



## BOARD OF REGENTS MINUTES

JANUARY 7, 2025

A Special Meeting of the Board of Regents of northern New Mexico College was held on Friday, January 7, 2025, In Person and Via Zoom in Cutting Hall, Northern New Mexico College, El Rito Campus. Regents Present in person and Viz Zoom: Michael A. Martin, Porter Swentzell, Regent Ruben Archuleta and Regent Erica Velarde. Regent Casandra Batista Daus was not present.

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, Juan Montoya, Facilities Director, Shawn Madrid, Capital Projects Coordinator, Betty Espinoza, Assistant Technical Professor, Cosmetology, Gloriadell Gonzalez, Cosmetology/Barber Instructor, Patrice Trujillo, Health & Safety Manager, Cindy Martinez, Human Resources, Vince Lithgow, Accountant III, Sara McCormick, Career Services Specialist, Sally Martinez, Executive Assistant to the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs, Alejandra Jaramillo, Director, HEP, Sandy Krolick, Creative Director, Communications & Marketing and Amy Peña, Executive Office Director.

Faculty Present: David Torres, Rhiannon West, Frank Loera, Lori Baca

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 9:05AM.

### **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

**Regent Swentzell Moved to approve the agenda. Regent Velarde – second. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Swentzell – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes. Motion passed unanimously.**

### III. BCES LAB RENOVATION

President Balderas stated he will start with the top line. This is really the vision of the board who put an aggressive mandate to improve and modernize the campus. President Balderas stated he is very proud because it also builds upon the strategic partnership pillar. This is a great project where this facility is nearly 30 years since it had a renovation. But, more importantly, its leveraging, grant funding, and under the very aggressive mission that even though we're not a research institution per se, we are partnering with visionaries that believe that the Northern should have the finest research facilities, and that's an aggressive mandate. We need your approval, sir, to do about half a million dollars in lab renovation upgrades, and this is something that President Balderas knows the BCES program is very excited about. President Balderas stated we do have Theresa Storey and other experts on standby if there are any other questions. This is going to be a strong milestone for the community. President Balderas stated he knows many of the Regents want to provide the best research opportunities for our students here on campus. So, this is a very successful place where we are at with a fork in the road. President Balderas stated that what also makes this project unique is this is a representative shared governance. There was not enough funding in the initial proposal to have the build out and construction because of excessive costs with the economy and so what we are Northern are also contributing is \$224,000 of State funding to get us across the finish line. We are also asking a lot of our staff facilities to volunteer per se within their traditional scope and salary to serve as kind of project managers and guides. This project would not come to fruition if it was not for the faculty, staff and a lot of other supports that we have that are really stepping up to make sure that we get this project underway, and that we have an aggressive build out for the spring. President Balderas stood for questions and stated this is an exciting moment.

Chair Martin asked if the board had questions.

Regent Velarde had no questions and thanked President Balderas for getting on this so quickly and bringing this for approval. So, then it can get through all the other proper channels and approvals so that we can get this done ASAP. So, this is exciting. Thank you for everybody who is working on this and all their support.

Regent Swentzell stated he had no questions and glad to see movement in terms of renovating. We had the tour at the last board meeting and looking at some of these places and there is a great deal of need. So glad to see that moving forward. Regent Swentzell thanked everyone for their work and pushing this forward.

**Chair Martin entertained a motion to approve the President's recommendation. Regent Velarde – second. A roll call vote was taken. Chair Martin – yes, Regent Velarde – yes, Regent Swentzell – yes, Regent Archuleta – yes. Motion passed unanimously.**

#### **IV. COSMETOLOGY LAB AND CLASSROOM RENOVATION – Informational**

President Balderas stated this is a story of bringing the best facilities to our students. The cosmetology program has been around many years and have been moved around due to mold and health issues before the President assumed the presidency. Their facilities were initially shut down before the President assumed Presidency and he stated that if it hasn't, if it wasn't for the faculty leadership, their own instructors that they trusted. We have developed a very strong relationship with the student body because they were very frustrated to be getting moved around to other facilities that they, they clearly knew were inadequate or were not their own space and so this project is requiring a lot of health and safety remediation and we are working closely with the faculty leaders who have the trust of the students and we are developing student leaders who are now becoming part of the process. They are really shifting their frustrations into a plan of action where they're helping advocate their own renovation. We have asked them to be very patient. They're actually gaining instruction in facilities right now that are temporary. These students have sacrificed and have shown real leadership in terms of how to make themselves part of the solution and to show they are part of the environment. The cosmetology department has not been remodeled in nearly 35 years or have had new facilities. They have inherited facilities from the Nursing program. This is the first time we are including the students and faculty in the design of their own facility. He thinks some of the individuals don't believe him because we have not gone through the process where they have been able to design new sinks, lighting, there is deficiencies in there that they are not learning in a salon/studio environment. Our goal is to have them train and learn in an environment in where they are similar to their work environment. This is also an aggressive construction we are hoping to build in the spring. We are hoping this current cohort of students will see these renovations before they graduate. We are hoping to have a remodeled new look to the cosmetology program by the end of the summer. President Balderas stated he would like to thank faculty, students and facilities and staff leadership who have had to sit down and explain the numerous issues we were facing. He believes this is going to be evidence of a model of shared governance. We are not including faculty and staff but we are also including students in the development of the process and understanding and seeing the construction through. President Balderas stood for questions. Again, over 35 years, this is how old these are facilities are so this is exciting.

Chair President Martin asked if there are any questions from the Board.

Chair Martin stated he sees Ms. Espinoza and asked her how things are going.

Ms. Espinoza stated we have been displaced since March 12, 2020. The Faculty, Gloriadell, Elain and Ms. Espinoza loved what they do and have made it work for them. First, they were online for many years. There were students that came in online and left online and that was very difficult because the are a practicum career and it has been difficult for the students. Teaching in a place that is not suitable for them does not meet

the needs of the students and working in or teaching them in a place where it is not suitable for them and to their environment is not, it does not meet the needs of students. If we have the students and not giving them what they are paying them for it is not right. Ms. Espinoza stated she feels for the past five years we have not done any justice for the students. We have done the best we can under the circumstances, because they do have great belief that this profession is something that our communities need. So therefore, we don't want our program to go away. Ms. Espinoza stated they are happy now that they are having buildings renovated. She knows it's probably be another semester that they are going to be out having to make sacrifices but at the same time, at least, there's light at the end of the tunnel. So, therefore, they are very pleased that the President and his staff, they are working with them to make this dream happen.

Ms. Espinoza read into this program and it started in 1930 in El Rito and in the early 2000's it was moved to Espanola because they needed to be in a location to access more students because El Rito was far out. It has been nice having it hear. We are counting on 25 students this coming semester. Ms. Espinoza stood for questions.

Chair Martin asked if there were questions from the Board.

Regent Velarde had no questions and thanked Ms. Espinoza you for her continued support of the students. She appreciates it and appreciates her patience and the Board was unaware of the facilities back in 2020 and how long it has been since they have had inadequate facilities. This is an everyday needed service for the community and it is great to continue to get this education at Northern. Regent Velarde asked where the permanent home will be. Ms. Espinoza stated Portable A, B and C. The three portables and they will be working on them all at the same time so they will be able to have a place to go in and learn.

President Balderas stated once we get the input in terms of what type of classrooms they want, sinks, lighting. We are going to let them run with us in developing their style. There are other infrastructure challenges they are coming up to. We do not want to patch up any of these projects. We want to get to the core initial challenge of what caused them to decay in the first place. This one was poor water management in terms of the roofs, HVAC. We are not only going to do all the roofs and to stucco, these facilities, we will make them more permanent and so they can endure weather and different challenges. We are re-engineering the power and we are really redoing electrical, plumbing and engineering. Another issue, President Balderas would like to bring to the Regents. They have limited parking in the front, in this remodel we are going to try to use the athletic department on the traffic corridor, because there is not a bridge, the elderly were walking far distances. We will have additional parking for students and closer parking for customers. There is a lot of other positive areas we are attacking so we don't think there will be such a decline in these facilities. The mold was created by poor moisture management and inadequate HVAC. We are trying to redesign and re-engineer and build

something that will sustain through the test of time. President Balderas is really proud of this potential project and all these ideas came from the instructors.

Regent Swentzell stated he appreciates the background and patience as Regent Velarde had mentioned. One of the things that is a question and comment and he realizes an operational concern, not necessarily the purview of the Regents, but in terms of some of the older buildings. You know, we look forward to the future proofing, and though you can't totally future proof anything, right. And you are looking at the structures that are last renovated 35 years ago. What is, you know and forgive the pun, but you don't want those updates to be purely cosmetic right? So, that you want the sort of guts of the infrastructure to be built in to really last long. You know, the next 35 years, and maybe wont we are looking for future proofing. In terms of the technology and tools and equipment is there adequate electrical support within the building, not just cabinets and paint, but something much more future proof. He knows it is an operational concern. It is a pet peeve to him when the building is purely cosmetic and the guts are not updated for the next 30 years. Regent Swentzell stated this is his question/comment.

President Balderas stated this is what he was getting at. In just about every project, we always start with electrical and plumbing. We have such an issue with leaky roof and mold across the campus. We are remodeling the event center now, as we speak as well to modernize the theater but we were forced to start with the leaky roofs and deal with some of the plumbing issues in the restrooms. He can assure the Board we are starting and addressing and building out in each remodel project, usually what would even be more fixing the code violation. This school will get completely new power distribution and wea are also having to do little things but this is important to the health and safety has to be the priority and not just a coat of paint. There are a lot of projects we are inheriting that are legacy. So, there is transparency, President Balderas is one of the things that is different with us, it is not that any administration is different, we are involving engineers, contractors and diverse contractors in HVAC and lighting. We didn't even have LED lighting across the campus. President Balderas is convinced the facilities department Juan and Shawn and these department that had to deal with past challenges did not have a construction team and planning team and so they would patch a lot of things up. We involve the facilities department in all the communication and planning. So, this is more for the information for the faculty that is listening. One of the governance approaches that we have changed is we have really brought all the parties together. One of the governing approaches we have brought. A lot of times President Balderas gets frustration but it works out when we have everyone involved in the planning and identification on how to engineer these projects. This is why we have been so successful in some of the legacy issues we have faced.

Regent Archuleta stated he is a big supporter of the program. He was a benefitted by getting free haircuts for years, and his mom attended the Cosmetology School in El Rito. That's where she met his dad and you know the rest is history. Regent Archuleta stated he did go get a haircut a couple of months ago. He got a good haircut and was really impressed by the professionalism of the students and the instructors. It was a nice building but it was a little rough and could be updated. Regent Archuleta stated he is a big supporter of that and he knows there is a lot of people right now that are very interested in this program. Thank you for making this happen and thank you to all the instructors for getting this done and being persistent and calling the Regents and asking questions.

Chair Martin asked if there will be a dedication in the summer once this is completed.

President Balderas stated we are in the double digits of construction that is ongoing. They are all going to want to do ribbon cuttings and celebrations. It really is, we have had faculty in tears when they see renovations happening. We will need the Board of Regents to get the word out and celebrate and invite guests. From trades we are talking about a grand opening and cosmetology they would like to work with the Board for these celebrations and make them community celebrations.

## **XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Martin will entertain a motion to adjourn.


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

**The Board of Regents adjourned at 9:30AM.**

Approved:



Michael A. Martin  
Chair



Erica Velarde  
Vice President