



**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS  
SPECIAL (WORK SESSION) MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA  
August 5, 2025 3:30 PM**

Hadley Hall, Room 130, Las Cruces Campus  
2850 Weddell Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico

## **MINUTES**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali at 3:30 PM.

Attendees included all members of the Board of Regents: Chair Ammu Devasthali, Vice Chair Deborah Romero, Secretary/Treasurer Christopher T. Saucedo, Marisol Olivas, and Ricardo Gonzales

Presenters/Staff in attendance included: Valerio Ferme, Chris Kinsley, Lakshmi Reddi, Mónica Torres, Sherry Kollmann, Patricia Sullivan, Justin Bannister, and Adam Cavotta

**B. Items for Discussion, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

**1. Strategic Planning, President Valerio Ferme**

President Ferme began the presentation and distributed two documents to the Board of Regents, including a list of opportunities and challenges developed at an administrative retreat earlier in the summer and a Flywheel diagram depicting the approach to integrate the opportunities and challenges into a strategic planning process.

**The key discussion points included:**

- **Systemic Collaboration:** The group acknowledged that fostering partnerships across the university system and with community colleges is a significant, long-term undertaking. However, progress has been made, with a collective effort leading to the enrollment gains.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** The team recognizes the importance of a more structured approach to legislative advocacy. A key priority is to prepare a unified and disciplined message, leveraging the specific relationships and expertise of individual regents and team members. This requires pre-discussion to align priorities with the right people, moving beyond casual, relational interactions.
- **Developing a Strategic Plan:** The group discussed the need for a new, "21st-century" strategic plan that is outcomes-focused, realistic, and adaptable.
  - **Stakeholder Engagement:** A preliminary list of stakeholders and "shareholders" was developed, with the goal of conducting listening sessions to gather input for the strategic plan. Suggestions for new groups to include were the agricultural community, military, and alumni/donors (with a need to be cautious about the latter, as they require careful coaching).
  - **Internal vs. External Facilitation:** There was a debate about whether to use an external consultant to facilitate the strategic planning process. While some argued an outsider could offer a fresh perspective and compressed timeline, others believed the university overuses consultants and that this work should be led internally to foster growth and authenticity among staff.

- **Realistic Goals:** The group stressed the importance of setting clear, realistic KPIs and a development plan rather than a rigid five-year plan. The plan should be a "range" of goals, allowing for flexibility. It was proposed that specific goals could be defined by the end of the calendar year, with KPIs to follow.
- **Culture and Modernization:** A central theme of the discussion was the need for a cultural shift at the university.
- **Investment and Value:** Investing in the institution's infrastructure, such as renovating labs, is crucial not only for modernization but also for showing faculty and students they are valued.
- **Communication:** The importance of face-to-face, organic communication was emphasized to combat the reliance on emails and texts, which can lead to misinterpretation and a breakdown in relationships. The group wants to get people to interact more, which in turn helps break down the "silo" mentality.
- **Hard Conversations:** The team needs to get better at having difficult conversations and holding each other accountable to a shared vision, even when there is disagreement.

**Additional Points were also discussed:**

- **Academic Affairs:** The importance of faculty presence on campus was raised. While acknowledging the shift toward online and hybrid courses, concerns were voiced about the impact on student success and retention when faculty are not physically available. It was agreed that this is a complex issue requiring a balance between student needs and faculty flexibility, and that data on faculty telework and classroom occupancy will be gathered.
- **Financial Health:** A significant point was made about the university's financial health, with the recognition that new revenue streams must be explored to avoid a crippling dependence on state funding.
- **Accreditation:** The upcoming HLC accreditation visit in 2027 was mentioned. The strategic plan should align with the requirements of this visit, reframing the process as an "opportunity" rather than a challenge.
- **Athletics and Foundation:** These were identified as "culture makers" that are integral to the university's perception and should be included in future strategic conversations, noting that there is a need to improve the working relationship between the two.

**C. Adjournment, Chairwoman Ammu Devasthali**

The work session was adjourned by Chairwoman Devasthali at 5:00 PM. As noted in the agenda, no votes or official actions were taken during this session.

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



Ammu Devasthali  
Board of Regents Chair



Christopher Saucedo  
Board of Regents Secretary/Treasurer