

Supercomputing Challenge Meeting Minutes January 15, 2026

6:00 - 7:30pm Zoom Meeting

AGENDA:

--6:01 PM--

o Establish (current) quorum

- 1 Char Arias _ Yes
- 2 Tom Bowles _ Yes
- 3 Ron Davis _ No
- 4 Creighton Edington _ Yes
- 5 Ely Knowles _ Yes
- 6 Lupe Montoya _ Yes
- 7 Lee Rand _ Yes
- 8 Tom Robey _ Yes
- 9 Tim Thomas _ Yes
- 10 Kaley Woelfel _ No

Others attending:

David Kratzer, Executive Director; Patty Meyer, Program Manager; Rashan Isaac, Program Manager; Richard Barrett, Mario Serna potential new board members

--6:03 PM--

o Accept Minutes of the Feb 25th meeting:

<https://supercomputingchallenge.org/board/250228-BOD-Minutes.pdf>

Tom B moved to accept, Tim seconded, all approved.

--6:05 PM--

o Complete action on Board membership of Richard Barrett and Mario Serna
Tim moved, Tom B seconded, that Richard be accepted to the board, all in favor.

Tim moved, Ely seconded, that Mario be accepted to the board, all in favor

--6:15 PM--

o Activities / status report on this season's program

- * Report on February Evaluations
- * Report on Expo planning, for April 20-21

--6:42 PM--

o Treasury Report

- * Report on this year's funding: details of nature, mechanics, timing...
- * Update on new Legislative Funding efforts.

For next year, https://www.nmt.edu/finance/budgetoffice/docs/Preparing_the_Budget.pdf

RPSP category

<https://edd.newmexico.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/New-Mexico-ST-Roadmap-Final.pdf>

--6:53 PM--

* DISCUSSION: David plans to retire as Executive Director as of June 1

Have candidates propose what they think the Supercomputing Challenge should be like and the committee select the best proposal/person. David will provide a job description.

--7:16 PM--

o Elect new officers

- * Informational: Tim giving talk to NMSPE next week
- * We need a treasurer who is familiar with QuickBooks. Alan Freedman potential board member/treasurer. Tim will check with a lady he knows.
- * Need a website maintainer to take over the web site for the 2026-27 Challenge year.

--7:25 PM--

o Other business

--7:29 PM--

o Adjourn

Zoom Meeting Summary

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The board meeting focused on several key topics, including the acceptance of new board members Richard and Mario, updates on the Supercomputing Challenge's funding and legislative efforts led by Tom Bowles, and the announcement of David's retirement as executive director. David shared details about the recent kickoff event and plans for the February evaluations and expo in Los Alamos. The board discussed the need to find a new treasurer familiar with QuickBooks and considered forming a committee to search for an executive director. They also explored the possibility of approaching Kurt Steinhouse for board membership to strengthen connections with the legislature. The conversation ended with discussions about website management and data security for student information.

Next steps

- [Thomas Bowles: Send out draft letters and templates for legislative funding support, including SIG Hecker's letters, to all board members this evening](#)
- [All board members: Send letters of support for legislative funding to relevant legislative committees and representatives, using provided templates, before the start of House Appropriations Finance Committee meetings \(target: by January 20th or as soon as possible\)](#)
- [Lee: Reach out to potential new treasurer candidate \(Alan Friedman\) regarding board treasurer/CPA role](#)
- [T.L. Thomas: Contact Sandia MBA candidate about potential board involvement and/or treasurer role](#)
- [T.L. Thomas: Talk to Kaylee about continuing as secretary](#)

- Board members: Email T.L. Thomas with interest in serving on executive director search committee
- T.L. Thomas: Form executive director search committee from responses
- David: Provide previous job descriptions to executive director search committee
- Thomas Bowles: Set up meetings with Representative Dixon, Representative Nathan Small, and Senator Mimi Stewart regarding legislative funding
- T.L. Thomas: Send letter of appreciation to Michael Jackson (NMT interim president) for his support
- Creighton: Send out funding support letters to his network of contacts in different regions of New Mexico
- David: Process and distribute meeting minutes using AI companion notes
- T.L. Thomas/Board: Collectively approach Kurt Steinhouse about joining the board (with possible involvement from Tom, Rashan, and Creighton)
- David: Work with New Mexico Tech in April timeframe to explore becoming an RPSP (recurring budget line item) for following year's budget proposal
- David: Determine which student participants will be over 18 (for foreign national paperwork requirements) before expo
- Thomas Bowles: Track legislative progress on funding request on daily basis and update board every 1-2 days
- Lee: Reach out to Kevin Robinson at Albuquerque First regarding press coverage
- Thomas Bowles: Send cover letter to Lee for press coverage reference
- David: Send AI-generated meeting notes to all after processing
- Mario: Send notes taken during meeting to David and Tim

Summary

Board Meeting: New Members and Events

The board accepted minutes from a previous meeting and confirmed quorum. They discussed and approved the acceptance of two new board members, Richard and Mario, with a majority vote. David provided an update on a recent kickoff event for a student program, which had 80 participants and cost \$17,000. He also outlined plans for upcoming February project evaluations and an expo in Los Alamos on April 20-21, noting that while some foreign participants had dropped out, the event would still include international students.

Supercomputing Challenge Funding Updates

The board discussed the status of the Supercomputing Challenge, including the participation of 20 teams and the involvement of two state representatives in the awards ceremony. Thomas Bowles provided updates on the legislative funding process, highlighting the involvement of New Mexico Tech and NMSU in managing the financial aspects. David and Patty addressed the progress on project evaluations and expo planning, while David also shared the current financial status, including the receipt of funds from NMSU and a donor's contribution of Apple stock. The board noted concerns about future funding for summer activities and the need to invoice NMSU by mid-June.

Legislative Funding Advocacy Update

Thomas Bowles provided an update on legislative funding efforts for the challenge. He explained that due to state budget constraints, Representative Chandler recommended contacting New Mexico Tech for funding support. Thomas successfully secured a \$210,000 request from the interim president of New Mexico Tech, Michael Jackson, to be included in their capital request to the legislature. He has drafted letters to various legislative committees and officials, including letters of support from SIG Hecker, and plans to send these out before the 30-day session begins next Tuesday. Thomas will also work to set up meetings with key legislators to advocate for the funding request, which is a small fraction of the overall budget. He emphasized the importance of getting letters of support from individuals and securing press coverage to help influence the legislative process.

Supercomputing Challenge Leadership Transition

The group discussed the Supercomputing Challenge's financial stability and future direction. David announced his retirement as executive director, and the need to find a replacement was emphasized. Thomas Bowles reported progress in securing state funding, with potential for more stable funding in the future. The group also discussed the need to refresh the board and increase outreach efforts. Char expressed concerns about the program's sustainability, but others noted improvements in funding and opportunities for growth. The conversation ended with a discussion about upcoming presentations and potential grants for teacher education programs.

Supercomputing Challenge Program Review

The board discussed the future of the Supercomputing Challenge, with Char expressing concerns about the current level of the program and suggesting a potential shift to focus on higher-level students. Thomas Robey emphasized the importance of finding a new executive director before making major program changes, while Thomas Bowles provided context on the organization's recent history and current challenges. The group agreed that the immediate priority is to replace David and secure stable funding, with longer-term program changes to be considered after these immediate goals are achieved.

Program Cost Reduction Committee Formation

The board discussed concerns about the program's high costs compared to other 501c3 organizations, with T.L. Thomas expressing support for maintaining the current \$200,000 budget scale while David suggested exploring remote options to reduce costs. Thomas Robey proposed forming a committee to search for a program replacement, with candidates presenting their plans to the board for evaluation. The board agreed to form a committee, with David offering to provide previous job descriptions as a starting point, and T.L. Thomas requested interested board members to email their thoughts for compilation. The conversation ended with a brief mention of the need to find new board officers, specifically a treasurer familiar with QuickBooks.

Board Treasurer Succession Planning

The board discussed the need to replace Lee as treasurer and explored potential candidates, including a retired professor pursuing his CPA. T.L. Thomas mentioned speaking with Kaylee about continuing as secretary. The group also discussed the importance of having board members from various New Mexico educational institutions, particularly UNM and NMSU, and considered approaching Kurt Steinhouse for a board position due to his connections in the educational community. Thomas Bowles provided context on how Representative Chandler's initiative helped secure funding for New Mexico State.

Website Updates and Advocacy Planning

The board expressed gratitude to Tom Robey for his efforts and discussed the website's user-friendly interface, which allows for easy updates without technical expertise. David explained the current data collection practices, noting that only the year in school is collected, which poses challenges for foreign national students over 18. Thomas Bowles agreed to share letter templates for advocacy efforts, emphasizing the need for new funding, and Creighton offered to help distribute these letters. The conversation ended with a motion to adjourn early, and Mario expressed interest in volunteering for search committees while declining the treasurer or president roles due to a need to learn the QuickBooks system.