

New Mexico Tech Board of Regents Minutes

Date: Friday, April 17, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m. MST

Location: Fidel Center Ballroom B, 801 Leroy Place, Socorro, NM 87801

Public Zoom Webinar: <https://nmt-edu.zoom.us/j/97703739901>

- 1) **Call to Order.** Regent Chair Dr. David Lepre Sr. called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Other Board members attending were Regent Yolanda Jones King, and Cody Johnston. Regent Jerry Armijo attended virtually via Zoom. Regent Srinivas Mukkamala was absent. In attendance: Michael Jackson, Vanessa Grain, Delilah Walsh, Lique Coolen, David Greene, Robert Balch, Mike Timmons, Katie Ismael, Sandi Lucero, Darryl Ackley, Linda DeVeaux, Val Thomas, and Daniel Grunow and many members of the public who attended in the audience and virtually on Zoom.
 - a) **Proof of Meeting Notice.** Ms. Vanessa Grain confirmed that legal notices were placed in the Albuquerque Journal and Santa Fe New Mexican.
- 2) **Approval of Agenda.** Chair Lepre stated that Regent Armijo was out of town and in order for him to participate, agenda items would need to be moved up earlier. Regent Armijo moved to amend the agenda by moving 7) Executive Session and 8) Reconvene in Open Session, and Action Item 9a) Approval of the Appointment/Selection/Hiring of the President of New Mexico Tech and the related Employment Agreement to right after 3) Public Comment. Regent Johnston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- 3) **Public Comment.** Chair Lepre opened public comment and noted significant community interest and attendance. He stated that, due to the length of the agenda, public comment would be limited to 20 minutes total, with speakers asked to state their name and keep remarks to 2 minutes. He emphasized that the Board is in the early information-gathering stage regarding the proposed data center project, and that no decisions have been made, and that additional public forums will be scheduled to allow for broader community input. Written questions were also invited to be sent to Regents via Ms. Vanessa Grain, Special Assistant to the Board. Multiple members of the public provided comments, primarily expressing concerns regarding the proposed data center project. Key themes from the public commentary included: Lack of transparency and need for more information, including requests for studies, project details, and community engagement. Environmental impacts, including water usage, wildlife disruption, air quality, and land use. Economic and community impacts, including effects on local tourism, infrastructure, and long-term sustainability. Infrastructure concerns, including power demand, internet bandwidth, and road capacity. Skepticism regarding project feasibility and developer credibility. Requests for community involvement and public meetings at accessible times. Speakers included local residents, New Mexico Tech alumni, faculty and staff, and other local community stakeholders. At the conclusion of the allotted time, Chair Lepre reiterated that the Board is not taking action on the project at this time, and reaffirmed the commitment to a transparent process with future public engagement opportunities.
- 4) **Executive Session. NMSA Section 10-15-1 H (7) of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, if required to consider limited legal matters. NMSA 1978, Sec 10-15-1 (H) (2), of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, if required to consider limited personnel matters.** Regent King moved that the Board of Regents enter in executive session, pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1H(7) of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, if required, to consider pending litigation involving the Board of Regents (Stephen Wells v. Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology), and pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1 H(2) of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, if required, to consider limited personnel matters, specifically,

the nomination and appointment/selection/hiring of the President of New Mexico Tech, as well as the Senior System and Network Administration II-ICASA; Chartwell's employee Memorial proposal; and Honorary Degree consideration. Regent Johnston seconds the motion which passed unanimously by roll call vote. The regular session was adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

- 5) **Reconvene in open session and take final action, if any, on such limited legal and personnel matters which shall be acted upon in open session following conclusion of the closed session.** Chair Lepre called for a motion to reconvene in open session at 10:18 a.m. Regent King moved to reconvene in open session. Regent Johnston seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Chair Lepre stated the matters discussed in the closed session were limited only to those specified in the motion for closure, namely, pending litigation involving the Board of Regents (Stephen Wells v. Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology) pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(7), and limited personnel matters, specifically the nomination and appointment/selection/hiring of the President of New Mexico Tech, pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1(H)(2), as well as the Senior System and Network Administration II-ICASA; Chartwell's employee Memorial proposal; and Honorary Degree consideration.
- 6) **Approval of the Appointment/Selection/Hiring of the President of New Mexico Tech and the related Employment Agreement.** Regent King moved to approve the appointment/selection/hiring of Dr. Michael Jackson for President. Regent Johnston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Following the vote, Chair Lepre announced the appointment of Dr. Jackson as the President of New Mexico Tech effective on May 1, 2026 followed by applause from all those in attendance. Chair Lepre offered brief remarks recognizing Dr. Jackson's leadership during his time as Acting and Interim President. He noted Dr. Jackson's steady approach, strong work ethic, and commitment to the institution and its community, and expressed the Board's confidence in his leadership moving forward. Dr. Jackson thanked the Board for their support and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve, emphasizing the importance of working collaboratively with the campus and broader community to advance the university's mission.
- 7) **Regent Committee Reports.**
 - a) **NMT Foundation Updates.** No report.
 - b) **Regent Enrollment Subcommittee.** No report.
 - c) **NMT Univ. Research Park Corp. Updates.** Regent King said they haven't held a regular meeting yet and suggested inviting the Chair and Secretary/Treasurer of the Research Park Board to participate in the upcoming Regents retreat.
 - d) **NM HERC Updates.** Regent King reported that a new Executive Director has been appointed. She noted that the Coalition plans to meet in Portales in the fall and will be conducting officer elections.
 - e) **Regent Research Subcommittee.** No report.
 - f) **Student Updates.** Regent Johnston reported ongoing coordination with the Student Government Association, including plans to distribute a student survey. No additional updates were provided.
 - g) **Regent Finance Subcommittee/Legislative Updates.** Chair Lepre reported on the recent Finance Subcommittee forum, noting strong attendance and generally positive feedback. He acknowledged staff efforts in organizing the forum and gathering input from campus stakeholders. Chair Lepre also noted that a Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) staff member will be visiting campus in the coming weeks and invited Regent participation.
- 8) **Info Items.**
 - a) **Student Government Association.** No report.
 - b) **Graduate Student Association.** No report.
 - c) **Faculty Senate.** Chair Linda DeVeaux congratulated Dr. Jackson and reported that a Faculty Senate survey has been distributed and results will be presented at a future meeting.

- d) **Staff Council.** Co-Chair Val Thomas congratulated Dr. Jackson and reported receiving feedback from the President’s Cabinet on survey results. She said ongoing discussions are taking place, with an emphasis on strengthening, collaboration and elevating staff voice across campus.
- e) **Student Affairs.** VP Greene congratulated Dr. Jackson and provided an enrollment update, noting increases in completed applications, admitted students, and committed students compared to the prior year. He reported continued weekly gains in applications and deposits and indicated that current trends suggest a projected incoming class of approximately 250 students. He emphasized ongoing efforts to improve student yield, housing commitments, and early engagement through orientation programs.
- f) **Administration and Finance.** VP Walsh congratulated Dr. Jackson and introduced new in-house counsel, Johanna Cox. She provided updates on the campus pool, noting that final study results are pending and will be shared once available, and confirmed ongoing coordination with the City of Socorro regarding the MOA for aquatic services. She also reported progress on the Mountain Springs Apartments lease purchase agreement, noting that the agreement is nearing completion pending State Board of Finance approval. Additionally, VP Walsh reviewed the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP), explaining that additional projects and placeholders were included to meet state requirements for future funding requests.
- g) **Academic Affairs.** No report.
- h) **Research.** No report.
- i) **President’s Updates.** President Jackson thanked the Board for their support and emphasized the importance of collaboration and open communication across the campus community. He provided updates on the Staff Council and Faculty Senate survey processes. He thanked the Staff Council Executive Committee for their feedback and noted their feedback was being incorporated into action plans and will inform upcoming Cabinet discussions and the Regents retreat. He also reported progress on staff job classification and career pathway initiatives, with plans for further campus review. President Jackson reaffirmed his commitment to working collaboratively to support students, faculty, and staff.

9) Consent Items.

- a) **Restricted Fund Purchases over \$300,000.**
University of Kentucky (Mineral Engineering mine safety designs)
University of Arizona (Mineral Engineering mine safety designs)
- b) **Unrestricted Fund Purchases over \$300, 00.00.**
SS Papadopoulos & Associates Inc. (Bureau aquifer characterization)
Intera Incorporated (Bureau aquifer characterization)
GeoTech Ltd (Bureau aquifer characterization)
Daniel B. Stephens and Associates (Bureau aquifer characterization)
WSP USA Inc. (Bureau aquifer characterization)
Audit Firm TBD (New Mexico Tech Annual Financial Auditing Services)
- c) **FY26 NM HED Quarterly Certification ending March 31, 2026.**
Regent King moved to approve the Consent Items 9a) through 9c) as listed, followed by a second from Regent Johnston. The motion passed unanimously.

10) Action Items.

- a) **Approval of Direction to Legal Counsel to Proceed as Discussed in Executive Session Regarding Pending Litigation Involving the Board of Regents (Stephen Wells v. Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology).** Regent King moved to approve the Direction to Legal Counsel to Proceed as Discussed in Executive Session Regarding Pending Litigation Involving the Board of Regents (Stephen Wells v. Board of Regents of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology). Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- b) Approval of Personnel Action Items.** Regent Lepre asked for a motion to approve personnel action memos for the following positions: Regent Johnston moved to approve the memos as presented by HR Director Salome Senior System and Network Administration II-ICASA. Regent King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - c) Approval of Minutes for Regular Mtg. on March 6, 2026.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - d) Approval of Minutes for Special Mtg. on March 19, 2026.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - e) Approval of Emeritus Status for Dr. T. David Burleigh, and Dr. Ken Minschwaner.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - f) Approval of Policy on Non-Faculty Research Emeriti Status.**
 - g) Approval of Addition to the NMT Employee Handbook.**
 - h) Approval of Policy for Voluntary Phased Retirement.** Regent King moved to table action items 10f) to 10h for further review. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - i) Approval of FY27 Tuition and Fees.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - j) Approval of FY27 Operating Budget.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - k) Approval of Restricted Budget Adjustment Request #1.** Regent Johnston moved approval. Regent King seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - l) Approval of Unrestricted Budget Adjustment Request #2.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - m) Approval of New Mexico Higher Education 5-Year Capital Project Funding Plan.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
 - n) Approval of New Mexico Finance Authority Resolution for the Local Solar Access Fund.** Regent King moved approval. Regent Johnston seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- 11) Individual Board Member Comments.** Chair Lepre and Regents briefly commented on the presidential search process, expressing appreciation for the work of the search committee, staff, and participants. Board members noted the strong engagement from the campus community and conveyed confidence in Dr. Jackson's leadership.
- 12) Announcements and New Business.** Chair Lepre shared that preliminary discussions are underway to hold the upcoming Regents retreat in Los Alamos. He also noted plans to revisit Board policies, including code of conduct and conflict of interest, at a future meeting. Chair Lepre further suggested developing a formal procedure for public comment to provide additional structure for future meetings.
- 13) Adjournment.** Regent King moved to adjourn the meeting. Regent Johnston seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Approved by the Board of Regents on May 15, 2026.
Approved by David Lepre Sr., Chairman
Attested by Dr. Yolanda Jones King, Secretary-Treasurer