

The Regents of the University of California

**NATIONAL LABORATORIES COMMITTEE**

November 15, 2023

The National Laboratories Committee met on the above date at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center, Los Angeles campus and by teleconference at 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco and Corral del Risco, 63727 Nayarit, Mexico.

Members present: Regents Hernandez, Reilly, Robinson, and Sures; Ex officio members Drake and Leib; Advisory members Cheung, Pack, and Powell; Chancellor Hawgood

In attendance: Regents Batchlor, Makarechian, Pérez, Sherman, and Tesfai, Regent-designate Beharry, Secretary and Chief of Staff Lyall, General Counsel Robinson, Chief Compliance and Audit Officer Bustamante, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Brostrom, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Nava, Vice President Leasure, Chancellors Christ and Muñoz, and Recording Secretary Li

The meeting convened at 2:50 p.m. with Committee Chair Sures presiding.

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of July 19, 2023 were approved, Regents Drake, Hernandez, Leib, Reilly, Robinson, and Sures voting “aye.”<sup>1</sup>

**2. STATE OF LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY**

[Background material was provided to Regents in advance of the meeting, and a copy is on file in the Office of the Secretary and Chief of Staff.]

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Director Thom Mason shared that this year marked LANL’s 80th anniversary as well as 80 years of the University’s involvement with the Laboratory. The contract between UC and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers was signed in 1943 by Robert Underhill (1893–1988), who was Secretary and Treasurer of the Board of Regents at the time, when neither he nor then UC President Robert Sproul (1891–1975) knew the nature of the work aside from its importance for the war effort. The contract was meant to transition from UC to the military after the research phase, but many scientific staff wanted to remain affiliated with a research university instead of the military, so UC has remained involved since then. Director Mason presented a photo of U.S. Army General Leslie Groves (1896–1970), President Sproul, and J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904–1967), the first Director of LANL, when UC received a contracting award from the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy.

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<sup>1</sup> Roll call vote required by the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act [Government Code §11123(b)(1)(D)] for all meetings held by teleconference.

In addition to national security, LANL has also expanded its focus to climate change and disruptive technologies. Director Mason shared the Laboratory's recent accomplishments. LANL won ten R&D 100 Awards, which acknowledged technological developments with significant potential market or economic impact; this included six special recognition awards. The Laboratory has served as a test bed for scaling clean energy solutions and was working to improve remote detection of nuclear proliferation. This past year, LANL installed Crossroads, a new supercomputer that was expected to be available to National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) Laboratories by the end of this fall. LANL was among many contributors who were recently recognized for installing sensors and forensic capability to help the U.S. make informed decisions when working with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and Ukraine. LANL's bioassurance effort, currently in its funding and approval phase, sought to improve preparation for the next pandemic with monitoring capability. In light of recent interest in quantum computing, LANL and Oak Ridge National Laboratory were co-leading the Quantum Science Center, a partnership among multiple Laboratories, universities, and the private sector to accelerate the design and exploitation of these technologies. LANL has launched the NanoSat Atmospheric Chemistry Hyperspectral Observation System (NACHOS), a small satellite-based hyperspectral imaging system, to detect pollutant gas sources from space. Director Mason stated that the University, the Laboratory's top source of postdoctoral researchers, enriched the LANL work force and was one reason LANL has remained a leading research laboratory globally. LANL hosted undergraduate students from UC's nine undergraduate campuses in 12 divisions, and the UC/Los Alamos Entrepreneurial Postdoctoral Fellowship Program prepared postdoctoral researchers to transition their ideas to realization in the private sector. For the last 17 years, the Laboratory has led a joint Engineering Institute with UC San Diego, through which engineers with a bachelor's degree could pursue a master's degree while waiting for their security clearance. The Southern California Hub was created to strengthen the relationship between UC National Laboratories and the southern UC campuses.

Director Mason thanked the Regents for approving \$2 million in funding for a new childcare facility near the Laboratory. With bipartisan support for its missions, the Laboratory's annual budget has grown from \$2.7 billion to just under \$5 billion. Last year, LANL hired nearly 2,500 new staff, many of whom were early in their careers and looking to start families. Employee resource groups had been advocating for childcare for some time, but the Laboratory's remote location and limits on the use of federal funding made securing childcare challenging. Triad National Security, LLC would contribute ongoing funding from the Laboratory fee to help the facility maintain viability. The facility was intended serve about 100 children and was being modeled on the childcare facility near Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). NNSA announced that it would extend its contract with Triad National Security, LLC to 2028, and efforts like a establishing a childcare facility could demonstrate the University's commitment to national service.

Regent Sures praised the Laboratory for the complexity of its operation and its work. He expressed the Regents' commitment to LANL, as well as hope that UC could remain in this contractual relationship for a long time and that UC could continue to invest in LANL.

Committee Chair Hernandez asked whether the Southern California Hub could extend its reach to include northern campuses like UC Merced. Director Mason shared his view that the Southern California Hub would reach all of California. The reason for the southern focus was because campuses closer to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) and LLNL have historically had more engagement. LANL sought to engage with researchers and recruit students from across the state.

Vice President Leasure added that the southern campuses did not have the same geographic connection to the UC National Laboratories that the northern campuses had. There were programs in the north as well. Over time, the intent was for all UC campuses to interact with all the UC National Laboratories and have strong relationships like the one between UC Berkeley and LBNL.

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Attest:

Secretary and Chief of Staff