



Board of Regents Regular Meeting

Friday, May 16, 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, May 16, 2025, with Regent Chair David Lepre Sr. presiding. Additional Board members in attendance were Dr. Yolanda Jones King, Jerry A. Armijo, Dr. Srinivas Mukkamala, and Cody Johnston.

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

- 1) Call to Order, Chair Lepre.** Chair Lepre called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
 - a) Proof of Meeting Notice, Chair Lepre.** Ms. Grain confirmed that legal notices were placed in the Albuquerque Journal and Santa Fe New Mexican.
- 2) Approval of Agenda, Chair Lepre.** The Agenda was unanimously approved on a motion made by Regent Armijo and a second by Regent Johnston.
- 3) Public Comment, Chair Lepre.** None.
- 4) Opening Comments from Chair Lepre.** Chair Lepre opened by affirming the Board's commitment to transparency, thoughtful deliberation, and accountability. He stressed that Board meetings are not ceremonial or perfunctory, but rather forums for honest, rigorous discussions on matters of significance to the institution. He expressed confidence in the diverse perspectives and expertise of the Regents and encouraged robust engagement during the meeting.

Chair Lepre also clarified the procedural structure for the meeting to enhance efficiency and ensure that all voices are heard. He requested that Regents reserve their questions until after each presentation concludes unless otherwise directed, and asked presenters to keep their remarks focused and timely. He introduced a two-round format for Board member questions to allow equitable participation, followed by open discussion after motions are introduced. He emphasized the importance of using microphones for

clarity and record-keeping and noted that all comments and motions should go through the Chair to maintain order. Lastly, he thanked the campus leadership, faculty, and staff for their preparation and contributions to the meeting's agenda.

5) Regent Committee Reports, Chair Lepre

- a) NMT Foundation Updates, Regent Armijo.** Regent Armijo reported that the NMT Foundation had not held a meeting since the last Board of Regents session. However, he noted that the Foundation continues to work closely with University Advancement to support student scholarships, capital projects, and long-term fundraising initiatives. He reaffirmed the Board's commitment to working in alignment with the Foundation's priorities and expressed appreciation for the Foundation's role in supporting institutional advancement.
- b) NMT Univ. Research Park Corp. Updates, Regent King.** Regent King reported that the University Research Park Corporation continues to explore opportunities for public-private partnerships and commercialization of research. While there were no formal actions to report at this meeting, Regent King emphasized that the Corporation is actively engaged in identifying pathways to grow entrepreneurial activity on campus, aligning with broader goals to translate faculty and student research into startup ventures and licensing opportunities.
- c) NM HERC Updates, Regent King.** Regent King provided a brief update on NM HERC activities. She noted continued collaboration among member institutions on joint research initiatives and infrastructure planning. Discussions are ongoing regarding shared resources, including data management and high-performance computing. Regent King highlighted the importance of aligning these statewide initiatives with New Mexico Tech's strengths in STEM research and innovation.
- d) Regent Finance Subcmte/Legislative Updates, Chair Lepre.** Chair Lepre stated there were no recent Finance Subcommittee meetings but noted that future sessions may be convened as budget planning for FY26 advances. He acknowledged recent legislative appropriations that support NMT operations and emphasized the importance of continued engagement with state lawmakers on key funding priorities, including infrastructure, student financial aid, and faculty support. He also discussed the need to monitor the impact of changes from the State Investment Council on NMT's fund allocations.
- e) Regent Research Subcmte, Regent Mukkamala.** Regent Mukkamala stressed the importance of strengthening entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems at NMT. He encouraged the university to think more like a business, with emphasis on translating research into real-world applications. He suggested setting key performance indicators (KPIs) for research centers, enhancing technology transfer processes, and increasing startup activity on campus. Regent Mukkamala stated that New Mexico Tech's research portfolio has significant untapped potential and urged leadership to prioritize commercialization as part of strategic planning.
- f) Student Updates, Regent Johnston.** Regent Johnston shared that he had recently collected results from a student survey, which he plans to distribute to fellow regents, GSA, and SGA leadership. He highlighted issues raised by students around

communication, campus climate, and services. He recognized outgoing SGA President Elijah Collins and welcomed incoming leadership. He commended the work of both SGA and GSA in advocating for student needs and expressed interest in engaging students more directly in future Board initiatives.

6) Info Items, Chair

- a) Faculty Senate, FS Chair DeVeaux.** Dr. DeVeaux presented the annual Faculty Senate survey report, compiled by the Regents Faculty Conference Committee. The anonymous survey gathered feedback on the performance of institutional units across Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Research, and Finance. Key concerns included declining enrollment, inconsistent administrative support, research funding, and quality-of-life issues for faculty. Faculty responses also indicated uncertainty about the university's future, with many exploring job opportunities elsewhere. Regents acknowledged the value of the feedback and discussed the need for renewed focus on enrollment and institutional morale. Chair Lepre invited Regents to share reflections following the reports and discussions. Regent Armijo offered a candid response to the Faculty Senate survey. He acknowledged that declining enrollment has been a persistent challenge over the past seven years, despite significant efforts to reverse the trend. He emphasized the urgency of addressing this issue, stating that enrollment has been the board's primary concern for the past seven years and that the board is firmly committed to figuring out a solution to the enrollment decline. He further remarked on New Mexico Tech's strengths—STEM focus, affordability, and academic excellence—and expressed frustration that these advantages have not translated into enrollment gains. Armijo affirmed the Board's dedication to supporting faculty and staff, and pledged to work collaboratively across campus to develop effective solutions. Regent Mukkamala emphasized the need for outcome-based research and entrepreneurial transformation. He advocated for performance metrics tied to licensing, commercialization, and company formation, and urged campus leadership to think more like a startup ecosystem. Regent King acknowledged both the criticisms and positive insights from the faculty report. She expressed gratitude for the campus community's candid feedback and emphasized the importance of rewarding what's working while addressing areas of concern. Student Regent Johnston expressed appreciation for the student-centered initiatives discussed and reiterated the value of continuing direct outreach to students. He committed to sharing survey feedback and continuing to serve as a conduit between student governance and the Board.
- b) SGA Updates, President Collins.** Outgoing SGA President Elijah Collins provided final remarks, expressed gratitude to the Board, and introduced incoming President Ella Hooks. He shared that the SGA had passed a \$216,000 budget, reduced by approximately \$17,000 due to decreased enrollment. He also noted plans for the student newspaper to acquire printing equipment and offer printing services to campus and the community.

- c) **GSA Updates, President Essel.** Outgoing GSA President Donna Christie Essel addressed the Board with a message of gratitude and reflection. She highlighted a year of growth, collaboration, and meaningful progress for the Graduate Student Association. Among the year's major accomplishments was the successful launch of the GSA-OoA Scholarship Fund, created in partnership with the Office of Advancement and the Center for Graduate Studies. This fund provides emergency financial assistance to graduate students facing unexpected academic or medical hardships. Essel also introduced the GSA Mentorship Program, aimed at easing the transition into graduate life for new students. The program, along with expanded outreach and inclusive programming, contributed to an over 80% increase in student engagement across GSA events. She expressed deep appreciation to her team of officers—Zohreh Motlagh Kazemi, Mercy Ike Ajigah, Rashedul Chowdury, Abraham Armah, and Imtiaz Ahmed—whose dedication and alignment made these successes possible. Essel concluded by thanking the Board, university leadership, faculty, and staff for their support, and officially introduced Imtiaz Ahmed as the incoming GSA President. She expressed full confidence in the continued growth and impact of GSA under new leadership.
- d) **Student Affairs and Enrollment Updates, VP Greene.** VP Greene provided a detailed report on enrollment management, student support services, and retention initiatives. Highlights included the restructuring of the Strategic Enrollment Management Committee, hiring of three full-time recruiters and a CRM/social media specialist, and advising reform efforts. Greene also detailed the use of \$135,000 in state wraparound services funding, with \$50,000 allocated to supplemental instruction in high-challenge courses. Career services reported over 770 student participants and 119 employer sessions. Student wellness and basic needs services reached hundreds of students, including food pantry programs and tele-counseling. The Children's Center received over \$800,000 in grant funding to expand pre-K services and offer free meals starting summer and fall 2025.
- e) **Capital Projects Status Update, VP Walsh.** VP Walsh updated the Board on key capital projects: Kelly Hall Renovation (PRRC Upgrade): 40% complete, on schedule for early 2026 completion. Electronic Lock Upgrade: Implementation underway, moving away from physical keys to card access for improved security and efficiency. Data Center Expansion: \$1.9M project; design complete and pending HED and State Board of Finance approval.
- f) **Reallocation of Funds Impacted by NM SIC, VP Walsh.** VP Walsh informed the Board about recent changes mandated by the New Mexico State Investment Council (SIC) that impact the university's non-U.S. public equity investments. The SIC notified participating entities that certain international fund options would be phased out and replaced with new small-cap and large-cap international fund categories. To maintain compliance and prevent forced liquidation of assets, NMT is required to reallocate its holdings into these new options. Walsh explained that while the shift does not affect the university's overall investment strategy or asset allocation, timely action is essential to preserve earnings and market exposure. The reallocation will be processed once the April investment statements are finalized.

This move ensures continued diversification in NMT's portfolio and avoids a scenario in which international funds would otherwise be converted to cash. She clarified that this change affects many public institutions across the state and that the Foundation is undergoing a similar process. Walsh emphasized that the reallocation aligns with NMT's current investment policy and does not alter risk posture or long-term strategy. A follow-up report will be presented to the Board once the transition is complete.

- g) FY25 Quarterly Financial Report 03/31/25, VP Walsh.** VP Walsh reported that New Mexico Tech remains on track financially. State appropriations increased due to legislative allocations for compensation and operations. Endowments and long-term investments rose by nearly \$30M, due to market gains and contributions. Although auxiliary revenue and cost recovery dipped slightly, increased billings and grants in Q4 were expected to stabilize income. Overall, instruction, research, and student aid accounted for over 80% of expenditures, reflecting institutional priorities.
- h) Sabbaticals for Spring 2026, Provost Jackson.** The Board was informed of two sabbatical approvals: Dr. Bixiang Wang, Department of Mathematics, and Dr. Mark Person, Department of Earth and Environmental Science. These sabbaticals were approved following internal review and reflect each faculty member's scholarly contribution.
- i) Research Presentation, Provost Jackson.** Provost Jackson delivered a comprehensive overview of Academic Affairs and the strategic direction of research and education at New Mexico Tech. He began by affirming that the division's core mission is to equip students with the knowledge and experiences needed to address today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities. He emphasized that academic innovation must be faculty-led and collaborative, spanning classroom instruction, interdisciplinary degree development, research involvement, and experiential learning opportunities such as internships, design competitions, and leadership roles. He acknowledged feedback from the Faculty Senate report and emphasized that any new initiatives will require community buy-in and shared responsibility. Rather than dictate top-down priorities, he invited faculty to reflect on their departmental strengths, student learning outcomes, and opportunities for growth. He announced a divisional forum scheduled for August 12 in Workman 101, where these topics will be openly discussed. Jackson also highlighted opportunities to expand interdisciplinary offerings, general education reform, and storytelling strategies to help market academic programs more effectively. He noted the importance of aligning with campus partners such as Student Affairs, Advancement, and Research to build cohesive student experiences. Regents responded positively, with Regent Mukkamala encouraging stronger emphasis on entrepreneurship and research commercialization. Jackson committed to continued dialogue with faculty and leadership to ensure that academic direction aligns with institutional goals and evolving student needs.
- j) President's Updates, Dr. Amouzegar.** President Amouzegar provided closing remarks that highlighted institutional momentum and ongoing leadership transitions. He formally introduced Darryl Ackley as the new Chief Information

Officer, noting Mr. Ackley's extensive experience in state-level technology leadership and his immediate impact on streamlining IT strategy, business process optimization, and the university's website redevelopment efforts. Mr. Ackley will also serve temporarily as Interim Director of EMRTC while recruitment continues. The President also shared the recruitment and hire of Patrick Stewart, new VP for University Advancement who will oversee the Office for Advancement, Marketing and Communications, and Government Affairs, emphasizing the importance of strategic hires to support institutional growth, fundraising, and branding initiatives. He acknowledged the challenges posed by staff transitions and expressed gratitude for the interim leadership stepping in to ensure continuity. President Amouzegar expressed excitement for the upcoming Commencement ceremony which will celebrate over 300 graduates and welcome an audience of approximately 2,000 family members, friends, faculty, and supporters. He recognized this milestone as a capstone to the academic year and extended appreciation to faculty, staff, and students for their resilience and accomplishments throughout the year. He concluded by reaffirming his commitment to supporting campus-wide efforts focused on student success, enrollment, research growth, and institutional reputation.

7) Consent Items, Chair Lepre.

- a) Restricted Fund Purchase Notification of Awards >\$300k, VP Walsh.**
- b) Unrestricted Fund Purchase >\$300 for Trane Technologies, VP Walsh.**
- c) Resolutions for Property Disposition (5), VP Walsh.**

Regent King moved to approve Consent Items 7a) and 7c), followed by a second from Regent Mukkamala. The motion passed unanimously.

8) Action Items, Chair

- a) Approval of April 17, 2025 Minutes, Chair Lepre.**
Regent Armijo moved approval, with a second from Regent King. The motion passed unanimously.
- b) Approval of KMP Resolutions for NMT and PRTC, VP Coolen.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.
- c) Approval of AA-01 Policy for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure of Faculty, Provost Jackson.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.
- d) Approval of AA-16 Policy on Emeritus Status, Provost Jackson.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.
- e) Approval of Approval of NMHED Capital Project Transmittal Sheet for Data Center Infrastructure Expansion and Playas Site Fence, VP Walsh.** Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.
- f) Approval of Bureau Contract Awards up to \$750k, VP Walsh.** No Action was taken by the Board of Regents.
- g) Approval of Emeritus Status for Dr. Thomas Engler, Provost Jackson.** Regent

Armijo recognized Dr. Engler for his distinguished career in Petroleum Engineering, PRRC, and campus leadership. Regent King moved approval, with a second from Regent Mukkamala. The motion passed unanimously.

9) Individual Board Member Comments, Chair Lepre. Chair Lepre praised Provost Jackson's engagement with the faculty and his academic vision.

10) New Business, Chair Lepre. None.

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

a) Board Policy Development & By-Law Review Process

b) Performance Evaluation

c) Tenure and Promotion

Chair Lepre entertained a motion to meet in Executive Session. Regent King so moved. Regent Johnston seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by roll call vote by Chair Lepre, Regent Armijo, King, Mukkamala and Johnson. The regular meeting adjourned at 2:58pm.

12) 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 4:36 pm. He announced that only those items listed in the Agenda were discussed. Regent Johnston moved approval of the faculty presented for tenure and promotion listed below, with a second from Regent Armijo. The motion passed unanimously.

Regents approved the following Faculty for Tenure and Promotion:

Tenure and Promotion to the rank of Associate Professor:

Dr. William Ampomah (Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering),
Dr. Matthew Johnson (Communication, Liberal Arts, and Social Sciences),
Dr. Isabel Morris (Civil and Environmental Engineering),
Dr. John Naliboff (Earth and Environmental Science),
Dr. Saulo Orizaga (Mathematics), and
Dr. Laura Waters (Earth and Environmental Science).

Promotion to the rank of Associate Teaching Professor:

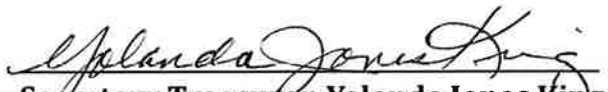
Dr. Carlos Lopez Carillo (Physics),
Dr. Kaarin Goncz (Biology),
Dr. Curtis O'Malley (Mechanical Engineering), and
Dr. Todd Wolford (Mathematics).

Promotion to the rank of Professor:
Dr. Pabitra Choudhury (Chemical Engineering)

- 13) Adjournment, Chair Lepre.** The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:39 pm on a motion by Regent King and a second from Regent Johnston.


Chair, David Lepre Sr.

Attest:


Secretary-Treasurer, Yolanda Jones King