



**Regents Regular Meeting  
Monday, October 9, 2023  
1:00 pm  
Fidel Center ~ Ballroom C**

**MINUTES**

The New Mexico Tech Board of Regents Regular Meeting convened at 1:00 pm on Monday, October 9, 2023, with Regent Chair Jerry Armijo presiding. Board members present were Dr. Dave Lepre Sr., Dr. Yolanda Jones King; and Dr. Srinivas Mukkamala and Adrian Salustri (both on Zoom). Other university administrators, staff and guests included: Dr. Daniel López, Dr. Van Romero, Richard Cervantes, Dr. Michael Doyle, Dr. David Greene, Dr. Michael Jackson, Vanessa Grain, Lala Garcia, German Bustillos, Dr. Robert Balch, Dr. Nelia Dunbar, Dr. Brian Borchers, Dr. Myrriah Tomar, Colleen Foster, Sandi Lucero, Katie Bauer, Jenny Ma, Emma Aafloy, JoAnn Salome, Valentina Avramidi, Dylan Purcell; Mark Adams, Jennifer Raney (both on Zoom) and Valerie Kimble.

- 1) **Call to Order.** Regent Chair Armijo called the meeting to order at 1:03 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.** Regent King moved to approve the Agenda as presented. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- 3) **Public Comment.** None
- 4) **Recurring Reports.**
  - a) **SGA Updates.** SGA President Dylan Schroeder was unavailable.
  - b) **GSA Updates.** GSA President Dylan Purcell reported that GSA bylaws have been updated to better manage the growth of the association and to address fiscal issues, such as spending limits. The GSA teamed up with the International Programs office and the CLASS Department for a combined chile roast and international potluck dinner, which drew from 100 to 150 attendees. The opportunity to sample foods from students' home countries was a success, and Purcell said he hopes to host more of these kinds of gatherings. President López commended Purcell for his emphasis on the budget, noting that the language in the bylaws is now in place for greater control over GSA finances.
  - c) **Student Life.** In his report, VP Greene updated Regents on student enrollment, noting that new student numbers are down 79, otherwise the numbers are fairly consistent. The retention rate for first-to-second-semester Hispanic students is up 10 points, and the rate for minority students overall is up eight points. A return to last year's student head **count** significantly increase enrollment. One issue, he said, in promoting Tech, is brand identity --



"Students don't know our brand outside the state." Student Life hosted 132 "welcome" events for first-year undergraduate and graduate students, and 32 career development events. VP Greene will be in Ghana later in October as part of a student-recruiting mission.

- d) Academic Affairs.** IVP Jackson reported that his office is moving forward with the Strategic Plan and Action Plan as outlined at the summer retreat. Academic Affairs will host "listening sessions" in October to generate feedback, particularly from alumni; and will recruit individuals to implement various components of the Strategic Plan. A final draft was planned for mid-November, with a rollout to Regents in December.
- e) Admin. and Finance.** VP Cervantes reported that NMT has four capital projects in the works: PRRC, campus-wide electronic lock upgrade, Data Center infrastructure expansion, and campus infrastructure upgrades. Cervantes, President López and Alex Garcia, Director of Capital Projects, attended a meeting of the state Board of Finance in September **seeking approval for PRRC construction, which was approved; and that the cost of materials has increased by 40 percent, along with rising construction costs, particularly due to a requirement to use in-state firms.** NMT has received the new boilers for Jones Hall, he said, adding that a request to hire a company to install them will follow later in the meeting.
- f) Research.** VP Doyle updated Regents on grant submissions, including a Department of Education program to fund 13 new Ph.D. students a year. He also addressed efforts toward faculty professional development and economic development. Dr. Doyle also attended a meeting with UTEP and Texas Tech University to create an alliance to develop a new doctoral program. He said it would create another pipeline for students, which would help increase enrollment.
- g) Special Research.** VP Romero reported that the division is making progress on a backlog in fiscal year spending, partly due to the Covid pandemic. Research expenditures are up, which is great, he said, back to \$22 million per year. Currently under way is a virtual reality training center to be housed in a vacant building in EMRTC's field laboratory. Trainees will wear goggles as they are guided through various training scenarios. Also in the works is a counter-drone program which is getting national attention, including from the State Department, to train personnel as France prepares to host the 2024 Summer Olympics. **Interpol has contacted NMT, and expressed an interest to arrange visits between France and Tech, he said, adding that these new ventures may show development beyond Homeland Security.**
- h) h) Bureau of Geology.** Director Dunbar gave Regents a five-page summary for FY 22-23, highlighting the employment of 72 students and increasing staff numbers, largely due to additional grant and contract income. Visits to the Mineral Museum are at, or above, pre-

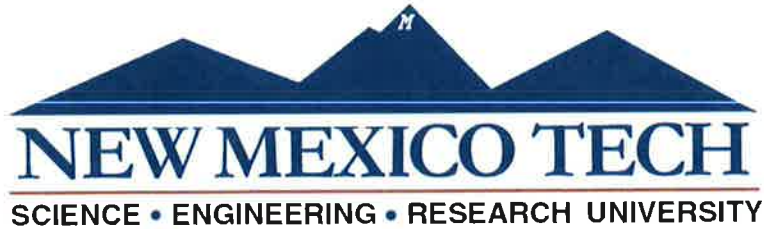


Covid levels. On September 21, the Bureau hosted a geothermal workshop which drew participants from academia, the national labs and industry, led by Bureau geophysicist Shari Kelly, focusing on opportunities and challenges in the geothermal field. Director Dunbar announced that NMT will occupy the entire bottom floor of the state Capital for Earth Science Day; and that she co-wrote an op-ed article on talent development, highlighting the Institute.

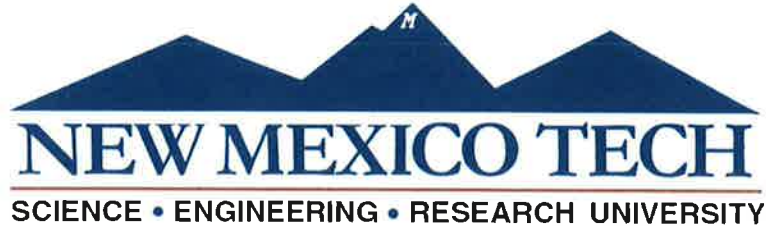
- i) **PRRC.** Director Balch reported that the research division has done well over the last several years, with 27 active projects totaling \$163 million, and eight pending, valued at \$4.4 million. Next is to build a carbon dioxide storage facility in the Four Corners region. PRRC has submitted 69 proposals; 29 are pending, valued at \$68 million. He noted a \$100,000 budgetary increase from the N.M. Legislature last year; hiring a Native American as a tribal liaison; and creating and filling the role of PRRC Deputy Director, following the retirement of Randall Seright, focusing on outreach and community engagement. Dr. Balch then introduced Jennifer Raney (on Zoom), an environmental engineer who cited her interactions in Santa Fe with key leaders and legislators.
- j) **President's Report.** President López reported that NMT is seeking a supplemental Legislative appropriation of \$3 million for the PRRC construction project. The supplement request is due to inflationary costs subsequent to the original appropriation. Construction will start once bids are finalized. The President's Golf Tournament brought in \$329,906.50 in cash, \$15,000 for in-kind support; and \$60,000 in cash and pledges for special endowment scholarships. Following the resignation of the EMRTC director, a temporary (three months) director is on board, with plans to hire a permanent replacement. President López also touched on plans for hiring a director for the proposed Hydrology Center, increasing enrollment, a brochure showing links between the local community and the Institute, and Playas issues. He will serve on a panel focused on artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential impact on the work force and cybersecurity. "We need to think ahead," he said. In closing, President López recognized Sandi Lucero, Colleen Foster and staff for the success of the golf tournament.

## 5) Information Items.

- a) **NMT Foundation Updates.** Regent Armijo reported that Foundation fund-raising efforts are strong and active, and expressed his appreciation for an approved administrative fee on NMT endowments. He said that because the Mountain Springs apartments, owned by the Foundation and leased to NMT, require multi-million-dollar renovations, it is in the best interests of the Institute to construct new student housing elsewhere. Options were being considered, and no students will be displaced.
- b) **NMT Univ. Research Park Corp. Updates.** Regent King reported that the corporation is seeking input from faculty and staff to enhance its efforts.



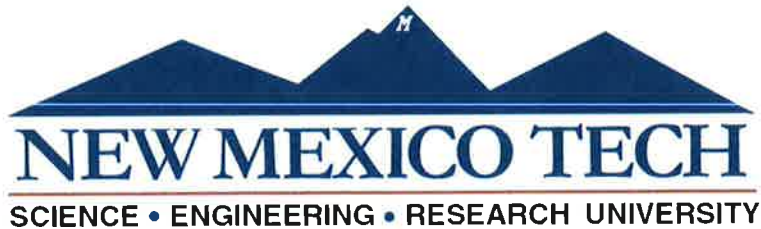
- c) **NMT HERC Updates.** Regent King updated the Board on HERC activities.
- d) **NMT Finance Subcmte/Legislative Updates.** Regent Lepre reported that earlier today, the first of three meetings prior to the end of the academic year was held. Topics for discussion are being developed to give voice to various groups on campus in advancing the Institute. Under review are audits from the past two years and funding priorities for the 2024 Legislative session. Dr. Lepre recognized HR Director Salome for her report.
- e) **NMT Research Subcmte.** Regent Mukkamala had no report.
- f) **NMT Student Updates.** Regent Salustri commended the SGA and GSA for their active engagement. He addressed the issue of AI, and how to handle it looking ahead, including the automatic execution of code.
- g) **Degree Conferrals for Aug & Sept 2023.** IVP Jackson provided Regents with a list of degree recipients for August and September 2023 as conferred by President López.
- h) **Restricted Fund Purchase Notification >\$100k.** VP Cervantes notified the Board of four projects exceeding \$100k, three for the Bureau of Geology and one for the Magdalena Ridge Observatory Interferometer.
- i) **Financial Report Ending 06/30/2023.** VP Cervantes delivered a Power Point presentation showing Institute finances from a cash-flow perspective. He noted that it incorporated the transition from the previous format to its current iteration, reflecting about 80 percent of what the final report will look like, both for restricted and unrestricted funds. Among its highlights are an increase in research revenue and increased costs for salaries and benefits, currently comprising 64-to-65 percent of revenue, noting that the more spent on salaries means less for operational expenses. There followed a discussion initiated by Regent Lepre on financial resources for unfunded state mandates; which, Cervantes said, the actual revenue in FY 23 exceeds expenses. He said that NMT needed to find a way to increase revenue on a regular basis, such as returning investment earnings to the university.
- j) **State Non-Recurring Appropriation Request.** VP Cervantes, in responding to a mandate to provide the HED with non-recurring appropriation requests, cited the following requests: Supplemental funds for natural gas utility expenses, ~\$900k; for Risk Management insurance expenses, ~\$475k; and for funds to cover unfunded mandates, i.e., increases in the minimum wage; compensation raises; NMT's share associated with the NMERB; and funds for equipment replacement and repair, including specific items for



classrooms and labs, vehicles for student field trips and the observatory telescope, ~\$3.7 million.

**6) Action Items.**

- a) Approval of September 05, 2023 Minutes.** Regent King moved to approve the minutes, followed by a second from Regent Lepre. The motion passed unanimously.
- b) Approval of IP Policy.** Dr. Myrriah Tomar, OIC Director, presented a proposed IP Policy for Board approval, based on policies at MIT and other universities. Previously, the university had no formally approved policy governing IP. VP Doyle said the proposed policy was developed from scratch, providing as much flexibility as possible; it covers individual and institutional rights associated with intellectual property ownership and benefits derived from such. Regent Lepre noted that the proposed policy does protect the interests of NMT. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- c) Approval of NMHED Qtr. Certification 09/30/23.** VP Cervantes requested Board approval for the required quarterly certification. Regent King moved for approval, followed by a second from Regent Lepre. The motion passed unanimously.
- d) Approval of SunZia Transmission Project.** 2nd Amendment to Purchase/Option Agreement. VP Cervantes requested that Regents approve a Second Amendment to Agreement and Option to Purchase Easements, the Memorandum of Second Amendment to Agreement and Option to Purchase Easements, the Easement Agreement and the Same Name Affidavit. Approve a second amendment to correct legal descriptions on several small parcels; for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as required to record the document; and to execute a "same name affidavit to clear up inconsistent naming for New Mexico Tech in the agreements. Pattern Renewables, assigned by the State to develop renewable energy, has exercised its option for an easement creating the need for an Easement Agreement to be signed. Cervantes said the State in October 2020 approved two agreements to purchase easements, and a first amendment. , notified NMT of issues related to the university being referenced The SunZia project has been in the pipeline for several years, benefits the university financially and has been reviewed by counsel. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- e) Approval of Unrestricted Fund Purchase >\$250k.** VP Cervantes requested Board approval to award a contract to Western Mechanical Co., Inc. to install the replacement boilers for Jones Annex. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.



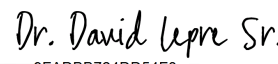
- f) **Approval of NMFA Resolution & Grant Certification of Grantee.** VP Cervantes requested that Regents approve a resolution for a \$50k reimbursement to NMT and grant certification. Regent King moved for approval. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- g) **Approval of NMT Property Resolutions.** Regent King moved for approval. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- h) **Approval of NMT Golf Tournament Naming.** Regent Armijo brought forward a proposal made by staff and on behalf of the Office for Advancement, to permanently name the annual event after its founder, to be called the President Daniel López Tournament. Introducing the proposal, Regent Armijo noted his involvement both from the perspective of a community member and, later, as a Board member. He described it as a unique tournament that has grown over the past 20-plus years, similar to a homecoming. In more recent years, however, he witnessed a decline in attendance, volunteers, and conviviality. This year's event renewed the spirit of the tournament, which Armijo attributed to the goodwill generated with President López at its helm. NMT needs to look for the ability to build goodwill in its new president, he added. Regent Lepre moved to permanently name the event the President Daniel López Tournament. Regent King seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. President López expressed his thanks and gratitude, adding that the credit really belongs to staff.
- i) **2024 Regent Meeting Dates.** The Board, with assistance from Ms. Grain, approved the following dates for its 2024 meetings: Feb. 5, March 8, April 29 and May 10.
- 7) **Individual Board Member Comments.** Regent Armijo announced a meeting at 4 pm today with NRAO officials, President López, VP Romero and himself to discuss a \$1 billion VLA/NRAO plan for a major expansion at the telescope site. According to published reports, UNM and NRAO are in talks; neither the City of Socorro nor NMT were notified, and are disappointed with the lack of communication. President López noted that Dr. Romero has taken the lead on the issue. Housing is a major concern. Dr. López also expressed his gratitude to Regents and staff for their help during his interim service.
- 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 Lepre seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken by Ms. Grain, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 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 3:48 pm. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Chair Armijo announced that only matters relating to legal and/or personnel were discussed.
- 11) **Adjournment.** Regent King moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:49 pm. Regent Lepre seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

  
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President

**Attest:**

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**Secretary- Treasurer**

