is a two-prong approach. One, it is the fast connections that we provide, and it is the modern technology that also protects them."

Regent Moseley, "Thank you madam chair, thank you Thomas for your presentation and your team's hard work. So, I just want to make sure I am reading this right? ICT would need $121,000 more annually to be at the funding level that be sustainable?"

Thomas Bunton, "Regent Moseley and madam chair, that is correct. We believe we have sources to find that funding. We have had discussions about whether we increase the rate. We have a longer-term discussion about increasing the rate next year. The challenge to be honest is the budgets for next year, this year have already been set. Now to be honest, 4% is a minor change. So, departments might see 12 to 1500 dollar increases. When you spread that out amongst our billing population, it is small, but it is still impactful."

"So, we really want to understand that with that said there may be some other sources of funding that we can leverage for this year to make up for that. I think the big request for this group is the approval of the purchase, because it is such a large purchase, and the approval of the lease agreement with the commitment that we will work with D'Anne Stuart and her area to find out. We feel confident we can pay for it. It is the longer term. How do we make sure we fix the budget model, so we do not have to come back to this group and say, how do we do this again?"

D'Anne Stuart, "Again, we need to look at the Com Rate, but where we are in the timing and the folks have submitted their budget. Our recommendation for this next year we would fund that $121,00 gap off the top of our equipment, our ERR funding that we get, and until we work through the communication rate and make sure that we are communicating that through all the various channels."

Regent Moseley, "Thank you D'Anne, and Thomas, really quick, do you have an estimate for how much it would cost to completely modernize the ICT infrastructure network across NMSU?"

Thomas Bunton, "Well, really close. So luckily with all the federal grants that Dr. Dugas and Carlos Herrera got combined with the HERC funding. We have completed about 9.1 million dollars' worth of upgrades. Some of the strategic reuse of budget stuff. But that is where we are. It is this 1.2 that will get us completely there. And I'll state it a little bit different way. We will be the only institution in the region that is a completely ubiquitous wired and wireless modern network, a single vendor solution. So, with that said, tis about 10 to 11 million, recognizing that we are doing what we call efficiency-based deployment. So, it is downsizing those 44,000 ports, 48000 ports into something that is usable that is being used today."

Chairwoman Devasthali moved to purchase the ICT Network Infrastructure, equipment through a 5-year lease agreement as presented.

Regent Moseley seconded the motion.

Adam conducted the roll call vote.

Regents Romer, Chacón-Reitzel, Mosely, Saucedo, and Devasthali all voted yes.
Motion passed.

E. **Informational Items**

   1. **None**

F. **Adjournment**, *Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali*

   Chairwoman Devasthali moved to adjourn.

   Regent Moseley seconded.

   Adam Cavotta rolled the board.

   Regents Romer, Chacón-Reitzel, Mosely, Saucedo, and Devasthali all voted yes.
   Motion passed.
   Meeting adjourned at 8:32 am

Meeting Minutes Approved on December 7, 2023 by the New Mexico State University Board of Regents.

Ammu Devasthali
Board of Regents Chair

Garrett Moseley
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer