

NORTHERN New Mexico College



BOARD OF REGENTS MINUTES

FEBRUARY 27, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of northern New Mexico College was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025, In Person and Via Zoom at Northern New Mexico College, Espanola Campus, Board Room. Regents Present in person and Viz Zoom: Michael A. Martin, Erica Velarde, Porter Swentzell, Regent Casandra Batista Dautz, Regent Ruben Archuleta. Ron Lovato and Dolores Gurulé were also present and sworn in by the Honorable Alexandria Naranjo.

Northern New Mexico College Staff Present: President Hector Balderas, JD, CFE, Larry Guerrero, EdD, Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Theresa Storey, Chief Financial Officer/Compliance Officer, Matthew Baca, General Counsel, Scott Stokes, Chief Information Officer, Shawn Madrid, Capital Projects Coordinator, Juan Gallegos, Windows Systems/Information Security Administrator, Judith Pepper, Major Gifts Officer, Martin Shupla, Library Director, Carmella Sanchez, Director of Institutional Research, Frank Loera, Director of Career Technical Education, Milam Shah, Communications Coordinator, Tammy Winston, Student Life Coordinator, Farjahan Shawon, Director Center for Teaching and Learning, Patrice Trujillo, Health & Safety Manager, Deborah Trujillo, IT Manager/Web Administrator, Stephanie Lovato, Accountant III, Grants, Kristy Alton, Director, Title V, Ambrosia Tuero, Director, Advisement, Analise Lopez, IT Technician, Sara McCormick, Career Services, Joseph Padilla, Instructor, Chair of Technical Trades, Christian Gomez, Technical Trades Academic Advisor, Joshua Lopez, Dual Credit Outreach Specialist

Faculty Present: Melanie Colgan, Scott Braley, Joan Hodge, Ellen Trabka, Sneha Chakradhar, Sushmita Nandy, JB Moore

Others Present: Felicia Rodriguez, Student, Joe Ortiz, TKM, Mark Santiago, TKM, Johanna Miller Martinez, Jake Arnold, Jasie Green

I. SWEARING IN CEREMONY (Ron Lovato, Erica Velarde, Dolores Gurulé)

Chair Martin introduced The Honorable Alexandria Naranjo to the Board of Regents and attendees to swear in Northern New Mexico College's new and reappointed regents. Judge Naranjo swore in Dolores Gurulé, Erica Velarde and Ron Lovato.

II. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 9:12AM,

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

Regent Velarde Moved to approve the agenda as presented. Second – Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes, Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. PRESENTATION OF AUDIT BY EXTERNAL FINANCIAL AUDITORS

Chair Martin invited the External Financial Auditors from TKM to join the Board of Regents. Joe Ortiz presented the Audit to the Board of Regents (attached). For the college, we got a clean opinion on the financial statements. That means whoever is picking up these financial statements, they can feel comfortable making decisions upon them and they can rely on them. They can also feel comfortable that the college is being good fiduciaries of the monies of the college, public money. With the single audit, the same, thing, unmodified opinion, clean opinion. That means you have been spending your federal dollars for the programs they tested in accordance with those requirements. So, a lot of work goes into that. They mark, they always joke that they come in for, you know, several weeks and poke and prod and issue this report but it takes the College all year to get a lot of great work by IT, Financial Aid, across the board everyone is doing a great job. It is a big, big this audit encompasses, big financial statements a lot of moving parts, financial team and related staff to bring that to fruition and they need the College's team to be able to accomplishment. So, there is some synergy involved there for sure. The Foundation is the same thing, an unmodified opinion and there is not a single audit for the Foundation. There was one finding, improper payroll expense which was self-reported and it is a current year finding and corrected in the same year. We will not see it again next year. All the prior year findings that were pending have all been resolved. There were some pretty big ones, the trial balance, maintenance and account reconciliation. That's probably the biggest and most alarming one. They have all been resolved. Late audit was also on there and has been resolved. This was another big one on the list. Mark stated this speaks volumes because it encompasses a lot of different things. Resolving that is big, its good. Hopefully, next year, everything looks good and next year, zero findings. The Foundation had one finding last year with a late audit report and it has been resolved as well. The College had 25 findings, 6 findings in 2023 and had 2024 down to one and 2025 goal to get down to zero. The timeframe was October 28, 1024, they reported to management and governing body which is some of the Board of Regents. They received OSA comments, November 27, 2024, Received Release Letter, December 12, 2024, Federal Audit Clearing House, January 3, 2024 (opn time). These are

the dates the College wants to see. Mark stated they have about 20 audits due on November 1st and generally they have a lot of those that run under the wire, the College was ahead of the game and it was earlier than on time. It is important to highlight that. The team wanted to get started as soon as possible to get the runway to the deadline. ‘

Chair Martin stated he would like to thank the Financial Team, this is the first time they have had a clean audit, on time in 10 years and Regent Velarde and Regent Swentzell can remember when we went through all the findings. Regent Velarde stated she would like to thank Theresa, Evette and the team, they have done amazing work, they have gotten us out of the trenches. They are amazing and thank you for what you have done. It is amazing. Our institution now will gain more respect because a lot of times we wouldn't get money because we didn't have a clean audit, they wouldn't trust us. Thank you. Regent Archuleta thanked TKM for all the hard work, thank you to the team and staff behind the scenes that do the work. They are the ones getting everything together. Regent Lovato thanked TKM, this is first meeting and he is pleased. His last engagement with the College was through the Foundation and it was difficult. Financially, there were a lot of challenges back then. Regent Gurule thanked TKM and the Financial Team. In her previous position she helped with auditors. Great job and thank you.

President Balderas stated he would like to address the Board of Regents and community members and staff and personnel and faculty. An audit is like a public health checkup, it represents the condition the organization is under and the stress and some of the, how well you are managing, not only your duty and your mission on how you are educating students. The audit can reflect some of the struggles of how we're handling public funds, which is the lifeblood of how all of you do in public service, which is to serve students. President Balderas stated he wanted to recognize as the Regents have not only Theresa and her team but it took kind of a crazy audit firm to sign up with us because like doctors shop for good patients we had to go out and get a firm that we knew was going to really partner and work Christmas Day, work on summers and really kind of get a better understanding of what is good about the organization and where we can improve and that is kind of a very serious question. When in 17, this Board held steadfast in leadership when they were told that the State was going to put them on special monitoring and that the Federal Government was also going to put us on monitoring because they weren't sure that we were managing our grants correctly and as Regent Velarde said, whether were going to get more funding in an area that really relies on Federal Grants. President Balderas state he would like to commend the faculty and staff and these Regents who stuck through the turbulence. They were committed to the mission that we have to get this right so the students could receive a good education. This good audit is a reflection of the public trust that all the regents kept fighting for. We were recently taken off those lists because of our partnership and compliance. Thank you staff that probably didn't like Theresa coming by asking for documents and maybe didn't understand this is for the good will to say we could be accountable for funding. It was not pretty somedays. Thank you to the Board of Regents and the community for sticking as part of this. We have gotten

some positive attention in Santa Fe. We are setting the right tone at the top. Ultimately this is not just about accounting but to be able to go and get investment. Thank you TKM for allowing the team to put together a plan. We are in pretty good fiscal health.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Audit.

Regent Velarde Moved to approve the audit as presented. Second – Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes, Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Chair Martin stated we will go into public input and called student Felicia Rodriguez.

Felicia Rodriguez, student, addressed the Board of Regents. My name is Felicia Rodriguez and I am a proud student of Northern New Mexico College, pursuing my AAS in radiation protection and my AAS in Nuclear Operation Technology.

As a more whole person. I am a happily married. I am happily married to my husband, a mother of 6 children, organizer of free community events, a youth group leader at my church, a current board member at breath of my heart birthplace, a co-grant writer for breath of my heart, and an RCT Cohort student here at Northern currently working at LANL. Over the past year of being a student here I have maintained a 4.3 GPA, made the Dean's list been a recipient of the N3B Scholarship, a recipient of the Gerd's Endowed Scholarship Fund, am a member of Phi Theta Kappa Alpha Iota Sigma. Chapter, and on Tuesday at the State Capitol received the New Mexico All State Academic Team Scholarship which is an award up to 2 students from each college can receive to acknowledge academic excellence, leadership and service. I was the single recipient of this reward award from Northern this year.

Today I am here to bring up some concerns about the Registrar's office and their handling of transfer credits, degrees, graduation application, treatment of students and customer service. I applied to Northern in October of 2024 and was almost immediately accepted by admissions. On October 18, 2023 I sent in my transcript via email from Brigham Young University Pathway Worldwide Enzyme College and some General Education credits from Sophia. I received a confirmation email from the Admissions office on October 19, 2023 that my transcripts had been received. Since then, I have had multiple interactions with the Registrar's Office regarding transfer of my credits. Beginning before my first semester, when I was unable to enroll in radiation protection classes, as the majority of them have a prerequisite of college algebra. Each time I received an email from the Office of the Registrar it seemed as though I was either talking to different people or I was receiving an email written by a bot. All emails were just signed "Office of the Registrar." Most emails told me to send my transcripts to the Admissions Office, which I did multiple

times. Yet, I continued to reach out to admissions and admissions informed me several times that they had indeed sent my transcripts to the Registrar's Office. Each semester I waited for my credits to be transferred over and had to directly send my transcripts from other institutions to my professors directly, so they could override the system and allow me to register for their classes. This cause me anxiety, wondering if I would be able to take enough credit hours each semester to fulfill the FAFSA requirement and to fulfill my contractual obligation to TRIAD, LLC which are 12 credit hours per semester and maintaining a 3.0 GPA while being employed through the RCT Cohort Program. Then I began hearing of major concerns from fellow classmates about the Registrar's Office, where students warned me of staying on top of them because some students had been waiting over a year for their grades to be transferred over, or records not being handled correctly. My mentor and supervisor with the RCT Cohort Program, along with faculty and staff, stepped in and began to advocate on behalf of students to get their credits transferred over. On Tuesday, I reached out to my classmates who have had issues with the Registrar's Office and informed them of my decision to come here today, and the majority of them expressed deep concerns of retaliation from the Registrar's Office if they attended or spoke up. However, 4 fellow students wanted me to share their stories, although they had work and could not attend this meeting. Each of them has their share of harmful interactions with the Registrar's Office. Currently at least 5 out of the 6 members of the RCT Cohort Program who are set to graduate Spring 2025 have had the same issues with the Registrar's Office. The Registrar's Office has fostered an educational environment of distrust and confusion. Three other members of the RCT Cohort Program, who were supposed to graduate last semester had their degrees withheld from them because they only filled out the handwritten graduation application and not the online one, and tried to have it immediately corrected. They entered into the radiation protection pipeline without their degrees, which means they were not able to receive a \$20,000 annual salary increase until they received their degrees.

I am also aware of past issues regarding interactions between the Registrar's Office and issues with how the Registrar's Office interacts with faculty and staff as well. I had gotten into the habit of checking my transcripts on banner every day, sometimes multiple times a day, in hopes that something would give. Yesterday morning, I sent out a final email to the Registrar's Office stating that I would be addressing these concerns here today and cc'd many of you on that email at 3:00PM. I checked my transcripts and credits have been transferred over. I stand here today to advocate for my fellow classmates and future students of Northern New Mexico College. If credits are not transferred over, this could lead to breach of contracts, loss of financial aid, eligibility due to the inability to enroll in needed courses, or during the last months of someone's degree program, realizing they are missing a couple of credits because degree audits were not able to be accessed by students finally leading to the inability to graduate this could hold Northern liable due to negligence of the Registrar's Office. The graduation application process is not streamlined and is actually confusing for students. The transfer of credits policy is unclear and does not have a tangible requirement of when the 30-day rule takes effect,

and the Registrar's Office is not complying with the 30-day rule, and many other aspects of the policy in regards of how credits are transferred over.

As a student of Northern and a woman who was born and raised her in this beautiful little valley of Espanola, I have a lot of personal interest in Northern New Mexico College. It is very likely my own children will attend this College. Espanola has a bad reputation for decades, and there are so many barriers that our people face, receiving a quality education does not have to be one of them with all the leaps and bounds Northern has made in the past few years because of your joint efforts we can't allow something like this to hold us back. Thank you for your time.

Chair Martin thanked Ms. Rodriguez and stated (inaudible) at the next meeting. President Balderas stated he can address some of the, he would like the students to have ample opportunity to present. So, thank you for your presentation and Ms. Rodriguez and President Balderas have met with her husband and we want to keep her involved in the improvement of the processes. So, thank you for coming having the courage to share that with the Board. Thank you so much.

Chair Martin introduced Johanna Miller Martinez. Ms. Miller Martinez stated she is going to share a little bit about herself. My name is Johanna Miller Martinez and my journey in college actually began in 2007 when I started taking classes fresh out of high school. I attended CSU, Colorado State University and completed two years of classes there. Well, life has a way of showing you what you need, and unfortunately, I went through a particularly challenging and impactful turn of events. As I look back, now I understand that the universe had plans for me, and my journey to become a teacher would take me through many stages, each adding to my knowledge and understanding of what kind of teacher I wanted to become.

In 2012 I moved from Colorado to New Mexico and by 2018 I was working as a Pre-K teach for Las Cumbres Community Services. I found a position with a therapeutic preschool there and it became the background the backbone of how I view the needs of every student in my classroom. I became a parent of two children, one on the autism spectrum and one with a visual impairment. Again, the university was helping prepare me with skills and understanding I would need in order to be the mother and teacher I am today.

Between 2018 and 2020, I acquired many useful and necessary skills. When the pandemic hit and the world ground to a halt, I would have an opportunity to learn more about how I could teach children long distance and create an environment at home to support my own children and their needs. Once more the universe provided me with an opportunity to grow. New Mexico made going back to school free for my bachelor's and I grabbed onto this gift and spend the last two years taking classes at Northern. I worked tirelessly with Dr. Rodriguez in the Education Department to complete my degree plan. The fall semester of 2024, I spend completing my student teaching at a new school in Santa Fe.

When I applied for graduation, I never received any news or information from the Registrar's Office. I started contacting them the week before winter break, asking them about when diplomas would be sent out. The response I got was a two-sentence email back telling me they would not be going through applications until returning on January 18th. So, I waited a whole month. My job needed that diploma and the PED needed that diploma and official transcripts to process my teaching license. Once more, on January 18th I reached out and the response I was given was that applications would be processed in the next three weeks and those who met the requirements would be notified. I was never notified. I never heard from the Registrar again. I was not told they did not accept some of my transfer credits. I was never told the audit came back and they still thought I needed three classes. I was left in the dark with no understanding of why my degree had not been approved. I had to reach out to my advisor, Alberto Meyers, who recommended I reach out to the Department Chair, Dr. Rodriguez and after reaching out to her and going through my own degree plan line by line I figured out which classes the Registrar was saying I needed. It was not easy. They had to go digging for information. I had to wait. Finally, last week, after almost three months after the end of the semester, did I receive information about what was holding up my degree. The delay in receiving my official degree in Early Childhood Education at Northern had a significant negative impact on my finances. Since completion of the fall semester at Northern, I was rightfully entitled to my degree. It cost my family and I thousands of dollars while I had to wait for the degree, I took a \$20,000 pay cut last semester to do my student teaching through PED in Santa Fe and I have lost now over \$7,000 waiting for my salary to increase because I didn't have my final transcript. I should have received my diploma and my degree at the close of the fall semester and should have been able to send all of the necessary documents to PED before winter break. My job has been in jeopardy throughout the last two months as I have waited to receive this degree. Daily I was told that if my degree was not posted I was going to lose my job. This is a situation that I shouldn't have been put in the emotional and psychological stress that I have gone through because the Registrar's Office lacked the ability to communicate with me and would not accept the transfer credits rightfully fulfilled the requirements of my degree plan as a student seeking a degree in education was costly. No other students that want to become teachers should have to deal with delays or unanswered questions the way I have. It is not fair, it's not just. It is not something I can stand by and watch happen to other students that are doing everything they can to become something.

As the Board the President and supporting members of the college, you cannot continue to let this happen in the Registrar's Office. You can do something about this. You can fix this for students that come after me. It is your duty to listen to what has happened here and make changes so that students can succeed. Thank you for your time.

Chair Martin thanked Ms. Martinez and introduced Tina Garcia.

Tina Garcia stated she is here to say basically the same thing but she is not a student. She is actually on the outside of it. There is a policy that says once the transcripts have been received the college 30 days is when the transfer of credits would be done and it breaks my heart to know that some students have gone, you know a whole year without a transfer of credits, you know. Ms. Garcia stated she tried to help her daughter along the way from the beginning and you know she wanted to repeat a class that she had taken and she had to get upset with her and say no, you already took the class. It should be accepted so Ms. Garcia intervened and it happened and happened for her. She got a transfer of credits but you know, it's not only the Registrar's fault as well, there is what are they called people that are along with the students, you know, checking off their degree plan and say, yeah, you took care of this on this semester, this one should have been transferred. So it's, I don't want to blame all of it on the Registrar, but she is a hostile creature, I mean, she doesn't want to own up to the Registrar, my daughter asked her specifically, am I good to graduate and my assumption is, it's the Assistant Registrar that didn't do her due diligence, as Janice says that she does, because Janice says if a students asked her that she takes five minutes it takes to see if they did something online and they are good to go and because my daughter asked the assistant, the assistant just kind of brushed her off, and everybody whenever she would try to, you know, fix the problem. Everybody just kind of shooed her away, didn't want to hear nothing she had to say, you know and there's some faculty and staff that know about the problem. They should be ashamed because they're a part of the problem of not getting it fixed. They know about this problem and they allow it. They're part of the problem.

Another thing I would have to say is like the broadcasts, if you know, because Janice wanted to defend herself against well, there was a broadcast. We did send the students this well, broadcast, I'm sorry to say but that is just a bunch of junk mail to students. I mean, you bombard them with a bunch of information there. There should be some kind of special broadcast for very major important things, not like the cafeteria or game, or anything like that.

And the complaint process. So, I had her do the complaint process online. There was never a receipt or nor any kind of recognition that there was a complain that went through. I think she asked the provost. You know the provost did all that he could do, but he was still not on the student side. You know, I just want to remind everybody if it wasn't for the student, even after that first presentation where does the student fit in this. It doesn't even sound like the students concerned on that. No wonder people forget about the student, you know, and it just seems like, I don't know, nobody cares for the student as you know a parent, I guess, because if a staff knew about this problem why didn't they try to push to fix it.

And the last thing I want to say is I'm very nervous so I hope everybody understood what I had to say and I just want everybody to know that this President is the greatest. I mean, I've been through one and there weren't as great as this one and this one truly does care about the student and it's obvious and I hope that. You guys keep him around for a long time. Think that's all I have to say.

Chair Martin stated we have work to do and asked President Balderas to get back to the Board at the next meeting with solutions for some of these problems. President Balderas stated he would like to add a quick contextual statement to the board just so we understand. As you saw in the audit it was a workload and corrective action, but there were always transparency and honest conversation. President Balderas stated he would like to commend the speakers for strengthening the regulatory environment. It is what the Board wants to hear – truth to power. President Balderas stated for five months the President and legal counsel has engaged a case management system as to how to manage all these students. It wasn't a trigger until students fought for and took their voices to other offices. We have been undergoing a system review through legal and have already engaged any and all students that are caught up in all this in a case-by-case basis. They are going to receive due process and factual notification. As you can see, we reconciled these and by virtue of the Office of the President and issued degrees by process of certified.

Regent Velarde thanked the speakers for their courage. It takes a lot to speak up and say something and a lot of times we talk ourselves out of it. It takes a lot to say something especially because it is frustrating especially when you have the goal set. Thank you.

Regent Archuleta stated it is nice to know they come to the board. Ms. Rodriguez has always been an advocate for the community. Regent Archuleta stated he had an issue with a coworker and she had the same issue and it was affecting her at work. She is a single mother with three kids and affecting her pay and a promotion. She was worried someone else was going to get it. He thinks it was very unfair and the President's Office got it taken care of. Thank you again.

Regent Lovato stated thank you for coming forward.

Regent Gurule thanked them all for their courage and to know their story. This was her biggest concern; a lot of our students suffer in silence because they are afraid to speak up. They're afraid that someone's not going to listen, or they're afraid that someone's going to think differently when they do speak up. We do think differently of the students and see their courage and strength. It is. Positive change in thinking that we'll see so she hopes that you speaking up will be a role model or a message to our students that they may be having issues that they can come and speak up as well. So, thank you so much for speaking to us today.

Chair Martin asked Ms. Melanie Colgan to address the Board. Ms. Colgan stated as Chair Martin said, I am a faculty member here in the Nursing Department and have been here since 2019. I am the director of the Associate Degree Nursing Program and I'm here to speak today about the chair rotation policy that is on your agenda later this morning. In regards to this I understand the intent behind the policy is to ensure that leadership opportunities and fresh perspectives are welcomed and encouraged here at Northern but I believe the policy may inadvertently create challenges that could hinder the college's success.

One major issue with the policy is that it references Deans and (inaudible) and she the Board is well aware but we don't have Deans here. We haven't had Deans for many years so this makes part of the policy just completely impractical and misaligned with the actual structure of the college. Without deans to oversee transitions and provide continuity, frequent chair rotations could leave gaps in leadership and further disrupting departmental operations. Additionally, the policy does not account for the significant financial and professional consequences for faculty members. When a department chair is rotated out of the position, they are essentially demoted, leading to a substantial salary reduction. This is a result of the department chair moving from an 11-month contract to a 9-month contract. This not only impacts their immediate financial wellbeing but it also has long term consequences for their retirement income through the Educational Retirement Board.

Since retirement benefits are based on an employee's highest average salary. Forced rotations could result in lower pension, and this will discourage faculty members from wanting to be in that leadership role. In the first place beyond financial concerns, we've already seen the damage that this policy can cause. Last year, the nursing department got to implement this policy. It nearly destroyed the nursing department. I'll be very honest with you all. The forced rotation of leadership led to instability, confusion and an incredibly low morale. Given the critical nature of nursing education, the disruption put both our program and our student success at risk. Additionally, this policy directly threatens our ability to retain faculty, which is already a pressing issue. As a result of last year's leadership, instability several nursing faculty members began looking for jobs elsewhere and with such a small group of faculty and ongoing nationwide faculty shortage, we simply cannot afford to lose multiple faculty members. If we do, the nursing

department will not be able to offer classes, and this will put our entire program at risk. This will not only harm students, but will also have serious consequences for the college's reputation and accreditation. Furthermore, frequent chair rotations negatively affect the long-term strategic planning and ongoing initiatives, especially when the maintenance of accreditation programs. Department chairs play a crucial role in shaping academic programs, securing funding and fostering faculty development.

Frequent transitions may lead to inconsistent leadership, making it difficult to maintain momentum on important projects and weakening relationships with external stakeholders. Think I've said enough, so my request today, I respectfully ask you all to listen to this project or to this policy and to think about rescinding the policy and coming back to the faculty and the chairs in collaboration to create another policy where we can stability. So, thank you for your time.

Chair Martin asked if there was anyone else on the zoom for public input. There were none.

VI. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

A. Recognition of Regent Porter Swentzell and Regent Casandra Batista Dauz

Chair Martin stated the Board would go on to the recognition of Regent Swentzell and Regent Batista Dauz. Chair Martin stated we are so glad Regent Swentzell could join us today because he was with us six years ago for the first audit. Chair Marti thanked Regent Swentzell for his leadership and wished him the best in the future.

Regent Velarde stated she would like to thank Regent Swentzell so much. She appreciates his time on the board, appreciates his friendship, appreciates his leadership. He taught her a lot of things she didn't know and gave her a lot of insight to things she wouldn't have otherwise had. Thank you.

Regent Archuleta stated he would like to thank Regent Swentzell, he was sort of a mentor to him. Regent Archuleta came in not knowing anything, not even being at a meeting before and took he took him under his wing and he knows professionally how to do things and how to think about things, and you know, instrumental in bringing President Balderas here, which is a great thing so and always, he'll always be a friend if you ever need any assistance, so please reach out.

Regent Batista Dauz thanked Regent Swentzell so much. Honestly, he kind of mentored here too. When she first came here, she didn't really understand the board, but he was kind of nice. You were like, you could say something now it's ok to vote on something. You're very nice and you kind of gave me that space and for that I am so grateful for everything you have taught me.

Regent Gurule stated she would like to thank Regent Swentzell for his humble leadership because he made a great impact for her when she was Student Senate President as well. He also fostered a lot of confidence in her, and he was always very kind in helping me through during the Presidential search. All these things that she was so intimidated by, he made her feel very comfortable so she thanks him for his leadership and his service to students.

Regent Lovato stated he just met Regent Swentzell but thank you.

Chair Martin stated Regent Batista Dautz worked in the Food Pantry. Little known fact about Regent Batista Dautz, she trapped prairie dogs for the last two summers and took blood samples from them. Thank you for all your leadership. She is one of the toughest ladies he knows. Thank you for all your leadership for the last two years.

Regent Velarde thanked Regent Batista Dautz and stated she is just awesome. It was great getting to know her even more when they went to the AGB conference in Boston. It was great to spend some time with her and she really is great. She is a great student leader and she knows that our students look up to her as well. So, as the stories she told Regent Velarde about the prairie dogs that is so awesome, that is so great. No matter what she does, she is going to be a leader.

Regent Archuleta stated he would like to thank Regent Batista Dautz for her professionalism. He knows a lot of students looked up to her. She is always good to students. She always brought back concerns from students to the Board and she was really engaged. Regent Archuleta thanked Regent Batista Dautz and stated he knows she will do well in life because she is very smart and very motivated. Good luck.

Regent Swentzell thanked Regent Bautista Dautz for her service and wanted to add to what others have said as well. He thinks during the time he has been here and others could probably attest, we have had some amazing student leaders and she set the bar even before she came on to the Board in terms of student leadership, of really creating a system, a conduit, if you will for creating possibilities for student leaders like herself and so we're really fortunate that she decided to take that next step to come onto the Board as a Student Regent and then look who is coming in your place as well and how that conduit is working. That's really a testament to your work that you did even before you came onto this Board as a Regent and so it's really a powerful testament to see Regent Gurule here, as well as part of the continuity of amazing student leaders. Thank you for your service even before you got on the Board. Thank you for your service on the Board and I know you're going to do amazing things so keep it up.

Regent Lovato thanked Regent Bautista Dautz.

Matt Baca, General Counsel asked if we might hear some parting words from the Regents.

Regent Swentzell stated he was just going to ask and he stated he just appreciates the opportunity to have served as a Regent at Northern New Mexico College. He stated he thinks he has shared this story quite a few times that he had started school, he had his daughter, he gave up on school to focus on work and raising his family here at Santa Clara Pueblo and it took him nine years to get an Associate's Degree and then it was only possible because of Northern New Mexico College. And so, he would say, but this, so in his sort of parting advice and recommendations is that this place is a jewel that allows students like himself, students who are sitting here as student leaders, students who even spoke this morning to finish those degrees to move forward to gain those career opportunities and that might otherwise be very difficult. Regent Swentzell stated he is not able to take off anywhere, he is at Santa Clara, so he can't go anywhere. Obviously, okay, he has his obligation to his community. So, as a result, there's not like, oh, he'll take off to New York, or there's many, many other students here in Northern New Mexico they take care of their parents, they take care of their family farms and businesses. They are raising children. They're working to provide for their families. They don't have a lot of other options and Northern provides those options for them. So, it's a bigger thing than just another regional college. It is something that is very unique here that provides those special opportunities. So, there's no way that he would be sitting here. So, he is grateful. The gift that was given to him he was able to return just a small amount to service so do those Regents who are sitting here congratulations to the new ones who are coming in and to those that have been on the Board. I'll see, you know, in our language we say (inaudible) this is our advice to remain humble, remember we are all servants, serving not only the students, but the faculty, the staff, the community that makes this school have a sense of humor. We can always laugh at each other and ourselves, most importantly ourselves. Who are we used to be so, and keep up the good work, so his door is always open.

Regent Bautista Dauz stated she is a first-generation college student. She grew up two minutes down the road from here and honestly, if it wasn't for what she saw here growing up coming to the College as a little kid. Seeing these college students, seeing these people in the education system, she probably wouldn't be in college. So, to her the College has always been special, it's always been like this community think as a kid. She saw the College as a space to go hang out with the older kids right. Like I got to hang out with college students. She got to see things and that formed so much of her desire to become a college student to get a higher education because sadly that's not really pushed a lot and so seeing other students, seeing that I could do it was so incredible. So, she is about to graduate but for years ago if you would ask her if she was going to graduate, she would have told you I don't know, you're crazy but I am so grateful for this opportunity because not only have I learned so much about how college politics works I've also fallen in love with it. When I started here, I wanted to be a lawyer, I want to fight against people. Now,

I want to be a professor, I want to teach, I want to contribute to the system, to this amazing system and hopefully I will get the opportunity to teach here at Northern but I am just so grateful for this opportunity. I'm thankful for everyone here for all the guidance even you Regent Gurule, all the guidance you gave me my first year as President. You helped me so much through it, and she thanked Regent Gurule. Regent Bautista Daut stated she knows Tammy Winston is at the meeting and she has to give a shout out to her as well. Thank you so much for this opportunity and my time here and she hopes everyone continues what they do best.

President Balderas stated he couldn't say it better than the leaders that are transitioning here today. They are the gold standards. President Balderas stated he just wants to say a couple of things. He just wanted to highlight about both our Regents. It is easy to say they are both his boss but really for a community to grow and succeed, you need strong leadership and President Balderas stated what he wants to highlight for the community members is they are already high skilled, high performers in life, as you can tell, their competence allows them to do this job. President Balderas stated he wants to also thank them for the humility and the time of sacrifice. Our Regent here (Regent Swentzell) is running a completely full time operational educational institution right up the road and still made time every day to be here to make the decision on behalf of the community and so the same goes with this superstar over here (Regent Batista Daut) who could have gone another pathway in her final year but chose to give back and educate us about food insecurity, infrastructure development. She moved the, the pantry is bigger in a bigger place. President Balderas stated he would just like to conclude with our gifts that not just thank them for their confidence but as you heard in their voices when you serve at Northern you really serve not as colleagues but as family so what we wanted to give them was a blanket that represents not only protection but that there's always been an open door for them to come back to our home with, this is their home.

B. Board of Regents Subcommittee Reports

1. Selection of Board Officers

Chair Martin stated he would open up nominations for Chair. Regent Velarde nominate Board Chair Martin. Regent Lovato nominated Regent Archuleta for Board Chair. Chair Martin asked if there were any other nominations and as there were none, Chair Martin asked Ms. Pena to call roll. Chair Martin – voted for himself. Regent Velarde – Chair Martin, Regent Archuleta – voted for himself, Regent Lovato – Regent Archuleta, Regent Gurule – Regent Martin. Michael Martin was voted Chair of the Board of Regents.

Chair Martin nominated Regent Velarde for Vice Chair. Chair Martin asked if there were any other nominations. Without any other nominations Chair Martin asked for a motion to accept Regent Velarde as Vice Chair. Regent Lovato moved to accept Regent Velarde as Vice Chair. Second – Regent Archuleta. Regent Velarde was accepted as Vice Chair.

Chair Martin asked for nominations for Secretary/Treasurer. Regent Lovato nominated Regent Archuleta as Secretary/Treasurer. Without any other nominations, Chair Martin entertained a motion to accept Regent Archuleta as Secretary/Treasurer. Regent Velarde moved to accept Regent Archuleta as Secretary/Treasurer. Regent Archuleta was accepted as Secretary/Treasurer.

Chair Martin stated he and Regent Velarde would remain on the HERC Committee.

2. Committee Assignments

Chair Martin stated the Board would move on to Committee assignments. For the Housing Committee, Chair Martin would like to reappoint Regent Archuleta and add our student Regent, Regent Gurule. Under Audit/Finance/Facilities Committee, Chair Martin would like to retain Regent Velarde and Regent Archuleta. On the Academic and Student Affairs, Chair Martin would like to appoint Regent Lovato and Regent Gurule to replace our two outgoing Regents. Under Governance Committee, Chair Martin would like to appoint Regent Velarde and himself.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve subcommittee assignments.

Regent Archuleta moved to approve the committee assignments. Second – Regent Velarde. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Housing Committee

Regent Archuleta stated the committee met in December. He did meet with a Guy Meyer who was in charge of dorms at Fort Lewis. It is not the traditional dorms it is individual housing. This will be brought to the Board of Regents to see what we will forward on.

Chair Martin asked how the dorms were in El Rito. President Balderas stated the dorms in El Rito, about 15 are almost remodeled. We are meeting some infrastructure challenges. We will have student/staff housing soon. This is only one wing of a huge historical dormitory. He looks forward to hosting tours and site visits. Regent Velarde stated she would like to have a sidebar with the President because she knows some of those infrastructure challenges and how they have been able to figure it out in the past with her other hat. So, she would love to have those conversations with President Balderas and facilities guys as well. Regent Velarde asked Regent Archuleta if there were conversations with the county and city to partner with them. We are not the only ones who needs housing, the whole community does to make us stronger. Regent Velarde stated there was brought up to Leo Valdez, they don't bring anything to the table as far as property. Regent Velarde asked if this was the city. Regent Archuleta stated the city

is also three years late on the audit. The county is under fiscal watch and stuff. He doesn't want to take that avenue yet because it could get messy. He thinks our situation is very strong. Regent Velarde stated she understood.

4. Audit, Finance, Facilities Committee

Regent Velarde stated they met yesterday and a good conversation and we will talk about that.

5. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

This committee did not meet.

5. Governance Committee

a. Open Meetings Act Resolution

Matt Baca, General Counsel presented to the Board of Regents. Mr. Baca stated this is the Board's annual obligation under the State's Open Meetings Act to adopt a resolution stating their explicit compliance with the act and what that will look like over the year. The Open Meetings Act has not changed since the last time the Board adopted a Resolution. So, this Resolution is nearly identical to last year's just updated for the dates, very minor grammatical changes. The Board has the Resolution in their packets and Mr. Baca opened it up to questions.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Open Meetings Act Resolution.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the Open Meetings Act Resolution. Second - Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

6. HERC Committee

Chair Martin stated HERC has not met and is in a state of flux until the Governor appoints all the new regents and he will report back as soon as there is a meeting. Regent Velarde stated they do get legislative updates daily. Regent Martin stated legislative updates are received daily.

7. AGB Board Professionals Conference - March 29-31, 2025

Chair Martin stated he believes Regent Archuleta is the only Regent who will be able to go. Regent Archuleta will be attending the conference. Chair Martin asked Regent Archuleta where he is going. Regent Archuleta stated Chicago.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve Regent Archuleta attending the AGB Conference March 29-31-2025.

Regent Velarde moved to approve Regent Archuleta attending the AGB Conference. Second – Regent Gurule. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – abstained, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Martin stated there are two sets of minutes to approve.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the minutes of November 21, 2024.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the minutes of November 21, 2024. Second – Regent Gurule. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Martin moved to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 7, 2025.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the minutes of January 7, 2025. Second – Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

VII. PRESIDENT’S REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Celebrate Northern

President Balderas started by welcoming our two new Board members, Ronald Lovato and our Student Regent Dolores Lila Gurule and congratulate Erica Rita Velarde on her reappointment.

President Balderas stated he is excited to announce the rededication of Cultura Café on February 10. I want to thank the Lazy Buffalo owner Melissa De La Cruz and her sister Mollie for all their hard work to make this happen. Bringing food service back to campus was one of the main requests I heard from students, faculty and staff when I started here, and I'm glad we were able to make that happen. The Board of Regents will enjoy a lunch later today from Lazy Buffalo.

We've received a \$1,068,700 EMNRD grant to manage a cutting-edge hydrogen fuel cell project, which will be built on our El Rito campus. We're partnering with Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, Hydrosonics and Microgrid Systems to develop zero-emission, low-cost clean energy using an innovative new technology for producing hydrogen. It's called the Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) Research and Demonstration Pilot Project, and it will demonstrate the ability to produce low-cost clean hydrogen, store it on-site and convert it to electricity with a net-zero carbon footprint.

We've been very active at the legislature this year. I want to thank everyone who joined me for American Indian Day and Higher Education Day. Northern will also be represented at the Roundhouse March 3 for Española Day. We want to invite everyone to that great day.

President Balderas thanked the faculty, students and alumni who participated in STEM Exploration Day 2025, introducing local students to all Northern has to offer in the STEM field and the career opportunities that can lead to.

Our engineering department's Parkinson's Glove project continues to earn recognition. The Española Valley High School MESA students who worked on the project with Associate Professor Steve Cox and our engineering students have been recognized with a Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Award and Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez also awarded three of those MESA students the 2024 Congressional App Challenge in New Mexico's Third District.

President Balderas gave a shout out to one of the original members of the Parkinson's Glove project, our alumni Jafett Garcia, who became a citizen of the United States on January 17. Jafett is originally from Ecuador, and he now works at LANL. I'm looking forward to his contributions to our state and our country.

Our Radiation Protection program was featured in an article in "The New Yorker." It was a nice spotlight on the program and our students.

Our Women's Basketball team finished their season undefeated at home and as Conference Champs. I also want to congratulate Miranda Salazar for being named CAC Defensive Player of the Week four times during the season. This team has some national significance. They are being scouted. They are currently on the road to represent us in Kansas at the Tournament.

We hosted students from Española Valley High School, McCurdy Charter School and Pojoaque Valley High School on campus for an ENLACE (ENGaging LATino Communities for Education) Leadership Day. Our Director of NNMC's Center for Teaching and Learning, Farjahan Shawon, introduced them to different leadership styles and led them through activities focused on skills employed by effective leaders.

President Balderas thanked Title V Grants, Native American Student Center, Veteran Resource Center, Education Opportunity Center, Counseling and Student Support Services, and Student Life they have been collaborating on a series of events for our students. They hosted a Financial Literacy Workshop on Wednesday, a Black History Month Celebration last week and a Pal-entines Day event the week before that. I want to thank them for their efforts to bring events to campus that will benefit our students and celebrate our cultural diversity and intellectual growth. This community deserves this. It's gratifying to see participation increasing for these events.

The Santa Fe Opera brought a free film screening of Gaetano Donizetti's "The Elixir of Love" to campus last weekend. That included a chance for young people to participate in an interactive introduction to the opera with Oliver Prezant.

There are a few earlier events we have not had a chance to celebrate yet, including our first-ever Homecoming week in December, with activities ranging from a dodgeball showdown (which my team won!) to an alumni VIP reception. This was the start of a new tradition to celebrate our Eagle pride and bring our community together.

We had another productive Convocation, with many in depth trainings for our faculty and staff. One of the highlights for me was leading tours of our Capital Improvements Projects. I want to offer more of these in the future to keep our community informed of both our challenges and successes and to encourage our faculty and staff to become involved in helping us improve our campus.

We welcomed 70 students at our New Student Orientation. I want to thank Haylie Baca and her team as well as all the faculty and staff who helped to organize this.

We are hosting two community events here this Saturday. The New Mexico School for the Arts-Art institute is following up with their performance of PUFFS in December with a presentation of "The Crucible." And the City of Española brings us an evening of mariachi with "Concierto Centenario."

B. CUP/NMICC Report

Most everything CUP/NMICC related at this time revolves around the legislative session; here are some of the highlights of where we are there:

House Bill 2/Budget

- The House has passed the budget bill and it is now with the Senate
- Higher Ed highlights
 - House adopted the LFC recommendation
 - I&G - 2.9% increase over FY25 for formula institutions (distributed by the formula)
 - Non-I&G/Non-RPSP - 2.5% increase over FY25
 - RPSP - 2.4% increase over FY25
 - Compensation - 4%
 - Adopted language requiring Opportunity Scholarship recipients to have a FAFSA, income verification, or attestation from the enrolled student recognizing they may be forgoing eligible federal aid
- CHESS - \$6M did make it in on House side, they are trying to get \$4M more on Senate side (THESE ARE NOT APPROPRIATIONS TO NORTHERN).

There are also Bills around the Regents. The two that he would highlight at this point is one is moving and one is not. There is one issued by the Attorney General to tie the hands of the Regents to entering into contracts unless they had a signature from the State Investment Council. That bill died in Senate Education as they were concerned about it and then the other one is, there is a bill to improve Regent education related to fiduciary responsibilities. That one, President Balderas thinks, is moving. Regent Velarde asked who is carrying that, Bill. Matt Baca stated it is Senator Steinborn. Chair Martin asked if it is similar to the training Regent Archuleta has as a school board member. Regent Archuleta stated yes, they increased their training from five hours to twelve hours as school board members with specific audit, finance. Regent Velarde asked if this is online training. Regent Velarde stated it is in person, conferences and budget conferences. Chair Martin asked if the Board training is online. Counselor Baca stated the bill is currently written, directs HED to develop the training curriculum. It spells out for ten hours they would mandate that each of that would break out to. There's a range of five different topic areas. But importantly, it mandates that HED pretty quickly come up with what it is. Chair Martin asked if it is for new Regents or all Regents. Counselor Baca stated it would be for existing and new Regents. President Balderas stated it seems like they are focusing a lot on financial management and institutional governance and he would say also covering ethics, he would say that just as judging the financial oversight the good oversight of the institution where we're at right now. It's interesting where this is probably the first administration to add legal counsel and yet they're providing training and so you all receive adequate counsel on a day-to-day basis. President Balderas thinks

we are probably ahead of institutions on that and then the financial management, auditing and oversight. He is really proud because he does think we all work on really bringing strong oversight. It's good to see the rest of the Regents in the State that would be exposed to this, that he doesn't think he always has the opportunity to work with auditors or counsel on a daily basis. Just for this education. Chair Martin stated just for the audience's clarification, we do have training for our new Regents that Mr. Baca and Ms. Storey will give to both. All the legal stuff and all the financial stuff. Thank you for your time.

Regent Velarde stated HERC also gives training in April. It is a really go training when it comes to financials and liabilities.

Other Higher Ed Bills of Interest

- SB266 - Currently tabled in Senate Education; AG "Contract" Bill requiring:
 - State Board of Finance (within 30 days) review/approval, modification or rejection of Contracts of President, VPs, Provosts, and Athletic Directors that are either longer than five years in length or if the total compensation amounts to 10 times the total compensation of the institution's lowest compensate, regular, full-time employee
 - If contract has indemnification clause or release of liability, in addition to Board of Finance, agreement must be sent to AG for review
 - Institutions are to report to AG and HED annually the people/positions that meet the requirements of the statute and Board of Finance is to report to them the number of agreements reviewed and actions taken
 - Provides a specific cause of action for AG to bring breach of fiduciary duty claims against board members and administrators
- HJR12 - Currently in House Judiciary (has passed two committees) "Regents" bill, amends Article 12, Section 13 of NM Constitution to:
 - Articulate what fiduciary duties of regents are
 - Adds violation of fiduciary duty as a basis for removal
 - Changes original jurisdiction of removal proceedings from NM Supreme Court to district court in location of the institution
 - Provides that AG or a majority of the Board of Regents may institute removal proceedings
- SJR7 - Currently in Senate Judiciary (passed only other committee), "Regent Nominating Committee" bill, amends Article 12, Section 13 of the NM Constitution to:
 - Provide that the Governor shall appoint regents from a list provided by a regent nominating committee
 - Provide that the legislature shall establish the committee by statute (appointment, terms, powers/duties, etc.)

- Does not apply to student regents
- SB19 - Passed the Senate, currently in House Education (with one more committee thereafter), “Regent Training” bill, requiring:
 - Regents complete ten hours of training during the first six months of the members' terms, and existing members to complete before the end of 2025
 - HED to develop the training and monitor compliance
 - The training shall consist of:
 - two hours covering the provisions of the constitution of New Mexico and state law pertaining to state educational institutions and related post-secondary education matters;
 - two hours covering financial management, budgeting and fiduciary duties;
 - two hours covering student success and student support services;
 - two hours covering institutional governance, innovation, best practices and available federal, state and nongovernmental resources to assist the boards of regents and members of the boards; and
 - two hours covering ethics and state law regarding ethics oversight and public accountability, including the Procurement Code, the Open Meetings Act, the Gift Act and the Inspection of Public Records Act.
- HM39 - Currently in House Education, Higher Education Faculty Compensation Study, requiring:
 - HED to work with LFC and LESC to conduct a comprehensive study on issues relating to the state of higher education compensation for temporary and non-temporary instructional staff;
 - If findings lead to a recommendation that there should be considerations of compensation structures that exceed the amounts currently received, the department also recommend methodologies to fund compensation increases
 - HED to present findings and recommendations by December 1, 2025

C. NNMC Foundation

President Balderas presented the following:

1. FY25 Philanthropic Donations: July 2, 2024 to February 21, 2025 - \$381,513.
2. Financial Aid will distribute Northern Scholarships and Endowed Scholarships held by NNMC Foundation in March 2025, totaling \$300,000.

3. Proposal submitted to private donor – pending approval.
 - \$55,200 for NNMC Technical Trades - purchased two training models, equipment and student manuals for the Electrical and Plumbing Programs.

Joseph Padilla stated they ordered a control trainer to teach students how to trouble shoot. For the HVAC program they ordered a heat pump and mini split simulator to introduce problems for students to troubleshoot.

D. Introduction of Staff and Faculty

President Balderas introduced the following:

Megan Barela Hudgell

Analyst 4E Research

Megan is the newest member of Dr. Rhiannon West's lab, where she will help facilitate wet lab and bioinformatics research with undergraduates as Research Assistant Professor. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of New Mexico and her PhD at George Washington University. She returned to New Mexico after receiving a 2National Science Foundation postdoctoral fellowship to study the Gila Trout.

Rebecca M. Chavez, BAIS

HEP Recruiter/College & Career Advisor

Rebecca Chavez is our new HEP/CAMP Recruiter/College and Career Advisor. She is a recent graduate of NNMC with a BA in Integrated Studies and is currently working towards an MA in Counseling.

Savanah DeAguero

Academic Advisor

Savanah DeAguero joins us as an Academic Advisor. She graduated from Western Carolina University in 2024 with a Bachelor's of Science in Integrated Health Science and a Minor in Psychology.

Dr. Leonard (Leon) Leyba, PhD

HEP Instructor

Dr. Leon Leyba is our new HEP instructor. He spent a summer at Northern after he graduated from high school with a vision of going into agriculture. Instead, he ended up spending several years in biomedical research as a student, technician, and post-doc. He left science to become an in-home caregiver. Most recently he served as tutor and family navigator at Peñasco Schools.

Kimberly Martinez**Administrative Assistant**

Kimberly Martinez has joined Northern as an Administrative Assistant with the Department of Business. She graduated from the University of New Mexico with her Bachelor of Business Administration in Human Resources and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in General Business. She brings years of experience in upper-level management and human resources.

Jessica Mercer**Phlebotomy Instructor**

Jessica Mercer is the new phlebotomy instructor for both our dual credit program and our Nursing & Health Science Department. She earned a certificate of completion in Phlebotomy and EKG from West Tennessee Business School and a national certificate as a phlebotomy technician through the National Healthcare Association in 2024. She moved back to Albuquerque to work for Tricare Kaseman, and a few years later was hired by Sandia Labs doing mobile and traveling phlebotomy, which led to teaching at Ohio School of Phlebotomy. She recently moved back to New Mexico to work for Healthworks for N3B in Los Alamos.

Heather Pierce**Math & Physical Science Holistic Advisor**

Our new Math & Physical Science Holistic Advisor Heather Pierce is originally from Texas but spent the past 15 years working at Emmanuel College in Boston. She spends her time and energy focused on easy access to math education for everyone. Heather has a BS in Math from Baylor University, an MS degree in Knot Theory from University of Texas, and an MS degree in Geometric Group Theory from Tufts University.

Antoinette Vita Villamil**Educational Opportunity Center Director**

Antoinette Vita Villamil joins us as our new Director of the Educational Opportunity Center. She received her MFA in poetry from New Mexico State University. Her poems have been published in periodicals including *Cacti Fur*, *inter-rupture*, *New Mexico Poetry Review*, *Community of Writers Poetry Review*, and the *Santa Fe Reporter*, and she has published a chapbook through Grandma Moses Press. Antoinette has also worked in community-based and educational nonprofits throughout New Mexico, including New Mexico MESA, Many Mothers, and Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council. She brings an extensive background in granting writing, as well as community program design, program management, and teaching composition at institutions such as NMSU, IAIA, and Santa Fe University of Art & Design.

Juan Mendoza joins us as a **Safety & Security Officer**.

I also want to congratulate Alejandra Jaramillo and Valentina Livingston for moving from interim director positions to permanent positions. Alejandra is the new director of our High School Equivalency Program and Valentina is now the director for both our Veterans Resource Center and the Native American Student Center, as well as our Tribal Liaison.

IX. FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

Dr. Braley stated almost everything covered is on the agenda. One note that came up in the certificates is the possibility that some minor changes didn't need to go through the whole process to do program changes. One example, state mandated changes to course numbering. If the State is mandating, we are being told to do this. They are going to start a conversation with the Provost's Office to look at what the process could be and look at whether the minor things do not go through the whole process. One thing he wanted to bring up which normally does not rise to the Board's level in the last year and a half, the safety committee, they have been really shaping the safety program and really generating it from scratch. With the renewed attention was getting from the fatality from Highlands, he wanted to say good things are happening at Northern under Jolene's leadership. Policies and such will be coming to the Board for approval. Last think, there is a lot of uncertainty about federal funds and faculty and staff would like a statement from Regents and President that they are on top of it, just a recommendation.

Chair Martin asked about the policy Ms. Colgan mentioned. Does the faculty have an opinion. Mr. Braley stated he asked two committees were asked for feedback. Because of public comment period timing they were not able to do a formal statement from the Senate. The policy that is written didn't go via the Faculty Senate. There wasn't an opportunity to provide feedback at the time. There were just some little edge cases, things like the Deans being constantly referenced throughout the policy is difficult when we don't have Deans. That ends up piling a whole bunch on the provost. So, they had concerns too and but overall, the tone of the Senate is that it needed work and he agrees with what Melanie said that the intent is clear, the intent is good there is just some implementation challenges there.

Chair Martin asked if there were questions from the Board. No questions from the Board.

X. STUDENT SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

Ms. Green wanted to congratulate Ms. Gurule. Thank you and she changed her life in getting involved in Northern. Student Senate liked their Leadership training so much they will be doing a capstone project and work together as student senate and other leaders at Northern to come up with an issue that they think Northern is having and come up with solutions and present it to the President. This will begin in April. They also donated to

the Black History Month Event. Meetings are going well and she will keep the Board updated. They will also do a graduation event for the graduates in May along with the Student Senate Awards.

Chair Martin asked if there were questions for President Green. No questions from the Regent Velarde, Regent Archuleta and Regent Lovato. Regent Gurule thanked President Green and stated she is doing an incredible job and thanked her for all she does.

Chair Martin asked if there will be elections before the end of the semester. President Green stated there is only one person on student senate who is eligible for President. She will speak with Tammy Winston to see who is eligible and they will need to do a training for positions.

XI. STAFF REPORTS

A. Provost & Vice President

1. Solar Certificate

Larry Guerrero, Interim Provost presented the Solar Certificate to the Board of Regents (attached). The Solar Certificate is a 15-credit hour certificate and will be offered in both Espanola and El Rito. There would be a 0.5 FTE faculty member and funding would be available through the Mill Levy. Employment of the solar installers is projected to grow 48% from the decade of 2023 to 2033 much faster than average of all occupations. There are about 4,100 openings for solar installers projected each year on average over the decade. Additionally, the solar installers are ranked as the third highest occupation by projected growth to 2032 by the New Mexico Workforce Connection Agency. This certificate has been vetted and recommended by the Faculty Senate, the Provost and the President. Interim Provost Guerrero opened up for questions from the Board. Additionally, Frank Loera, Joseph Padilla and Chris are in attendance for any questions.

Regent Velarde stated no questions just her own internal fear of where things are headed with federal government. Although we have had these great statistics, she is just worried the ship might be headed in a different direction. If we can keep our thumb on it and watch it that we are guiding our students on the path of where they can be employed.

Regent Archuleta, Regent Lovato and Regent Gurule – had no questions.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the Solar Certificate. Second – Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Biotechnology Certificate

Larry Guerrero, Interim Provost presented Biotechnology to the Board of Regents (attached.). Northern New Mexico College would like to offer a new certificate in biological sciences with an emphasis in biotechnology. This certificate in biotechnology is designed to provide students with a foundational understanding of principles and practices of molecular biotechnology. This is a 21hour certificate and would not need any new faculty. The Department of BCE currently offers degree programs in biology, such as an Associate's Degree and a Bachelor of Science Degree. The Bachelor of Science Biology Program offers three different concentrations, cell and molecular biology, pre-health and ecology and evolution. The Biotechnology Certificate is embedded within the BS in Biology program, meaning that students can earn this certificate while completing their degree requirements or pursue it separately as a credential.

This certificate has been vetted and recommended by the Faculty Senate, the Provost and the President. Interim Provost Guerrero stated he would take any questions from the Board of Regents.

Chair Martin asked if there were questions from the Board.

Regent Velarde asked what it encompasses for the College. Interim Provost presented the information (attached). It equips students with foundational knowledge and skills in biological sciences, molecular sciences, molecular biology, genetics, biochemistry essential for a career in biotechnology. This provides practical training and advanced laboratory techniques to enhance technical expertise, and it also educates students on ethical considerations, intellectual property and regulatory requirements surrounding biotechnology, research development and commercialization. Regent Velarde asked what Biotechnology means. Regent Velarde stated she thinks she knows what it means but. Interim Provost called on Dr. Sushmita Nandy for further explanation. Dr. Nancy stated biotechnology is a combination of sciences and technology. So, this program is created for students to have higher employability in the pharmaceutical industry, food, manufacturing industry and so it has implications in the industry level. Wo, we want to create programs that are aligned better with the workforce requirements of the current times. Regent Velarde asked if this is medtronics, things like omnipod, and if these are the things, we are talking about technologies that are helping us biologically as far as like, so the omnipod is for diabetes and it gives you your sugar numbers right away because it's on you. So those are the kinds of things we're talking about when we reference biotechnology. Dr. Nandy stated absolutely sensors and nanotechnology is part of biotechnology and so this is a certificate program so this gives a fundamental knowledge to students how technology can be incorporated and how we can have products that we use in our everyday lives. So, she thinks, yes.

No other questions from the Board of Regents.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Biotechnology Certificate.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the Biotechnology Certificate. Second – Regent Gurule. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Addendum to the Academic Calendar

Larry Guerrero, Interim Provost presented the addendum to the Board of Regents (attached). This is another action item, addendum, academic advising and registration is currently scheduled for April 14, 2025 on this academic calendar. This could potentially affect summer and fall enrollment for the summer and next fall. So, our proposal to this is to make a proposed addendum to the academic calendar which would allow for registration to begin on Monday, March 17th which is the first day of spring break. So, in essence about a month sooner as opposed to April 14th. This would allow faculty and staff more time to visit with their advisees prior to summer classes. Interim Provost Guerrero opened for questions.

Chair Martin asked if there were questions from the Board. No questions from the Board.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve.

Regent Archuleta moved to approve the Addendum to the Academic Calendar. Second – Regent Lovato. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Data and Enrollment Report

Larry Guerrero, Interim Presented to the board of regents (attached). Interim Provost Guerrero stated the Board has had a chance to view this document in their package but if not, not to insult their intelligence he will reach the Board the package or data enrollment and of course this is provided by our wonderful IR team, Carmella Sanchez and Rishi. They do a wonderful job of providing this. So, what Interim Provost Guerrero wants to do is just compare apples to apples. If you look at spring of 22 our head count was 932 students, our spring of 23 was 1,025 students, which is an increase of 9% in the summer term. Summer 2023 we were at 305 students. In the summer of 24 we were at 444 students with an increase of 46%. In the fall of 23, we're 1,229 students. In the fall of 24 we were at 1,386 students which is an increase of 13 and lastly the spring of 24 we were at 1,270 students and as of today, in the spring of 25 we are at 1,380 students which is a 9% increase. So, yes, just a wonderful note that these numbers have come true since President Balderas has taken over as President here. Not only have we seen our

enrollment increase with these kinds of numbers we have seen our dual credit increase as 82%. In some cases, our grants, our faculty are doing a wonderful job in obtaining grants. The grants are probably the highest he has seen them in quite some time now and of course, the programs that we started in the last four semesters. As you can see, we've had five out of the technical trades. We've had one in biotechnology and the then next month we will have a brand-new certificate coming out of the Teacher Education Program in Spanish. So about seven new programs in about a little over a year along with all this data. Interim Provost stated he wanted to publicly just thank all the faculty and staff and students who have done a wonderful job in making these numbers possible. But again, it wouldn't be possible, it wasn't for the leadership of our President. So, he just wants to make sure that we do recognize everybody because it does take a team effort. He is so happy to see these kinds of numbers and he hopes everybody else does.

Chair Martin stated what he was struck by is that he looked at the difference between spring 22 and spring 25 we have 432 more students and spring 25 we 443 more students. So, his hat is off to everybody for all their hard work. President Balderas, you and all your staff, thank you so much sir.

Regent Velarde stated it is amazing and she would like to see how we could maybe be a part of a study because everywhere else she hears about the enrollment cliff, the enrollment cliff and she is like excuse me, I, we're not experiencing. Yeah, we're, it is a cliff that we are climbing what I mean, so it's interesting that is it, maybe because of the students we serve. It is because of the community that we're in, that we have the difference? Importance to people that that they continue to come here and we're not experiencing what these other really large institutions. Excuse me, institutions are raising their flags, worried about how they're going to pay bills in the next five years. So, she just says, if we could become of a part of study to figure out, how is it we're not part of that cliff? She thinks it would be beneficial.

President Balderas stated he has a comment but he stated he would allow Interim Provost Guerrero to respond first.

Mr. Guerrero stated he agrees. It is a team effort. He thinks the culture on our campus has changed, we are offering more opportunities, more courses. He also thinks, we also have some things that we need to work on clearly by today's meeting. Certainly, everybody comes to work but they don't leave until they know that they've done one thing for a student. If they've helped the student one time or one way in their day, then they could probably go home and feel good about themselves and he thinks the big thing is the customer service. He thinks our one stop shop, our enrollment management teach, our student services faculty. He thinks there's just more of an emphasis on the students that he thinks it shows. If we could help one student, it would make a difference.

President Balderas stated Regent Velarde's national lens is right. He thinks we should do this study but we have meet with HEI's across the country. We are pursuing the Hispanic population which is on the increase. We think because we go after nontraditional students, we could probably, there is a college closing down every week in our country because of this cliff. We will continue to monitor this to make sure we are not hurt by this.

5. Tenure and Promotion Approval

Larry Guerrero, Interim Provost presented the tenure of Joan Hodge for approval (attached). Joan Hodge, a faculty member with the Department of Nursing and Health Sciences has completed the tenure application process and has been positively recommended by the Tenure Promotion Council of the Faculty Senate for Tenure. They are based on four criteria. The first is teaching. The Council recommends Ms. Hodge for her commitment to teaching and excellence. Her passion for education is evident through student evaluations, letters of recommendation and other supporting evidence. Second, Advising. The Council recognizes Ms. Hodge active participation in departmental advising evidence provided indicated that she regularly advises 10 to 20 students per semester and documents. The advisement session, 3rd service. The Council recommends Ms. Hodge for her significant contribution towards developing the RN to BSN fully online program. The council members also recognize her art of self-care course that she introduced developing authors at Northern. Fourth and last scholarship. Ms. Hodge has shown a commitment to staying current in both teaching and nursing by actively participating in workshops and training programs on a personal side.

Interim Provost Guerrero stated he would like to recognize her support team, Department Chair, Ellen Trabka, Melanie Colgan, Director of AND Undergraduate Nursing and of course family member, Judith Pepper. Interim Guerrero read Ms. Hodge's biography (attached).

Interim Provost stated it is the recommendation of the Tenure Promotion Council, the President and the Provost to recommend her tenure and promotion.

Ms. Hodge stated she has loved the life changing education the students receive at Northern and has been extremely supported by Ellen Trabka her department head and what we do in, everywhere at Northern in the nursing department and especially in the RN to BSN program because healthcare is so important and we all need very well qualified committed dedicated people, nurses to help us. What we do is extremely important and she is very honored. She is proud to be part of it and thank you everyone at Northern. She loves it.

Chair Martin asked if there were comments from the Board.

Regent Velarde thanked Ms. Hodge for all that she has done. She is sure she has touched and then helped guide. We take certain things for granted when we don't need them. Just recently, my dad has been in the hospital and watching the nurses with my dad has given me such a great appreciation for what you guys all do. It is not a profession; it is definitely a passion and it is something that you have to love to do. The compassion, not only compassion, but having to be on top of it all. I mean, it's really funny, I look at it and I see all the nurses in there doing their work and the doctor comes in maybe once or twice and he checks all the nurses notes right and so all of that responsibility and all that data that the doctor is computing is coming from the nurses and if it wasn't for that work, and if it wasn't for the passion, because all honesty, you couldn't pay me enough to do what nurses do because it is a lot of work and it is a lot of stress and a lot of things that you take home on you and with you. So, thank you so much for what you've done and thank you for your help to provide nurses in communities for the last ten years and I hope you continue to touch the beautiful lives that you have. Thank you.

Regent Archuleta stated he would like to thank her coming from the medical profession. He is a CT Tech Manager right now but he works with a lot of nurses at Presbyterian and our best nurses are graduates from Northern. So that makes him proud because he is a graduate of Northern and just the professionalism and when they graduate, they are ready to hit the floor running. Compared to other institutions, he thinks we're above and beyond. So, thank you to you and your staff and again he sees it every day. Giving back to our community is rewarding.

Regent Lovato congratulated Ms. Hodge.

Regent Gurule congratulated Ms. Hodge and thanked her for her service to the students and to the college.

President Balderas stated he thinks she has the votes. He is not worried about her. She is a walking institution with a level of class, her demeanor toward the students. He also wants to especially thank her for her holistic worldview to healthcare. He thinks she is going to continue to put the nursing program on a national lens that that worldview we are actually out in front on what healthcare reform needs to be and we're going to put our students in well position and as our Board knows Judith and Joan are, they walk different, talk different and dress different. So, on behalf of the Board of Regents and the faculty, we hope we do you justice. We tried to get you the classiest, fanciest pen we could find to match your beautiful attire all the time you set such a high standard for our students and so as a Board of Regents and colleague we would be so grateful if you would accept our pen before we go to a vote.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Tenure of Joan Hodge.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the tenure of Joan Hodge. Second – Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Interim Provost Guerrero stated he knows this is Ms. Hodge’s day but he also wants to recognize her department. Those of you who don’t know, the nursing department has achieved a great feat for our college. They have a back-to-back two-time 100% pass rate on the NCLEX.

6. Amendment to Academic Chair Appointment Policy

Matt Baca, General Counsel presented this amendment to the Board of Regents (attached). Mr. Baca stated there is a memo in front of the Board of Regents with a proposed amendment to the existing chair appointment policy and then the comments some of which the Board heard this morning. Then as Scott mentioned the one of the other Faculty Senate Chair Committee submitted some comments that are, in fact as well along with some individual comments. As you might recall, the chair appointment policy was passed in 2022. It will provide the democratic process for staff and faculty to select the chair of their departments. One of the concerns that Melanie raised and it’s a big one is continuity in leadership, particularly for programs that have their own individual accreditation. So, we have that in nursing, engineering and business just to name a few. So, what the amendment to this particular policy simply attempted to do was just to remove the term limit provision to keep intact the Democratic process, the vote within the department. But to say hey, you would still come up for a vote but you could still be eligible to continue in your position, even if you were a longer standing chair. That was the single proposal he thinks what you all have seen and have heard today just the introduction of the conversation has really sparked a lot of dialogue about much broader concerns so the memo is in front of you.

Mr. Baca stated he thinks it gives the board two choices and of course you could come up with your own if either one of them is acceptable to you. One of them is to adopt the single amendment to remove the term limit provision and allow for longer existing chairs to continue in that roll. Alternatively, the board would be well within their authority to rescind the policy as it’s currently written and then you know expect that we would work with the Faculty Senate and community to maybe take a more holistic and revisionary approach to the way we’re doing this. So, Mr. Baca asked President Balderas if he wanted to add any context or any particular recommendation but he thinks this is sort of the framework. President Balderas stated he just wants to convey to the Chair and Regents the College is willing to work with whatever outcome to guide a new rulemaking process and bring back a longer-term solution. Also, he does want to commend our Counsel and our Provost. They’ve been trying to navigate a difficult situation in terms of managing

elections with the rule that had some issues. So, he believes we've mitigated those issues during the year. But we do recommend some type of action today from the Board and again we will engage the faculty and staff immediately this coming year to bring this back up.

Regent Archuleta asked if we are suspending or rescinding the policy. Or, are suspending and rescinding the same thing?

Mr. Baca stated they would just be repealing what is in place.

Regent Velarde stated in his previous board when they suspended the policy, and then we went and amended it. So is kind of the same thing. Mr. Baca stated it is. Regent Velarde stated rescind means you are just taking it back.

Chair Martin stated for the new Regents he went back and looked at his packet from November of 22. The policy was approved by the committee and legal but we did not have any input from the faculty so his personal feeling is that we should just rescind the policy and we pretty much have brand new players now and he thinks it would be easier to fix if we started over then work with the, that is his personal opinion. Chai Martin asked Regent Velarde for her opinion.

Regent Velarde stated she believes we should rescind it and go back to the drawing board so that we can have everybody's input. She thinks it is important to be able to have everybody's voice heard so that we can then make an informed decision. Just, she thinks, just taking, you know, striking the word out, or a portion of it, she doesn't think is strong enough. She is not the one sitting in those seats as a faculty and she wants to give them the opportunity to. They're the subject matter experts, not her. So, she would like for them to have that opportunity.

Regent Archuleta stated coming from the medical field he agrees what Melanie presented is 100% accurate. It should come from them as they are boots on the ground. This program is probably one of the better programs has across the State. A lot of college graduate nurses but it doesn't mean anything, you have to pass the test. The Nursing Program is one of the best in th state. 100% test rate is very impressive. Let them come to the table.

Regent Lovato stated there are two options and asked for a repeat.

Mr. Baca stated one of the bigger concerns is continuity in leadership. The original intent of the proposed amendment was just to strip the term limit language out of the policy so the rest of it maintained its force and effect. But yeah, exactly and then, as you see in the packet, and as you've heard today you know, even bringing up that simple amendment

brought out a larger discussion about hey do we need a fuller examination of the operation. So, he thinks it would be to either take the more limited approach and amend for now or to take the approach that's been discussed here, and to rescind the policy.

Regent Lovato stated he would take the approach of rescinding the policy.

Regent Gurule asked if rescinding the policy would put everything on hold for our current leaders until there's a new policy drawn out and is the amendment more helpful to our faculty right now.

Counselor Baca stated effectively either path. Nothing would hold up any particular department or any particular person today. So, he thinks they could be comfortable with whatever option they took. There isn't going to be an impact on a particular department today. What he does think is we are hearing from the faculty is that their perspective. They'd really like that fuller examination.

Chair Martin asked if Dr. Brailey sees any problems with rescinding the policy.

Dr. Brailey stated the only question that comes to mind is he knows Business is in the process of turnover, but he is not sure where exactly they are at today. So, the only question would be if there is an impact directly on that process.

Mr. Baca stated that is a great point. That process necessarily started under the existing rule. It was the policy, so we are following it. He thinks it is our assessment that it wouldn't, this action today wouldn't impact that. This would be more for the President or Provost to speak to, but he thinks there is a comfort about the continuity and leadership of that department.

Regent Velarde stated that concerns her if we are going to allow it to roll out when we already saw the fiasco, we kind of did for nursing. I would prefer, if we could rescind it with a pause on all if it right now so that business is paused in doing that. She doesn't know internally what that would do it but to her it just seems like she would really not like to have you know this whole drama that went on via nursing and have that unrest. She doesn't want him to leave any, lose any of our faculty so is that a possibility

President Balderas stated he sees two issues. There was the term limit which he doesn't know was quite vetted and but the term limit what it essentially did was it forced chairs that wanted to continue to run to not be able to continue to serve and he doesn't think we quite appreciated the policy shift for that. Secondly, though, he does believe that if you rescind and we begin a rule what you're rescinding is a democratic process and you what you're supporting is everyone should be able to run for those chair positions and every one of the faculty should have a say in who those leaders are. He just wants to caution the Board that he does believe that with the rescission still that there's a support

of foundation under that there will be consistent operation. He doesn't see resistance because the fallback is then the Provost and the President still retain all HR authority and those chairs serve under a management structure and so there'll be stability. So, there is a little bit of shift between those two policies the democratic election of faculty but we still fall back on with the chairs and the consistency will fall on the Provost and the President to manage day to day.

Regent Velarde asked if this will put a pause on what's going on right now in business. It'll continue to go as is. President Balderas stated yes. Chair Martin stated so the Business Department will continue to be the Chair. Regent Velarde stated no, she thought they were in process of going through a change, right? And so that's her concern. If we're going to go through the same change with did with nursing and it was that traumatic, she does not want to continue to do it and hurt other people, right. And so, if we already know there is an issue and it's been raised and we're looking at the issue. Why would we continue the process? She is just saying she thinks the process needs to be paused and she doesn't know if it can be as far as the changeover or what changes are going in the Business Department right now.

President Balderas is asking if she is talking about talking about the process of hiring or appointing a chair.

Ms. Colgan stated she is also the chair of the Personnel Committee and they met last Friday to discuss all of this and the Chair of the Business Department is also on that committee so she hates to speak for the Business Department but she is hoping what she can tell the Board some information on the conversation. The Business Department is about to undergo a major accreditation visit as well as starting and the business chair is set to rotate out in June which would be something completely brand new to handle the accreditation process for our largest department that actually supplements a lot of other departments in the college. So maybe it's accreditation. To pause everything now is a great thing to do. One of the concerns we have on the policy in general is just that with the rotation of the chairs in accreditation programs. A scenario like this can happen when we lose the chair of our people on accreditation and then yeah, so I hope that adds a little to your conversation and

Regent Velarde thanked Ms. Colgan for her email because it was that that gave me the information to know that we were coming upon the accreditation process, and it, you know a little instability isn't good.

President Balderas stated he was addressing the kind of safety net and asked the Counselor to weigh in to address Regent Velarde's question about the transition. What occurs within the current rule or current structure that allows the management to have the safety net in consideration of accreditation.

Counselor Baca stated he thinks what the President is getting at is the democratic process is to put a recommendation in front of the provost and eventually with the President. So, there is a mechanism existing policy that you go through a process of chair selection but the provost still retains the ultimate authority to say, I either agree with the candidate that was elected or I disagree with the candidate and the policy requires an articulation as to why that is so. He thinks what President Balderas is saying is there is still administrative control for the ultimate appointment and so he thinks that there is some comfort that there is not going to be disruption in the Business Department.

Regent Velarde stated the issue for her is why put everybody through the scoops and circles just to know that more than at the end the provost is probably going to keep the current chair because we know that we're coming up for accreditation and we want to be smart about it. We don't want to put somebody who is not doesn't have the right tools in there to do that so her issue is, why are we going through that whole process? If they're in the middle of it, let's stop them in the middle of it, because they haven't come to the end of it and let's pause the whole thing and then come back to the table.

Regent Martin and Regent Velarde stated that is what we are doing. Regent Martin stated he appreciates Regent Velarde's concern. He thinks we want to assure the Board we are not making a problem for the Business Department.

President Balderas stated he wants to make sure, considering, you guys, we do try to meet your direction that what we were saying is not tying the provosts' hands and the Presidents hands to intervene if there is decision making, especially if there is accreditation at risk.

Regent Archuleta moved to rescind the policy. Regent Lovato – Second. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Vice President for Finance & Administration

1. Removal of HED Enhanced Fiscal Oversight

Ms. Storey deferred to President Balderas for this item. President Balderas stated we mentioned it earlier about the clean audit. He cannot thank this Board of Regents and the leadership of setting a real high priority oversight. As you know we were taken off the at-risk list for fiscal monitoring not only by the State but also by the Feds and I just want to commend Theresa, her team, the entire faculty and staff and this Board of Regents for really having the resolve to see all this through. President Balderas deferred this back to Ms. Storey.

Ms. Storey stated she will add a little bit of details along the way because as Regent Archuleta mentioned it takes a collective effort. We know we were put on fiscal watch by the Department of Higher Education in March of 2017. That was due to late audit as well as potential fraud and embezzlement. We saw late audits for another nearly 10 years for fiscal year 17 to 23 in the interim there were measures that were put in place. WE heard through our report earlier that we utilized REDW who came to Northern in 202 Via RFP. The scope was to do a trial balance assessment that trial balance assessment went back to the last clean audit. So, the scope was five years 2015-2020. We still utilize their service and it's been a great investment especially considering the transition in the ERP and the challenges were experienced that ultimately contributed to the delay of our audit in 23. So again, just happy to report that we have been removed from the designation by the department of education. We have been removed from the heightened cash monitoring with the Federal Government and so just something to celebrate.

2. P-Card Policy

Ms. Storey presented the PCard policy to the Board of Regents (attached). This policy just formalizes the policy for standard operating procedures.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve.

Regent Archuleta moved to approve the PCard Policy. Second – Regent Velarde. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Fiscal Watch Report

Ms. Storey presented the Fiscal Watch to the Board of Regents (attached).

Chair Martin stated he reached out to Ms. Storey because of the situation at New Mexico Tech where they had millions and millions of dollars in an account. He realized what is our cash balance in the Mill Levy now, we must have \$6M sitting in there, don't we? Ms. Storey about the cash balance of the Mill Levy. Ms. Storey stated at the end of fiscal year it was about \$6M and the Grants are included and it is growing. Chair Martin stated for the new Regents we receive about \$2.8M a year in Mill Levy Funds and we have been receiving it since 2019 and we've charged the administration with coming with a plan to spend some of that money because they hadn't spent it in the past before the President and his staff came on board so his concern was that we had discussed having a minimum of that Mill Levy money that we keep as a safety net and if we could invest that in more than a ¼% we could earn a little bit of money. If it's just going to sit in the bank does that make sense? President Balderas stated yes, we did a statutory review of the two issues that the chairman's referring to the New Mexico Tech kind of controversy or scandal was the President and the Regents were at odds with fiscal policy. We don't have that here

but went through the checklist as you directed. The second issue was whether or not the cash holding was kind of receiving the best of return. What we've identified is that we are going to take a reasonable portion of those proceeds and enter into a low-risk interest bearing 3-month CD so we're going, we believe that Ms. Storey and Century have already worked out a very low risk solution but also doesn't the other controversy is these funds are still somewhat operational funds. So, they are not investment funds in our review, he wants the Board to know that the Foundation does invest its funds per investment policy so we're compliant there and then number four, we do not have a conflict of interest. The other controversy in New Mexico Tech was that one of the Board of Regents was the lawyer for the bank that was not receiving an adequate return. So, we kind of looked at the statute. We do think we can probably secure a little bit more income through that CD and we're making those modifications. So, we thank you for that direction. Thank you so much.

Regent Velarde asked what the percentage rate is on the CD. President Balderas stated it is in the 2's to 3's. Chair Martin asked if we are getting a 10th of a percent. Regent Velarde stated she is just wondering if we shopped to find higher interest rates at all. She knows we're more than likely shop banking the New Mexico Institutions but just, you know, just to know if there is a higher rate there. You know, Former Regent Swentzell stated they got 4%. Chair Martin asked on a CD. Former Regent Swentzell stated on cash with Del Norte Credit Union. We had to battle them for every half of a percent. It wasn't just like, oh, yeah, you should be getting this we have to call.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Fiscal Watch Report.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the Fiscal Watch Report. Second - Regent Archuleta. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Inventory Deletions

Ms. Storey presented Inventory Deletions (attached) to the Board of Regents.

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the Inventory Deletions.

Regent Velarde moved to approve the Inventory Deletions. Second - Regent Gurule. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

XIII. VOTE TO REOPEN MEETING - Certification that only those matters described in the Executive Session Agenda were discussed in the closed session; if necessary, final action with regard to certain matters will be taken in Open Session

None.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Martin entertained a motion to adjourn.

Regent Archuleta moved to adjourn. Regent Velarde – second. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Lovato – yes. Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjourned 11:45AM.

Approved:



Michael A. Martin
Chair



Erica Rita Velarde (Jun 12, 2025 10:33 MDT)

Erica Velarde
Vice Chair












1112_001

Final Audit Report

2025-06-12

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-  Signer erica.velarde@nnmc.edu entered name at signing as Erica Rita Velarde
2025-06-12 - 4:33:39 PM GMT- IP address: 73.228.0.132
-  Document e-signed by Erica Rita Velarde (erica.velarde@nnmc.edu)
Signature Date: 2025-06-12 - 4:33:41 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 73.228.0.132
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