



**Board of Regents Meeting
Wednesday, 1:00 pm, March 6, 2024
Macey Center Galena Room
New Mexico Tech Campus**

MINUTES

The New Mexico Tech Board of Regents convened at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, March 6, 2024, with Regent Chair Jerry Armijo presiding. Other Board members attending were Dr. Yolanda Jones King, Regent Adrian Salustri; and, via Zoom, Dr. David Lepre Sr. and Dr. Srinivas Mukkamala. University administrators, staff and guests included: Dr. Daniel H. López, Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar, Mrs. Maria Montero, Dr. Michael Doyle, Dr. Van Romero, Dr. David Greene, Dr. Rick Thompson, Dr. Robert Balch, Dr. Michael Timmons, Dr. Peter Phaiyah, Dr. Brian Borchers, Dr. John Meason, Lillian Armijo, Richard Cervantes, Jenny Ma, Vanessa Grain, German Bustillos, Jo Ann Salome, Dylan Purcell, Emma Aafloy, Valentina Avramidi, Daniel Lunsford, Kiane Garcia, Alex Garcia, David Manzano; Mark Adams and Dr. Myrriah Tomar via Zoom; Valerie Kimble and technical video/sound staff.

- 1) Call to Order. Chair Armijo called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.**
 - a) Proof of Meeting Notice.** Ms. Grain confirmed that legal notices were published in *El Defensor Chieftain* and the *Albuquerque Journal*.
- 2) Approval of Agenda.** Regent King moved to amend the Agenda, asking that (Action Item 7e, Approval of FY25 Federal Appropriation Priority List), be moved from an Action Item to an Information Item. Interim President López explained that the issue was not about prioritizing requests, but about the process itself. Following a brief discussion, the Chair called for a second to Regent King's motion. The motion died for lack of a second, and the Chair entertained a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Regent Salustri so moved, followed by a second from Regent Lepre. The motion passed, with Regent King voting against it.
- 3) Introduction of President-Elect Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar and Mrs. Maria Montero.** Chair Armijo introduced Dr. Mahyar Amouzegar and his spouse, Maria Montero. Dr. Amouzegar will officially assume the presidency of NMT on April 15, 2024. They expressed their excitement in being here, and in looking forward to the President-Elect's investiture.
- 4) Public Comment. N/A**
- 5) Recurring Reports.**
 - a) SGA Updates.** None.
 - b) GSA Updates.** Outgoing GSA President Purcell said his goal for a seamless transition for new officers to be in place before the next Regents meeting will allow the student officers to familiarize themselves with procedures and contacts to help them do their jobs.
 - c) Student Life.** VP Greene reported that undergraduate admissions are up by 96 students over last year; an increase of 129 in applications; retention percentages are also increasing. Participants in a



Student Leadership Camp two years ago accrued a ~90 percent first-to-second semester retention rate. NMT would like to push its retention rate closer to its competitor in Colorado, at 90 percent.

- d) **Academic Affairs.** AVP Thompson updated Regents on NMT's HLC reaccreditation under the "Open Pathway" process; which, during year 10, includes a comprehensive review and an onsite visit in 2025. Other benchmarks include improved student retention and a one-stop-shop for student support. An official HLC review of a recent project demonstrated, among other findings, adequate resource provision, a nice piece to add to NMT's Assurance Argument regarding student learning and retention.
- e) **Administration and Finance.** VP Cervantes reported that the Legislature approved a \$3.5 million request to cover inflationary increases for Phase I of the Kelly Hall replacement. An additional \$8.4 million in GO Bonds is on the November ballot for voter approval. Other projects in the works are electronic door locks; boilers for Jones Annex; and chiller replacement. Following a virtual meeting with S&P's Global Ratings group, NMT is expected to retain its A+ rating.
- f) **Research.** Among updates from VP Doyle were potential areas of collaboration with UTEP, including biomedical sciences and materials science. A Distinguished Visitors Day at Playas Testing and Research Center (PTRC) drew 45 participants from federal agencies, the NSF and industry. The consensus is that Playas can become a unique national resource; next step is how to make it happen. A Research Colloquium with 23 presenters was so productive that plans are to extend it to two days next year. Also, a process for organizing a Research Council to offer advice, develop strategies, directions and priorities; and an OIC initiative which could result in a manufacturing subsidiary in Socorro.
- g) **Special Research.** Dr. Romero reported that NMT developed an explosives degree in Mechanical Engineering 29 years ago in response to instruction from the late Regent Steve Torres. The University continues to follow that directive with an academic offering in explosives. Dr. Romero and Dr. Jeff Altig will co-teach through the Chemistry Department. Dr. Romero also announced a great response from "high-caliber" alumni willing to offer workshops on careers and opportunities available to NMT students.
- h) **Bureau of Geology.** Director Timmons reported Legislative funding requests, including a \$1.1 million increase in the Bureau's base appropriation; a \$1.5 million geothermal fund to develop a research/education program at NMT; a one-time \$160k appropriation for a hydro-geologic study in Rio Arriba County; and an award of \$75k to the Carrizozo Soil and Water Conservation District for the northern Tularosa Basin study. Among other funding initiatives are two through the Interstate Stream Commission, including a six-month, \$50k study to support the ISC in developing a plan to address brackish water.
- i) **PRRC.** Director Balch noted his efforts to support Legislative bills and provide testimony on behalf of PRRC's 100 percent soft-money budget, thereby raising the profile of the PRRC in Santa Fe. In reporting three new grant approvals, he recognized Robert Czarnota for his first grant approval as the PI, noting grant funds at both the federal and industrial levels.
- j) **President's Report.** Dr. López summarized results of the 2024 Legislative session, acknowledging the efforts of VP Cervantes, Carlos Romero and David Manzano in NMT's success in student support, research funding, capital outlay projects and other initiatives. In his last meeting as Interim President, Dr. López acknowledged socio-political forces at play in presenting new challenges to higher education, and the need for institutions, such as NMT, to guard their independence in the face of the rapid movement of technology, and potential negative aspects of AI, cautioning what it



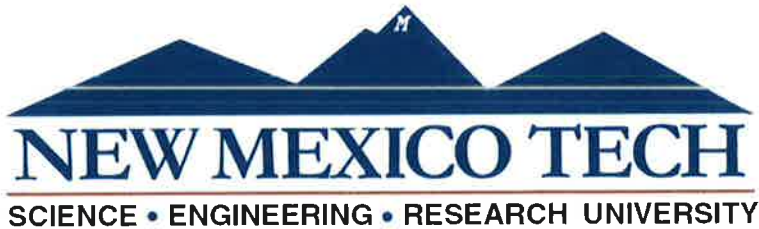
means, and how to deal with it. Saying he had no answer, but urged that higher education leaders consider which students are universities trying to serve. During the discussion that followed, Regent Salustri said of mitigating the effects of AI: “No magic process will make it happen.”

6. Information Items.

- a) **NMT Foundation Updates.** Regent Armijo reported that at the last Foundation meeting, efforts continue to progress on the Capital Campaign, with a goal still to be established.
- b) **NMT Univ. Research Park Corp.** Regent King reported that the NMTURPC Board is still working on the Strategic Plan, acknowledging its quality board, and the continuing need for other committed board members.
- c) **NM HERC Updates.** Regent King acknowledged the loss of the head student Regent from UNM, and the continual focus on additional behavioral health initiatives.
- d) **NMT Finance Subcmte/Legislative Updates.** On behalf of Legislative Subcommittee Chair Regent Lepre, Regent Salustri identified four primary agenda items for the first Spring Budget Forum on April 3, 2024: A detailed report of Legislative Session outcomes; Building the I&G budget; Update on the Campus Capital Improvement Plan (“more student-oriented capital projects”); and Student Financial Aid status report. Regent Lepre briefly addressed issues of transparency, particularly useful when dealing with the HLC; the Funding Formula; and tying research back to the academic community.
- e) **NMT Research Subcomte.** No updates.
- f) **NMT Student Updates.** Noting that original estimates were dialed back, and emphasizing the need for NMT to provide a high value to students, Regent Salustri as governing body student representative, acknowledged the necessity for the proposed increase in tuition and student fees.
- g) **Degree Conferrals for February 24, 2024.** AVP Thompson referred Regents to a list of 18 degrees completed and approved by the Faculty Senate.
- h) **Restricted Funds Purchase Notifications >\$100.** VP Cervantes reported 23 purchases (18 for EMRTC, three for ICASA and two for the Department of Mineral Engineering).
- i) **NMT Strategic Plan Update.** Dr. Phaiah, as part of his Power Point presentation, cited six strategic themes, their objectives, potential tasks and implementation strategies endorsed by the Faculty Senate at its Feb. 6, 2024 meeting. During the discussion that followed, Regent Salustri cited references to Colorado School of Mines, often mentioned as a competitive institution. Being admitted there is one thing; graduating from NMT is an accomplishment. “It’s not that they’re a better school; they’re an easier school,” he said, cautioning against comparisons.

7. Action Items.

- a) **Approval of February 6, 2024 Minutes.** Regent King moved to approve the Minutes, as previously amended. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- b) **Approval of FY24 Tuition & Fees.** VP Cervantes introduced an increase in student tuition, room and board, delineating factors including inflation, the CPI, and the necessity to maintain a competitive edge among state research institutions: For FY25, proposed increases of 3 percent for tuition increase; 3.2 percent for room rates; and a 4.1 percent increase in board to offset a portion of the 5.5 percent increase assessed by NMT’s food services provider. After discussion, Regent King moved for approval. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.



- c) **Approval of NMHED Capital Projects**, VP Cervantes requested authorization to submit the transmittal summary sheets to the HED and Board of Finance for the Capital Projects requests. Regent King moved to approve the request. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- d) **Approval of Property Resolutions**. VP Cervantes requested Board approval for the property resolutions. Regent King so moved. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- e) **Approval of FY25 Federal Appropriations Priority List**. According to VP Romero, this time of year is when Congressional priorities are taking shape, and therefore an appropriate time to align NMT requests with its I&G mission. Discussion included whether the process for prioritizing Congressional requests should be internal or done in consultation with the state's Congressional delegation. VP Romero stated that priorities are evaluated by federal staff on what already exists, citing the First Responders Program as an example. Dr. Amouzegar took the podium to request that the issue be tabled, because as incoming President, he will inherit whatever is decided. Regent King then moved to table the issue. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

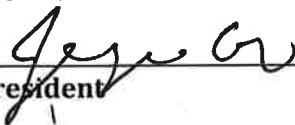
8. **Individual Board Member Comments**. All five members of the Board of Regents acknowledged and thanked Dr. López for returning to NMT as Interim President. In particular, Regent Armijo recognized him as both a mentor and personal friend, who had no intention of once again helming the University, but agreed to do so to help NMT solve outstanding problems, not just as a past President, but also because of an abiding love for the school. In turn, Dr. López thanked his staff, calling his year of service a pleasure and a rewarding experience.

9. **New Business**. None

10. **Executive Session**. (NMSA 1978, Sec. 10-15-1 (H) (2), (If Required to Consider Legal and/or Personnel Matters). Regent Salustri moved to adjourn the regular meeting and go into executive session. Regent Mukkamala seconded the motion, and Ms. Grain conducted a roll-call vote, which was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 2:54 pm.

11. **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 Armijo reconvened the open session at 3:43 pm, saying that no action was taken, and only those items listed under the agenda were discussed. Regent King then moved to accept the recommendation of Academic Affairs to grant Dr. Amouzegar to a joint appointment in Math and Computer Science, with tenure. Regent Salustri seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

12. **Adjournment**. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 3:45 pm on a motion by Regent King and a second from Regent Salustri.



President

Attest:



Secretary- Treasurer