

# New Mexico State University regents approve merger of education and health colleges



LAS CRUCES – The New Mexico State University Board of Regents voted Friday to merge two colleges into one. The change will go into effect on July 1.

NMSU Provost Carol Parker proposed in August 2020 to merge the College of Education, the College of Health and Social Services, and the Department of Sociology (in the College of Arts and Sciences), to create [a new college to be named the College of Health, Education and Social Transformation](#).

"The proposal is actually quite modest," Parker said to the *Sun-News* in March. "None of the academic programs will change. None of the faculty will be affected. Nobody's going to be moved to a different department. Nobody's departments are being changed in any way. None of our faculty policies concerning tenure promotion will change.

"Essentially, literally, we are just giving all of these pre-existing units and all these pre-existing academic programs to one dean, and changing the name of the college."

**Read more:** [NMSU Faculty Senate rejects proposed merger of education and health colleges](#)

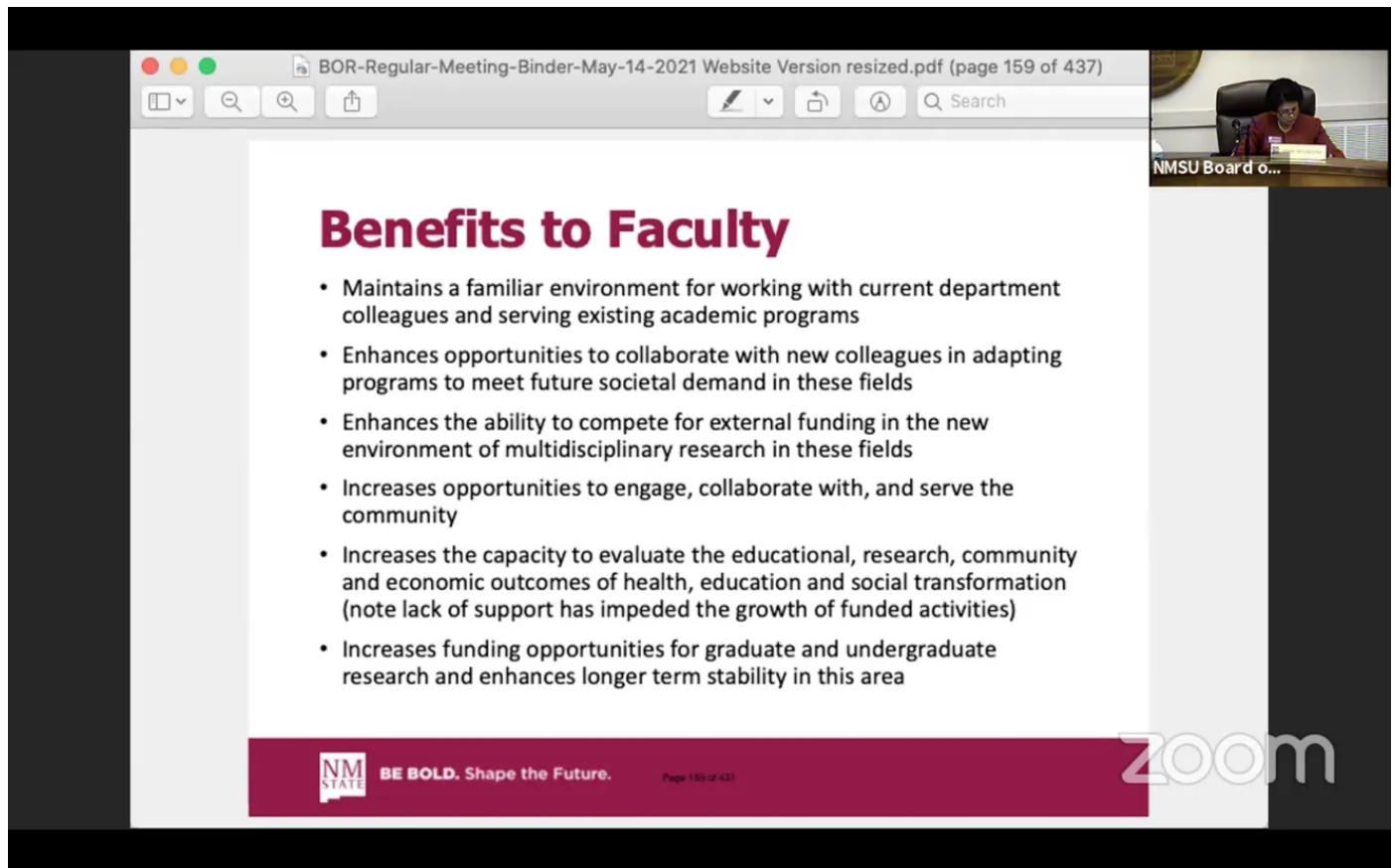
The regents unanimously approved the merger provided that an advisory committee be created, consisting of administrators, students, staff and faculty to create an organizational chart and job description for the new dean. That committee will be the advisory committee for the merger and regularly update the regents.

In a news release from NMSU, Parker said the first order of business will be finding a candidate to lead the merged college. During the regents meeting, regent Ammu Devasthali said this dean would need to prioritize all nine disciplines equally.

The College of Education and the College of Health and Social Services both currently have interim deans.

"I believe that many strong candidates will be interested in this position because of the unique opportunity they will have to be part of something big, by helping to shape this new transdisciplinary college," Parker said in the news release.

All the regents were in agreement that the search for a dean would need to include faculty input.



On April 1, [the Faculty Senate rejected the proposal](#).

Some of the concerns that faculty senators expressed included a lack of details about how the merger would benefit faculty and students.

Ultimately, 32 faculty senators voted against the proposal, nine voted for it and six abstained from voting.

**More NMSU news:** [Meet some of NMSU's notable graduates, including a soon-to-be great-grandmother](#)

During Friday's regents meeting, Faculty Senate Chair Julia Parra said she felt much better about the merger than she had previously, but still had

some apprehension.

"I would actually recommend to faculty to watch what has occurred today. I think many of their questions might be answered," Parra said. "I do think there are a couple of issues at hand (such as) the feasibility of the merger, and I do think that faculty trust and confidence is not something that we should ignore."

After this comment from Parra, regent Arsenio Romero proposed a motion to approve the merger, provided that a committee be formed that can give a voice to faculty, staff and students in the merger process.

According to Parker, all the changes will happen within the departments. Devasthali said this will help make the merger more acceptable for everyone.

Although the merger will go into effect this summer, the changes and benefits will be seen over years. The regents said they will be checking in to see how the new college progresses.

The merger would save the university money by consolidating administrative salaries from two colleges into one over time.

Another benefit, Parker said, is that there is a "lot of common interest" between the health and education fields.

"We want to position these programs so that they're able to collaborate and hopefully, leverage these common interests that they have more easily to grow enrollment, produce more graduates and ... do more work in the community," Parker told the *Sun-News* in March. "That's where the aspect of social transformation comes in."

During Parker's presentation to the Board of Regents, she pointed that other land-grant universities have combined health and education in one college,

including Utah State University, University of Arkansas, University of Idaho and Montana State University.

"I am grateful for the support of the members of the Board of Regents, and all the campus partners who worked on this initiative during the past year," Parker said in the news release. "I am looking forward to immediately working with the faculty, staff and academic leadership to begin implementation."

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