

**New Mexico Tech Board of Regents Regular Meeting
Friday, November 17, 2023
1:00 pm
Fidel Center ~ Ballroom C**

MINUTES

The New Mexico Tech Board of Regents Regular Meeting convened at 1:00 pm on Friday, November 17, 2023, with Regent Chair Jerry Armijo presiding. Board members present were Dr. Yolanda Jones King and Adrian Salustri. Other university administrators, staff and guests included: Dr. Van Romero, Richard Cervantes, Dr. Michael Doyle, Dr. David Greene, Dr. Michael Jackson, Dr. Rick Thompson, Vanessa Grain, Lala Garcia, German Bustillos, Dr. Robert Balch, Jennifer Raney, Dr. Nelia Dunbar, Dr. Michael Timmons, Dr. Brian Borchers, Jenny Ma, Emma Aafloy, Valentina Avramidi, Dylan Purcell, Dylan Schroeder, Juan Rueda, Simon Kopischke; Dr. David Lepre, Dr. Srinivas Mukkamala and Mark Adams (on Zoom) and Valerie Kimble.

1. Call to Order. Regent Chair Armijo called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

a) Proof of Meeting Notice. Ms. Grain confirmed that legal notices were placed in the Albuquerque Journal and El Defensor Chieftain.

2. Approval of Agenda. Chair Armijo requested a motion to amend the agenda to include a Faculty Senate report. Regent King so moved, followed by a second from Regent Salustri. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment. None

4. Recurring Reports.

a) SGA Updates. SGA President Dylan Schroeder provided updates on funding, activities and future large-scale events. Paydirt also is back in print.

b) GSA Updates. GSA President Dylan Purcell reported on increased student engagement and workshops, including an online series on travel grants, and future events co-sponsored with the SGA. Chair Armijo commended both students for their diligence and input in attending every meeting as members of the Presidential Search Committee.

c) Student Life. VP Greene reported an increase in completed and paid applications from last year. More potential students are attending on-campus events, with the University



seeing a positive impact from recruiting trips. If these numbers remain consistent, enrollment projections should return to the level set two years ago.

d) Academic Affairs. IVP Jackson introduced Dr. Richard J. "Rick" Thompson Jr., as Associate VPAA, who will lead NMT's HLC reaccreditation process to culminate in an on-site visit in March 2025. Dr. Thompson has a Ph.D in astronomy and astrophysics, and experience with higher education accreditation initiatives that will serve the Institute well. Dr. Thompson said he is looking forward to working with his new colleagues, adding that the University is in good shape at this point in the process.

e) Administration and Finance. VPAF Cervantes updated the Board on several items, noting that reports from the recent audit were sent to the State Auditor for review. The administration is pleased with the reports, with findings to be discussed at the February 2024 Regents meeting. University staff met with the architect and vendors to discuss options and upgrades to the \$2.1 million campus-wide electronic lock upgrade project. Once received, the project will need Board approval before going on to HED and the State Board of Finance. On Nov. 16, NMT met with vendors to discuss options and upgrades to the Data Center Expansion Project. Cervantes said NMT will contribute 10 percent of the ~\$2 million project cost. In closing, he reported that a meeting with local Legislative representatives brought some assurance of funding to cover the \$3.1 million shortage for the Kelly Hall project, but nothing definite.

f) Research. VP Doyle reported that NMT's Entrepreneurship Fellowship program started by Dr. Myrriah Tomar is catching hold across the state, and was recognized as a leader in the field. A research-overview booklet, intended as a handout, is almost completed. Following a visit to Playas by an NSF leader, the PTRC is emerging as a possible NSF research center in Spectrum Science, because of its unique capabilities in real-world validation of models. Doyle noted Department of Defense interest in Playas, and the potential for expanded student involvement in academic research.

g) Special Research. VP Romero delivered a Power Point presentation reflecting an historical financial overview of EMRTC and PTRC. Excess funding from an annual \$22 million Homeland Security grant for the First Responders program, which was on reduced operations during COVID-19-19, is now operating at a \$44 million pace, but will return to the \$22 million level in about one year. Overhead generated before COVID-19 was \$3 million. He said this year the number rose to \$8 million, but would drop back down to \$3 million. Romero said NMT was the only entity in the nation training First Responders during COVID-19. While things are good right now, these excess funds will disappear in a year. Replying to a query from Regent King, Romero said EMRTC could do UAV operations on the range.



h) Bureau of Geology. Director Dunbar reported on a successful grant application for \$780k, under PI Dr. John Rakovan, to purchase a single crystal x-ray diffractometer, a diagnostic tool for the Bureau. Dunbar also attended a workshop sponsored by the Plutonium Workforce Development Initiative, saying she sees a real future in this program to teach students about the tools they will need. The (Nov. 10-12) N.M. Mineral Symposium drew 275 attendees, including a number of international participants. Of note is a new mineral specimen of fluorite, called "The Beast," in the Bureau atrium. The Bureau also is three years into a five-year water quality project with the Navajo Nation. Regent King recognized Dr. Dunbar as recipient of the 17th Annual IMPACT! Award from the New Mexico Network for Women in Science and Engineering.

i) PRRC. Director Balch expressed his gratitude for PRRC staff for a "bumper crop of proposals" totaling over \$60 million, a success rate of over 90 percent. He also acknowledged the work of Dr. Sai Wang for his role in developing three storage sites for CO₂, among projects that give the research division long-term visibility.

j) President's Report. Chair Armijo announced that Interim President López has been working remotely during his wife's rehabilitation, and wished her a speedy recovery. Regent Armijo acknowledged Regent Lepre, co-chair of the Presidential Search Committee, its members and the outside consulting firm, for winnowing an impressive candidate list to five finalists as good fits for the University and local community. He said that each finalist will spend time on campus, feedback would be evaluated, and Regents will choose from among the top three the new President of New Mexico Tech.

k) Faculty Senate. Dr. Borchers thanked Regents Armijo and Lepre for speaking to the Faculty Senate about the presidential search. He stated that the NMT Strategic Plan would be discussed at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

5. Information Items.

a) NMT Foundation Updates. No report.

b) NMT Univ. Research Park Corp. Regent King reported that the strategic planning is coming together.

c) NMT HERC Updates. Regent King reported no updates.

d) NMT Finance Subcmte/Legislative Updates. Regent Lepre thanked VP Romero for his presentation, adding that he would like to meet with the Budget Office for review. He acknowledged VP Doyle for his reports; had no chance to meet yet with Regent Salustri. Dr.



Lepre suggested a meeting with Romero, Cervantes and others involved in the legislative process to set up a system to stay in touch with each other.

e) NMT Research Subcmte. Regent Mukkamala had no report.

f) NMT Student Updates. Regent Salustri reported that he is trying to check in with his peers as to their summer plans.

g) Restricted Fund Purchase Notification >\$100k. VP Cervantes announced nine Restricted Fund purchase requests, eight of which are for the AFRL (ranging from a \$108k purchase from Honeywell, to \$1.1 million to McClain + Yu Architecture). The only other purchase was to NETL for a \$103k insurance policy from Arthur Gallagher Risk Management Services.

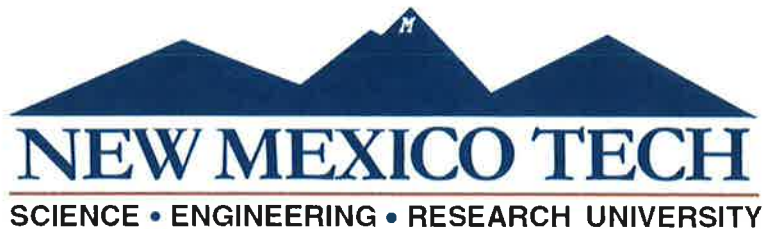
h) Financial Report Ending 09/30/2023. VP Cervantes reported statistics for the first quarter of the fiscal year. He commended his staff for developing a financial management tool to interpret and analyze data. Cervantes cautioned that timing issues could distort the bottom line, adding that overhead numbers are positive, with nuances still to be worked out. He noted that unrestricted expenses have increased over last year; i.e., supplies and consumables on the research side exceed its salaries and benefits. A full report was included.

i) NMT University Research Park Corporation (RPC). Earlier this month, NMT met with the Research Park leadership to discuss the financial model of the RPC. It was agreed to seek some strategic guidance from the Board to discuss at the Board meeting in December in more detail. Regent King suggested further review.

6. Action Items.

a) Approval of October 09, 2023 Minutes. Regent King moved to approve the minutes, followed by a second from Regent Salustri. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Approval of Emeritus for Dr. Dunbar and Dr. Kieft. Dr. Michael Timmons brought forward a request to grant emerita status to Dr. Nelia Dunbar, Director of the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, citing her record as an "internationally known researcher...and remarkable leader." Dr. Jackson nominated Dr. Thomas Kieft, longtime Professor of Biology, for emeritus status, noting that he has served NMT in a variety of roles, including as a teacher, scholar and student mentor. Regent King moved to approve emeritus status for both individuals. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Dr. Dunbar said she is looking forward to continued research and outreach,



including a return to Antarctica and personal pursuits. Dr. Timmons will succeed her as Bureau Director.

c) Approval of Changes to Degree Conferral Process. IVP Jackson proposed a recommendation he had introduced at a previous Board meeting to alleviate timing issues in the degree conferral process. He proposed that, similar to other times of the year, the President be granted the ability to confer degrees with the Regents notified of degree conferrals at their next regular meeting. This permits Commencement to be a ceremonial celebration distinct from the degree conferral process. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

d) Approval of Unrestricted BAR #1. VP Cervantes requested, and Regents unanimously approved, a request to approve Unrestricted BAR #1 on a motion by Regent Salustri and a second from Regent Lepre. Six specific reasons for the BAR request were included for Board review.

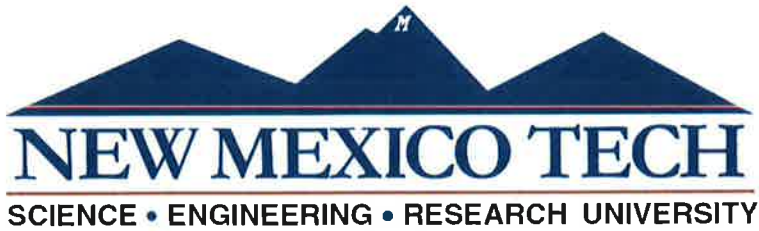
e) Approval of Unrestricted Fund Purchase >\$250k. VP Cervantes requested Board approval for two Unrestricted Fund purchases exceeding \$250k: a) to purchase a crane for EMRTC, to MGX Equipment Service, LLC; and b) to purchase library services from Elsevier. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

7. Individual Board Member Comments. Regent Lepre acknowledged members of the Presidential Search Committee, and Ms. Grain, for outstanding work, particularly during the past two weeks, comments echoed by Regent Mukkamala. Ms. Grain said it was a team effort, and thanked Ms. Lala Garcia, Mr. German Bustillos, Chartwells, Advancement/Alumni, Auxiliaries, as well as many other NMT staff for a successful effort during this time.

8. New Business. None.

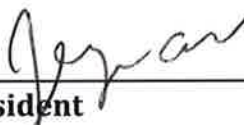
9. Executive Session. NMSA 1978, Sec 10-15-1(H)(2), (If required to Consider Legal and/or Personnel Matters). Regent King moved to meet in Executive Session. Regent Salustri seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken by Ms. Grain, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

10. 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. Regent King moved to reconvene the meeting at 3:19 pm. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Chair Armijo announced that only matters related to legal and/or personnel were discussed. Regent King moved to approve the appointment



of Dr. Jaakko Putkonen to the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. He will enter as a tenured full professor, and will serve as department chair. Regent Mukkamala seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

11. Adjournment. Regent King moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:20 pm. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.



President

Attest:



Secretary- Treasurer