

# NMSU appoints Dan Arvizu as chancellor, John Floros as president

New NMSU Chancellor Dan Arvizu giving remarks at his introduction. Las Cruces Sun-News

LAS CRUCES - In a surprise move, New Mexico State University regents announced Friday they were making not one, but two hires to lead the university after the retirement of outgoing Chancellor Garrey Carruthers on July 1.

The regents voted 5-0 to appoint [Dan Arvizu](#), an NMSU alum and former director and chief executive officer of the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory, as chancellor. The voted, too, to hire John Floros, dean of the Kansas State University agriculture college and K-State Cooperative Extension, as president of NMSU.

The move means a separation of two titles that until now were combined. Carruthers' official job title is chancellor and president of NMSU.

Arvizu and Floros were two of the top five candidates in a national search for the next chancellor.

Regent Chairwoman Debra Hicks said the board, after gathering a lot of input from the public, was seeking a diverse slate of qualities and skills sets in the next chancellor. In particular, regents wanted the person who'd understand the land grant mission of education, research and outreach; who'd appreciate the Hispanic-serving mission; who'd be able to boost student outcomes; and who'd be familiar with New Mexico's culture.

"We're excited to say we believe we have the individual," she said during a Friday afternoon news conference. "This individual needed to be innovative. We wanted him to be strategically investment-oriented, decisive, a respected visionary leader."

[Arvizu](#), who attended the regents meeting and a public welcome event afterward, will oversee the entire NMSU system, which includes campuses in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Grants, as well as Doña Ana Community College. He'll be tasked with addressing the big-picture vision and strategy of the university system, regents said. And Floros will be focused upon operations the main campus.

5-0 vote by [#NMSU](#) Board of Regents to appoint Dr. Dan Arvizu as chancellor. Applause in the room for Arvizu.

— Diana Alba Soular (@AlbaSoular) [2:27 PM - May 11, 2018](#)

Addressing members of the public, Arvizu, who's originally from Alamogordo, said it's been 45 years this month since he first received his bachelor's degree in engineering from NMSU. He said he was honored to have been selected for the role.

"I could not be more pleased to be here," he said.

Arvizu presently serves as senior advisor to the Emerson Elemental practice of Emerson Collective, whose stated mission is to restore and strengthen the symbiosis between humanity and nature. For the past two and a half years, he's been working in the Silicon Valley. He has spent most of his career in advanced energy research and development, including being appointed by President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama to serve on the National Science Committee.

NMSU Board of Regents Chair Debra Hicks said she met with Arvizu and Floros this week about the possibility of splitting the job titles, a direction regents agreed upon Monday.

Regent Vice Chairwoman Kari Mitchell said that while the decision was made only recently to split the roles, it has been clear for a while that NMSU eventually would have to take that path to address a shifting environment in higher education. Challenges include declining public funding for institutions, changing student population and rapid shifts in education delivery models.

"We were compelled to start thinking about how the university would overcome those challenges, given the fact the university has struggled in some of those fronts over the last decade," she said. "It became evident to us then that at some point in time, a board at New Mexico State University would have to make the decision to split those two functions."

The regents also delegated responsibility to Hicks for negotiating the contracts, including salary, with Arvizu and Floros. Hicks said the full board then will have to review and ratify the contracts.

NMSU Provost Dan Howard is set to retire Aug. 1. Asked whether he plans to hire a replacement provost, Arvizu said he's undecided. He and Floros will have to consider that once they start work. Hicks said the regents haven't given Arvizu any direction about whether or not to hire a provost.

*This is a developing story and will be updated.*

*Diana Alba Soular may be reached at 575-541-5443, [dalba@lcsun-news.com](mailto:dalba@lcsun-news.com) or [@AlbaSoular](https://twitter.com/AlbaSoular) on Twitter.*