

New Mexico Highlands University
Board of Regents Meeting
January 28, 2022

The New Mexico Highlands University Board of Regents held a virtual meeting only on January 28, 2022. The university made every effort to accommodate members of the public as stated in the January 13, 2022 meeting announcement. The meeting was livestreamed via Zoom Platform. Members of the public were able to access the livestream through the following link:
<https://nmhu.zoom.us/j/99373471046>

Meeting ID: 993 7347 1046

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Chairman Marchi called upon Dr. Kimberly Blea, Dean of Students to read an opening statement:

“Thank you for joining the NMHU Board of Regents today, January 28, 2022 for our virtual Regular Board meeting. The university has made reasonable efforts to accommodate members of the public. The items to be addressed at this meeting are time sensitive and cannot wait, thus in accordance with the NM Attorney General’s Open Government Division Advisory, the meeting is being held as a virtual meeting only via Zoom Platform.”

Board members participating in the meeting remotely are: Mr. William Garcia, Ms. Danelle Smith, Mr. Christopher Ulibarri, Dr. Frank Sanchez and Chairman Mr. Frank Marchi.”

“Also participating in the meeting remotely are Dr. Sam Minner, Dr. Roxanne Gonzales, Mr. Max Baca, Dr. Kimberly Blea, Dr. Elisabeth Massaro, and Ms. Veronica Black.”

“Should Board members or the university lose connectivity and there is no longer a quorum, the Board meeting will be suspended and no action will be taken until a quorum is reconvened.”

Call to Order – Chairman Marchi called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Roll Call - Board Members Present: Mr. William Garcia, Mr. Frank Marchi, Ms. Danelle Smith, Dr. Frank Sanchez and Mr. Christopher Ulibarri.

Administrative Personnel Present: Dr. Sam Minner, President; Dr. Roxanne Gonzales, Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs; Mr. Max Baca, Vice President for Finance, Administration, and Government Relations; and Dr. Kimberly Blea, Dean of Students.

Others Present: Dr. Elisabeth Massaro, Faculty Senate Chair; Ms. Veronica Black, Staff Advisory Senate Chair, Ms. Patricia Ives, University Legal Counsel, and Ms. Maria Sena, Senior Executive Administrative Assistant. Numerous faculty, staff, students, community members, and the general public participated in the meeting as it was streamed via ZOOM.

Approval of the January 28, 2022 Agenda

Regent Ulibarri moved to approve the Board's virtual meeting agenda for January 28, 2022 with the request made by President Minner. Regent Smith seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor: Regent Garcia, Regent Smith, Regent Sanchez, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes from December 17, 2021 (Attachment A)

Regent Garcia moved to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2021 meeting with changes. Changes included adding that the NM Reforestation Center will have not a negative impact on water issues. Sufficient water will be available for this project. Regent Smith seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Approval of the Minutes from December 28, 2021 (Attachment B)

Regent Smith moved to approve the minutes from the December 28, 2021 meeting as presented. Regent Ulibarri seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda (Attachment C)

Regent Smith moved to approve the NMHU Open Meetings Act Resolution, Quarterly Report and Certification for FY22/Q2, Vice President of Student and Donor Engagement Report, Vice President of Finance, Administration, and Government Relations Report, Dean of Student Affairs Report, Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs Report, and the Disposition of University Inventory on the Consent Agenda as presented. Regent Ulibarri seconded. Discussion occurred regarding the NMHU Open Meetings Act Resolution. Regent Garcia asked for clarification regarding more the two Board members attending working meetings. Legal counsel, Ms. Pat Ives, indicated that more than two members of the Board can attend a working meeting, however, a seventy-two-hour notice needs to be given and the meeting has to be opened to the public. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Board of Regents Report

Higher Education Regents Coalition (HERC) Update

Regent Garcia stated that HERC stands for the Higher Education Regents Coalition. It is a consortium of all the higher education four-year institutions in the state. The two-year community colleges are invited as guests but are not part of the governing council. He stated that HERC has three major initiatives underway. First initiative is that the HERC Board endorsed the Council of University President priorities. Mr. Marc Saavadra provided a presentation and the HERC Board voted in support of these priorities.

He indicated the second initiative is that Michael Martin, Board Regent from Northern New Mexico University has agreed to chair the annual symposium. This symposium provides needed training for regent's job duties, regent's responsibilities, and legal parameters. This training is typically held in April but currently the date is pending. He indicated that regents from UNM are proposing that a strategic summit and a strategic session be held together.

He stated the final initiative has been long standing which is broadband expansion. This continues to be a priority item that the Chairman King presents to the legislature and to the Governor's Office.

Chairman Marchi announced that Regent Ulibarri will be succeeding him on the HERC Board. Regent Ulibarri has agreed to take on these responsibilities.

Regents Comments-No action items

Regent Ulibarri stated he had no comments.

Regent Smith stated she had no comments.

Regent Sanchez stated he had no comments.

Regent Garcia stated he had no comments.

Public Comment

No one came forward.

NMHU Foundation Report (Attachment D)

Dr. Carlotta Lockmiller stated that her report would be brief. She highlighted a few items including the Highlands Love event scheduled for February 10th had been postponed. The virtual Highlands Love event scheduled for February 24th virtual will take place.

She stated that the comprehensive campaign is in the final draft. Interviews will take place in March and April.

She also indicated that the University and Foundation reached agreement to lease purchase the Rio Rancho Center building.

Chairman Marchi thanked her for her attendance in the meeting. He requested that at the next regular Board meeting she provide an update on the Case Presentation, "*back from the dead*".

Vice President of Finance, Administration, and Government Relations-Mr. Max Baca

Legislative Update

Mr. Max Baca provided a brief update on the legislative session. He stated that Mr. Robert Romero had been hired to lobby for Highlands and Regent Sanchez has been there every day recruiting and advocating for the University.

He indicated that the LFC recommendations would provide funds to add a center of social work and for the NM Reforestation Center. Part of the recommendations are to adopt a seven percent compensation increase. Three percent would take effect in fiscal year 2022 and four percent will take place in fiscal year 2023. He is continuing to track funds for the facilities building and legislation is for moving forward for a living wage to \$13.50 per hour.

He stated that Dr. Joshua Sloan made a presentation for the NM Reforestation Center and the request went through the committee. The request is now in appropriation. He stated that a Native American Center is also begin considered.

He discussed the Legislative Fellows initiative. He stated that the fellows are to grow our own student leaders. This year's program has allowed seven students to attend the legislative session. They have lobbied for two full days. The fellows are lobbying for one million dollars to fund solar panels and charging stations for the University.

Dr. Denise Montoya also indicated that she had many requests from legislatures legislators asking that these students apply for opened positions.

Regent Sanchez stated that it was impressive to see legislative fellows in action. He has had the opportunity to spend time with them and was very pleased with all of them. He stated that he would like to see this initiative expand but it's a matter of finding resources. Dr. Minner stated that it is his intention to expand the legislative fellows program.

Regent Garcia asked Mr. Baca what the process was for the forty-five million dollars to establish the reforestation center. Mr. Baca indicated that House Bill 101 would appropriate 4.6 million dollars recurring monies to start the center which would include seedlings and a nursery. He stated that the final location for the nursery has not been determined, but the primary location discussed is the Highlands golf course.

Regent Garcia asked where the Dual Credit request stood. Mr. Baca indicated that additional funds might be added to this program. An in-depth discussion regarding the dual-credit program will occur at the next Board of Regents meeting.

Regent Smith asked what part Mr. Robert Romero played at the session. Mr. Baca stated that he provided an expanded level of contact. Mr. Romero lives in Santa Fe and is able to attend after-hour events and follows up with legislators. The University had the ability to utilize his important contacts and solid relationships he has in the community. Regent Sanchez recommended keeping the lobbyist year-round for advocating for Highlands throughout the year.

Regent Garcia stated he was pleased to hear a Native American Center was being included as part of the consideration for funding. Regent Garcia commented on the report that the HU Native American Director had approached the Administration seeking inclusion for Native students into the Legislative Fellows Program – discussion concluded that the two different approaches could be combined and provide additional diversity. Dr. Minner agreed and will consider this option.

Tuition and Fees Presentation (Attachment E)

Mr. Baca provided a detailed presentation on tuition and fees for 2022-2023. He discussed some financial updates and sources. He stated that enrollment decreases are happening all across New Mexico. All four-year institutions have been impacted.

Mr. Baca stated that mandatory increases might occur next year. Currently, no increases are expected for health insurances. However, other expenses such as legal, accreditations, and CBAs might increase.

Dr. Minner discussed his FY23 priorities. Priorities include compensation, advertising, expanded programs, and retention initiatives. He would also like to address adjunct faculty concerns.

Mr. Baca continued his discussion with in-state tuition & fees. He discussed the University ranking compared to the other New Mexico universities. Mr. Baca stated that Eastern has reduced tuition to be more competitive with Texas universities.

Regent Garcia indicated that maybe a lower less increase in out-of-state tuition might attract more out-of-state students. Regent Garcia would like a follow up on out-of-state student tuition and how it is handled at Eastern New Mexico University.

Mr. Baca discussed the cost of attendance and NM Lottery Scholarship data for Highlands. He indicated that other universities have lost NM Lottery Scholarship dollars. He provided the NM Opportunity Scholarship allocation data. He stated that Highlands needs to ensure that we are pulling all the dollars for the Teacher Preparation Affordability Grant. Dr. Mary Earick indicated that her department is working with local schools to collaborate with teachers.

Regent Garcia asked what the costs and revenues are to attract students. How much of our future is dependent on online students versus on campus? Mr. Baca responded by stating that they have a lot of data to review regarding this issue. His office is determining where to put more resources in future.

Mr. Baca continued to discuss tuition and fees further for both undergraduate and graduate students. He provided breakdowns and fee comparisons. He also discussed meal plan rates and housing room rates. Regent Garcia felt that maybe Highlands should keep the cost of meal plans and housing low. It would make it affordable for students.

He stated that the University needs to expand our marketing efforts. University needs to develop strategies to boost efforts of marketing to both parents and students. Dr. Terri Law indicated that the University lacks brand awareness. She stated more in-person recruitment and outreach is needed. She also indicated that outreach to TV marketing would be beneficial.

Mr. Baca informed the Board that he would bring back the tuition and fees for the Board vote at a special Board meeting.

NMHU 2021 Audit Report-Action Item (Attachment F)

Mr. Baca stated the audit was an unmodified good audit. Some minor findings were process or user error. He stated that the University policies are that currently in place constrict ourselves. Policies need to be adopted to complement the processes instead of hindering the University.

Regent Smith stated that there are a few items that need correction. Mr. Baca will need to determine who will be responsible for the corrections and he will provide an action plan to address all the findings.

Regent Garcia asked if net revenues for the University were in the negative. Mr. Baca and Ms. Stephanie Gonzales provided a brief explanation. They stated the revenues were not in the negative. It only looks like they are because of how revenue, expenses, and liabilities are required to be reported.

Mr. Baca stated that at the next Board meeting, he will provide the CFI and a statement for unfunded liabilities.

Regent Smith moved to approve the NMHU 2021 Audit Report as presented. Regent Ulibarri seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Board of Regents Standing Committees Updates

Strategic Enrollment Management/Donor Engagement Committee

Regent Sanchez stated that the committee has not met since last Board meeting. However, he is working with ENLACE to have two groups come on campus during the summer semester.

He also stated that Dr. Law and her offices are working hard with recruitment efforts. Dr. Theresa Law indicated that the meeting with the Santa Fe Indian School was cancelled and will be rescheduled. Her offices currently have a full travel schedule for spring recruitment and will be recruiting at the Gathering of Nation event in Albuquerque.

Student Affairs Committee

Regent Ulibarri indicated that the committee had not met and no report was available.

Academic Affairs Committee

Regent Garcia stated that this committee is scheduled to meet on February 16th. They will be discussing the Centers efficacy. This includes how the centers are efficiently delivering services, what is the cost, and what are the revenues.

Athletics Committee-Regent Garcia

Regent Garcia indicated that this committee is scheduled to meet on February 8th. In the previous meeting, the Athletic Department shared its overall strategic plan. He stated that they are looking at possibly creating a fundraiser.

Budget, Finance & Audit Committee

Regent Smith stated that this committee met on December 13, 2021, and January 21, 2022. During the January meeting, the members were provided a legislative update which included compensation and the hiring of Mr. Robert Romero as the University's lobbyist. The committee also reviewed audit findings.

Staff Advisory Senate Report

Ms. Veronica Black was unavailable. Report was deferred.

Executive Session– (a) limited personnel matters related to the dismissal, resignation, and/or investigation or consideration of complaints or charges against any individual or public employee pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15- 1(H)(2); (b) bargaining strategy preliminary to collective bargaining pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(5); and (c) threatened or pending litigation subject to the attorney- client privilege in which the university is or may become a participant pursuant to NMSA 1978, 10-15-1(H)(7). Regent Ulibarri moved to enter into executive session for the sole purpose of discussing the items listed. Regent Smith seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried. The Board entered into executive session at 11:55 a.m.

Regent Ulibarri moved to return to open session. Regent Garcia seconded. Regent Ulibarri stated for the record that only those items specified under the executive session were discussed and the Board took no action. Regents present confirmed. A roll call was taken, voting in favor of returning to open session were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried and the Board returned to open session at 1:31 p.m.

Public Action and Statements as Necessary on Executive Session Discussion

Dr. Minner stated that his son's wedding in India has been postponed until October 2022.

President's Report

Campus Update

Dr. Sam Minner provided a brief campus update. He stated that many challenges continue due to COVID-19. Efforts are ongoing with students, faculty, and staff to stay upbeat.

He indicated that the University is expecting a big year on legislative funding including compensation. Highlands is in position to take the leadership role if the NM Reforestation Center is approved.

He indicated that he had sent out thank you letters for donors that provided \$1,000 or more in donations.

COVID Update

Dr. Brandon Kempner stated it has been difficult month due to COVID-19. The institution adopted protocols to keep everyone on campus safe. He stated that the University is ready to implement the booster mandate. The University is enforcing the mandates that are in place including dropping students from in-person classes.

Dr. Minner stated that after the spring semester, a new individual will be appointed to lead the COVID response team. He felt that it is too much for one individual to take on these responsibilities for a long period of time.

Regent Garcia thanked both Dr. Kempner and Dr. Blea for the job they have done with COVID issues.

Gene Torres Golf Course Update

Dr. Minner stated that the framework document has been transformed into a legal agreement by the University attorney. This agreement has been shared with the City of Las Vegas (City) and San Miguel County (County). He stated that the University needs to be careful and systemic on this initiative. If the City and County have any changes, he will bring their requests back to the Board.

He stated that an opening date cannot be set until the City and County sign the agreement. He would like to hold an event for signature. Regent Garcia stated that once the Agreement was signed, there was a lot of work that the operations oversight group needs to do in order to open the course. He urged sooner rather than later would be advantageous.

Sininger Hall Design and Initial Cost Estimate (Attachment G)

Dr. Minner stated that the rendering of Sininger Hall was completed. He introduced Ms. Sylvia Baca, Associate VP of Facilities, Planning, Maintenance, and Management. She introduced Mark Baker and Tomas Sanchez with Baker Architect. They presented the Sininger hall design and construction cost estimates.

Mr. Baker shared a presentation for Sininger Hall remodel. A small addition was made to the lecture hall. It will include a main entrance and lobby.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the lecture hall will be technologically advanced to include screens, camera, and projectors. He indicated that the lecture hall will have windows to make the room more open. However, for privacy, window treatments will be installed.

Mr. Baker stated the renovation project will go out to bid by Summer 2022. Renovations will take between ten to twelve months. Completion is estimated to be Summer 2023.

Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Update

Dr. Keith Tucker provided an update. He stated that the HLC Peer Reviewers are planning to be on campus on February 28-March 1, 2022. There will be two in-person and three individuals online. The agenda has not been provided. He stated that the Assurance Argument is being finalized and will be submitted today.

Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA)

Dr. Roxanne Gonzales indicated that Prescilla Ortega-Mathis, Executive Assistant and Dr. Cristina Duran, Dean of the Facundo Valdez School of Social Work will be retiring. She stated that Ms. Ortega-Mathis has been with the University fifty years and Dr. Duran has been with the University twenty-five years.

Graduation Residency Requirement (Attachment H)

Dr. Gonzales stated that her office looks at policies that provide challenges or barriers to students that prevent them from graduating. The current Graduation Residence Requirement states that transfer students are required to take at least 30 semester credits their last year with Highlands including the final semester of 15 credits. Her office is requesting that the policy be changed to retain the 30 resident hours with Highlands but not require those hours to be completed at Highlands. This would allow students the ability to take these final credits at other institutions and transfer them back to Highlands.

Dr. Henrietta Romero, Registrar, provided examples of situations that have occurred with these issues. She stated since 2012 approximately 3,000 waivers have been given to students.

Regent Garcia moved to approve the Graduation Residency Requirement as presented. Regent Sanchez seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor were: Regent Garcia, Regent Sanchez, Regent Smith, Regent Ulibarri, and Chairman Marchi. Motion carried.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Follow up Items

Foundation Update on Case presentation, "Back from the Dead"

Legislative Session Update (how did Highlands do and what needs to be done if the NM Reforestation Center was approved)

Dual Credit Discussion

Out-of-State Tuition Follow-Up including how Eastern New Mexico University handles this type of tuition

CFI and a Statement for Unfunded Liabilities Update

Gene Torres Golf Course Agreement Update

Tuition & Fees Special Board Meeting

ENLACE Group on campus Update



Chairman

NMHU Board of Regents



Secretary/Treasurer

NMHU Board of Regents