

Nevada Department of Education

Nevada Commission on Mentoring Sub-Committee

Friday, March 7, 2025

2:00 PM

Office	Mode	Platform
Department of Education	Teleconference/Livestream	Zoom

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBER PRESENT

Karl Catarata, Chair

Katie Membreno, Vice Chair

Dr. Michael Maxwell

Raja Mourey

Vincent Nava

Andres Estrada

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Ashley Crow, Education Program Professional

Kurt Coleman, Education Program Supervisor

Rose Cota, NDE Contractor

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance and Land Acknowledgement:

Vice Chair Membreno called the meeting to order on Friday, March 7, 2025, at 2:07 p.m.

Katie Membreno, Vice Chair conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (6 Members present).

Chair Catarata led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance, and acknowledged the land and tribes across the state.

2. Public Comment

Chair Karl Catarata opened the floor to public comment.

Traci Raber, Las Vegas Area Council Boy Scouts of America, discussed the request submitted for the micro grant, and indicated that the requested funding will significantly enhance efforts in several key

areas, including: training of adult leaders; scholarships for at-risk youth from Title I schools, specifically in the Las Vegas area, to attend outdoor adventure programs; and to expand outreach efforts, ensuring more youth have access to the positive impact of scouting's membership. Ms. Raber discussed the data showing that youth with mentors are more likely to succeed in college and become more engaged in their communities, and added that the Las Vegas Council has a proven track record of effectively managing grants and demonstrating its commitment to responsible stewardship of the funds entrusted to it.

There was no additional public comment.

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda

The Commission **acquired quorum** and therefore could vote on approval for any objective in this meeting.

Motion: To approve a flexible agenda

By: Karl Catarata

Second: Vincent Nava

Vote: Passed unanimously

4. Welcome and Introduction (Mission Statement)

Vice Chair Katie Membreno thanked members for their time and effort in reviewing applications, and thanked guests present for attending today's meeting.

5. Chair's Report:

Chair Catarata reported that grants need to be completed today so that funds can be dispersed. The Chair indicated that there are currently no other legislative updates for the Commission.

6. NCOM Development updates:

Chair Catarata indicated that for FY'25, NCOM received the following grant applications:

- Iron Sharpens Iron Mentoring
- Silver State Education Foundation
- OCA Las Vegas
- UNLV
- Douglas County School District
- Boy Scouts of America Las Vegas Area Council

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion of the organizations.

Commissioner Mourey asked for an explanation of the high risk/low risk numbers

Rose Cota explained that this scoring came from the student investment department, which reviews all applications, information, and the pre-award assessments individual, and indicated that they use their own formula to come up with the high risk and low risk assessments that are provided in the scoring. Ms. Cota indicated that because she is not part of the scoring, she cannot provide detail on why the applications were scored the way they were. Ms. Cota informed the Commission that the information on how the assessment scorings were reached was provided along with all the applications that are up for consideration.

Chair Catarata added his interpretation of the risk scoring, based on information from staff, noting that a high risk is a strong indication that the subrecipient will not be able to comply with state requirements in regards to financial management and ideally, NCOM would not provide an award to those with high scores. However, the Chair noted that nearly all of the applicants are high risk and that should not disqualify any of the applicants.

Commissioner Nava asked how much was possible for the Commission to award to possible grantees, and if there are any application limitations in awarding the grants.

Chair Catarata indicated that every fiscal year, DOE provides NCOM with approximately \$50,000 for grants, and explained that the \$50,000 is separated into two, \$25,000 for grants in the spring, and \$25,000 for grants in the fall. The Chair indicated that if Commissioners believe that an applicant is worthy of more than \$25,000, NCOM has the opportunity to motion for the amount and then vote based on the merits of the application. Chair Catarata next discussed the division of the funds, noting that they can be divided up however the Commission sees fit among the applicants. The Chair discussed the great need from all the organizations doing mentoring work in the state, and lamented that only a certain amount of funds can be provided to the organizations that meet the criteria.

Dr. Maxwell asked if this round of grants equals \$25,000 or the entire 50.

Rose Cota confirmed that the total amount for the spring awards is \$25,000.

Chair Catarata first discussed Iron Sharpens Iron, noting their request for 18,200 to pay for: one part-time youth mentor a marketable wage for 20 hours per week; to support training/coaching on the curriculum; trauma-informed care; and best practices in youth mentoring for both paid and volunteer mentors; and to support rent of the building space.

Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that historically, these grants were intended to fund small, grassroots, mentoring organizations that would not typically get some of the funding of the larger groups or organizations. Dr. Maxwell indicated his willingness to fund Iron Sharpens Iron, but at a lower amount of \$8,200, minus the one part-time mentor.

Commissioner Mourey offered that the Commission grant half of the requested amount at approximately \$13,200 so as to provide the funding for a mentor for 12 to 13 hours a week.

Commissioner Nava indicated his support for the mission and grassroots approach of this organization, and noted the unsustainability of using grant money for salaries. As such, Commissioner Nava concurred with lowering the amount granted, noting that perhaps the Commission could think of some number now and then at the end determine a specific amount to allocate.

Chair Catarata informed the Commission that he is taking notes on everyone's amount recommendations. The Chair noted that he is agreeable to providing an amount of up to \$13,500 for this organizations.

Vice Chair Membreno noted the importance of keeping in mind the total amount the Commission has to award so as to meet the goal of awarding multiple applicants. The Vice Chair discussed her support of paying mentors and volunteers, and reiterated the fact that if one organization is paid a higher amount, this does mean less funding for other organizations that the Commission wishes to support.

Chair Catarata noted his appreciation for the grassroots organizations that serve underserved communities, and indicated the importance of following the vision of former Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson who established NCOM. The Chair explained his concern regarding funding brick and mortar and things like rent and noted his support for funding things like training and coaching. The Chair further noted that he would like to see more definition regarding curricula as well as trauma-informed care that will be using state dollars. Chair Catarata indicated his support for funding this organization at an amount under \$10,000.

Dr. Maxwell noted Commissioner Nava's suggestion in the chat to agree whether or not the Commission wishes to fund an organization, and then come back later to determine an amount.

Chair Catarata suggested awarding a ballpark number to orgs now, and then determining final award amounts once all applications have been reviewed.

Vice Chair Membreno asked for clarification as to whether the Commission intended to agree to

support an application and then move on and vote later, or to vote on an application at the time of discussion.

Chair Catarata clarified that the Commission will determine approvals and discuss the numbers, but will determine the final awarding amounts at the very end, which is what requires the motions under Open Meeting Law. The Chair clarified, however, that if a commissioner feels strongly regarding an organization, they can motion during discussion.

Dr. Maxwell proposed an \$8,000 award to Iron Sharpens Iron.

Both the Chair and Commissioner Nava concurred with Dr. Maxwell's proposal.

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion on OCA Las Vegas.

Dr. Maxwell indicated that the amounts in the budget in the description do not match the actual amounts requested.

Commissioner Nava concurred that this was a confusing application, but did note that the requested amount was \$2,000.

Chair Catarata also indicated his struggle with determining the requested amount. The Chair discussed the proposal, noting that the application mentions ensuring that students are career and college ready; networking with AA, NHPI (Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian Pacific) under individuals who have carved out spaces for them. The Chair further noted that in the past, when an application has not been completed correctly, it has been struck from the application process.

Dr. Maxwell concurred that one of two things could be done: either the application could be struck altogether; or accept it for the \$2,000 requested given that it is a small amount.

Traci Raber interjected that the errors being discussed are actually the examples that are provided on the form, and the requesting organization's error was simply not deleting the examples.

Dr. Maxwell recommended that as a result of Ms. Raber's explanation, the Commission fund this organization the \$2,000 requested.

Commissioner Mourey concurred.

Commissioner Nava concurred.

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion on Boy Scouts of America, Las Vegas Area Council, noting that the total amount of funds requested is \$12,500 for conduct workshops for adult leaders; youth workshop; activities; outreach expansion; and evaluation.

Commissioner Nava commented on the strength of the application but noted his hesitancy that this is a more established organization that does likely have other means to obtain funding. Commissioner Nava indicated his willingness to support the organization, but not at the amount requested.

Chair Catarata noted his appreciation of the applicant's organization and indicated that in terms of training workshops, the Commission does not have enough funds to allocate the full amount, but the Chair noted his willingness to allocate nine to \$10,000 to this organization. The Chair concurred with Commissioner Nava's observation that this is a national organization that does have the means to obtain other funding.

Dr. Maxwell concurred that this was a well-written application and noted his issue with the recruitment piece as the organization is already serving 6,588 youth. Dr. Maxwell agreed that the Las Vegas Boy Scouts should be funded, but suggested funding them at 7,500 which did not include the 5,000 for outreach expansion.

Commissioner Mourey indicated the importance of ensuring that the impact of the Commission's grant is lasting and making an impact. Commissioner Mourey indicated his support of awarding a grant to them at a lower amount between 7,500 and 9,000.

Chair Catarata agreed to the 7,500 to 9,000 range. The Chair agreed with Commissioner Mourey regarding the importance of return of investment from the funded organizations.

Commissioner Maxwell cautioned the Commission to be considerate of how much money the Commission has to divvy up between the organizations, noting that if each of the three already discussed are funded at the proposed amounts, this leaves only 7,500 for the three still left to be discussed.

Commissioner Mourey concurred, but noted that if the groups are funded under 7,500, he is not certain that this will make an impact.

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion on UNLV Board of Regents Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Office of Undergraduate Research. The Chair explained that this organization provides mentoring to STEM and non-STEM UNLV undergraduates interested in pursuing research. Chair Catarata indicated that the requested amount is 7,500 for: 10 mentors; bus passes; and stipends

for first generation undergraduate peer mentors. The Chair noted that this is a returning applicant who has previously shown the Commission the lasting impact of the grant and where the funds are going.

Dr. Maxwell indicated his support for the work of the organization, but noted concern about the high ask, the stipend for paying mentors, and the university's ability and eligibility for other funding that other organizations might not have. As such, Dr. Maxwell proposed that the organization be granted 3,500.

Commissioner Mourey concurred with Dr. Maxwell.

Vice Chair Membreno indicated that although she trusts that this organization can use the funds and have a lasting impact, because they are eligible to apply for other funding elsewhere and given that they have applied before, the Vice Chair noted her belief that the Commission should look at other organizations who may be struggling in terms of finding funding. Vice Chair Membreno suggested, however, that if there are extra funds left over at the end of the process, this application should be considered. The Vice Chair put on the record that this is a great organization, and reiterated her belief that this time around, grassroots organizations should be funded.

Commissioner Mourey concurred with Vice Chair Membreno.

Commissioner Estrada agreed with the group.

Chair Catarata noted that similar to the Boy Scouts, another large organization, UNLV has been able to quantify and qualify how they're going to showcase the usage of the state dollars, and indicated his appreciation for the application.

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion on Douglas County School District.

Commissioner Nava noted that this organization had the lowest risk in the index given, but questioned if a school district, is also eligible to receive funds from elsewhere.

Rose Cota indicated that she would not be able to answer that question with accuracy but could find out should the Commission choose to table this.

Commissioner Nava noted that there was no need to table it and that he would accept the application given that it has passed DOE's standards.

Dr. Maxwell indicated that this is a school district and as such, has other funding available. Dr. Maxwell also pointed out that this is a public school, but that the application includes no plan specifics. As such, Dr. Maxwell indicated that for these reasons, he cannot support this application.

Commissioner Nava concurred.

Motion: Not to fund the application for Douglas County School District, but thank them for their application and offer reasons afterwards should they seek feedback
By: Dr. Maxwell
Second: Commissioner Nava
Vote: Passed unanimously

Chair Catarata opened the floor for discussion on the final application, the Silver State Education Foundation, which supports high school youth through implementation of homegrown teacher pipeline at Canyon Springs High School in North Las Vegas. The Chair noted that the requested amount for \$12,500 includes: stipends for mentors and career coach; bus or coach for homegrown students to attend a career session at UNLV or career UNLV sessions, exploration workshop or summer courses; and HP 15.6 Chromebook laptops for students to complete assignments.

Dr. Maxwell indicated that he likes the work the program is doing, but does not agree with providing the \$9,500 for laptops when many schools already have access to them for students. Dr. Maxwell did agree to funding the program, but for a smaller amount than requested.

Commissioner Nava indicated that he would be comfortable with funding a total of 3,000, which does not include the computers.

Chair Catarata indicated his preference of granting 2,000 or 2,500 to this organization.

Commissioner Mourey discussed the importance of investing in high school as a gateway to the future, especially in the inner city. The Commissioner indicated that if the choice was to strike one and grant the others, he would choose to strike UNLV and fund this program at 3,000 as it is at the high school level.

Dr. Maxwell reminded the Commission that the programs agreed to for the UNLV applicant are for first-generation college students coming from high school. Dr. Maxwell provided a breakdown of the amounts proposed so far, noting that currently the funding is at \$21,000 between four of the groups, which would leave 4,000 for the Silver State Education Foundation at Canyon Springs. As such, Dr. Maxwell indicated his willingness to fund this organization with some amount, just not with the full 12,500 ask.

Commissioner Mourey concurred with a grant of 3,000 or 4,000 to the Silver State Education Foundation.

Chair Catarata opened the floor to public comment specifically regarding this agenda item.

Traci Raber thanked the Commission for the opportunity, noting that it has been enlightening and interesting to see all the different organizations mentoring youth, particularly in Southern Nevada. Ms. Raber discussed looking forward to collaborating with other organizations that had also applied for the grant funds on how to work together to mentor the youth in the communities, particularly those from Title I schools.

There was no additional public comment.

Chair Catarata requested that Commissioners be specific in terms of motions and dollar amounts.

Dr. Maxwell pointed out that all of the awardees are in Las Vegas, and the one applicant outside of Las Vegas was not funded, and noted the importance of the Commission to be cognizant of this fact.

Chair Catarata concurred that the Commission needs to follow up with the applicants and have good rationale as to why all awardees are in Las Vegas, and proposed thank you letters to all applicants, whether approved or denied this time, and to include with those thank you letters an encouragement to reply again. The Chair further discussed the need to always lobby for more funds, noting that 25,000 is not enough for the work the mentoring organizations are doing.

- Motion:** To grant the organizations a total of \$25,000 as follows:
- Iron Sharpens Iron for a total of \$7,000
 - OCA Las Vegas for a total of \$2,000
 - Las Vegas Area Council Scouting America for a total of \$7,000
 - UNLV Office of Undergraduate Research for a total of \$7,000
 - Silver State Foundation for a total of \$2,000
- By:** Dr. Maxwell
- Second:** Commissioner Andres
- Vote:** Passed unanimously

Commissioner Mourey voiced his concern that the 2,000 provided to two of the organizations might not be enough to make a significant difference for them.

7. Agenda Item Considerations

Chair Catarata noted the importance of sending official thank you letters from the state and asked that it be added to the April agenda.

- Motion:** That Commission and Staff work on sending follow-up and thank-you letters to all applicants with either an amount and total or a letter of denial.
- By:** Chair Catarata
- Second:** Vice Chair Membreno
- Vote:** Passed unanimously

Vice Chair Membreno requested that the youth commissioner application be added to the next agenda.

Motion: That all applicants of NCOM attend the next meeting to meet the sitting Commissioners, and to put forward all of their applications to the Governor's office to see if they will be accepted or denied by the state.

By: Chair Catarata

Second: Commissioner Nava

Motion: Passed unanimously

8. Public Comment #2

Commissioner Nava thanked the members of the public who came and spoke during today's meeting, noting that this was a very insightful process. The Commissioner noted that he is looking forward to seeing the impact that these grants have.

Chair Catarata noted his appreciation of every single applicant, whether they received funding or not, and encouraged each of the applicants to apply again for the next and future grants. The Chair reiterated that the Commission's work and vision has been charted out from late great Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, who encouraged the support of mentees. Chair Catarata explained that there is no other convening body in the state doing this type of time sensitive, time consuming, and challenging work, and as such, the Chair expressed his appreciation for the leadership, the Commissioners, the NDE staff, and the members of the public.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the May 7, 2025 NCOM meeting at 4:03 p.m.

By: Chair Catarata

Second: Commissioner Nava