ARIZONA SPACE COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 11, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.
Arizona Christian University
1 W. Firestorm Way (Commons Building) Glendale, AZ 85306

I. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Brett Mecum led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Mecum called the meeting of the Arizona Space Commission to order at 10:01 A.M.

Marisa Walker, Executive Vice President and Administrator, Arizona Commerce Authority, proceeded with the roll call. A quorum of voting members confirmed present.

Board Members Present:

- Grant A. Anderson - in person
- James F. Bell – online
- Megan Fitzgerald – in person
- Shawn Linam – in person
- Michael McGuire--online
- Brett Mecum – in person
- Len Munsil – in person
- Lisa Morris - in person
- Michael P. Vargas – in person
- Steve Zylstra – in person

Board Members Not Present:

- Jim Cantrell
- Erika Hamden
- Douglas Nichols

III. Consent Agenda

Chairman Mecum introduced the first agenda item: approval of the February 11, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Anderson moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Munsil. The minutes were approved without objection.

IV. Welcome Remarks

Commissioner & President of Arizona Christian University (ACU) welcomed attendees to his campus and noted that the campus was a former WWII Air Base where pilots were trained. ACU was established 15 years ago as a small bible college with 350 students. Seven years ago, it acquired the

property and emerged as one of the fastest growing liberal arts universities. Commissioner Munsil invited Dr. Jeff Green, Provost & Chief Academic Officer of ACU to address the group. After expressing his privilege to welcome the Arizona Space Commission, Dr. Green underscored the role of institutions, leadership, discipline and people for technology to progress. The future of space will require engineers, entrepreneurs and policymakers who possess sound judgement and a strong sense of responsibility. Space is increasingly impacting our economy and national security. Arizona's stewardship and planning for water infrastructure and other investments positions it well for many of the key requirements going forward. Institutions like ACU recognize that the exploration of space requires graduates who can think ethically about power, prosperity and responsibility.

Following his remarks, Dr. Green responded to questions. He indicated that ACU has courses in math and science and is planning a fully fledge engineering program focused on cybersecurity and robotics. Sensitive to the impact of AI, ACU promotes training in positions not expected to be displaced.

V. Presentation

Col. Omar Perea, Chief, National Security Space Ecosystems, Space Systems Command, U.S. Space Force (USSF) joined the meeting virtually to discuss partnership opportunities for states. He noted that a few years ago he was put on a special detail to work with the state of Texas as it stood up its Space Commission and ensure alignment with the federal government. He highlighted a new command, a part of the Task Force Futures under General Robert T. Claude, which aims to shape the future of military space operations. Because the US Space Force is small establishing strategic alliances with external entities like the ASC is a priority.

He highlighted the awards by the Space Strategic Technology Institute to ASU (remote sensing) and UA (space operations) as established relationships with the USSF. Col. Perea emphasized several opportunities for aligning USSF & ASC, which included:

Arizona's Space Ecosystem. USSF informed support to Commission regarding a coalition spacing government-industry-academia.

Identifying and Addressing Interagency Challenges. AZ could formalize a similar approach to TX to coordinate spaceport permitting or test site support, rather than leaving it to each region to advance.

Enabling and Formalizing Public-Private Partnerships. AZ could serve as a matchmaker to support shared goals between public and private sector by leveraging Cooperative Agreements, Other Transaction Authorities, Partnership Intermediary Agreements, R&D grants, structured consortia etc.

Maximizing Arizona's Share of Federal Space Investment. By focusing on federal range safety and inland launch studies, AZ can deepen relationships that inform NDAA language and funding.

Strengthening Workforce Development and Shared Infrastructure. Partnerships with industry to guide workforce and training programing.

Col. Perea underscored engagement with two organizations within USSF, the Commercial Space Office (COMSO) and SpaceWERKs. He mentioned the three pillars for setting the stage for the space ecosystem which included:

Legislative

- Market Arizona
- Create intergovernmental agreements with other states and federal agencies
- Arrange and provide funding for major federal offices, bases or facilities
- Secure access to space-faring vehicles
- All for temporary closure of highways, venues, or areas for space related activities
- Provide Public Information Act exceptions for applications and activities conducted under the ASC

Financial

- Establish Space Exploration Space Systems
- Capabilities Fund or the like to provide funding for 1) Contract awards for Arizona priorities; and 2) Grant awards for others
- Establish Consortium comprised of representatives from higher education institutions, industry leaders and elected officials.

Partnerships

- Work with USSF; NASA & Air Force Research Lab (AFRL); National Labs through Cooperative Agreements and org; Partnerships Intermediary Agreements; Public Private Companies and Universities & Research Institutions

Col. Perea offered military experts who can brief Arizona policy makers; and to assist with economic development initiatives around technology transfer. USSF anticipates additional funding and encourages the Commission to explore a small contract to initiate a relationship.

Chairman Mecum noted the relationships with the Space Force Association, Arizona's SFA chapter and USSF Southern Command. Col Perea intends to reach out to those entities to be helpful.

Commissioner Morris requested more background on his detail to the Texas Space Commission. Col Perea noted previously established relationships and significant financial resources as key motivations initially but stressed that those factors are not a prerequisite for partnership.

Commissioner Zylstra queried where he was located. Col Perea indicated that he relocated from El Segundo California to El Paso, TX.

Commissioner Anderson asked about Arizona's perceived strengths and weaknesses. Col. Perea mentioned that based on his perspective and work with the University Consortium, our academic institutions are "ahead of the game and doing some great things in power propulsion and remote sensing". Priority areas include alternative energy forms for space and critical minerals/supply chain. He highlighted that across the US there is a need for inland launch facilities. Key next steps include determining whether FAA would permit inland launch facilities and what systems would be needed. Much of the space activities are classified, Col. Perea would like to work with Arizona to help design a roadmap for small businesses to achieve clearance.

Commissioner Bell sought clarification on partnerships and whether the agreements were advanced directly with the Texas Commission or does it serve as an intermediary to establish collaborations with

entities like USSF. Col Perea noted that Texas is doing both. He did caution that establishing a PA (partnership agreement) can be challenging with states, but it will depend on what is being proposed and the preferred methodology. Good ideas could secure seed funding with a cost match. Proposed next steps include Commissioners Vargas and Bell exploring the authority of the Commission to advance direct partnership agreements with USSF and other models of engagement, such as the Ohio Federal Research Network.

VI. Strategic Plan & Working Group Discussion

Chairman Mecum reiterated that Vice Chairman Anderson is leading the strategic planning effort. The intention is to produce a draft by June and potentially take a hiatus in July and August.

Vice Chairman Anderson underscored the need to have a final draft by September to complete reviews and production. Each working group is encouraged to outline a SWOT analysis. Initiatives are expected to emerge from this exercise. Since there will be potential overlap, working groups are encouraged to identify areas of crosspollination. Although there will be numerous potential opportunities, the strategy should identify the items that have a high priority or potential for success. Tactics will need to be firmly linked to performance metrics. Weekly meetings are encouraged to ensure progress.

Commissioner Morris suggested a whiteboard session to identify where we want to be in X years and work backwards to determine what needs to be undertaken to reach that goal. The SWOT can inform the "now" and create a baseline for iterative steps every two years. For instance, developing a robust supply chain could begin with a University Capstone project to design and populate a database.

Commission Zylstra noted that seeing the SWOTs from the various working groups would be helpful. A logical next step would be to combine the content for further evaluation.

Commissioner Morris suggested a half-day workshop. Commissioner Linam requested more clarity on the strategic priorities, which would make regularly scheduled working sessions more productive. Commissioner Zylstra recommended dedicating the next three meetings to the strategic planning effort.

Chairman Mecum encouraged the Commissioners to determine the most viable next steps for producing the plan. He emphasized that the first report will be a foundational framework for the two-year reporting cadence required by statue. He underscored the urgency and importance of the plan. The Commission enjoys strong bipartisan support, however that may not always be the case.

Responding to Commissioner Zylstra, Ms. Walker indicated the document would undergo a production process to ensure a consistent voice and a polished look.

The Commission took a break at 11:28 and called back to order at 11:35.

VII. Discussion

1) **Charter**—Chairman Mecum requested proposed additions and modifications. Commissioner Morris recommended adding a Treasurer position, a process for collecting funds and the interaction with the ACA. Chairman Mecum suggested two-year terms for leadership positions. Commissioner Zylstra noted that these positions should be subject to elections and potential reelections. The Commissioners were instructed to track proposed changes on the share point document.

2) **Space Marshal Designation Process** -this item was deferred to the next meeting.

3) **NASA Grant**-Commissioner Vargas provided details on a workforce development funding opportunity. The SciTech Institute in collaboration with the Arizona Tech Council is preparing a response. The three-year, $1.5 million dollar grant is a unique opportunity to address the talent pipeline for the space industry. Commissioners are encouraged to consider submitting a letter.

4) **Commissioner Updates**-

i) Commissioner Morris indicated that she has left Virgin Galactic to lead operations for Solestial, an ASU startup with an innovative silicon solar power technology.

ii) The Commissioner wished happy birthday to Commissioners Zylstra and Hamden.

iii) Commissioner Vargas shared information on a private showing of Project Hail Mary in Tempe on March 29th.

iv) Chairman Mecum updated the group on the upcoming hearing on the space commission license plate and welcomed others to testify in support.

v) Commissioner Munsil made a motion for SB1020 remain a standalone bill. Commissioner Fitzgerald seconded. Motion passed without objection.

vi) Commissioner Bell noted a recent NASA funding opportunity for science payloads, carried by commercial providers, for a future mission to the moon. There were an estimated 100 responses to Step One and 75-80 Step Two submissions. ASU participated in approximately a dozen of them. UA, NAU and ASU involvement in various proposals exceed that of many NASA centers.

VIII. Call to the Public

An attendee requested information on the working groups. Chairman Mecum identified the four working groups.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 P.M. following a motion by Commissioner Bell, seconded by Commissioner Zylstra, and unanimously approved.