Unofficial AI Minutes

Board of Regents — Nevada System of Higher Education

Quarterly Meeting (Day Two, Reconvened)

Truckee Meadows Community College, Sports and Fitness Center
7000 Dandini Boulevard, Reno, Nevada
Friday, September 4, 2026

Video/teleconference connections to System Administration (Las Vegas) and Great Basin College (Elko).

Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Stephanie Goodman reconvened the meeting at 9:03 a.m. and asked staff to call the roll. The following members were recorded present, constituting a quorum:

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Regent Downs.

Note: Agenda Item 22 was pulled and will be rescheduled. Agenda Item 26 (National Call to Action from U.S. Secretary of Education) was also pulled. Items were taken in a modified order.

Item 16 — Public Comment (Information Only)

Chair Goodman opened public comment. Comments received:

At the System Office (Las Vegas):
- **Dr. Bill Robinson** — Expressed he is not opposed to 90-credit degree programs but urged caution, warning many entering students are not equipped for college-level writing and math, that high school programs lack boundaries and quality metrics, and that institutions are "invading each other's territories." Urged the Board to consider the full life-cycle impact of reduced-credit degrees. Also commented on the Handbook review, noting it affects over 100,000 faculty, staff, and students; praised Title 2/Chapter 2 (his employment contract), criticized Chapters 5 and 6 and parts of Title 4, urged restoring Title 5, and stressed the "biggest thing wrong with the handbook is there's no accountability... no consequences." Urged faculty involvement.
- **Max Quinnett** (Junior Senator, Nevada State Student Alliance; VP for Battle-Born Futures, NSU) — Strong support for Item 21 (NSU Strategic Plan), highlighting the inclusive process (40+ committee meetings, public comment) and its focus on student success, access, and operations.
- **Stephanie Flores** (Student Body President, NSU) — Full support for Item 21 and the revised mission statement, emphasizing accessibility and economic mobility.
- **Luisa Bautista** (Chair of Public Relations, NSU; member, Task Force on Power-Based Violence) — Support for Item 21, noting 140 public comments were incorporated and appreciation for the three-year plan's flexibility. Thanked Dr. Fernandez, Amy, and Ruby.

At TMCC (host site):
- **(GBC Student Government representative)** — Spoke on Item 17, expressing excitement over the new GBC mascot ("This little guy has become a child to me"), declaring "we are Bighorns."
- **Matthew Johnson** — Retired after 29 years (U.S. Army / Nevada National Guard, former G-6). Praised the UNR Cybersecurity Center, describing red-team/

blue-team exercises, the sandbox environment, guest speaker events, and Dr. Shamik Sengupta's annual cybersecurity conference.
- **Paul Anderson** (Sparks City Council; Chair, TMWA and Western Regional Water Commission) — Praised UNR research partnerships, citing the One Water Nevada Advanced Purified Water Facility groundbreaking and Dr. Pagilla's Nevada Water Innovation Institute; nearly 40 students trained.
- **Dr. Julio Cho** (CTO, NGF Korea) — Nanomaterial/graphene company headquartered on the UNR campus with a commercial plant breaking ground in Fallon; agriculture research partnership with Dr. Sullivan and FFA grant co-submission; water purification (arsenic/mercury) initiatives.
- **Rochelle Basson** (President, WNC-NFA) — Update on collective bargaining now entering a third year; no counter-proposals received on salary/workload; concern WNC had no decision-makers at the table; noted WNC spends less (unadjusted for inflation) on instructor salaries than in 2008; fact-finding request unanswered for months.

By telephone:
- **Jennifer Navarro** (Graduate Research Assistant, UNR, Materials Science & Engineering) — Emphasized research should reach and benefit communities, not just publications.
- **Stacy Walters** (President, Nevada Faculty Alliance) — On Items 31 & 32: argued the January 2026 student-fee increase was justified as covering COLA/merit, yet faculty received no COLA or merit; alleged CSN pressured budget committee members to sign NDAs, undermining shared governance; urged Item 32/handbook review to prohibit conditioning shared-governance participation on NDAs and require NDA reporting to the Board.
- **Lisa Neff** — Praised UNR Med; Dr. Jones diagnosed her daughter Julia's FSHD1 after four negative results from prestigious labs, enabling study participation and ongoing treatment research.
- **Tiffany Moehring** (Head of Communications & Marketing, American Battery Technology Company) — On Item 20: praised the UNR partnership since 2021 (Nevada Center for Applied Research), DOE-funded battery recycling/critical minerals work, and workforce pipeline.
- **Dr. Charles Johnson** — Described the UNR portable colposcopy project developing a smaller, more robust, affordable diagnostic tool to expand access to women's healthcare.
- **Alexandra Urza** (Director of Forest Health, Whitebark Institute; UNR graduate) — On Item 20: UNR research informs forest restoration/wildfire

resilience in the Eastern Sierra and protection of culturally important resources (pinyon pine) with tribal communities.

Item 17 — Intercollegiate Athletics Feasibility Study, Rodeo Club, Mascot and Branding Initiative, GBC (Information Only)

Presenters: President Amber Donnelli and Kevin Seipp (Electrical Technology faculty and part-time Athletic Director).

- President Donnelli reported a comprehensive feasibility study on returning intercollegiate athletics; recommended a deliberate, incremental approach. Unveiled the new **Bighorn** mascot and branding (two-year initiative). Rodeo Club emerged as the natural first step given rural Nevada's culture and multigenerational support.
- Mr. Seipp presented cost data: startup costs range from ~$35,500 (cross-country/rodeo) to ~$86,000 (baseball); annual operating estimates ~$97,000 for rodeo. Three-year rodeo budget projects ~$69,800 (Year 1) rising to ~$102,000 (Years 2–3). Funding planned via the Elko County Fair parking surcharge, donors, and sponsorships. GBC will compete in the Rocky Mountain Region of the NIRA. Year One is now, with two athletes recruited (budget built for five).

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Downs** — Endorsed athletics as a pillar of student success. Asked about injury risk in rodeo (Seipp: inherent risk, accepted by students, not a major concern), whether students supply their own animals (yes; some events require a horse; roping stock leased locally and provided by host rodeos).
- **Regent Fernandez** — Commended the rebrand and community connection; noted potential pipeline to NFR.
- **Regent Goicoechea** — Shared regional history; supported recruitment benefits, noting Nevada athletes currently leave for out-of-state schools.
- **Vice Chair Del Carlo** — Supportive; asked about funding students who reach the College National Finals Rodeo (Casper, WY). Seipp indicated confidence in community/donor support and budget flexibility.
- **Regent Carvalho** — Noted strong Southern Nevada rodeo culture (Boulder City) as a recruitment source.
- **Regent Arrascada** — Asked about timeline (Year One is now), full-time

enrollment requirement (12-credit minimum), NIL/sponsorship eligibility (individual sponsorships allowed with NIRA disclosure/approval; not full NIL), scholarships (not budgeted; would require a full athletics program), and academic advising for recruits. Confirmed the item is informational because the program is currently a club.

No action taken.

Item 20 — Collaborative Research Improving the Lives of Nevadans, UNLV, UNR, and DRI (Information Only)

(Item requested by Regent Downs.)

Presenter: Dr. Mridul Gautam, Senior VP for Research and Innovation, UNR, on behalf of the NSHE Research Affairs Council. Dr. David Hatchett (VP Research, UNLV) present; Dr. Vic Etyemezian (VP Research, DRI) absent (in Boston).

Dr. Gautam presented statewide collaborative research spanning water resources, wildfire science (NSF-funded "Harnessing the Data Revolution for Fire Science," $20M award + $4M state match), Mountain Rain or Snow citizen science, extreme heat (Nevada Heat Lab), polar/ice-core research, UNLV wastewater public-health surveillance, radiochemistry, brain health and fMRI/high-performance computing, national security (UNR Zebra Pulse Power Lab), water treatment/reuse, cybersecurity, AI, robotics/drones (FAA test site; DARPA Subterranean Challenge first place, 2021), and forest management (Whittell Forest before/after). During the project's first four years, 117 undergraduates, 36 graduate students, and 5 postdocs were engaged.

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Downs** — Thanked presenters; called it valuable for demonstrating community impact.
- **Regent Arrascada** — Asked about real-world application of integrated fMRI/HPC. Dr. Gautam described the UNR–Renown partnership (~8–10 years of low-cost fMRI access). Dr. Hatchett detailed UNLV's fMRI (appropriation-funded), ~$2M facility, and ~$5.5M HPC investment, open to all NSHE researchers, integrating education, research, and community outreach. Discussion of applications in aging/trauma, addiction, and the arts.
- **Regent Boylan** — Expressed strong interest in counter-UAS/anti-drone

technology; confirmed no classified research is done on campus and no clearance needed for a lab tour; Dr. Gautam offered a visit.
- **Vice Chair Del Carlo** — Reflected on R1 status (2018), the importance of telling this story to the Legislature, and DRI's global reach. Dr. Gautam noted the work predates R1 designation by decades.
- **Regent Boylan** — Echoed appreciation, thanking Regent Downs and Dr. Gautam.

Chair Goodman noted a Thursday tour of the UNR Medical School (Dr. Hauptman, Dr. Birkin, postdoc Haley Herman, Dr. Jones — muscular dystrophy work). No action taken.

(The meeting recessed for a 10-minute break.)

Item 21 — 2026–2029 Strategic Plan and Handbook Revision, Institutional Mission Statement, NSU (For Possible Action)

Presenter: President Sandra B. Richtermeyer.

President Richtermeyer presented "A Framework for Action" (2026–2029), NSU's first strategic plan since the college-to-university renaming, with three goals, 12 objectives, and 38 KPIs aligned to NSHE's "Success by Design." She thanked the Strategic Planning Committee and Dr. Ade Fernandez's team. She read the revised mission statement:

> "At Nevada State University, excellence fosters opportunity. Through quality teaching, accessible degree programs, and a supportive learning community, we cultivate a holistic learning environment for all students. We are dedicated to helping advance the intellectual pursuits and economic mobility of our students for a better Nevada."

Goals: (1) foster student support and success (including increasing tenure density); (2) advance access and opportunity (including the North Las Vegas campus); (3) strengthen operational effectiveness and maturity. Accountability via quarterly updates, annual reviews, and a public KPI website.

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Fernandez** — Commended the emphasis on economic mobility and the

plan's grounding of higher-education relevance; indicated support.
- **Regent Brown** — Asked Chancellor McNair how the plan reflects NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 3 and folds into the system master/strategic plan. Chancellor McNair responded the plans track closely at a high level and he believes it fits within Title 4. Regent Brown pressed for a system-level view of how institutional plans fit the master plan; noted she would have welcomed reference to core academic programs (teachers, nurses, healthcare). Complimented the new president's command of the material.
- **Regent Brooks** (remote, Las Vegas) — Offered positive support, praising NSU's role in access and student success in Southern Nevada.
- **Regent Carvalho** — Commended the plan and mission; specifically praised the inclusion of tenure density as a "bold statement" given constrained budgets. President Richtermeyer confirmed plans are already underway.
- **Regent Arrascada** — Praised the comprehensive concurrent-enrollment pathways objective; asked about enrollment metrics. President Richtermeyer cited (as of that morning) total enrollment 8,851 (up 5.51%), non-dual 4,178, dual 4,673, first-year experience 538 (vs. 490 prior fall).
- **Regent Boylan** — Praised the president and echoed Regent Carvalho; asked for clarification of Regent Brown's question, which Regent Brown restated (whether the Chancellor reviewed Title 4, Ch. 14, Sec. 3 to ensure alignment with the master plan).

Motion: Regent Carvalho moved to approve the NSU 2026–2029 Strategic Plan and the corresponding Board of Regents Handbook revision (Title 4, Chapter 14, Section 5(4)) updating the NSU mission statement. **Second:** Regent Boylan.

Vote Tally — Item 21

Motion carried unanimously. (Recorded by electronic vote of members present.)

Item 23 — Corequisite and College-Ready Gateway Policy Evaluation, NSHE (Information Only)

Introduced by: Assistant Vice Chancellor Terina Caserto.
Presenter: Dr. Bruce Vandal (Bruce Vandal Consulting), via Zoom, presenting the July 2026 evaluation (with Kathleen Almy).

Key findings:
- Success in college-level math/English improved and was sustained across 2021–2024.
- Success **rates** in courses rose (especially English), but overall completion did not increase proportionally because a growing number of students are **not enrolling** in gateway math/English in the first year (nearly 1,000-student increase in "avoiders"), despite rising overall enrollment.
- Corequisite students consistently improved; Math 126 (Pre-Calculus) corequisites increased STEM-pathway access; Math 124 (College Algebra) showed declining corequisite success.
- Completing gateway math/English strongly correlated with retention (~82% vs. ~50%).
- Recommendations: investigate root causes of non-enrollment; consider revising placement into corequisites (possibly placing more students in corequisites); examine Math 124 content and statistics as a gateway course; replicate high-performing institutions' practices.

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Downs** — Clarified corequisites cost an extra 2–3 credits (no institution disputed). Confirmed the study excluded students who had already fulfilled math/English (including dual-enrollment) and those testing into higher courses. Questioned enforcement of first-year gateway enrollment, prerequisite enforcement, and placement tools; AVC Caserto stated placement standards are in policy but implementation/technical enforcement varies by institution and there is no system-wide standardized placement tool. Suggested a follow-up study on why students avoid the courses.
- **Vice Chair Del Carlo** — Raised the Board-adopted 350:1 advising ratio and code requirements for initial and first-semester advising as possible factors; asked which campuses are performing well.
- **Regent Brooks** (remote) — Asked about targeted interventions for gaps among adult learners, first-gen, and Pell students. Dr. Vandal noted part-time/adult students do well when enrolled but often don't enroll; Pell students enrolled at higher rates (full-time incentive); course scheduling/availability matters.
- **Regent Fernandez** — Asked for updates on the Launchers Initiative task force membership and meetings; AVC Caserto to follow up. Noted future collaboration with the incoming ARSA Chair (Regent Downs).
- **Vice Chair Del Carlo** — Asked about next steps; AVC Caserto described

ongoing working groups and the forthcoming UNLV study (Item 24) as springboards.

No action taken.

(The meeting recessed for lunch, reconvening at 12:33 p.m.)

Item 24 — Impact and Implementation Study, NSHE Corequisite Mandate (Information Only)

Introduced by: UNLV CFO Chris Batone.
Presenters: Dr. Frederick Ngo (USC; formerly UNLV) and Dr. Stephanie Relles (UNLV), via Zoom. Funded by a $1.2M Institute of Education Sciences award (with seed funding from the Nevada Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation / NPWR).

- Five-year study (currently Year 3). Uses the Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research (NPWR) data system, focusing on 64,000+ students (fall 2015–fall 2023) who matriculated directly from a Nevada high school to an NSHE institution.
- Employs regression discontinuity (sharp and fuzzy RD) designs using 11th-grade ACT cutoffs.
- Findings: corequisites improved outcomes relative to the prerequisite model — a **7–10 percentage point improvement** in college-level math completion at the cutoff margin (similar to Tennessee); no statistically significant difference in English (interpreted positively, as corequisite students achieved at levels comparable to higher-scoring peers). Two-year outcomes show consistent positive short-term gains.
- Qualitative component (Dr. Relles): stakeholder survey (206 respondents) and interviews across all seven teaching institutions; found persistent tension (some prefer prerequisite/hybrid models, especially math faculty) and identified collaboration among advisors, math/English instructors, and administrators as the key opportunity.

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Downs** — Engaged in extended clarification of Slide 16, interpreting the post-policy graph as showing an overall decline (attributed by presenters partly to COVID), and expressed skepticism that eliminating the gap by lowering

higher-scoring students' outcomes constitutes success. Also raised the limitation that the sample excludes non-traditional/returning students and requested a broader descriptive study. Presenters acknowledged the causal-design limitation and offered a descriptive study and institution-specific qualitative work.
- **Regent Arrascada** — Compared study data to the NSHE data dashboard and national ACT averages (composite ~19.4; English ~18.4; math ~18.9), confirming alignment; Regent Downs supplied national figures. Highlighted NSHE positives.
- **Regent Carvalho** — Praised Drs. Ngo and Relles; expressed continued support for the corequisite model while emphasizing the need to understand institutional fidelity/implementation and better support students.

Chair Goodman suggested institutions review both the Item 23 and Item 24 presentations and report back. No action taken.

Item 25 — Critical Labor Shortage Position Designation, UPD Southern Command (For Possible Action)

Presenter: Chief of Police Arnold Vasquez (UPD Southern Command), via Las Vegas.

Chief Vasquez requested extending the critical labor shortage designation to the **Deputy Chief** classification (per NRS 286.523(5)). Two of three authorized Deputy Chief positions are vacant (one since March 2025; one since Deputy Chief Todd Miller's retirement, end of May 2026). A national search yielded only nine applicants and failed. Barriers identified: FLSA-exempt compensation compression (Deputy Chief ineligible for overtime while the subordinate Lieutenant position is eligible) and difficulty attracting candidates with prior Nevada PERS service. The designation would be a targeted two-year measure (through September 4, 2028).

Discussion / Member Positions:
- **Regent Downs** — Confirmed this is a different position (Deputy Chief) from prior requests (peace officer, dispatcher, sergeant, lieutenant); confirmed the mechanism allows a retiree to collect full retirement and be rehired at full pay; confirmed the two-year limit with required reassessment.
- **Regent Brown** — Expressed strong support, citing prior discussions, historical

staffing struggles in Southern Command, and the department's critical infrastructure role.

Motion: Regent Brown moved to (1) adopt the written findings supporting designation of the Deputy Chief classification as a critical labor shortage position per NRS 286.523, and (2) approve the designation of the Deputy Chief classification as critical need pursuant to NRS 286.523 for two years, through September 4, 2028 (amended at counsel's request to include both elements). **Second:** Regent Bautista.

Vote Tally — Item 25

Motion carried unanimously (12 votes recorded; **Regent Boylan absent** for the vote).

Item 26 — National Call to Action from U.S. Secretary of Education (For Possible Action)

Pulled from the agenda. No action taken.

Committee Reports — Items 27–31 (For Possible Action)

Chair Goodman invited committee members to comment (none did) and called for a motion to accept all committee reports together:

- **Item 27** — Audit, Compliance and Title IX Committee
- **Item 28** — Health Sciences System Committee
- **Item 29** — Security Committee
- **Item 30** — Academic, Research and Student Affairs Committee
- **Item 31** — Business, Finance and Facilities Committee

Motion: Regent Brager moved to accept committee reports, Items 27 through 31. **Second:** Regent McGrath. No discussion.

Vote Tally — Items 27–31

Motion carried unanimously (all votes recorded except **Regent Boylan, absent**).

Item 33 — New Business (Information Only)

Suggested future agenda items (description/clarification only; no substantive discussion):

Regent Downs:
1. Review institutional enforcement of the gateway course policy and whether institutions need Board action (tech/staffing) to enforce it.
2. Review whether institutions enforce prerequisites, including placement in gateway courses, and what NSHE can do to enable proper placement.
3. Provide students full transparency on how student access fees are spent at each institution.

Regent Brown:
1. Discuss/consider creating an ad hoc committee to oversee a comprehensive review and revision of the Board of Regents Handbook.
2. Discuss/consider the reporting structure of the NSHE Chief Human Resources Officer — including whether the CHRO should report functionally to the Office of General Counsel while reporting administratively to the Chancellor — to ensure independent accountability and employee protection.
3. Update Board policy to require a consultant activity report twice annually (state and non-state funded, no minimum threshold), including total contract amounts and six-month expenditures.
4. Establish a requirement for the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor to complete a comprehensive review of Handbook Titles 1–4, with the Board Chair ensuring timely completion and accountability.

Regent Brooks:
- Bring forward a full-Board agenda item on AB 345 and its implementation throughout the system.

Regent Bautista:
- Begin the conversation on merging the IDEA Committee with Title IX.

(Regent Brager noted a possible prior motion on the IDEA/Title IX matter; Chair Goodman confirmed the Chief of Staff maintains the work plan and will ensure alignment.)

Chair's Closing Remarks

Chair Goodman noted the distribution of contact cards for Regents and Presidents and thanked TMCC President Karin Hilgersom (host) and the many TMCC and support staff, including Melissa Olson (facilities/marketing/communications), Dean Kim Harrell and the Edison campus team, Faith Ross and the EPIC team, Jeff Hawkins and the athletic department, audiovisual staff (Rick Romero, Claudio Asinaga, Ben Labrador, Martin Santos, Eric Hernandez, Mark Rosenberg, Joseph Domingo), SCS staff (Brian Anzalone, James Unfried, Gar Casal, Bentley Holmes-Gull), catering (Christina, Zachary, Lacey Barela, and the Silver and Blue Catering team), UPD Northern Command, and the Board office team (Kerry Nicolajewski, Winter Lipson, Catherine Riley, and Klaus Vander Wey).

Item 34 — Public Comment (Information Only)

No public comment was offered at GBC (Elko), the System Office (Las Vegas), TMCC (host site), or by telephone.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Goodman adjourned the meeting.

These are Unofficial AI Minutes generated from the meeting transcript and should be verified against the official record.