

Minutes approved by the Board of Regents at the May 21, 2026, meeting.

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF REGENTS
NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

System Administration, Las Vegas
4300 South Maryland Parkway, Board Room
Friday, February 20, 2026

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:

Mr. Byron Brooks, Chair
Ms. Stephanie Goodman, Vice Chair
Mr. Joseph C. Arrascada
Mr. Aaron Bautista
Mr. Patrick J. Boylan
Mrs. Susan Brager
Ms. Heather Brown
Mrs. Amy J. Carvalho
Mrs. Carol Del Carlo
Dr. Jeffrey S. Downs
Mr. Carlos D. Fernandez
Mr. Pete Goicoechea
Ms. Jennifer J. McGrath

Others Present:

Mr. Matt McNair, Chancellor
Mr. James Martines, Vice Chancellor and Chief General Counsel
Mr. Chris Viton, Vice Chancellor of Budget and Finance/
Chief Financial Officer
Ms. Keri D. Nikolajewski, Chief of Staff to the Board of Regents
Mr. Chris Nielsen, Special Counsel to the Board of Regents
Dr. Stacy S. Klippenstein, President, CSN
Dr. Amber Donnelly, President, GBC
Dr. Amber Lopez Lasater, Acting President, NSU
Dr. Jeffrey W. Alexander, President, TMCC
Dr. Chris Heavey, Interim President, UNLV
Mr. Brian Sandoval, President, UNR

Chair Byron Brooks called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. with all members present. Regent Brager led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Information Only-Public Comment - Glenn Christenson spoke in support of deviating from the Code (Agenda Item 2) to ensure a wide and inclusive net is cast for the Nevada State University presidential search.

Tracy Sherman urged the Board to prioritize listening to faculty members speaking on specific issues, particularly Agenda Item 2.

Dr. David Cooper spoke in opposition to Agenda Item 2. Additionally, he suggested creating a new, distinct term for administrative faculty to ensure their voices are properly heard in shared governance.

Dr. El Hachemi Bouali opposed deviating from the Code (Agenda Item 2), arguing that selective rule-breaking for leadership positions erodes trust and creates a "rules for thee, not for me" environment.

Eric York urged the Board to consider the implications of deviating from established policy (Agenda Item 2) and the impact on shared governance and the spirit of collaboration.

Dr. Bill Robinson expressed concern over the massive 300-400% increase in administrative overhead since 1999, compared to only a 55% increase in the student population.

The following individuals submitted written public comment:

- Jim Seebock expressed support for allowing NSU Acting President Amber Lopez Lasater to apply and be considered as part of the presidential search (Agenda Item 2).
- Matt Morris expressed support to deviate from the Code to deem NSU Acting President Amber Lopez Lasater eligible to apply for permanent president (Agenda Item 2).
- Staci Walters, representing Nevada Faculty Alliance, expressed opposition to deviating from the Code (Agenda Item 2), arguing that consistency and adherence to rules are essential for maintaining faculty trust and institutional transparency. Ms. Walters also expressed support for reviewing staffing and position data (Agenda Item 5) and recommended including pre-pandemic enrollment benchmarks to provide better context for resource allocation.
- Anthony Morrone expressed opposition to any changes in the Student Access Fund policy (Agenda Item 4).

2. Postponed-Authorization to Deviate from Processes Defined in Board of Regents Policy, Nevada State University Presidential Search – The Board of Regents postponed consideration of a request from Regents Del Carlo, Brown, and Fernandez to deviate from processes defined in Title 2, Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5(d)(1) of the Code in order to deem Nevada State University Acting President Amber Lopez Lasater eligible to apply during the search for a permanent president (*Ref. BOR-2 on file in the Board Office*).

2. Postponed-Authorization to Deviate from Processes Defined in Board of Regents Policy, Nevada State University Presidential Search – (Continued)

Regent Del Carlo opened the discussion, explaining that the goal was not to hand-pick a winner, but simply to allow Acting President Amber Lopez Lasater the opportunity to apply for the permanent position. Regent Del Carlo praised Dr. Lopez Lasater's grace and courage in handling difficult personnel issues and emphasized that leadership qualities are rare and should be recognized. Regent Brown and Regent Fernandez echoed these sentiments, adding that the Board should have the best opportunity to see all options and that limiting the pool by excluding an internal candidate felt counterproductive.

Regents expressed concerns over policy integrity and public perception. Regent Boylan and Regent Arrascada argued that changing the rules midstream would make it look like the fix is in. They warned that such a move could tarnish NSHE's reputation with search consultants and future external candidates. Regent Goicoechea suggested that while the Code might need changing, it should be done systematically rather than on a case-by-case basis, as a deviation might send the wrong signal to other potential applicants.

Regent Carvalho delivered a detailed statement emphasizing that the policy distinguishing acting from interim roles exists to protect the integrity of the search. She noted that allowing an acting president to become eligible after a search has commenced risks blurring the lines between stewardship and candidate advantage, potentially giving the acting president a structural advantage in a process meant to be open and unbiased. Continuing to maintain the strict eligibility distinction dictated by Board policy helps to assure stakeholders that the search is transparent, equitable, and insulated from internal power dynamics. An acting president, by virtue of position, has institutional visibility, access to stakeholders, and daily engagement in high-level decision making – advantages that other candidates do not share on an equal basis. Permitting eligibility partway through the search effectively places one candidate in a position of advantage which can deter qualified external candidates. Given the importance of the Nevada State University presidency to students, faculty, and the broader community, adhering to the Board's policy is in the best interest of the institution, the System, and the Board.

Dr. Jinger Doe, Chair of the Council of Faculty Senate Chairs, requested the Board to adhere to shared governance principles and established policy to maintain trust across the institution.

Regent Brager expressed discomfort with the situation, noting that while she respects Dr. Lopez Lasater's performance, perception is reality in high-level searches. Vice Chair Goodman expressed her appreciation for Regents' perspectives and shared her own admiration of Dr. Lopez Lasater's leadership.

Regent Brown moved to postpone the agenda item to a future date. Vice Chair Goodman seconded. Upon a roll call vote, the motion carried. Vice Chair Goodman and Regents Bautista, Brager, Brown, Carvalho, Del Carlo, Fernandez, Goicoechea, and

2. Postponed-Authorization to Deviate from Processes Defined in Board of Regents Policy, Nevada State University Presidential Search – (Continued)

McGrath voted yes. Chair Brooks and Regents Arrascada, Boylan, and Downs voted no.

3. Not Approved-Bylaws of the Board of Regents and Procedures and Guidelines Manual Revisions, Annual Evaluation of the Chancellor – The Board of Regents did not approve proposed revisions to Title 1, Article VII, Section 3(b) of the *Bylaws of the Board of Regents* brought forward by Vice Chair Goodman and Regents Brager and McGrath that would have provided for the participation of the Board Vice Chair in the annual evaluation of the Chancellor. Likewise, corresponding revisions to the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual*, Chapter 2, Section 2(4), concerning the process for annually evaluating the Chancellor were not approved (*Ref. BOR-3 on file in the Board Office*).

Vice Chair Goodman opened the discussion by expressing concerns that the current evaluation process relies too heavily on the Board Chair. She noted that if there is a difference of opinion regarding a chancellor's performance, both the Chair and Vice Chair should be able to submit independent reviews to the full Board. Vice Chair Goodman emphasized that this change would create a more equitable process for both current and future hires, ensuring that an individual is not stuck with a review from someone they may not know well or who holds different views.

Regent Brager shared that she is accustomed to a more collaborative process when it comes to evaluations. She believes the opinions of all Regents should be heard in an open meeting. Regent McGrath echoed these sentiments, stating that having more than one voice in leadership evaluations is common in the private sector and appropriate for the Board. Regent Del Carlo expressed that many Regents have felt left out of the process in the past and she supports the idea of the Vice Chair having a formal role, especially if there is disagreement.

Special Counsel Chris Nielsen cautioned that forming a subcommittee of two or more Regents to conduct the annual evaluation would trigger requirements of the Nevada Open Meeting Law and such meetings would need to be publicly noticed. He further clarified that the proposed revision was designed to navigate those nuances by allowing for separate written evaluation reports if there is disagreement.

Regent Boylan inquired and Chief General Counsel James Martines clarified that current policy provides for the annual evaluation to be led by the Chair with input from others, while the periodic evaluation is a much more robust, committee-driven process.

Regent Carvalho argued that effective management typically involves a single, unified evaluation. She cautioned against providing a chancellor with two potentially conflicting written evaluations that could create dueling narratives, weaken expectations, and complicate executive leadership. Regent Carvalho also expressed concern that the change would shift the focus from a Board-centered review to a fragmented officer-level process.

3. Not Approved-Bylaws of the Board of Regents and *Procedures and Guidelines Manual* Revisions, Annual Evaluation of the Chancellor – (Continued)

Regent Carvalho also noted that the proposed revisions could introduce procedural complexity and extend timelines.

Regent Downs and Regent Boylan questioned the necessity of the change. Regent Boylan noted that the process already allows for collaboration between the Chair and Vice Chair. Regent Goicoechea suggested that in a perfect world, a three-member committee would be the best way to avoid loggerheads between the Chair and Vice Chair. Chief General Counsel Martines reminded the Board of the Open Meeting Law implications of such a structure.

Vice Chair Goodman moved approval of a revision to Title 1, Article VII, Section 3(b) of the Bylaws of the Board of Regents to provide for the participation of the Board Vice Chair in the annual evaluation of the Chancellor and corresponding revisions to the *NSHE Procedures and Guidelines Manual*, Chapter 2, Section 2(4). Regent McGrath seconded. Upon a roll call vote, the motion failed. Vice Chair Goodman and Regents Bautista, Brager, Brown, Del Carlo, Goicoechea, and McGrath voted yes. Chair Brooks and Regents Arrascada, Boylan, Carvalho, Downs, and Fernandez voted no.

The meeting recessed at 10:26 a.m. and reconvened at 10:43 a.m. with all members present except Vice Chair Goodman and Regents Brown and Goicoechea.

4. Information Only-Student Access Funds - The Board of Regents discussed current policies that require allocating a portion of registration fees and differential fees to Student Access Funds and the policy specifying the allowable uses of those funds. The discussion included institution-specific information initially presented at the January 23, 2026, special meeting of the Board (*Ref. BOR-4a and BOR-4b on file in the Board Office*).

Chief Financial Officer Chris Viton provided an overview of the material including the rules for fee set-asides, criteria for need-based versus non-need-based aid, and how different campuses administer these funds.

Regent Goicoechea returned to the meeting.

Regent Downs asked if any of the access funds, specifically the 20% allowed for other access-oriented financial assistance, were being used for athletics scholarships. UNLV Interim President Chris Heavey initially stated there was an \$800,000 set-aside for student-athletes but later corrected the record to clarify that UNLV does not use access funds for athletics. UNR President Brian Sandoval, TMCC President Jeffrey Alexander, CSN President Stacy Klippenstein, and NSU Acting President Lopez Lasater all confirmed their

4. Information Only-Student Access Funds - (Continued)

respective institution does not use access funds for student-athletes, noting the funds are strictly used for student support services and retention.

Regent Brager expressed interest in how the funds are tracked and whether they could be clearly identified in an audit. Mr. Viton confirmed that the funds are managed in specific accounts through financial aid offices and are fully trackable. Regent Carvalho noted that according to the NSHE Financial Aid Report, non-need-based aid accounts for nearly 60% of total aid, while need-based is only 41%. She questioned if the funds were reaching the right students. Associate Vice Chancellor Renee Davis clarified that the 60% figure includes student loans and general employment, which are often classified as non-need. She offered to provide a more specific breakdown of access aid percentages in the future.

Chair Brooks proposed a shift in philosophy. Currently, institutions have a maximum percentage for set-aside funds. He suggested setting a minimum percentage instead. This would give the presidents more flexibility to use funds for other student needs like food and/or housing insecurity, technology access, and retention services, rather than being locked into specific financial aid buckets. President Klippenstein and Acting President Lopez Lasater expressed interest in this flexibility, noting that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't always work for different campus needs. UNLV Interim President Heavey noted that while he supports flexibility, UNLV has such high need that they would likely continue their current allocation profile.

Regent Downs and Regent Boylan raised concerns about whether the 15,000 students who are paying access fees are aware of where their money goes. Regent Boylan referred to the current system as socialism, arguing that one group of students should not bear the burden of another group's education. He suggested seeking funding from the legislature or gaming taxes instead. Regent Downs called for informed consent, suggesting that the access fee should be a prominent line item on tuition bills rather than being hidden in the registration fee.

President Sandoval and Regent Arrascada defended the policy, stating that access is one of the Board's primary pillars. They argued that removing the policy would be detrimental to the state's workforce and that many fees, such as those for new buildings, are paid by students who may never use the facility but support the greater good of the institution.

Chair Brooks concluded the discussion by noting that the conversation spawned several potential new business items. There was a consensus among Regents to revisit the policy to explore better visibility, flexibility for campuses, and how to define access for current needs.

5. Information Only-Staffing and Position Data, NSHE - The Board of Regents discussed campus staffing data prepared in response to a Regent request. The information presented included position headcounts for academic faculty, part-time instructors, administrative faculty, classified staff, and technologists (*Ref. BOR-5 and Supplemental Material on file in the Board Office*).

5. Information Only-Staffing and Position Data, NSHE - (Continued)

Regent Fernandez left the meeting.

Chief Financial Officer Chris Viton explained that the data represents headcounts as of November 1st each year to align with federal IPEDS reporting. The report included: 1) headcounts for each campus, including a new line item for part-time instructors; 2) breakdowns of academic faculty, part-time instructors, and administrative staff, including classified staff and technologists, sorted by Workday units; 3) base salaries for executive and administrative faculty from 2019 and 2025, including housing and car allowances for presidents and chancellors; and 4) high-level staffing and salary trends.

Regent Fernandez returned to the meeting.

Regent Downs thanked Mr. Viton for the transparency. He raised concerns about whether the institutions are right-sized. Further, he questioned the philosophical mission of the System, noting that administrative growth often seems to outpace academic faculty growth. Regent Downs suggested that the Board should analyze whether the current funding structure supports too much overhead at the expense of instructional positions that drive revenue. He further requested analysis or an action item for the April meeting to compare Nevada's structure with other states. Regent Boylan agreed, stating that the institutions appear top-heavy with multiple layers of vice presidents. Regent Boylan expressed frustration that these topics are often discussed without resulting in concrete changes or conclusions.

Regent Carvalho noted several anomalies in the report, such as empty fields for certain positions. Mr. Viton explained that empty fields usually indicate a position was vacant, newly created, or eliminated during that specific reporting period. UNLV Interim President Heavey cautioned that position-level data from Workday is often unreliable for tracking long-term trends.

Interim President Heavey further explained that staff often move between different funding categories or departments which can make it look like positions were lost or added when they were simply reclassified.

Regent McGrath left the meeting.

Interim President Heavey also shared macro data to provide context. He noted that UNLV is in the 20th percentile for administrative staffing and the 30th percentile for academic staffing per student FTE compared to national peers. Interim President Heavey noted that because Nevada is ranked 49 out of 50 in funding, the institutions are generally under-staffed rather than over-staffed. He emphasized that presidents are constantly looking for ways to optimize staffing to serve students more effectively.

6. Information Only-New Business – Regent Downs requested a future agenda item for possible action addressing the formation of a cross-sectional working group of faculty, classified staff, and administrators to review staffing and position data in comparison to other states and within the context of NSHE's funding structure. He also requested an item

6. Information Only-New Business – *(Continued)*

for possible action regarding notification to students about payment of access fees.

Regent Del Carlo requested a review of Title 2, Chapter 1, Section 1.5.5(d)(1) regarding the appointment of an acting president and consideration for adding some flexibility to the policy. She also requested that Regents be notified of the deadlines for submitting agenda items and sent a copy of the new business list on a quarterly basis.

Regent Brager requested an update on electronic voting.

Regent Bautista requested an agenda item regarding clarity and differentiation between academic faculty, administrative faculty, and executive administration.

7. Information Only-Public Comment – Dr. Laura Naumann expressed appreciation for the Board's thoughtful discussion under Agenda Item 2, though she wished the proposal would have been voted up or down instead of postponed. She noted the Nevada State constituency was clear in wanting new leadership found through a national search. For those reasons, they were actively opposed to an interim appointment of an internal candidate who could become permanent. Dr. Naumann underscored the point of the existing Code provisions for acting presidents is to protect the integrity, fairness, and stability of the selection process.

The meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Prepared by:

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Submitted for approval by:

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