

NMSU Presidential Search

Background and Next Steps

- The New Mexico Constitution provides that “The legislature shall provide for the *control and management* of each of the institutions [...] by a board of regents for each institution...” NM Constitution, Article XII, Sec. 13A
- The NMSU Board of Regents has conducted two searches for the next president of the institution.
 - The first search yielded 5 finalists but the regents voted to begin a new search on March 11, 2024.
 - The second search yielded 5 finalists who were invited to campus during the week of September 9-13, 2024.
 - The Board of Regents has a closed meeting scheduled on 9/14.
- The next public meeting of the Board of Regents is scheduled for 9/19.

Finalists:

- **Valerio Ferme, Ph.D.**- currently serves as Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of Cincinnati (UC).
- **Bryan Haynes, Ph.D.**- currently serves as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of California, Riverside (UCR)
- **Monica Lounsbery, Ph.D.**- Dean of the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) at California State University, Long Beach
- **Neil MacKinnon, Ph.D.**- Former Provost at Augusta University (AU), a public R2 university in Georgia. **APPLICANT WITHDREW FROM CONSIDERATION.**
- **Arsenio Romero, Ph.D.**- Former New Mexico Secretary of Public Education

Transitions:

- Chancellor Arvizu resigned on April 7th, 2023
- Jay Gouge became interim chancellor from April 2023 to April 2024
- Monica Torres began as interim chancellor in May 2024

Valerio Ferme, Ph.D.

Valerio Ferme currently serves as Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of Cincinnati (UC).

A firm believer in student access, Ferme has championed student success via numerous access and retention investments. During his tenure as provost, the colleges have more than doubled hires of underrepresented faculty; and he has launched a post-doctoral program to attract diverse, prospective faculty candidates; provided permanent professional funds for employee resource groups; created a provost faculty fellow program; and addressed salary minima for advising staff and adjunct faculty.



Ferme joined UC in 2019 as dean of the college of Arts and Sciences. As dean, he spearheaded a commitment to research that increased sponsored awards from @\$10M to over \$22M annually, while expanding its pedagogy in the areas of experiential-based learning and co-operative education. Ferme was the first university dean to create a post of Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence and Community Partnerships, which has since been adopted across the university. Notably, Ferme did so during the COVID-19's campus-to-remote transition and, despite the global pandemic, helped the college balance its budget for the first time in a decade, while absorbing over \$9M of expense and revenue shortfalls.

Prior to UC, Ferme served as dean of the College of Arts and Letters at Northern Arizona University (2017-2019) and Divisional Dean for the Arts and Humanities at the University of Colorado from 2015-2017, where he taught for nineteen years and served repeatedly as Chair of the Department of French and Italian. At NAU, Ferme increased underrepresented faculty hires and bolstered collaborations between students and organizations in the Flagstaff area, as well as with the Native people of Arizona's high plains. In Colorado, Ferme's work focused on curricular

enhancements and support for underrepresented minorities. In 2014, Ferme received the Boulder Faculty Assembly Excellence in Teaching Award and, in 2017, a Special Recognition Award from the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement for his work in inclusive excellence.

Ferme earned undergraduate degrees in Biology and Religious Studies at Brown University, Masters in Comparative Literature and Italian Studies from Indiana University and a PhD in Comparative Literature from UC Berkeley, where he was awarded Fulbright and Chancellor's Fellowships. As a scholar, Ferme has published three monographs, three edited volumes, two scholarly translations and a bilingual collection of poetry, in addition to over 60 articles and reviews.

Brian Haynes, Ph.D.

Dr. Brian L. Haynes has spent his entire career in higher education supporting diverse students with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. He currently serves as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), an appointment he has held since August of 2018.

Throughout his career, Dr. Haynes has served as a champion for countless individuals aspiring to achieve a college degree. He is a tireless advocate for underserved community access and success in higher education, and regularly mentors and serves as a role model for college students. His previous service includes positions at Ohio University, Gettysburg College, East Carolina University, the Florida Board of Regents (now Board of Governors), Florida International University, Clayton State University, and California State University, San Bernardino.

A collaborative team-builder, Dr. Haynes has worked across divisions with colleagues in his various roles, gaining a deep understanding of everything from successful fundraising to building partnerships between his respective university and



local K-12 school systems and community colleges. As an example, Dr. Haynes serves as the Principal Investigator of the Inland Empire Regional K-16 Collaborative Grant. Funded by the State of California Budget Act of 2021, this \$18.1M grant focuses on collaborative opportunities at all levels of education throughout California to create career and educational pathways starting at the elementary school level.

Dr. Haynes has been actively involved in numerous higher education-related professional associations, including currently serving on the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities, the Council on Student Affairs' Executive Committee, and as an Editorial Board Member for Student Affairs Today, an online higher education journal featuring the latest legal developments and innovative practices.

Among his higher education recognitions, in 2017, Dr. Haynes received the prestigious NASPA Pillar of the Profession Award, given annually to distinguished individuals who have served as leaders, teachers, and scholars in student affairs and the higher education community.

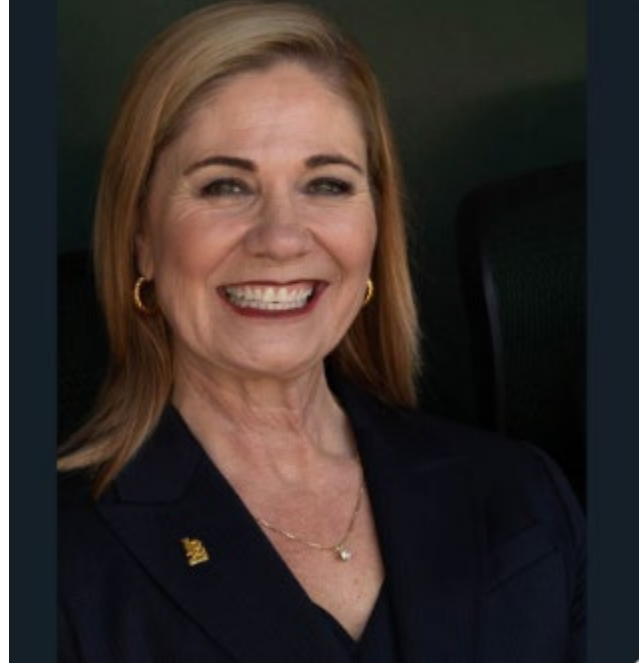
His community involvement includes service on numerous advisory boards that support the local community and the Inland Empire region of Southern California. In 2018, Dr. Haynes received the Tom Bradley Community Service & Distinguished Citizen Award from Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated and was the recipient of the Excellence in Educational Administration Award from Inland Valley News.

Born and raised in Columbus, Ohio, Dr. Haynes earned a bachelor's degree in history from The Ohio State University and has a master's degree and doctorate in higher education from Ohio University. He and his wife, Jacquelyn, are the proud parents of Faith (20) and Joshua (16).

Monica Lounsbery, Ph.D.

Dr. Monica A. F. Lounsbery serves as Dean of the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) at California State University, Long Beach. Leading one of the largest and most diverse colleges in the California State University system, she oversees nearly 9,500 students and over 600 faculty and staff. Her visionary leadership has driven interdisciplinary initiatives that have significantly improved student success, research output, education, and public-private partnerships.

Dr. Lounsbery has more than 20 years of leadership experience in higher education. In addition to her current role, she held several key positions at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas including Associate Dean in the School of Medicine, Vice Provost, Associate Vice Provost, and Founding Chair of the Department of Sports Education Leadership. Throughout her leadership career, she has consistently demonstrated her ability to build academic programs, propel innovation, and promote student success.



As a scholar, Dr. Lounsbery is a nationally recognized expert in physical activity policy. She has secured highly competitive funding for her research and has widely published and presented it in prestigious venues. Her scholarly contributions have earned her Fellow status in several esteemed professional societies, including the National Academy of Kinesiology, where she was recently elected President-Elect.

As an academic leader, Dr. Lounsbery has a proven track record of fostering DEIA and student success, growing enrollment, and enhancing institutional fiscal health. As Dean, she successfully increased faculty diversity, implemented student supports to promote equity, increased the college's four-year graduation rates from 14.8% to 42.1% and eliminated a \$1.5 million budget deficit. She also secured over \$31 million in private gifts and more than doubled external contract and grant awards from \$10 million to over \$20 million, ensuring long-term financial stability for the college. Her commitment to faculty and staff trajectory is reflected in the creation of programs aimed at promoting professional growth.

Dr. Lounsbery's career is marked by the countless initiatives she has led to improve critical outcomes within the university mission. Her dedication to academic excellence, student success, and community engagement makes her a transformative figure in higher education.

Arsenio Romero, Ph.D.

Dr. Arsenio Romero is a native New Mexican with 28 years of experience in education. His career has been marked by a steadfast commitment to fostering academic excellence and holistic student development from early childhood through higher education.

Beginning as a dedicated teacher, Dr. Romero quickly emerged as a leader within the educational community. His tenure as a superintendent and principal was characterized by his championing of forward-thinking educational policies and practices. Now, as Secretary of New



Mexico Public Education, Dr. Romero brings his wealth of experience and passion for education to the forefront, advocating for policies that uplift educators and students alike while continuing to inspire positive change and meaningful progress.

Dr. Romero's dedication to education is also deeply rooted in his own academic journey and his unwavering commitment to New Mexico State University. He earned his BA in Education from New Mexico State University, followed by an MA in Educational Administration from the University of New Mexico, and ultimately, a PhD in Educational Leadership at NMSU. His commitment to educational equity and leadership extends beyond his studies, as he served on the NMSU board of regents and taught educational leadership at the university. Through these roles, Dr. Romero recognizes the importance of research, community and global partners, strong relationships with faculty and staff, and a learning environment that is reflective of the rich diversity of the NMSU student body. Dr. Romero's profound gratitude for the opportunities that the state of New Mexico and NMSU have afforded him has deeply influenced his unwavering dedication to the next generation of New Mexico's learners.

Amid all his achievements, Dr. Romero's greatest pride is his family. His wife, Amber, and their four children, longtime residents of Las Cruces, are the heart of his life and the foundation of his success.

- Why did the first search fail?

On March 11, 2024, the NMSU Board of Regents voted unanimously to launch a new search for the university system's next president. In a memo to campus that day, NMSU Regent Chair Ammu Devasthali stated, "after careful consideration, I did not believe that any of our finalists fully meet NMSU's needs at this critical juncture. We have said from the beginning that finding the right leader is paramount. While the presented candidates possessed impressive qualifications and are assets to their respective institutions, we had not yet found the next leader of our university system. The presidential search committee worked extremely hard to bring forward the best candidates from the pool we had earlier this year, and we appreciated their efforts."

NMSU's most important mission is the success of our students, and that mission will continue to shape our priorities as we seek the right leader for our university system.

- Will this search possibly result in hiring two candidates for one position similar to what happened when President Carruthers was replaced?

No. This question has been asked before during this search process. Our answer is no. We are seeking to hire one person to fill one position – the president of the NMSU System.

- Are you comfortable with hiring a president out of this pool of final candidates?

While our process is still not complete, at this point we are comfortable with our pool of final candidates. They are each experienced, proven leaders and we appreciated their visits to our Las Cruces campus last week, where, in addition to private interviews with key leaders, we hosted public faculty/staff, student, and community forums for each finalist. Those were well-attended, particularly online, and attendees were able to ask important questions that will help shape our final decision.

Our university community is still providing input on our candidates. The feedback survey closes Wednesday evening, and we have been reviewing the submissions to better understand the impressions each candidate made on our stakeholders.

The Board of Regents will consider all feedback and finish its own information gathering and evaluation before a selection is made.