

**New Mexico Bioscience Authority (BSA) Board of Directors
Regular Meeting**

March 20, 2024, 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

317 Commercial St. NE, Suite 311, Albuquerque, NM

Present: Dale Dekker (Chair), Greg Byrnes, Dana Catron, Tom Kieft, Paul Laur, Francisco Pallares, Dr. David Perkins, Tanner Schaub

Absent: Christos Christodoulou, Prisca Tiasse, Nora Sackett

Staff Present: Stephanie Tofighi, Sterling Nichols

#	Agenda Items	Board Actions
1.	Call to order and Confirmation of Quorum	The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM. A quorum was confirmed.
2.	Approval of Minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> January 18th, BOD Meeting 	<p>The Chair called for a motion to approve the January 18th, 2024, meeting minutes.</p> <p>After he called attention to a name and title change needed on page eight, a motion was made by Paul Laur to approve the January 18th minutes with a second from Greg Byrnes.</p> <p>A roll call vote of all board members was called with seven in the affirmative, none in opposition, one in abstention and three absent. The vote was as follows:</p> <p>Byrnes-Affirm, Catron-Affirm, Christodoulou-Absent, Dekker-Abstain, Kieft-Affirm, Laur-Affirm, Pallares-Affirm, Perkins-Affirm, Sackett-Absent, Schaub-Affirm, Tiasse-Absent</p>
3.	Announcements and Chair's Report	<p><u>Chair's Report: March</u></p> <p>NMBSA Chair Dale Dekker provided an update on the following items of interest for the month of March.</p> <p><u>2024 Legislative Update</u></p> <p>The Chair announced that current efforts to get the 2024 Co-Investment legislation passed have not been successful. He informed the board that NMBSA Director Paul Laur would</p>

		provide more insight on the Co-Investment Legislation in the upcoming March Executive Committee Report; Agenda Item 7.
4.	President's Report	<p><u>President's Report: March</u></p> <p>NMBSA President Dr. David Perkins stated that he had no announcements for the March President's report but expressed interest in hearing Director Laur's perspective on the Co-Investment Legislation in the March Executive Committee Report.</p>
5.	Executive Director's Report	<p>Executive Director (ED) Stephanie Tofighi provided an update on the following items for the month of March.</p> <p><u>Career Development in Bioscience</u></p> <p>ED Tofighi has been active by participating in events relating to career development in bioscience. Tofighi said the state has recently included the BSA's participation in career events which makes for an added voice in the conversation that relates to the bioscience industry as well as business development in New Mexico.</p> <p><u>National Science Foundation Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies Grant (ExLENT) NSF 23-507</u></p> <p>The BSA seeks to submit a proposal for the ExLENT grant in September of 2024. Additional details would be discussed during the Mission Accomplishment Committee report; Agenda Item 9.</p> <p><u>NMBSA-UNM Facilitated Internship Program Update</u></p> <p>A potential candidate for the Facilitated Internship position was interviewed, however the candidate accepted a different position that relates to their doctoral interests. The BSA will continue to move forward in their search for interns by participating in the Facilitated Internship Meet and Greet Event at the UNM Anderson School of Management on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. The Meet and Greet event will focus on educating potential interns about the BSA and its mission for</p>

		<p>bioscience while seeking a candidate to assist with the New Mexico Bioscience Connect Ecomap logistics and operations.</p> <p><u>New Mexico Bioscience Connect Ecomap</u></p> <p>ED Tofighi announced that the Ecomap is on schedule to launch following a successful introduction of the Ecomap at the New Mexico Rural Bioscience Ecosystem Meeting at Spaceport America on February 28, 2024. Attendees at the meeting were given a tutorial on Ecomap. Attendees provided valuable feedback that will be essential for its growth.</p> <p><u>NMBSA-Ecomap Technologies Webinar</u></p> <p>ED Tofighi conducted a recent webinar with Ecomap Technologies regarding the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Growth Accelerator Fund Competition.</p> <p><u>Santa Fe Business Incubator (SFBI) Meeting</u></p> <p>ED Tofighi met with SFBI Program Manager Carl McClendon and the New Mexico Angels President Drew Tulchin to discuss the proposal the SFBI submitted to the SBA’s Growth Accelerator Fund Competition Grant. ED Tofighi noted that she can provide grant submission support to SFBI member companies in support of the SFBI’s goals to improve the economy of northern New Mexico.</p> <p><u>New Mexico Biomedical & Biotechnical Association (NMBio) Lunch and Learn Event; February 20, 2024</u></p> <p>ED Tofighi and NMBSA Director Nora Sackett presented at the NMBio Lunch and Learn event which addressed increasing visibility for organizations such as the BSA and the New Mexico Economic Development Department. The event focused on increasing their impact. The Lunch and Learn event allowed ED Tofighi to formally introduce the New Mexico Bioscience Ecomap while providing insight on the BSA’s efforts to support bioscience business growth.</p> <p><u>New Mexico Career Development Association Annual Conference at UNM Valencia Campus; February 22, 2024</u></p>
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6.	Mercury Bio Update	<p>Dr. Richard Sayre, Chief Science Officer at Mercury Bio company located in Santa Fe, New Mexico joined the BSA’s March 2024 board meeting to present on Mercury Bio and its current focus on developing molecular drug-delivery technologies.</p> <p>Dr. Sayre is an accomplished scientist with a Doctorate in Molecular Biophysics from the University of Iowa. Dr. Sayre’s work experience has been very diverse. Sayre has served on notable scientific consortiums such as the <i>BioCassava Plus</i> program, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which involved the engineering of Cassava plants in Africa to become a one source food. Sayre also served as Chief Science Officer for a national consortium funded by the United States Department of Energy to reduce the price of algal biofuel with a consortium consisting of 12 companies, 3 national labs and</p>

		<p>15 research universities from the US. Sayre has been recognized by Nature Magazine as one of five plant scientists that can change the world.</p> <p>Through screen share, Dr. Sayre presented on Mercury Bio’s focus on enhancing therapeutic drug stability, drug delivery and delivery efficiency using yeast extracellular vesicles.</p> <p>Mercury Bio</p> <p>Mercury Bio evolved from the original company which was named Spartina Biotechnologies. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Mercury Bio saw an opportunity to pivot the company and focus on therapeutics that would address SARS-CoV2. At the time of SARS-CoV2 there were no therapeutics for people that were infected. Mercury Bio then took advantage of the opportunity and decided to produce such therapeutics based on RNA Technology.</p> <p>Soon, vaccines became available to protect against the COVID virus based on messenger delivery RNA’s. One of the technologies that made RNA Vaccines and therapeutics possible was the delivery system. If RNA is injected to an animal or human, it degrades rapidly. While great promise for RNA Therapeutics has existed, it was the development of the delivery system that ushered the technology into fruition.</p> <p>The Current Delivery system used by vaccine makers; Moderna and Phizer is <i>Lipid Nanoparticles</i>.</p> <p>The Challenge: The Current leading drug delivery platforms have multiple limitations.</p> <p><u>Limitations for Lipid Nanoparticles (LNPs)</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Transfections rates • They are effective for single use applications. • Lipids are synthetic and not natural. Synthetic lipids can be toxic.
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		<p style="text-align: center;">CONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LNPs are unstable and require very low storage temperatures. • LNPs have limited access to organs in the body. <p>As a result of the limitations and challenges for LNPs, one of the newer technologies to address the challenges of LNPs is <i>Human Exosomes</i>.</p> <p>Human Exosomes can be a safer alternative to LNPs but have many of the same challenges and limitations as LNPs.</p> <p><u>Human Exosomes</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">PROS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects nucleic acids from degradation. • Native Lipids are safe. • Potential for cell specific targeting <p style="text-align: center;">CONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive to produce and can be very costly to scale. • Contain off-target RNAs. <p>Mercury Bio’s solution for effective drug delivery is to harness <i>yeast extracellular vesicles (yEVs)</i> from <i>Saccharomyces boulardii</i> for safe, effective delivery of therapeutic molecules to cells. yEVs are a safe, stable, low-cost solution for drug delivery. <i>Saccharomyces boulardii</i> produces a lipid contained vesicle which can package drugs, proteins and nucleic acids.</p> <p>yEVs are amenable to genetic engineering. Their membrane proteins can be modified to anchor ligands and/or enzymes.</p> <p>yEVs can be targeted to specific cells to enhance drug delivery efficiency and reduce off target side effects. They increase the efficiency of drug delivery while substantially reducing potential off-target side effects.</p> <p>In contrast to LPNs and human exosomes, Lyophilized yEVs and their RNA cargo are stable for months at room temperature.</p>
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		<p>Mercury Bio’s current ‘Targeting’ efforts for utilization of yEVs</p> <p>Mercury Bio is currently involved in a joint effort with Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) through funding from the New Mexico Economic Development Department’s Division of Science and Technology. LANL is developing a Machine Learning or Artificial Intelligence tool to design ligands that will interact with cognate receptors. So far, they have been able to design ligands with binding energies that have high affinity potential.</p> <p>Experimental Studies</p> <p>Mercury Bio is conducting experimental studies that synthesize peptides in <i>E. coli</i> that will be distributed to LANL’s Chemistry Division who will conduct experimental studies.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Mercury Bio understands the value of yEVs which can be applicable to the delivery of various therapeutic RNAs including: Messenger RNAs, Small Interfering RNAs, Self Replicating RNAs, and Amplifying RNAs</p> <p>Mercury Bio has demonstrated they can load all these molecules into yEVs and deliver them potentially.</p> <p>Packaging Therapeutic Proteins</p> <p>Mercury Bio is eager to load proteins in particular antibodies into yEVs in order to deliver antibodies intracellularly within the cell which is not possible with current technology. Currently there are antibody therapies on the market for Alzheimer’s, but the challenge will be in the delivery. If Mercury Bio can develop a way to deliver antibodies inside of a vesicle package directly to cells, they would anticipate that intracellular delivery of antibodies would be much more efficient than extracellular delivery. There are great opportunities for newly developed protein therapeutics.</p> <p>Small Molecule Drugs</p>
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7.	<p>Executive Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Investment Legislation Update Report 	<p>NMBSA Director Pau Laur informed the BOD of the latest developments involving the stalled 2024 Co-Investment legislation.</p> <p>Director Laur said following the 2024 Legislative session in which the Co-Investment bill would not be messaged by the Governor, he contacted Alex Greenberg who is the Economic Development Policy Advisor for Governor Lujan-Grisham and a former BSA board member. Laur met with Greenberg at the</p>

		<p>Governor’s office to discuss some recommendations for the Co-Investment Legislation.</p> <p>In reviewing the Legislation, Greenberg expressed his concerns using three categories: Due Diligence, Optics and Presentation.</p> <p>1. Due Diligence – An assurance that a core competency exists to administer large sums of monies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Greenberg considered following the lead of the New Mexico State Investment Council (SIC) ➤ Using a third party such as Mercer Global Investments Inc. who conduct’s investment opportunities for Government agencies <p>Laur concluded the Due Diligence category stating that following the 2022 Legislative Session, suggestions were made to reduce portions of the bill, however, Greenberg proposed to expand it by citing more specific language and terms. Greenberg offered his assistance in reviewing drafts of the bill but with the understanding Gubernatorial approval is not guaranteed.</p> <p>2. Optics – An assurance that conflicts of interest do not exist.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Generate local media interest by initiating ‘Op-Ed’ pieces favoring the legislation. ➤ Garner public opinion that expresses support for the legislation <p>3. Presentation – Adding more structure to the bill by including more specific language, terms and conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Try to describe the size of an investment depending on the investment stage for the company of interest. ➤ Add more structure for implementation of the bill. ➤ Hire staff to manage the fund while assuring resources exist for proper fund management. ➤ Find other funds to complement ‘State Money.’ *** ➤ Provide specific language in the bill about repaying the limited partners on the distribution of funds if companies are successful.
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8.	Finance Committee Report	<p>Monthly Financial Statement Review: January & February</p> <p>Strategy and Policy Director Ryan Cangiolosi presented the January and February 2024 Financial statements to the BOD via Screen Share:</p> <p><u>January 2024</u></p>

	<p>Ecomap Technology Job/Internship Module</p>	<p>Mr. Cangioli reported that there were no significant changes to the budget for the month of January. The only changes to the budget were for expenses such as staff salaries, rent, and Fringe benefits. An upcoming change to the budget will be attending the International BIO Conference in San Diego for the month of June 2024. Costs will cover Executive Director Stephanie Tofighi’s participation at the BIO conference’s New Mexico Pavilion.</p> <p><u>February 2024</u></p> <p>Mr. Cangioli reported that there were no significant changes to the budget for the month of February except for Staff Salaries, Rent, Legal Fees and other operational expenses. The Chair added that the state appropriations have been received.</p> <p>Following the January and February financial statements presentation, the Chair called for a motion to approve.</p> <p>A motion was made by Tom Kieft to approve both financial statements with a second from Francisco Pallares</p> <p>A roll call vote of all board members was called with eight in the affirmative, none in opposition, none in abstention and three absent. The vote was as follows:</p> <p>Byrnes-Affirm, Catron-Affirm, Christodoulou-Absent, Dekker-Affirm, Kieft-Affirm, Laur-Affirm, Pallares-Affirm, Perkins-Affirm, Sackett-Absent, Schaub-Affirm, Tiasse-Absent</p> <p><u>Ecomap Technology Job/Internship Module</u></p> <p>Through Screen Share, Tofighi shared the Ecomap Technologies add on costs for the inclusion of a Job/Internship module to the current Bioscience Ecomap. Tofighi explained that Job/Internship module is an addition to the Bioscience Ecomap created by Ecomap Technologies focusing on bioscience in New Mexico. Previously, the BOD approved the basic Ecomap programming package, but the approved package did not include a module for a Workforce Portal. However, as the BSA approaches areas of workforce development utilizing the Ecomap, it would be very beneficial to include the portal as an add-on, in that it specifically aligns</p>
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		<p>with the Governor’s Center of Excellence that calls for the engagement of student populations she said. The add-on will meet the needs of students who are interested in engaging with the state’s bioscience companies.</p> <p>The price of the add-on which is a ‘Workforce Portal’ will be \$5,000. The Portal will contain curated information on jobs, internships, apprenticeships, and various opportunities for students with an interest in bioscience. The Portal will be unique in that the information will be compiled from start-ups companies the Ecomap is tracking. Funding for the requested \$5k will come from the SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition Grant.</p> <p>The Chair called for a motion to approve the \$5K ‘Add-On’ request for an Ecomap Work Portal.</p> <p>A motion was made by Francisco Pallares to approve the \$5,000 request with a second from Dana Catron.</p> <p>A roll call vote of all board members was called with eight in the affirmative, none in opposition, none in abstention and three absent. The vote was as follows:</p> <p>Byrnes-Affirm, Catron-Affirm, Christodoulou-Absent, Dekker-Affirm, Kieft-Affirm, Laur-Affirm, Pallares-Affirm, Perkins-Affirm, Sackett-Absent, Schaub-Affirm, Tiasse-Absent</p>
9.	<p>Mission Accomplishment Committee Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSF 23-507 Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT) Proposal Update 	<p>At the March 13th Mission Accomplishment Committee Meeting, Director Christos Christodoulou suggested for a niche division of biotechnology the BSA could be immersed in. For Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies (ExLENT), Biotechnology is a technology that has broad implications. The discussion at the March 13th MAC meeting revolved around developing a grant narrative around the significance of biology in space and the potential for students to participate in internships with aerospace companies throughout the state that are incorporating bioscience related aspects into their product and service development. A collaboration with NEXUS could be valuable moving forward.</p> <p>With such broad implications, the BSA seeks to engage with the different categories of ExLENT to create internships for</p>

		<p>Pre-Medicine undergraduates and Graduate students that are looking for Biochemistry and any Study of Medicine related Graduate programs. The internships would allow students to get experience in the Technological and Entrepreneurship aspects of medical research that would determine a continued interest in medicine while evaluating the potential of their intellectual property and what opportunities it could create.</p> <p>In recognizing the potentiality for students to get internship experience, Tofighi has been in conversation with Christina Salas; a Professor in Biomedical Engineering and an appointee for The Department of Orthopedics at the UNM Health Sciences Center School of Medicine. Salas has experience serving as a liaison for the Medicine and Engineering departments in which the BSA has particular interest. Internships will be three-year programs with a focus at UNM in the first year and collaborating with New Mexico State and New Mexico Tech in the succeeding years. Tofighi continued stating there are three tracts for the ExLENT program:</p> <p>Pivot Tract – Tract for students who have a specific discipline of study then pivot. Students usually pivot from a non-STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) field of discipline into a STEM field of discipline.</p> <p>Beginnings Tract – <i>The BSA will target the beginnings tract.</i> For students possessing an introductory background in STEM. The target is for undergrad Pre-Med students looking for a specific domain of a STEM degree and bypassing the Entrepreneurship and Research tracts.</p> <p>Exploration Tract – Measures what experience the student has in STEM.</p> <p>In closing, ED Tofighi mentioned that the BSA submit a proposal for the ExLENT Grant by mid-September of 2024. The ExLENT Grant is for \$1 Million over three years with most of the funding directed at the creation of paid internships. In addition to the ExLENT submission, Tofighi will work on producing a White Paper for review at the next MAC meeting on April 10th 2024.</p>
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10.	Other NMBSA Related Business Discussions	<p><u>2024 International BIO Conference</u></p> <p>NMBSA Director Greg Bynes announced that The New Mexico Biomedical and Biotechnical Association (NMBio) will be co-partnering with the Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA) for the planning of events at the BIO Conference' New Mexico Pavilion.</p> <p>At present there are more financial expectations to meet before the conference which is in June Byrnes said. However, we have quite a few companies that have made commitments to participate at the Pavilion and hopefully the companies that submitted applications for STEP Grants will receive them. Burns admitted there will be good representation from the central part of the state for companies in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Sandoval County. Organizations such as Sandia National Labs have committed and will facilitate a sponsorship. Byrnes noted that he is waiting to see if Los Alamos National Labs will commit once they have personnel in place. Overall, everything is developing according to plans for this year's conference Byrnes said.</p>
11.	Adjourn	<p>The Chair called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.</p> <p>A motion was made by Tom Kieft with a second from Francisco Pallares</p> <p>A roll call vote of all board members was called with eight in the affirmative, none in opposition, none in abstention and three absent. The vote was as follows:</p> <p>Byrnes-Affirm, Catron-Affirm, Christodoulou-Absent, Dekker-Affirm, Kieft-Affirm, Laur-Affirm, Pallares-Affirm, Perkins-Affirm, Sackett-Absent, Schaub-Affirm, Tiasse-Absent</p> <p>The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:53 PM.</p>

Respectfully submitted by Sterling Nichols and Stephanie Tofighi