

NORTHERN New Mexico College



BOARD OF REGENTS SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Regents of Northern New Mexico College was held on Friday, September 26, 2025, In Person and Via Zoom in Alumni Hall at Northern New Mexico College El Rito Campus. Regents Present in person and Viz Zoom: Michael A. Martin, Erica Velarde, Ruben Archuleta, and Dolores Gurule. Regent Lovato was not in attendance.

Northern New Mexico College Staff Present: President Hector Balderas, JD, CFE, René Vellanoweth, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Theresa Storey, Chief Financial Officer/Compliance Officer, Matthew Baca, General Counsel, Scott Stokes, Chief Information Officer, Juan Gallegos, Windows System/Information Security Administrator, Evette Abeyta, Budget Director, Tammy Winston, Student Life, Alejandra Jaramillo, HEP, Jessica Ortiz, Accountant III, Vince Lithgow, Accountant III, Arin McKenna, Staff Writer/Reporter, and Sandy Krolick, Creative Director, Marketing & Communications.

Faculty Present: Scott Braley, Faculty Senate President

Others Present: John Ussery, Tim Crone, Jake Arnold,

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Martin Called the meeting to order at 9:00AM

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

The Board of Regents moved and approved the agenda as presented.

III. PUBLIC INPUT

None.

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

A. Board of Regents Subcommittee Reports

1. Housing Committee

Regent Archuleta reported positive developments in student housing, including maintenance improvements and a potential developmental study at the Northern campus.

2. Audit, Finance, Facilities Committee

No report

3. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

No report

4. Governance Committee

No report

5. HERC Committee

Chairman Martin stated the Higher Education Coalition Committee discussed the New Mexico Higher Education Unified Budget Request, noting a flat budget proposal and cautious approach to salary increases due to funding uncertainties.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Martin stated we are going to the approval of the minutes and entertained a motion to approve the minutes from August 29, 2025.

Regent Archuleta moved to approve the minutes. Second – Regent Gurule. A roll call vote was taken. Chairman Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes, Regent Gurule – yes. Motion passed unanimously.

VI. PRESIDENT’S REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Celebrate Northern

President Balderas stated he would like to celebrate our enrollment numbers, which, once again, have increased by 12% over last fall’s numbers. This is a historic, kind of, unprecedented three and half years of growth. There are currently 1,558 students enrolled, increasing our headcount by 172 students and student credit hours have been by 14.6%. President Balderas stated he wanted to thank our admissions department, our credit office, communications and all the collective individual departments that are really embracing the spirit of integration and excessive communication and what he is really

most proud of is he really thinks Northern is working together to actually have strategic enrollment targets, and it's based on the mission and the fundamental belief that every student in this region should be choosing Northern as their number one choice not as a default and that takes a real culture shift. It takes a lot of risky. It's much more courageous and difficult to be intentional about setting a higher standard for our students but we all believe the very floors, student vehicles to the amazing faculty and staff that there should be enough investment in this community to keep our students here. He is also excited because Northern, in these numbers, he has to put it in proper perspective, we're among the involvement leaders in the State of New Mexico. We are not just keeping up with the competition, we are causing them to wonder what we're doing in Santa Fe, what's up here in water, what's going on in Espanola. President Balderas stated he wanted to give a lot of credit to the amazing organization that works at Northern.

President Balderas stated we had some great Hispanic Heritage Week events. He wanted to thank the Española Chamber of Commerce for partnering with us on these events, and Senator Leo Jaramillo and Deputy Secretary of Higher Education Patricia Trujillo for participating in our Fiesta. President Balderas also thanked Paul Espinosa for sharing his great documentary, "Singing Our Way to Freedom," and for coming to campus to participate in a Q & A after the screening. Student Life sponsored several fun events, including a salsa competition, Latin America Games Day and Constitution Day. Arnold Suazo won the lowrider competition and Arin McKenna's salsa won first place.

Thanks to the Enlace Program and Student Life, we've launched a new peer mentoring program called Wisdom Warriors, designed to help our students thrive in college academically and personally. The Wisdom Warriors will help guide other students through campus life, share academic tips from their own experience and connect students with opportunities, events, & communities. The goal is to help our students stay on track to graduate.

Our Math & Physical Sciences Department has acquired a portable planetarium, which has been featured in two recent events. High school students were the first to enjoy it during Challenge Tomorrow, an outreach initiative for LANL and the Bradbury Science Museum to inspire future STEM careers. Northern was proud to host that event, which introduced students not only to careers at LANL but to what Northern has to offer in STEM education.

The Math & Physical Sciences Department also partnered with the Universities Space Research Association's Lunar and Planetary Institute to host Sky Fest, a free community astronomy event. In addition to planetarium shows, visitors enjoyed hands-on activities, screenings of the Cosmic Dawn documentary, talks from astronomy professionals and telescope viewings. The Pajarito Environmental Education Center and the New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science also collaborated on that event.

Our Counseling & Student Support Center co-sponsored two mental health trainings presented by Optum Whole Health Solutions, Suicide Prevention Training and Mental Health First Aid Training. CASSC also hosted a free health fair in late August, which offered health screenings, vaccines, dental services, STD testing and Medicaid assistance. We want to thank CASSC for looking out for the mental and physical health of our students.

Our Department of Student Success hosted its second event in the Cooking Up Traditions Series. Participants learned how to make Enchiladas del Norte de Nuevo México with the Lazy Buffalo Co. This series is paid for with a grant from the Con Alma Health Foundation.

Our faculty and staff had fun playing with hula hoops and building towers from spaghetti and marshmallows at a Lunch & Learn focused on the power of teamwork led by our Director of Safety & Security, Henry Geno Trujillo.

If you haven't viewed it yet, "Rooted Movements: The Continuum of Creative Traditions in Northern New Mexico" will be up in the CFA Gallery through October 5. The show was organized by Art for the People. Events in conjunction with the show included an opening reception with a poetry open mic and "PLÁTICAS on the Continuum of Creative Traditions in Northern New Mexico," a full day gathering which brought together local artists, organizers, scholars, and other community members to discuss the past, present and future of New Mexico's creative practices.

The El Rito Studio Tour is this weekend, and their Mercado will be at our El Rito campus. The Mercado will feature more than 20 local artisans, including students & teachers from Northern's Heritage Arts Program in weaving, traditional Spanish colonial woodworking and retablo painting. Stop by and support our students.

Today we will be partnering with our amazing Alumni Association. There will be graduates from the 1950s and 60s who are driving it literally right now and they're very particular classic of community because these were students that, some of them on the wall graduated, but really had a deep connection as well. We are always very concerned about how to keep this campus alive and they'll be merging with the group today from the community, which is a little bit different group of activists, organizers that also see how important this campus is to community survival and that's the second group and then we'll be welcoming amazing faculty and staff and students from our other main campus, our other campus, I should say and today we'll be celebrating it's called Northern Rising a celebration of 116 years of memories on this campus. It will also be giving an update but also sharing some ideas of how we're going to continue the renovation of this campus and how the Espanola campus can partner to deliver better programs and services here on this campus and on the other campus.

President Balderas stated this concludes his celebration report.

B. CUP/NMICC Report

The CUP and NMICC have been meeting mainly focused on trying to figure out what the shared priorities should be in light of the drastic federal cuts are looming, and then also the concern for the overall state of the economy and there's a request for 2.7% increase in the I&G formula, which would pay for some of our infrastructure and the way we pay our bills. They are also requesting to fully fund employees benefits as those continue to be increased costs on our employees as well and we have numerous shared priorities, much that President Balderas are not enough to completely manage the need. For instance, campus safety, they're only asking for \$15 million for all campuses. Rio Arriba is currently under a declaration of emergency with potentially a National Guard deployment. So, we are not going to just rely on that request. We're going to go to produce our own individual requests for campus safety and technology. Hopefully, we're successful but we keep this committee apprised of our progress and obviously continued support for our lottery opportunities scholarships. With that, President Balderas stated this concludes his report on the CUP and NMICC.

C. NNMC Foundation

President Balderas we are off our million-dollar presidential campaign. We are now at \$609,519 as of March 24, we started that campaign, and our normal donations in the last quarter at \$55,201. President Balderas stated a lot of people don't know Judith Pepper is and he doesn't want to say the word semi-retired, but she's definitely part-time, and she does a lot of this amazing work for us. We are still not letting her go. She moved to Texas and we're still hanging on to her but President Balderas wants to congratulate her as well.

D. Introduction of Staff and Faculty

President Balderas introduced the following new staff member.

Hattie Sherrick **Admissions Recruiter Specialist**

Hattie Sherrick is our new Admissions Recruiter Specialist. Hattie, who is originally from Louisiana, served as a language arts instructor for the high school equivalency at New Mexico Junior College and in New Mexico Corrections before joining Northern. She worked in the standardized testing industry for seven years before moving to New Mexico to teach. Prior to that she worked as a news writer in Louisiana after receiving a Bachelor of Science in Mass Communications from McNeese State University in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Hattie also has a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from McNeese State University and is currently completing the Doctor of Criminal Justice (DCJ) program with a concentration in Education at Saint Leo University in Florida.

President Balderas stated that concludes all his report.

VII. FACULTY SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

Faculty Senate President Brailey stated they had their first meeting and it was very routine. The only thing that he would mention that might come to the Board soon is that there's a lot of interest in changing some of the programs, and so that the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is working on some program-level changes that he expects to see, probably at the next Board meeting.

Chairman Martin asked if there were questions from the Board of Regents. No questions.

VIII. STUDENT SENATE PRESIDENT REPORT

Brandee DeAguero stated she and Mr. Isiah Martinez will be going to Washington, DC for a conference that is going to be happening October 7-13, 2025. They are going to have the opportunity to meet new colleges, get to see and hear all the good sides from their colleges. It is her first time being in DC so she is very excited but nervous. Student Senate is still currently working on filling the reporter that's open, the treasurer and the new secretary's position so they can have a bigger senate group. Right now, they only have five on their team. They are also trying to look for an El Rito Center to see, if they can get in contact with them to kind of see how their students, like, if they need anything from us or like, help, we can reach out to help them. We're trying to find someone here to help them. Student Senate is also in the process of brainstorming for the homecoming that is happening November 10th. They are trying to get as much ideas and updates they can donate.

Chairman Martin asked if there were questions from the Board. No questions. Chairman Martin thanked Ms. DeAguero.

IX. DEEP DIVE

A. HLC Assurance Argument

President Balderas stated one of our talented staff employees, well, actual partners, she runs a show, Carmella for the Board's preference, we are literally under three accreditation cycles right now while we are doing other things as well and so President Balderas stated he would like to comment Carmella and the entire business department. Not only are we renovating but we want to commend Dr. Baca, who just recently got through a final phase of a business school accreditation. Our engineering school is also preparing, but also Carmella is leading an entire effort for us. President Balderas stated

that it is the ability for us to do business and open our doors. This is all important this accreditation but he will defer to her to give us some context and update.

Carmella Sanchez gave the Board of Regents and updated regarding accreditation (attached). Chairman Martin asked if Ms. Sanchez could get the Board of Regents the document as soon as possible for review. Chairman Martin also asked the Board if there were any questions. Regent Velarde had no questions and thanked Ms. Sanchez for all the information. Regent Archuleta had no questions and thanked Ms. Carmella for all the hard work. Regent Gurule had no questions and thanked Ms. Sanchez.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Martin entertained a motion to adjourn.

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

The Board of Regents adjourned at 9:37am.

Approved:



Michael A. Martin
Chair



Erica Velarde (Nov 24, 2025 15:47:03 CST)

Erica Rita Velarde
Vice Chair

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Final Audit Report

2025-11-24

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By:	Amy Pena (amy.pena@nnmc.edu)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAqV_wop1OYnIAL_EHafreO2IVD-3KpT_5

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2025-11-24 - 9:47:01 PM GMT- IP address: 73.118.65.127
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