

**ARIZONA SPACE COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 10:00 A.M.
University of Arizona (UA)/Applied Research Bldg., Rm 250
1420 E. Helen Street, Tucson, AZ 85719**

*Items which may be acted upon by the Board are indicated with an asterisk below.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Brett Mecum called the meeting of the Arizona Space Commission to order at 10:06 a.m. A quorum of voting members confirmed present.

Board Members Present:

Grant A. Anderson - online
James F. Bell - in person
Jim Cantrell – in person
Megan Fitzgerald - online
Erika Hamden – in person
Shawn Linam – in person
Brett Mecum - in person
Lisa Morris - in person
Len Munsil - in person
Michael P. Vargas - in person

Board Members Not Present:

Michael McGuire
Douglas J. Nicholls
Steve Zylstra

At 10:09 am, Chairperson Mecum stepped out to take a call and designated Commissioner Vargas to preside over the meeting in his absence.

II. Welcome

Kim J. Patten, Sr. Associate Vice President & Chief of Staff, Research & Partnerships, at the University of Arizona provided a presentation which emphasized the \$560.5 million in annual economic impact of the university's space science activities to the Arizona economy. UA is in the top five for institutions receiving NASA financial support. Other



distinctions include being the first public university to lead a NASA mission (Phoenix) and the first university to lead a new frontiers mission (OSIRIS-REx). During her remarks, she noted critical infrastructure located at the Applied Research Building such as the largest thermal vacuum chamber of any university in the world, the advanced and additive manufacturing laboratory, the imaging technology lab and the CubeStat Lab for fabrication of nanosatellites and small instruments. The University is launching a Space and National Security Institute to align space research with national defense priorities such as satellite technology, secure communications, space resilience, cybersecurity and quantum systems.

III. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Cantrell shared:

- He attended the New Worlds Conference in Austin and highlighted the establishment of the Arizona Space Commission.

Commissioner Linam shared:

- Qwaltec is a member of the Amentum's Jacobs Technology Inc. team which was recently awarded the \$4B, 10-year Space Force Range Contract (SFRC) by the United States Space Force (USSF) Space Systems Command (SSC). Qwaltec will provide support across the contract scope.

Commissioner Mecum shared:

- He presented at the Space Roundtable at Pima Community College the night before to an engaged crowd.

Commissioner Hamden shared:

- UA submitted a recent application to NASA for a UA Space Institute Mission PUFFINS—Polarimetry in the Ultraviolet to Find Features in INterStellar dust), which if secured would result in a \$20 million contract for small satellite opportunity.

Commissioner Bell shared:

- Following the Arizona Aerospace Defense Manufacturing (AADM) event, he received positive feedback on the establishment of the Arizona Space Commission.

IV. Future Agenda Items/Locations

Commissioners were encouraged to submit ideas for future meetings and to consider hosting. With the intent to have a statewide impact, the Commission intends to organize meetings in alternate locations.

At 10:23 am, Chairperson Mecum returned and resumed presiding over the meeting.



V. Election of Vice Chairperson*

Three Commissioners submitted statements of interest for the Vice Chairperson position, Grant Anderson, Erika Hamden and Shawn Linam. Chair Mecum made a motion to nominate the three Commissioners. Commissioner Bell seconded the motion. With no other interest in the Vice Chairperson position, Commissioner Bell motioned to close the nominations and Commissioner Cantrell seconded the motion.

Commissioners Anderson, Hamden and Linam were given a few minutes to articulate their interest. The Chair called for a vote and noted that should there not be a majority of votes for one of the three, they would drop the individual with the lowest number of votes and go to another round.

Round One:

- Grant Anderson voted for himself
- Jim Bell voted for Shawn Linam
- Jim Cantrell voted for Shawn Linam
- Megan Fitzgerald voted for Grant Anderson
- Erika Hamden voted for herself
- Shawn Linam voted for herself
- Lisa Morris voted for Grant Anderson
- Len Munsil voted for Grant Anderson
- Michael Vargas voted for Erika Hamden
- Brett Mecum abstained

Since no candidate received a majority, Erika Hamden was removed from the slate and a second round of voting for Grant Anderson and Shawn Linam proceeded.

Round Two:

- Grant Anderson voted for himself
- Jim Bell voted for Shawn Linam
- Jim Cantrell voted for Shawn Linam
- Megan Fitzgerald voted for Grant Anderson
- Erika Hamden voted for Shawn Linam
- Shawn Linam voted for herself
- Lisa Morris voted for Grant Anderson
- Len Munsil voted for Grant Anderson
- Michael Vargas voted for Grant Anderson
- Brett Mecum voted for Grant Anderson

Grant Anderson was elected Vice Chairperson.



VI. Charter Discussion and Possible Action*

Marisa Walker, Executive Vice President, Infrastructure & Sustainability, Arizona Commerce Authority, reviewed the draft charter which aligns with state statute. Language for Chair and Vice Chairperson for a 2-year term of office was suggested. Commissioner Morris suggested staggering the terms for leadership and Commissioner Cantrell recommended rotating the chairperson's position. Ideas for modifications or additions to the charter are to be provided by Monday close of business.

VII. University Tech Transfer Presentation

Douglas Hockstad, Associate Vice President of Tech Launch Arizona (TLA) highlighted intellectual property & licensing, venture development, and graduate students and financial resources as the three pillars to support startup creation. TLA has established an online Startup Hub (<https://techlaunch.Arizona.edu/startuphub>) and the Wildcat Philanthropic Seed Fund to link opportunities and high potential investors. Since the establishment of TLA in 2013, they have seen 157 UA startups compared with 69 launched between 1944 to 2012. UA innovation generated \$1.6 billion in economic output over the last 5 years. Mr. Hockstad noted emerging challenges that could chill investment include attacks on research support and tech transfer laws, reductions in federal funding and indirect support, and recent suggestions that the federal government should own a part of university inventions.

VIII. Arizona Optical Metrology (AOM) Launch and Orbit in the New Space Industry Presentation

Tyler Steele, Director of Sales and Marketing with Arizona Optical Metrology LLC shared that the company was founded in 2009 by two University faculty members -Drs. Chunyu Zhao and Jim Burge. AOM has around 20 employees and offices in Tucson, AZ and Rochester, NY. The company designs and manufactures computer-generated holograms (CGH) for use in systems that measure optical surfaces like mirrors and lens. Dr. Burge works on mirror metrology processes and fabrication technologies that enable some of Earth's most ambitious telescopes projects e.g. James Webb Space Telescope. The company recently collaborated on the FIREBall-2 (Faint Intergalactic-medium Redshifted Emission Balloon) project with the UA Steward Observatory and the NASA Space Telescope Mission Aspera which the University is leading. There are several challenges faced by the company but none greater than the need for highly specialized expertise and talent.

IX. Consent Agenda*

Jim Cantrell moved to approve the minutes for the August 13, 2025 Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bell and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair Mecum noted that at the last meeting, the Commissioners identified multiple working groups. He requested that each Commissioner rank their preferences to serve



as he intends to make assignments next week.

Marisa Walker updated the Commissioners on the proposal received from the Paragon Policy Fellows to assign a team of students to support the Commission by doing a landscape scan of other state space activities and Arizona's strengths.

Commissioner Bell requested an update on the marketing plan. Marisa Walker indicated that the marketing and communication working group will assist with this effort. Commissioner Hamden noted that they have a graphics person who has developed a mockup of a potential logo. Commissioner Morris shared that she also has a graphic designer that could help design content.

X. Call to the Public

The meeting was opened for public comment.

Ian O'Grady, Policy Advisor, Hobbs Administration, underscored his appreciation for the volunteer leadership of the commission. Commissioner Mecum asked that he communicate gratitude to the Governor for her support.

Stephen Fleeming underscored the value of maintaining a statewide approach and avoiding the pitfalls of other states which have largely come to focus solely on one municipality.

Jonathan Stratton with SpaceOps noted the space strengths throughout the state but notably in Phoenix, Yuma, Flagstaff, and Tucson. He emphasized the importance of growing the industry ecosystem and noted lessons learned in California, Texas, and New Mexico.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm following a motion by Commissioner Cantrell and seconded by Commissioner Morris.

