

*Approved by the Board of Regents at the September 11-12, 2025, meeting.*

**BOARD OF REGENTS and its  
ad hoc CHANCELLOR SEARCH COMMITTEE  
NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

System Administration, Las Vegas  
4300 South Maryland Parkway, Board Room

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Video Conference Connection from the Meeting Site to:  
System Administration, Reno  
2601 Enterprise Road, Conference Room  
and  
Great Basin College, Elko  
1500 College Parkway, Berg Hall Conference Room

Members Present:

Regents Committee

Mrs. Susan Brager, Chair  
Mr. Joseph C. Arrascada, Vice Chair  
Mrs. Amy J. Carvalho  
Dr. Jeffrey S. Downs  
Ms. Stephanie Goodman

Other Regents Present:

Mr. Byron Brooks  
Ms. Heather Brown  
Mrs. Carol Del Carlo  
Mr. Carlos D. Fernandez  
Mr. Pete Goicoechea  
Ms. Jennifer J. McGrath

Advisory Members Present:

Advisory Committee

Dr. Kumud Acharya, President, DRI  
Mr. Taylor Adams, President and CEO, EDawn  
Mr. Ryan Cherry, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Ms. Valerie Conner, Chair, Council of Faculty Senate Chairs  
Dr. Brian Cram, Former Superintendent, CCSD  
Dr. Amber Donnelly, Interim President, GBC  
Ms. Helen Harriff, President, Classified Council Executive Board  
Dr. Karin M. Hilgersom, President, TMCC  
Dr. William L. Kibler, Acting President, CSN  
Mr. Kevin Osorio Hernández, Chair, Nevada Student Alliance  
Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President, NSU  
Mr. Brian Sandoval, President, UNR  
Ms. Kelly Scherado, Affirmative Action Officer, NSHE (*ex officio*)  
Dr. Lawrence Weekly, Chair, NSHE IDEA Council  
Mr. Michael B. Wixom, Former Regent, NSHE

Others Present:

Dr. Daniel Archer, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs  
Dr. Natalie Brown, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Workforce Development and Community Colleges  
Ms. Elizabeth Callahan, Public Information Officer  
Mr. James J. Martines, Vice Chancellor and Chief General Counsel  
Mr. Christopher G. Nielsen, Special Counsel to the Board of Regents  
Ms. Keri D. Nikolajewski, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents  
Mr. Chris Viton, Vice Chancellor, Budget and Finance and Chief Financial Officer

Faculty senate chairs in attendance included the following individuals: Ms. Valerie Conner, CSN (*Chair, Council of Faculty Senate Chairs*); Dr. David Cooper, NSU; and Dr. Jinger Doe, TMCC. Classified council chair in attendance included the following individual: Ms. Stacy Wallace, NSU, ex-officio.

*Land Acknowledgment*

*Before beginning, we take a moment to recognize that here in Nevada we stand on the land of the Wa She Shu – Washoe; Numu – Northern Paiute; Nuwe – Western Shoshone; and Nuwu – Southern Paiute. We take a moment to recognize and honor their stewardship that continues into today. With this recognition, we state an intention to rightfully include their voice and respect them as the 27 sovereign tribal nations of Nevada.*

Chair Brager called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. with all members present. Regent Goodman led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chair Brager read the Land Acknowledgement.

1. Information Only – Public Comment

Bill Robinson provided in-person public comment stating that all the great NSHE Chancellors have been community people, Nevadans, or come through the System. The outside Chancellors have not left on good terms. He stated he would not hire any of today's candidates.

Patrick Villa provided in-person public comment stating he was speaking on behalf of the CSN faculty, noting they were less than enthused with the three finalists, so if the Committee is not impressed, to keep the process open.

Lahana Pearce provided in-person public comment stating that the decision to be made today is important because NSHE needs a chancellor who won't back down when things get hard and someone who understands that DEI isn't about politics, it's about people and creating spaces where every student has a chance to thrive. Faculty, staff, and students are feeling uncertainty, but the right leader can bring hope, strength, and clarity.

2. Approved – Minutes – The Committee recommended approval of the minutes for the November 14, 2024, meeting. *(Ref. CS-2 on file in the Board Office.)*

Vice Chair Arrascada moved approval of the minutes for the November 14, 2024, meeting. Regent Goodman seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Information Only – Chair’s Report – Chair Susan Brager and Search Consultants Dr. Julie Holley and Dr. Susanne Griffin, of Greenwood Asher & Associates, provided a brief review of the search process to date and announced the finalists for Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

- TJ Bliss, Ph.D. *(Ref. CS-3a on file in the Board Office.)*
- Richard L. Ludwick, J.D., D.Ed. *(Ref. CS-3b on file in the Board Office.)*
- Matt McNair, J.D. *(Ref. CS-3c on file in the Board Office.)*

4. Information Only – Interview Process and Questions – Chair Susan Brager and Search Consultants Julie Holley and Susanne Griffin of Greenwood Asher & Associates led a discussion on the interview process. Chair Brager noted that interview questions had been handed out and assigned to Advisory Committee and/or Regents’ Committee members. *(Supplemental material on file in the Board Office.)*

5. Information Only – Open Forum Reports and Finalist Interviews – Search Consultants Julie Holley and Susanne Griffin of Greenwood Asher & Associates provided a report on the open forums held with each finalist on April 7-8, 2025, in Reno and Las Vegas, including a summary of the feedback received through surveys completed by forum participants and observers. Search Consultant Holley presented an overview of the background, qualifications, and reference feedback of each finalist prior to their interview. The Committee interviewed the finalists for Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

Search Consultant Holley reviewed the feedback received through surveys completed by forum participants and provided an overview of the background and qualifications, including reference feedback, for TJ Bliss, Ph.D.

Chair Brager welcomed Dr. Bliss. Dr. Bliss responded to the interview questions, including follow-up questions.

The meeting recessed at 10:39 a.m. and reconvened at 10:48 a.m. with all members present.

Search Consultant Holley reviewed the feedback received through surveys completed by forum participants and provided an overview of the background and qualifications, including reference feedback, for Richard L. Ludwick, J.D., D.Ed.

Chair Brager welcomed Dr. Ludwick. Dr. Ludwick responded to the interview questions, including follow-up questions.

5. Information Only – Open Forum Reports and Finalist Interviews – (Continued)

The meeting recessed at 11:57 a.m. and reconvened at 12:36 p.m. with all members present.

Search Consultant Holley reviewed the feedback received through surveys completed by forum participants and provided an overview of the background and qualifications, including reference feedback, for Matt McNair, J.D.

Chair Brager welcomed Mr. McNair. Mr. McNair responded to the interview questions, including follow-up questions.

The meeting recessed at 1:44 p.m. and reconvened at 1:51 p.m. with all members present.

6. Information Only – Advisory Committee Discussion and Assessment of Finalists – Advisory members discussed the finalists for Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education and provided the Regents' Committee with their assessment of the candidates.

7. Action Taken – Regents' Committee Discussion and Recommendation – The Committee recommended that TJ Bliss, Ph.D., and Matt McNair, J.D., be moved forward to the Board of Regents for consideration of appointment as the next Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education at a special meeting to be held on Thursday, April 10, 2025.

Regent Downs disclosed he is an employee of the Nevada System of Higher Education and Western Nevada College. Because the independence of judgment of a reasonable person would not be materially affected, he will vote on this matter. He disclosed the relationship under NRS Chapter 281A.

The Regents' Committee discussed and assessed the finalists for Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education.

Regent Brooks stated that this is a difficult process. Based on how the System has moved, finding candidates is a challenge. He commended Chair Brager and Board staff. He stated it is clear that NSHE has policy issues. The NRS and Code are outdated and must be addressed for the System to move forward positively. Each candidate has a unique perspective on what they think would be important for Nevada. It comes down to leadership style and what the Board is looking for. He appreciates the candidates' willingness to take on a complex role.

Regent Del Carlo stated that this is a very difficult decision. The three candidates are very different and not traditional.

Regent Carvalho stated that a lot of work and consideration have gone into three searches simultaneously, and she appreciates all the work done by the consultants, Committee Chair, and Chief of Staff. She noted the Committee started out by looking for someone system-focused who could bring the institutions together. She was most impressed with Dr. Bliss.

7. Action Taken – Regents’ Committee Discussion and Recommendation – *(Continued)*

Regent Goodman stated there are two viable candidates who would do great work and learn Nevada. The Board can assist them in areas they are unsure of. She did not think it was a detriment to bring someone in who is not a Nevadan. She believes Mr. McNair can take the System to the next level. He brings a different style of leadership and is innovative. She believed it was vital to pick a Chancellor to move forward.

Regent Downs enjoyed listening to each of the candidates and believed all three could do the job, but he was leaning toward Dr. Bliss.

Chair Brager stated she was confident that they had leadership within their midst. She believed in the integrity of this search. She thanked everyone who participated, but the Board must make the final decision.

Regent Goodman recommended that TJ Bliss, Ph.D., and Matt McNair, J.D., be moved forward to the Board of Regents for consideration of appointment as the next Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education at a special meeting to be held on Thursday, April 10, 2025. Regent Carvalho seconded. Motion carried via a roll call vote. Chair Brager, Vice Chair Arrascada, and Regents Carvalho, Downs, and Goodman voted yes.

Regent Del Carlo stated that as a Regent, she had not seen this happen before and asked how the process would work.

Chief of Staff Nikolajewski agreed that she also has not seen this. There is nothing in policy that says the Board cannot ask further questions, but there is also nothing that says it can. However, she thought it would make sense for the Board to have further discussion with the candidates tomorrow.

Regent Del Carlo asked if Chair Brager would consider questions for tomorrow. Special Counsel Nielsen stated that tomorrow’s meeting could not be discussed in today’s meeting, but he heard the questions and will work with the Chair to hopefully have some answers.

Chief General Counsel James Martines also had not seen two candidates brought forward; however, a contract will be prepared for both candidates to be posted as supplemental material for the Board to act on.

Regent Goodman stated she served on the last search committee. Once the candidate was moved forward to the Board, the search failed. These are viable candidates, and the decision should be left up to the Board. The System Office needs leadership.

Chair Brager clarified with legal counsel that there is nothing that would stop the Board from asking the candidates questions tomorrow.

8. Information Only – New Business

In response to a question from Regent Carvalho related to the process, Special Counsel Nielsen responded that there is a process in *Robert's Rules of Order* to reconsider a motion.

Regent Del Carlo clarified that a motion for reconsideration should happen at this meeting, with Special Counsel Nielsen responding yes it would have to happen at this meeting.

9. Information Only – Public Comment – None.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Prepared by:

Angela R. Palmer  
Special Assistant and Coordinator  
to the Board of Regents

Submitted for approval by:

Keri D. Nikolajewski  
Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents