

**New Mexico Highlands University**  
**Board of Regents Special Meeting**  
March 19, 2025

The New Mexico Highlands University Board of Regents held a special meeting on March 19, 2025. The meeting was held in the Board Room-107 of the Rodgers Administration Building at 803 National Avenue in Las Vegas, NM 87701. The university made every effort to accommodate members of the public as stated in the March 13, 2025, meeting announcement. The meeting was livestreamed via Zoom. Members of the public were able to access the livestream through the following link: <https://nmhu.zoom.us/j/99373471046>

**Call to Order** – Regent Frank Sanchez called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

**Roll Call** – Board Members present: Robert Lucero (via zoom), Elaine Luna, Gary Tripp, and Dr. Frank Sanchez

**Administrative Personnel Present:** Dr. Neil Woolf, President; Dr. Brandon Kempner, Acting Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs; Stephanie Gonzales, CPA/Vice President for Finance & Administration; and Dr. Paul Grindstaff, Vice President for Advancement

**Others Present:** Dr. Jennifer Lindline, Faculty Senate Chair; Robert Anaya, Staff Advisory Senate President (via Zoom); Kayl Rainer, ASNMHU President; April Kent, HLC Liaison Officer; Patricia Ives, NMHU Legal Counsel; and Carolina Martínez, Senior Executive Administrative Assistant. Numerous faculty members, staff, students, community members, and public participated in the meeting as it was streamed via Zoom.

**Compliance with Meeting Notice Requirements**

Regent Sanchez stated that in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the notice and agenda with the meeting date, time, and place for the March 19, 2025, special meeting were posted in compliance with the NMHU Board of Regents Open Meetings Act Resolution.

**Approval of the March 19, 2025, Special Meeting Agenda**

Regent Tripp moved to approve the March 19, 2025, special meeting agenda as presented. Regent Luna seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Regent Sanchez. Motion carried.

**Approval of the December 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes**

Regent Tripp moved to approve the December 13, 2024, special meeting minutes as presented. Regent Luna seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Regent Sanchez. Motion carried.

**Matters of the Board**

**Introduction of New Board Members**

Regent Tripp said that Las Vegas, New Mexico is his hometown. He is one of seven children raised by his mother. He is a West Las Vegas High School graduate. He and his wife Jeannette, married

for 45 years, both received their bachelor's and master's degrees from NMHU. He served New Mexico's children by working in the educational system for over 40 years. He is looking forward to serving Las Vegas and surrounding areas, and all NMHU students striving to earn their degrees.

Regent Luna stated that she has lived in Las Vegas since 1977. She is proud that she earned her undergraduate social work degree and her master's of social work degree at NMHU. She met her husband David during her last year of college. He came to NMHU on a wrestling scholarship and he still coaches wrestling for the community. They have been married for 44 years and raised their children in Las Vegas. She is looking forward to serving the university.

Meeting attendees welcomed them to the Board and university.

### **Board of Regents Election of Officers – Action Item**

Regent Tripp moved to elect Regent Sanchez to serve as Chairman of the Board. Regent Lucero seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Regent Sanchez. Motion carried.

Regent Tripp moved to elect Regent Lucero to serve as the Board's Vice-Chair. Regent Luna seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Regent Lucero abstained. Motion carried.

Regent Lucero moved to elect Regent Tripp to serve as Secretary/Treasurer of the Board. Regent Luna seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, and Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Motion carried.

### **Board of Regents Subcommittee Appointments**

Chairman Sanchez appointed Regent Lucero as Chair and Regent Tripp as Vice-Chair of the Finance & Administration Subcommittee.

Regents Tripp and Luna were appointed to serve on the Higher Education Regents Coalition.

Chairman Sanchez informed the Board that he would Chair the Academic Affairs Subcommittee and appointed Regent Luna to serve as Vice-Chair.

Regent Tripp was appointed to Chair the Athletics Subcommittee and Chairman Sanchez indicated the he would serve as Vice-Chair.

Chairman Sanchez indicated that he would appoint Regents to serve on the Student Affairs Subcommittee after the governor appointed a student regent to the NMHU Board.

Chairman Sanchez stated that he would chair the Cowboy Research Park Ad hoc Committee and appointed Regent Lucero as Vice-Chair.

Chairman Sanchez will Chair the Gene Torres Golf Course Ad hoc Committee and appointed Regent Tripp to serve as an advisor to the committee.

Chairman Sanchez created the Hall of Fame Ad hoc Committee and appointed Regent Luna and Regent Tripp to Co-Chair the committee.

**Board of Regents Acknowledgement of Service: William Garcia, Danelle Smith, and Cody Rivera**

Chairman Sanchez recognized and acknowledged William Garcia, Danelle Smith, and Cody Rivera for the service as NMHU Regents. He thanked Mr. Rivera for serving on the board and stated that the former regents would recognize at a later date.

Regent Lucero commented that he was proud of everything Regent Rivera accomplished while serving as student regent and commented that he was honored serving on the board with him.

President Woolf mentioned that he was graciously welcomed by the former board members when he began his tenure last summer. He pointed out that the amount of service the board members do, as volunteers, is incredible. He appreciates his time working with Regents Rivera, Garcia and Smith and looks forward to working with the new board members.

**Call to Recess for a Campus Tour, Lunch in the Dining Hall, Continued Tour**

Chairman Sanchez said he scheduled a tour so Regents could see the campus in its current state in order to envision its potential and recognize the work needed to modernize the campus. He stated, for the record, that no business would be conducted during the tours and lunch.

Regent Tripp moved to recess the meeting for campus tours and lunch. Regent Luna seconded. A roll call was taken and voting in favor were: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Motion carried and the Board recessed at 10:39 a.m.

**Reconvene in Open Session**

The Board reconvened in open session at 3:17 p.m.

**Executive Session – (a) discussion of limited personnel matters related to President Neil Woolf’s contract and goals, pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(2); (b) discussion of limited personnel matters related to the hiring, promotion, dismissal, assignment, 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); (c) discussion of matters subject to the attorney-client privilege pertaining to threatened or pending litigation in which the university is or may become a participant, pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(7); and (d) discussion of the purchase, acquisition or disposal of real property of the university, pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 10-15-1(H)(8).** Regent Luna moved to enter into executive session for the sole purpose of discussing the items listed. Regent Tripp seconded. A roll call vote was taken, voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Motion carried and they entered into executive session at 3:19 p.m.

**Reconvene in Open Session**

Regent Luna moved to return to open session and stated, for the record, that only those items specified under the executive session motion were discussed and the Board took no action. Regents present confirmed. Regent Tripp seconded the motion. A roll call was taken, voting in favor of


returning to open session were; Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Motion carried and the Board returned to open session at 5:39 p.m.

**Public Action on Items Discussed in Executive Session**

Regent Tripp moved that President Woolf's contract be amended to reflect the executive session discussion and the intent of the parties when the contract was negotiated. The Board asked that Human Resources and legal counsel review the contract to ensure all state laws are followed before the contract is provided to President Woolf for signature. Regent Lucero seconded. Voting in favor: Regent Lucero, Regent Luna, Regent Tripp, and Chairman Sanchez. Motion carried.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.

  
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Chairman  
NMHU Board of Regents

  
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Secretary/Treasurer  
NMHU Board of Regents