

Board of Regents Regular Meeting
Friday, April 17, 2025
1:00 pm
NMT Campus
Fidel Center Ballroom B

M I N U T E S

The regular meeting of the New Mexico Tech Board of Regents convened at 1:00 pm on Friday, April 17, 2025, with Regent Chair Jerry Armijo presiding. Additional Board members in attendance were Dr. David Lepre, Dr. Yolanda Jones King, Dr. Srinivas Mukkamala, and Cody Johnston.

University administration was represented by President Mahyar Amouzegar and Vice Presidents Richard Cervantes, Delilah Walsh, Lique Coolen, Michael Jackson, and David Greene. Other attendees included Vanessa Grain, Brandon Boutler, Peter Szatmary, Carlos Romero, Mike Timmons, Bob Balch, along with various faculty, staff, and guests.

- 1) Call to Order, Chair Armijo.** Chair Armijo called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
 - a) **Proof of Meeting Notice, Chair Armijo.** Ms. Grain confirmed that legal notices were placed in the Albuquerque Journal and El Defensor Chieftain.
- 2) Approval of Agenda, Chair Armijo.** The Agenda was unanimously approved on a motion made by Regent King and a second by Regent Johnston.
- 3) Public Comment, Chair Armijo.** None.
- 4) Presentation to Adrian Salustri, Chair Armijo.** Chair Armijo announced a presentation to former student regent Adrian Salustri for his two years of service from 2023-2024. Although he could not attend the meeting, he will receive a gift and plaque as appreciation for his contributions and service to the Board.
- 5) Election of Officers/Subcmte Appointments, Chair Armijo.** Chair Armijo facilitated the election process, noting the two open officer positions—Chair and Secretary/Treasurer—each serving two-year terms as specified in the Regents' Bylaws. Chair Armijo opened the floor for nominations. Regent David Lepre Sr. was nominated and unanimously elected as Board Chair. Regent Yolanda Jones King was nominated and unanimously elected as Secretary/Treasurer. Both Chair Lepre and Secretary/Treasurer King expressed their gratitude to fellow Regents and affirmed that it is an honor and

privilege to serve New Mexico Tech. Subcommittee appointments were also discussed and it was unanimously decided to keep them the same.

6) Regent Committee Reports, Chair Lepre

- a) **NMT Foundation Updates, Regent Armijo.** Regent Armijo provided a detailed report on the NMT Foundation's current fundraising efforts. He explained that the Foundation is actively preparing for a capital campaign aimed at raising funds for university priorities, including research initiatives, campus improvements, and scholarship funds. The Foundation has been in talks with major donors and is focusing on strengthening relationships with alumni and other key stakeholders to ensure long-term financial sustainability for New Mexico Tech.
- b) **NMT Univ. Research Park Corp. Updates, Regent King.** Regent King reported on the activities of the Research Park, discussing the ongoing improvements in patent investments and the recent formation of an internal intellectual property review committee. This committee is tasked with identifying opportunities for the university to maximize the commercial potential of its research. Additionally, the Research Park continues to look for ways to collaborate with national labs, local businesses, and industry leaders to further its growth and impact.
- c) **NM HERC Updates, Regent King.** Regent King provided an update on NM HERC's support for addressing basic needs for students, including expanding access to food, housing, and healthcare services. He emphasized the need to restructure the subcommittee to ensure that it can better meet the growing demand for these services. There is also a concerted effort to recruit additional members to the subcommittee to provide a wider array of support for students' diverse needs.
- d) **Regent Finance Subcmte/Legislative Updates, Chair Lepre.** Chair Lepre presented updates on the state budget and its impact on New Mexico Tech. He discussed how the legislative session resulted in increased funding for research and development and highlighted the potential for the reintroduction of House Bill 449, which would create a higher education capital facility fund. He explained that this bill was important for ensuring that universities have the necessary funds to maintain and develop their physical infrastructure.
- e) **Regent Research Subcmte, Regent Mukkamala.** None.
- f) **Student Updates, Regent Johnston.** Regent Johnston explained he will have more to report once he has time to speak to the newly elected officers of SGA and GSA. He did discuss his concerns regarding graduate student insurance, and he would like to see more discussion on addressing this issue with the President and Regents.

7) Info Items, Chair

- a) **SGA Updates, President Collins.** President Collins reported that a new SGA President was elected and her name is Ella Hooks. He will introduce Ella at the next board meeting in May. He also noted that the NMT newspaper Pay dirt has made a comeback, doing well and he is very happy with their success.
- b) **GSA Updates, President Essel.** President Essel reported that their first event of the year was a tax filing process hosted by Sherry Rodriguez from admin and finance and it provided valuable guidance to both domestic and international students. She will also introduce the newly elected GSA President and the May regent meeting.

- c) **Emeritus Status for Dr. Bhaskar Majumdar, Provost Jackson.** Provost Jackson provided a detailed update on the Emeritus Status proposal for Dr. Bhaskar Majumdar, a distinguished faculty member at New Mexico Tech. Dr. Majumdar, who has made significant contributions to both the academic community and the broader scientific field, has recently retired from his full-time position at the university, but his work continues to have a lasting impact. Regents acknowledged the emeritus status for Dr. Majumdar.
- d) **Student Affairs and Enrollment Updates, VP Greene.** Vice President Greene provided a comprehensive update on student enrollment and related affairs. He began by highlighting the success of Admitted Student Day, which saw a significant turnout of prospective students and their families. This event provided an opportunity to showcase New Mexico Tech's academic programs, campus facilities, and unique student experiences, leading to positive feedback from attendees.

VP Greene also addressed the ongoing challenges in student enrollment, specifically the decline in the number of completed applications compared to previous years. He noted that completed applications have decreased from 1,300 to 700, largely due to financial concerns and the increasing cost of attendance, which have impacted potential students' decisions.

A key focus was the impact of financial aid on enrollment. VP Greene explained that many students have been unable to follow through with applications due to limited financial aid offerings, highlighting the need for increased scholarship opportunities and other forms of financial assistance to make New Mexico Tech more accessible to a wider range of students. This discussion tied into broader conversations about tuition rates and potential adjustments, including the proposed 9.1% decrease in tuition for resident undergraduate students for FY26.

The enrollment team is also working diligently to enhance recruitment efforts, especially with international students. VP Greene pointed out that visa issues continue to be a barrier for attracting international applicants, affecting the university's diversity and enrollment numbers. Efforts to streamline the visa process and improve international student outreach were emphasized as ongoing priorities.

Another point discussed was the importance of positioning New Mexico Tech as the first choice for prospective students. VP Greene explained that a key strategic goal is to ensure that more students choose New Mexico Tech over other institutions, particularly in high-demand programs where competition for spots is fierce. Increasing retention rates will be closely tied to this goal, as students who view the university as their top choice are more likely to stay and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Finally, VP Greene shared that the administration is working on new initiatives to bolster student support services, including better career counseling, mental health

resources, and academic advising, in order to enhance the overall student experience and ensure long-term success for enrolled students.

- e) **Research Presentation-EMRTC, Director Ackley.** Director Ackley provided an in-depth presentation on the Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center (EMRTC), explaining its history, mission, and recent activities. He discussed the expansion of the university's partnerships with national labs, the formation of a new business unit dedicated to research and development, and the growing interest in commercial explosives research. Director Ackley also mentioned that EMRTC is establishing an internal grant program to fund research projects and is focused on enhancing collaboration between the university's academic departments and the research centers.
- f) **Legislative Updates, Dir Manzano, M. Saavedra, CUP and Dir. Balch.** The legislative updates provided by AVP Carlos Romero (in place of David Manzano), Marc Saavedra, CUP, and PRRC Director Bob Balch underscored the critical role that legislative actions play in shaping the future of higher education at New Mexico Tech. The cybersecurity funding, Opportunity Scholarship, capital facility funds, and research funding discussions were all part of a broader strategy to ensure that the university remains a leading institution in STEM education and research innovation while also ensuring greater accessibility for students and long-term sustainability of the university's infrastructure. The Board and President Amouzegar thanked the NMT legislative team for all their hard work and efforts at this past legislative session.
- g) **President's Updates, Dr. Amouzegar.**
 - i) **OP-03 Emergency Policy**
 - ii) **OP-07 Education Policy**
 - iii) **OP-08 Endowed Scholarship Policy**

President Amouzegar introduced Ms. Delilah Walsh, NMT's new Chief Financial Officer and Vice President of Administration and Finance. Ms. Walsh, a Socorro native and NMT alumna, gave a brief introduction of her work history, and personal accomplishments. She said she was honored to be before the board in her new role as vice president, and looks forward to being a part of the universities continued growth and success.

President Amouzegar provided an overview of three internal university policy updates that had been recently approved:

Education Upgrade Policy: This policy formalizes the tradition of awarding bonuses to employees who complete higher degrees (bachelor's, master's, or Ph.D.). It establishes a structured, official process for awarding one-time bonuses to encourage and reward staff members who further their education.

Endowment Scholarship Policy: The policy increases the minimum amount required

for creating an endowed scholarship from \$15,000 to \$25,000. For faculty and staff, the minimum remains at \$15,000. The update also limits overly restrictive donor stipulations on endowed scholarships, ensuring that funds can be distributed to more students while maintaining flexibility for donors.

These three (3) updated policies aim to formalize and clarify important internal practices, ensuring transparency and consistency in the university's operations. The three policies were reviewed and approved by legal counsel.

In discussion, Regent King asked Chair Lepre for a formal legal policy review and approval process to be established for all policies. Chair Lepre noted the request from Regent King.

8) Consent Items, Chair Lepre.

- a) Restricted Fund Purchase of Awards >\$300k, VPAF**
- b) FY25 NMHED Qtr. Cert. Ending 03/31/25, VPAF**

Regent Armijo moved to approve Consent Items 8a) and 8b), followed by a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.

9) Action Items, Chair

- a) Approval of March 7, 2025 Minutes, Chair Lepre.**
Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.
- b) Approval of AA-01 Policy for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty, Provost Jackson.** Regent King moved to table, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.
- c) Approval of AA-16 Policy on Emeritus Status, Provost Jackson.** Regent King moved to table, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.
- d) Approval of FY26 Tuition and Fees, VPAF.** Tuition Adjustments: For resident undergraduate students, a 9.1% decrease in per credit hour tuition was proposed. This reduction is part of an ongoing effort to make New Mexico Tech more accessible and competitive for both in-state and out-of-state students. The goal is to ease the financial burden on students while maintaining the quality of education and student services. While tuition was reduced, there were minor increases in general fees to support student activities and services. These increases are aimed at maintaining essential student resources without heavily impacting overall affordability. The fee structure and tuition reduction were designed with a focus on student retention and increased accessibility. By adjusting tuition and fees, the university seeks to ensure that it remains a desirable option for prospective students while balancing financial sustainability.

A motion to approve the proposed FY26 tuition and fees was made by Regent King and seconded by Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.

e) Approval of FY26 Operating Budget, VPAF.

The VPAF presented to the FY26 Operating Budget, which is designed to ensure New Mexico Tech's financial stability while continuing to support its academic and research priorities.

Revenue and Expense Overview: The approved budget includes a \$2.5 million increase in state appropriations, which will support compensation, operational costs, and programmatic needs. The budget was crafted with a conservative approach to revenue estimates, reflecting the uncertain fiscal environment. The primary focus is on balancing financial sustainability while maintaining the quality of education, research, and student services.

Strategic Priorities: The operating budget aligns with the university's strategic priorities, including investments in student success, faculty support, and research excellence. It aims to preserve critical resources for the university's core functions and ensure continued growth in these areas.

Cost Management: The budget also accounts for expected cost increases in areas such as benefits, utilities, and administrative expenses, while focusing on efficiency and reducing non-essential expenditures.

Flexibility and Reserves: The budget maintains an emphasis on flexibility to adapt to potential future changes in revenue and expenses. The administration has committed to using budgetary reserves strategically to address immediate needs and long-term goals.

The proposed budget approval demonstrates the Board's commitment to maintaining a balanced and sustainable financial framework that will support New Mexico Tech's academic, research, and operational needs throughout FY26.

A motion to approve the FY26 Operating Budget was made by Regent King and seconded by Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.

f) **Approval of FY26 Board of Regent Budget, Fund D04010, Chair Lepre.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.

g) **Approval of FY26 Presidents Budget, Fund D01010, Chair Lepre.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.

h) **Approval of Resolutions to Update Checking/Investment Accounts, VPAF.** Regent Armijo moved approval, with a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.

i) **Approval of Restricted Budget Adjustment Request #1, VPAF.** Regent Armijo moved approval, with a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.

j) **Approval of Unrestricted Budget Adjustment Request #2, VPAF.** Regent Armijo

- moved approval, with a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.
- k) **Approval of NMHED 5-Yr Capital Project Funding Plan, VPAF.** Regent Armijo moved approval, with a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.
 - l) **Approval of NMT Univ. RPC Board Member for VP Walsh, Regent King.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.

10) **Individual Board Member Comments, Chair Lepre.** None.

11) **New Business, Chair Lepre.** None.

12) **Executive Session, Chair Lepre. NMSA 1978, Sec 10-15-1 (H) (2), (If Required to Consider Legal and/or Personnel Matters)**

- a) **Tenure and Promotion**
- b) **Pending Litigation**
- c) **Discussion of Presidents Performance Evaluation**

Chair Lepre entertained a motion to meet in Executive Session. Regent King so moved. Regent Armijo seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote by Chair Lepre, Regent Armijo, King and Johnson. The regular meeting adjourned at 4:07pm.


13) **Reconvene in open session and take final action if any, on such limited legal and/or personnel matters which shall be acted upon in open session following conclusion of the closed session, Chair Lepre.**

Chair Lepre reconvened the regular meeting at 6:04 pm. He announced that only those items listed in the Agenda were discussed, and that no action was taken.

14) **Adjournment, Chair Lepre.** The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:05 pm on a motion by Regent Johnston and a second from Regent Armijo.


Chair, David Lepre Sr.

Attest:


Secretary-Treasurer, Yolanda Jones King