



HLC Accreditation Evidence Document

Title: Foundations of Excellence Final Report

Office of Origin: Office of the Provost

Description: The final report of the "Foundations of Excellence" initiative taken up by the university in the 2012-13 academic year to address problems and solutions to first year experiences of students. The "primary outcome of this project was an evidence-based action plan for institutional change and improvement" (i), which entailed considerations of academic advisement, new student orientation, and assessment.

Date: 2013

Foundations of Excellence

Final Report



The First Year in High Gear



June 2013

The University of New Mexico



As this state's flagship research university serving a highly diverse student body, the University of New Mexico is committed to offering a high-quality education marked by a challenging and supportive environment that provides all students with the foundation for academic and personal success in the first year and beyond.

 |

Foreword

The University of New Mexico was one of eleven four-year institutions participating in the Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year Self Study, an important campus-wide project which took place on the UNM Main Campus during the 2012-13 academic year. This process was conducted in collaboration with the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, which has worked with over 300 two- and four-year colleges and universities across the country in order to develop the standards that constitute a model first year.

The primary outcome of this project was an evidence-based action plan for institutional change and improvement that will be implemented in order to increase the quality of the first-year educational experience. We expect this to produce improved retention rates for our freshman class, place students on a solid trajectory toward graduation, and demonstrate national leadership in the area of student academic success.

This report is the culmination of eight months of dedicated work by over two hundred members of the University of New Mexico community, including students, faculty, and staff. The centerpiece of this report is a plan for improving the first-year experience that will provide all students with the foundations for academic and personal success in the first year and beyond.



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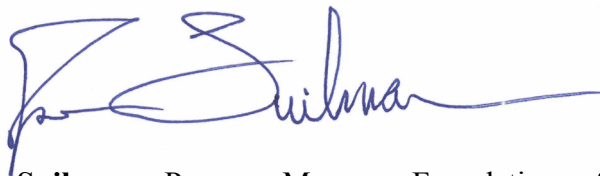
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Acknowledgements

The University of New Mexico would like to thank the faculty, students, and staff who gave their time and energy to the Foundations of Excellence® process. They formed the committees, provided a candid assessment of the first-year experience, and generated the many ideas and recommendations for improving it. The ultimate success of this effort depends on their continued commitment to bringing this plan to fruition.

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Introduction

Improving the first-year experience for students at the University of New Mexico is a momentous undertaking that requires making the first year a priority at a large institution that serves many students and performs many functions. The following report was the result of a choice to single out the first year for increased attention, to make it the focus of a candid self-assessment, to make its challenges the occasions for creative thinking and problem solving. The Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) Task Force—composed of over two hundred members of the UNM community, including faculty, students, and staff—generated this report. Many members of this same dedicated group have already begun acting on the recommendations, setting into motion this extensive, coordinated plan for improving the first-year experience.

The University of New Mexico (UNM) is a complex institution: it is a research university with the highest Carnegie Basic Classification for doctorate-granting universities—designated “RU/VH,” or “Research Universities (very high research activity)”—one of only seventy-three public universities in the United States with this designation. It is a Hispanic-Serving institution. Among the seventy-three RU/VH universities, it has the largest percentage of American Indian and Hispanic students enrolled, and only seven schools on the RU/VH list have a higher percentage of Pell Grant recipients. The returning student population is joined every year by a traditional beginning freshman class of approximately 3,400 students, 1,900 new transfer students, and 1,800 new graduate and professional students. How well we integrate those new students into the UNM community will determine our future and theirs.

As a research university that serves a large and diverse undergraduate student body, UNM is often criticized for dissipating its energy by trying to be all things to all people. This criticism gains validity when part of the University’s stated mission appears to be de-emphasized. With competing resources and evolving priorities, the well-being of the 3,400 beginning freshmen has not been the focus of a cohesive, intentional undertaking for some time. Individual departments and programs that have a high degree of interaction with freshmen have not ignored them and many, to the contrary, have demonstrated great passion for improving their success. Those efforts, however, have been isolated and uncoordinated. This FoE initiative establishes an institutional focus on the first-year experience of our beginning freshmen that has collaboration, coordination, and shared outcomes as core values.

The term “emerging majority” is increasingly commonplace in descriptions of the nation’s shifting demographics. At UNM, our first-year students emerged several years ago as a majority-minority cohort. In the Fall 2012 semester, only one-third of our beginning freshmen were classified as white. Many of the students entering UNM arrive with great but untapped potential, having grown up without access to financial and other resources that have historically predicted academic success. Many are first-generation college students who come from homes where English is a second language; have significant financial challenges; and may not even have U.S. citizenship. Our core values of equity, inclusion, and access compel us to admit these students, but admission without support is insufficient. Indeed, it is morally irresponsible. We must utilize all available resources in a unified manner to assure that all students, irrespective of wealth or privilege, have the opportunity to succeed. If we are unsuccessful, the economic



conditions and quality of life of our students and their families will not reach their full potential. If we are successful, UNM will lead the way for other institution across the county that are just beginning to experience this demographic transformation.

UNM’s Foundations of Excellence® work was launched in the same year that UNM began its focused long-term strategic planning effort known as UNM 2020, and the two processes are opportunely aligned.

Central themes of UNM 2020 include a focus on innovative teaching and learning and enhancing the “Lobo Experience” so that UNM becomes a destination university. The Action Plan that emerged from the FoE effort provides specific steps to accomplish a number of UNM 2020 objectives.

Our Action Plan, detailed in the following recommendations, and which can be found in-full in the appendix, features a new administrative body charged with coordinating first-year programs and developing best practices to support students as they acquire the foundational skills necessary for success in their years at UNM and beyond. But given the urgency of our mission, the Task Force did not wait for finalization of this report to begin instituting the recommendations made by our members. To date, significant steps have been taken to improve the first-year experience.

For many students, their first exposure to UNM is New Student Orientation. In preparation for making improvements to the New Student Orientation program, a committee was recently formed to collect and review orientation materials, develop student learning outcomes for each section of orientation, and develop other recommendations to be implemented the following summer. Another committee has also been working to improve the Lobo Reading experience in

order to create a much wider campus involvement. Part of this work will include making the book available electronically to incoming students, and then integrating the book into orientation and the high-freshman-enrollment English 101 and 102 courses.

UNM faces challenges due to the diversity of academic preparation of its incoming students. Approximately 30% of our entering students have remedial needs, while at the same time, many students with “national merit” designation matriculate with each freshman class. Taking remedial courses (at UNM these are called Introductory Studies courses) delays a student’s entry into college-level courses and slows progress to degree. Two efforts to reduce remediation are included in the FoE Action Plan, the Math Learning Lab (MaLL) for Math 120-College Algebra students, and the English 101 “Summer Stretch” and “Studio Courses.” The MaLL has just finished its first year (2012-2013 academic year) as the sole form of delivery for the Math 120 curriculum. Similarly, innovative English 101 courses are being developed and deployed. This summer, students who would have placed into developmental English or math courses are being given the opportunity to enroll in college-level courses that provide additional time and support. Students who successfully complete these offerings will now be able to complete core English and math requirements by the end of their first year.

Financial hurdles are the single most common reason cited by students for stopping out at UNM prior to graduating. This year, curricular and co-curricular offerings will include programs that encourage financial competency. For example, a financial competency unit will be included in first-year seminars to provide students with the skills to navigate the complex financial terrain of paying for college, managing living expenses, and planning for the future. Other co-curricular initiatives, such as the study abroad savings program being developed by the UNM Global Education Office, will be introduced to students early, either during or prior to new student orientation, to help students and their families save for high-impact educational opportunities. Study abroad opportunities, and others like them, have been shown to dramatically improve student academic success.

Several recommendations address teaching in courses that enroll a large number of first-year students. UNM has instituted a new Center for Teaching Excellence, led by a new director, that will provide the professional development needed to support faculty in first-year courses. A subcommittee of the Provost's Committee on Academic Success (PCAS), under which our new First Year Steering Committee (FYSC) will likely be located as a subcommittee, is developing rubrics for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Those rubrics are part of an effort to make effective teaching a large part of the promotion and tenure process, along with other evaluative processes, and to find ways to recognize and celebrate excellent teaching. Many first-year courses are taught by lecturers, and UNM established a professional career path for lecturers during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Courses taken during a student's first year set the stage for future success. Our work was guided by the advice of Dr. George Kuh, who stresses the effect that "high-impact practices" have on student engagement and success. Several high-impact practices are being piloted or substantially revised and reissued this year in light of Dr. Kuh's advice. The number of Freshman Learning Communities was doubled this year (from about 30 to 60) with the goal of making high-impact practices more widely available in course work. University College is offering five new First-Year Seminars (in addition to those offered in athletics) targeting Pell-eligible students. Another First-Year Seminar will be offered by Accessibility Resources. All First-Year Seminars will include curricula on financial competency, critical thinking, the Lobo Reading experience, and research skills. As part of the plan to increase research service-learning opportunities for students, including freshmen, the Faculty Senate recently created the Community-Engaged Scholarship Task Force. In the residence halls, Residence Life has introduced themed residence floors that give students the opportunity to live with peers, form study groups, and attend similar classes. Finally, as part of the effort to ensure that all students are receiving at least one high-impact practice during their first year, we are beginning to develop a tracking system for first-year students that will eventually allow us to match students with effective programs and allow us to collect data that will be used to guide the improvement of this program on an on-going basis.



Advisement plays a central role in student success. For the first time in over ten years, the University Advisement Center gave advising awards as part of an overall effort to elevate the profile of advising on campus. The LoboAchieve advising system, an important new tool for faculty, advisors, and others, is "Going Live" on August 1, 2013, and will be open to the incoming freshman cohort. The system allows students to sign up for faculty office hours, has a centralized location for recording advising notes, an early alert feature that will allow instructors to alert advisors and other service providers to potential issues with student academic performance, and many more features geared toward student success. As part of the plan to restructure advising, and to shift more advising duties to college-specific and major-specific advisors, a pilot program was started that involves moving intended engineering students to School of Engineering advisors earlier. At the Spring Advisor Institute on May 22, 2013, the Provost and Associate Provost for Curriculum introduced

advisors to the importance of the initiative to improve the student-to-advisor ratio, and to get advisors to "buy in" to LoboAchieve.

Mentors and coaches can provide much needed guidance to students and, as Dr. Kuh reminded us, play an important role in shrinking the psychological size of campus. The Volunteer Academic Coaching program, which provides one-on-one coaching for some freshman students, just finished its pilot phase. Ways to expand the program to more first-year students are being considered in preparation for the new year. Finally, “roadmaps” for majors have been created that list each major’s critical requirements and optimal course sequence. The goal is to help students stay on track to completion in four years.

In addition to the academic advising provided by advising centers across campus, students need consistent, reliable, and accessible information about campus resources. The Student Academic Success office is collecting all first-year communication so that we can better coordinate the messages sent to incoming students. Also, two “one-stop” efforts are underway to simplify access to resources. A physical “Student Success” location, which will have staff devoted to first-year students, is currently under construction and will be open to students before the Fall 2013 semester. The electronic one-stop, which will have links and information specific to freshmen, is in development; a beta-version can be found at students.unm.edu.

Decisions concerning the first year will be informed by data related to students and their experiences, but currently students are surveyed far too often, and there is a lack of central oversight. A committee was formed to streamline student surveying, and the committee will collect all surveys and combine them into simpler survey tools to be administered at intervals throughout the school year. Data related to student learning is also critical. The Provost’s Committee on Assessment is working on an assessment plan for core curriculum to assess the effectiveness of writing/speaking core courses this fall.

In the following section, you will find recommendations for improving the first-year experience at the University of New Mexico. This section is an abbreviated version of the full Action Plan, which you may find in the appendix at the end of the report (pg. 113). The reports by each of the Dimension Committees that evaluated the nine aspects of the first year (as developed by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education) are included.

Our student success efforts do not end with the creation of this document. Implementation of the recommendations will require a sustained effort and the support of the entire UNM community. Our obligation to students, to their families and to the state of New Mexico compels us to invest our time, energy, and resources in an ongoing effort to ensure that each student we admit, who is willing to work hard, is given the opportunity to flourish personally and academically.

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Recommendations

First Year Steering Committee (FYSC)

The task force recommends the creation of the First Year Steering Committee (FYSC), led by a representative of the Provost, and acting under his or her authority, as a necessary pre-condition to implementing many of the other recommendations listed below. The committee will have campus-wide representation from schools, colleges, and administrative units that serve first-year students, as well as representatives from student groups.

The FYSC will orient its work around a version of the Philosophy Statement for the First Year adopted by campus, the initial draft of which was developed as part of the FoE exercise. This statement is considered to be a living document and will be modified as changing needs and circumstances warrant:

As this state's flagship research university serving a highly diverse student body, the University of New Mexico is committed to offering a high-quality education marked by a challenging and supportive environment that provides all students with the foundation for academic and personal success in the first year and beyond.

The FYSC will work with all appropriate schools, colleges, offices, and others to:

- Coordinate and enhance all curricular, co-curricular, and other first-year efforts;
- Inform funding for all first-year initiatives, and review all proposals for first-year programming to ensure promising practices are featured and that resources are used efficiently and effectively;
- Develop the plans and tools necessary to track student progress, create an active support plan, and match students with high-impact programs and practices;
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate data that informs and assesses first-year policies and programs;
- Streamline first-year communication to students and their families, as well as to faculty, staff, administrators and others in the University community concerning current programs and other efforts.

A Challenging and Supportive Experience for All Students

UNM is committed to offering a high-quality education, which requires preparing students to meet high academic expectations. Reaching these expectations in turn requires excellent support and service to help students navigate the multiple challenges they face—academic, transitional, and otherwise. We are likewise committed to providing the resources students need to be successful in their first year and beyond.

The FYSC, or subcommittees thereof, will be responsible for:

- Continuing to enhance learning in New Student Orientation (NSO);
- Developing a curriculum that provides a strong foundation for success, with high priorities in reducing remediation, increasing high-impact offerings, adopting and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for the first year, and increasing intellectual and experiential diversity;
- Intentionally focusing on the learning that occurs outside classrooms, labs, and studios, both on and off campus, by encouraging progress on first-year Student Learning Outcomes in out-of-classroom activities.
- Providing students with a safe and welcoming campus that encourages their personal growth and development.



Faculty, Staff, and Support Services

Curricular and co-curricular efforts must be balanced by efforts to improve the support and development activities of those who serve first-year students—including faculty and staff, advisors, and others—as well as enhancing the services they provide and simplifying access to resources.

The FYSC, or subcommittees thereof, will be responsible for:

- Facilitating and rewarding best practices by faculty and staff, and creating a culture that tangibly values teaching and serving first-year students;
- Restructuring advising with the aim of lowering the advisor-student ratio in the University Advisement Center and shifting advising duties to major-specific or college-specific advisors who are closer to the programs in which students are enrolled;
- Simplifying student access to resources, by creating two centralized and well-known presences or “one stops” —one physical, the other electronic—for first-year students and those who serve them;
- Developing a model of active or intrusive support to bring resources to students who need them in a timely manner.

Communication

Improvements must be made to first-year communication to streamline messages to prospective and current students and their families, ensure that faculty and staff have the information they need to serve students, and to publicize UNM’s contributions to the broader community.

The FYSC, or subcommittees thereof, will be responsible for:

- Recommending and supporting the creation of a position within University Communication and Marketing (UCAM) Office focused on first-year communication, which includes recruitment activities;
- Developing a system for consistently delivering effective and timely communications to students;
- Preparing messages in multiple languages and media for the many audiences with whom UNM communicates.



The Foundations of Excellence® Process

In July of 2012, five representatives of UNM— Greg Heileman, associate provost for curriculum; Terry Babbitt, associate vice president of Enrollment Management; Kate Krause, dean of University College and Honors College; Mike Dougher, senior vice provost; and Amy Neel, president, Faculty Senate—attended the Foundations of Excellence® launch meeting in Asheville, NC. They went with the goal of improving the quality of the first-year experience for UNM freshmen, and to thereby improve student retention and completion rates.

In September 2012 UNM held a Student Success Summit to kick off the Foundations of Excellence® project on campus. Drew Koch, executive vice president at the Gardner Institute, and advisor to UNM for the FoE process, gave a keynote address, motivating participants and explaining the process. The event drew over two hundred participants, who were either assigned to, or volunteered for, the nine Dimension Committees, each focused on a different aspect of the first-year experience. Those participants constituted the FoE Task Force, which included all members of the Steering Committee and nine Dimension Committees. The Steering Committee was composed of the Co-Chairs of each Dimension Committee, as well as a number of other campus leaders.

In early October 2012, consultant to UNM, Steering Committee member, and co-chair of the Philosophy Dimension George Kuh visited UNM for a day of meetings with co-chairs and members of the other eight Dimension Committees to provide guidance and answer questions as the committees began their work. The Dimension Committees performed assessments of various areas of the first-year experience, and those assessments would eventually culminate in a final report including recommendations for improving the first-year experience at UNM.

Members of the Task Force completed the Current Practices Inventory in October 2012. This inventory included a review of programs, committees, policies, and high-enrollment courses that impact freshmen, as well as demographic information and retention data for recent cohorts.

In addition to the Current Practices Inventory, two surveys—one for faculty and staff and the other for students—were conducted to assist the Dimension Committees in their evaluation of UNM's current first-year experience. To promote the surveys, emails were sent directly to

various faculty, staff, and students. There were also incentives attached to the completion of the surveys, including iPads, gift certificates, and other prizes. The promotion of the student survey was much more intensive and included campus-wide publicity (e.g., campus websites, Facebook, as well as posters and leaflets), an instant lottery event in the Student Union Building's computer lab, an event coordinated with an Operation Registration initiative for freshman students, and another with the University Advisement Center. The survey of faculty and staff was completed in early November 2012, and closed with a response rate of nearly 30%, involving over 2800 responses. The survey of students was completed in early December 2012, and closed with a response rate just over 20%, about 930 responses.

In February of 2013, UNM and the FoE Task Force held a second Student Success Summit for an FoE mid-process review. By that point in February 2013, five of the Dimension Committees had completed final reports, and the other four were near the halfway point in their process. The purpose of the event was twofold. First, it was an opportunity for the Dimension Co-Chairs to present the work of their committees, including some of their proposed recommendations, which spurred discussion on the connections and overlapping interests and concerns of the separate Dimension Committees. Second, it was a chance to refocus the committee members' efforts after a long holiday break, and to keep people motivated for the final report writing process. Toward this end, both FoE advisor Drew Koch and George Kuh spoke during the event. Dr. Kuh was the keynote speaker and presented on implementing effective change. Dr. Koch was present via Skype. He outlined the end of the self-study process for the Dimension Committees, and offered advice for tackling potential challenges.

The Dimension Committees' Final Reports—which included the evaluations of UNM's first-year efforts and recommendations for improving them—were completed by late March 2013, after drafts of those reports were sent to advisor Drew Koch for feedback, then revised by the Dimension Committees, and finally submitted to the FoE Liaisons for inclusion in the development of the Final Report and Action Plan.

On March 26, 2013, George Kuh once again visited campus to assist the FoE Liaisons, Drs. Heileman, Krause, and Babbitt, in compiling, distilling, and refining the recommendations from each Dimension Report into a single Action Plan, which outlines the process for implementing change during the coming year. That Action Plan is the centerpiece of the full Final Report.

The full process, nearly eight months in the making, and including thousands of hours of work by the Task Force, culminated in the present Final Report and improvement plan, one that we expect to produce improved retention rates for our freshman class, place students on a solid trajectory toward graduation, and demonstrate national leadership in the area of student academic success.

The Dimension Final Reports, included in each of the following nine chapters, are structured as follows. First, an assessment of the current situation, judged according to criteria specific to that

dimension, is provided, along with a recommended grade. The recommended grade is a letter grade evaluation of UNM's performance according to the Dimension criteria, not an evaluation of the work of that Dimension Committee. The evaluation is followed by the committee's recommendations for improving UNM's performance relative to those same criteria.



Dimension One

Philosophy

Foundations Institutions approach the first year in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy/rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation.

The Philosophy Dimension Committee determined that no campus-wide philosophy statement exists for the first-year student experience at UNM. However, some colleges, departments, offices, and other campus units have developed mission, vision, and values statements and used them to guide the implementation of specific first-year programs and policies. Enacted philosophies also are evidenced in the purposes and activities of other units. A clear, compelling statement of the University's philosophy about the first-year student experience can bring coherence to organizational policies and practices, help advance understanding of the extant explicit and implicit views about this critical developmental period in the lives of students, and guide the articulation of expected learning outcomes, resource allocation, and leadership priorities. The timing for this work is fortuitous, as UNM, under the leadership of President Robert Frank, is currently developing a vision for the University of New Mexico as part of the UNM 2020 initiative. Efforts to develop and promote a philosophy for the first college year must be aligned with, and promoted in coordination with, the soon-to-be created UNM 2020 vision.

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 1.1

Does your campus have a statement of philosophy/rationale for the first college year?

The committee agreed that UNM currently has no explicitly stated philosophy for the first year. Consequently, the committee focused its efforts on drafting a statement for the first year and finding evidence of either general University philosophy statements or department- or program-specific statements.

Performance Indicators 1.2 and 1.3 concerned the content and dissemination of such statements, and as no statement exists, these indicators were bypassed.



Performance Indicator 1.4

If a written first-year philosophy statement does not exist on your campus, the Dimension Committee should review institutional documents to determine the existence of key elements that can be used in the development of an explicit first-year philosophy statement.

The Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) Faculty and Staff Survey indicated a belief among some faculty and staff that philosophy statements existed in specific departments and programs, and this belief was reinforced by Philosophy Dimension Committee members. The committee reviewed websites and strategic documents for evidence of statements across campus. The

philosophy statements, whether implicit or explicit, that exist at UNM can be divided into two general categories: first, philosophy statements for UNM students generally; and second, philosophy statements particular to departments or programs.

General statements of philosophy for UNM students were present in the UNM Strategic Framework, the President’s Strategic Advisory Team (PSAT) Report, the University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals, and the University of New Mexico Accreditation Self-Study Report. Philosophy statements developed by particular units were found in departments such as the Department of English, and support services such as University Advisement Center (UAC), Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS), New Student Orientation, Lobo Center for Student-Athlete Success, College Enrichment Program (CEP), and El Centro de la Raza, to name a few of the offices that serve a significant percentage of first-year students. Additionally, programs for freshmen—such as New Student Orientation, Convocation, and Freshman Family Day—are demonstrative of an implicit philosophy that recognizes the difficult transition that first-year students make, the importance of preparing students for college, and the University’s desire to make the first year a memorable one.

The FoE Survey results revealed that:

- About half (53%) of faculty and staff answered “not at all” or “slight” to a question about the degree to which an institutional philosophy statement had been communicated to them. The response was similar (47.9%) for a question about department- or unit-level philosophies.
- More than a third (36%) of faculty and staff responded “high” or “very high” that their department or unit operated from a commonly held philosophy for the first/freshman year.
- Almost three quarters (73%) of faculty and staff responded “high” or “very high” that a formalized institutional philosophy for the first/freshman year of college is valuable.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

The absence of a written philosophy statement provides an opportunity to reflect on the University’s mission and vision for first-year students through participation in the FoE process. Creating such a statement at this point in time is especially timely due to a confluence of events:

- The UNM 2020 initiative provides an opportunity to coordinate a first-year

philosophy with the new general UNM vision.

- Senior administrators unequivocally endorse the need for a concentrated focus on enhancing the quality of the first-year experience.

There was a high level of campus participation in the FoE process, as shown by the more than two hundred people who served on the Task Force; the favorable response of faculty and staff to an institutional philosophy, as demonstrated in the FoE Survey; and the outpouring of good will and collaborative effort shown by members of the UNM community throughout this effort.

The development of a philosophy statement promises several positive outcomes:

- It can improve coordination and collaboration among the many effective programs and services already in place, and guide resource allocation and/or reallocation accordingly.
- It can inspire campus-wide conversations about the University's philosophy for the first year, providing a common language for its consideration, an opportunity to reflect on our common vision, commit to it, and develop specific goals to bring it into being.
- It can also guide assessment and evaluation efforts for the first year.

Challenges

There are several challenges facing the development and implementation of a campus-wide philosophy. First and foremost may be attempting to reconcile what some view as a long-standing campus tension between the University's research and educational missions. While many see these two goals as complementary, others view them as mutually exclusive, competing options, with the success of one serving as a detriment to the other.

Other important challenges include:

- Utilizing campus resources efficiently while still creating change.
- Developing consensus on UNM's vision for the first year and ensuring participation from the wider University community in the development of department- and unit-level philosophies.
- Creating change at an established university, which often requires patient persistence in the pursuit of student success.

- Forging a common philosophy that can work successfully in units and departments across campus, many of which are not connected to others and function under the guidelines and requirements of external accrediting bodies.

Recommended Grade: C-

Initially, a lower grade was considered for this dimension, as UNM did not have an explicit, commonly-held philosophy statement for the first college year; however, taking into consideration the extant statements of philosophy utilized by various units and departments on campus, as well as efforts across campus which already demonstrate a commitment to first-year students, a slightly higher grade was selected.

Recommended Action Items

1. Develop a campus-wide philosophy for the first year, beginning with the draft developed by this committee. *(High Priority)*

Statement of Philosophy for the First College Year

The Philosophy Dimension Committee embraced the challenge of drafting a statement of philosophy for the first college year. The following statement will be used as an initial philosophy of the first year at UNM, taking into consideration the UNM 2020 vision, and feedback from campus constituencies:

As this state's flagship research university serving a highly diverse student body, the University of New Mexico is committed to offering a high-quality education marked by a challenging and supportive environment that provides all students with the foundation for academic and personal success in the first year and beyond.

2. Disseminate widely the newly created philosophy. *(High Priority)*

The creation of the philosophy statement must be followed by its wide, ongoing dissemination to all campus faculty and staff. Additionally, the statement must be the basis for the subsequent development of unit- and department-level philosophy statements, in order to guide the creation of policies and practices related to the first college year. Further, it must be internalized and enacted by all campus constituencies responsible for unit- and department-level versions.

Sources of Evidence

Broad Learning Goals for Core Courses

http://www.unm.edu/~assess/SupportingFiles/UNM%20Student%20Learning%20Goals_3-08.pdf

Center for Academic Program Support: Mission

<http://caps.unm.edu/info/mission>

College Enrichment Program Mission

<http://cep.unm.edu/about.html>

El Centro de la Raza: Mission

<http://elcentro.unm.edu/about/>

English Dept: Letter from Chair

<http://english.unm.edu/letter-from-the-chair.html>

English Dept: Core Courses 101/102

<http://english.unm.edu/english-101102/index.html>

Freshmen Financial Aid Guide

http://financialaid.unm.edu/common/documents/workingcopyfreshmanguide10-11_1_89b9.pdf

Lobo Center for Student-Athlete Success Mission

<http://www.golobos.com/compliance/nm-compliance.html>

Lobo Orientation Website

<http://nso.unm.edu/>

Math 120 Redesign Webpage

<http://www.math.unm.edu/~jross/MATH%20120.html>

President's Strategic Advisory Team (PSAT) Report

<http://www.unm.edu/budgetimpact/documents/PSAT-Recommendations-Fall-2010.pdf>

Student Survey and Faculty and Staff Survey - Foundations of Excellence®

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

University Advisement Center Mission

<http://advisement.unm.edu/mission/index.html>

University Council on Academic Priorities (UCAP)

<http://provost.unm.edu/academic-planning-2012.html>

UNM Strategic Framework

<http://presidentialsearch.unm.edu/strategicframework.pdf>



Dimension Two

Organization

Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.

The first-year experience at the University of New Mexico has substantial effort and resources committed to student transition and success. These efforts originate from several different divisions on campus including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Athletics, Enrollment Management, Information Technologies, and Institutional Support Services, among others. The units assigned to advise and serve as the academic home for the vast majority of new students have evolved over the years from an Office of Undergraduate Studies (UGS), to University College with integrated advising in the late 90s, to the current model of University College as academic home with separate advising under the University Advisement Center (UAC). Most academic schools and colleges other than University College that have significant interaction with first-year students do so through courses, special programs or limited direct admission.

UNM has had different emphases in first-year goals for beginning freshman over the years, with priorities generally being growth and improved quality. In 1996 the freshman class included 1600 students, which prompted formation of a task force to focus on increasing that number. The New Mexico Lottery Success Scholarship, subsequently named the Legislative Lottery Scholarship, was created with its first awards in 1997, and the freshman class grew quickly to 2112 students. Since that time the overall trend line for new freshmen has been upward with short cycles of decreases every three to four years. The 2011 freshman class included 3267 first-time full-time students.

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 2.1

The following statement was selected as the best description of UNM’s first-year organizational structure: Multiple Administrative Structures cooperate to administer and align first-year policies, practices, and programs.

A primary question the Organization Committee addressed regarding the first-year experience was this: is there evidence that organization of efforts is a critical element in successful outcomes of the first-year experience? Defining outcomes is unfinished work, which the FoE undertaking will help UNM to improve, but there is compelling empirical and qualitative information pointing to organization as an important element. The Faculty and Staff Survey responses regarding their perception of first-year organization indicates that they do not believe there is a significant amount. Figure 2.1 shows that 40% of faculty and staff found “not at all” or “slight” communication and collaboration among first-year efforts.

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
To what degree has this institution effectively organized itself to develop an integrated first college year that supports routine communication among discrete first-year functions?	46.8%	38.2%	15%
To what degree has this institution effectively organized itself to develop an integrated first college year that supports collaboration between academic and student affairs?	44.1%	37.1%	18.8%

Figure 2.1 Results of Faculty and Staff Survey—Communication and Collaboration on First-Year Efforts

The graph in Figure 2.2 illustrates the growth of new freshmen over the last fifteen years and the corresponding retention rate for the cohorts who began that year. The pattern implies that headcount increases, particularly abrupt and substantial changes, will be accompanied by a decrease in retention of comparable magnitude. Even when the growth is planned and anticipated, the expected benefits are negated by poor rates of return for new students. There are likely several factors that contribute to this, including support capacity from transition services, advising and tutoring; course availability of high demand classes; and pressure on

auxiliaries such as parking, food service, student health and others, to name a few. An organizational structure that accounts for all of the critical but disparate reporting lines of first-year services and support should be a constructive move in planning, coordinating, and executing strategies to accommodate the fundamental needs of first-year students.

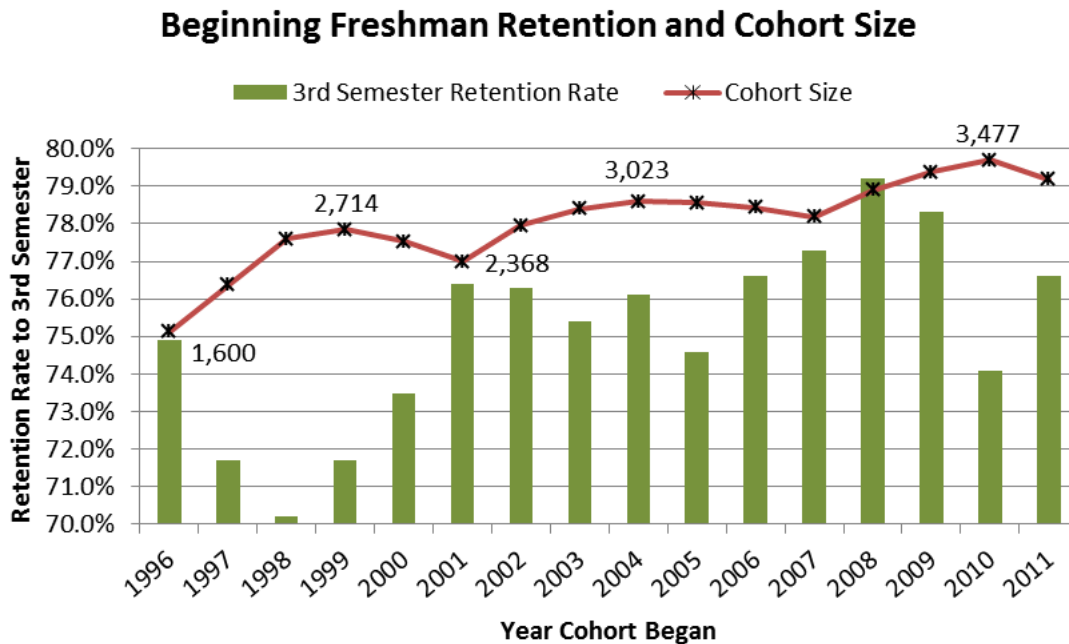


Figure 2.2 Relationship of freshman cohort size and third semester retention (Office of Institutional Research, Freshman Cohort Tracking)

There are several other indicators that endorse the need for organization of first-year efforts, including the high number of new students who have test scores below college readiness standards, broad geographic and cultural diversity, large numbers of students who are Pell Grant eligible, and a substantial population of first-generation college students. At UNM, we consider these demographics exemplary of our commitment to access and diversity, but helping students succeed under these conditions requires a highly organized effort.

Performance Indicator 2.2

To what degree does your institution's first-year organizational structure facilitate coordinated and timely communications, provision of accurate and timely financial aid information, early warning initiatives that include special attention to first-year students, and academic advising that includes special attention to first-year students?

Communication with first-year students is currently not coordinated among programs and academic units on campus that communicate with prospective, incoming, or first-year students. Information regarding the number of programs and units that communicate with freshman students was initially conducted informally. The responses, however, which suggested that, not only do many programs and academic units communicate with freshmen, most of those programs were unaware of the communications sent by others. This realization prompted a more organized and ongoing effort to inventory current communication and coordinate the messages.

While communication with first-year students is generally uncoordinated and decentralized, financial aid information is, for the most part, accurate and provided in a timely manner by UNM’s Financial Aid Office. Nonetheless, evidence shows that financial problems often mount quickly for students, and that these problems are an important factor in student attrition, making a case for earlier and more thorough information relating to financial matters. The complexity of the departure dynamics for first-year students is illustrated in the flow diagram in Figure 2.3.

Illustration of Student Attrition by Semester

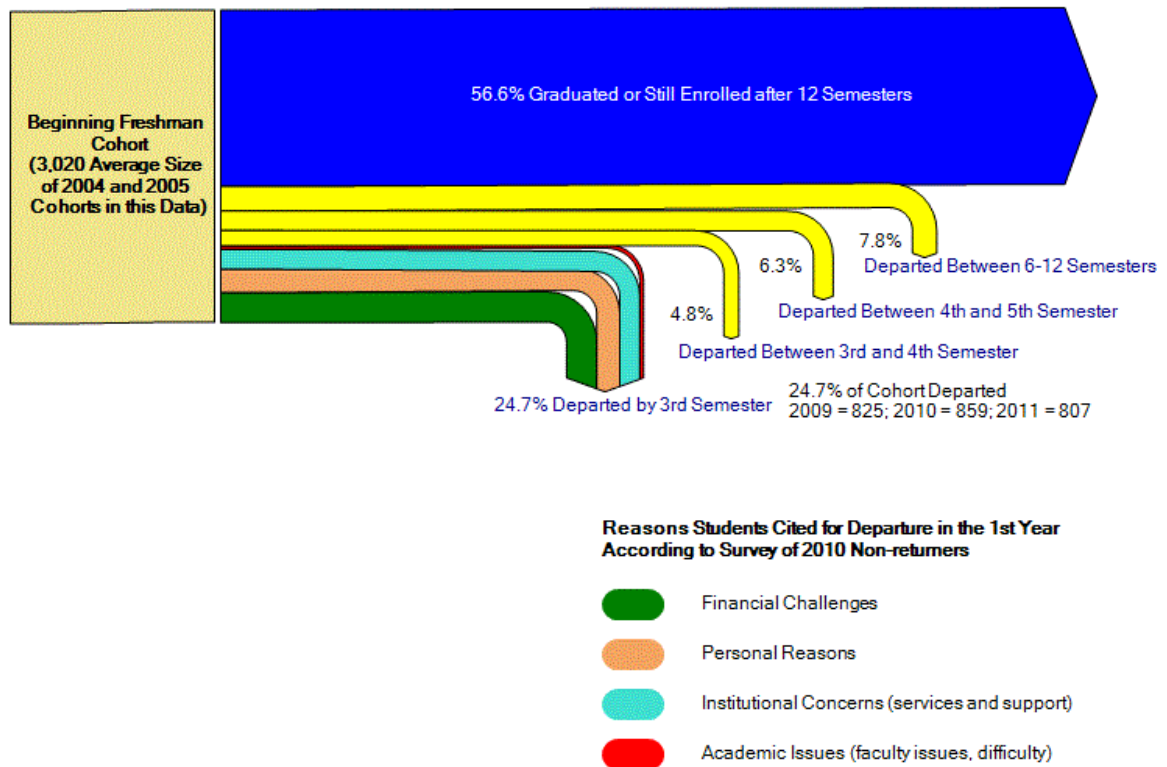


Figure 2.3 First-year student departure and self-described reasons for leaving (UNM Enrollment Management)

The attrition problem prior to the second year is well documented at most institutions. However, the complexity of reasons for departure when mingling financial concerns, personal issues, institutional barriers, and academic challenges demand a collaborative effort to make an impact and influence students to persist. Problems related to personal finance are particularly acute and warrant specific attention.

Regarding early warning initiatives, sufficient need exists for an easily accessed and effective early-warning mechanism that it was a primary focus of recent efforts to choose and implement a new advising portal. This search resulted in the licensing of the Starfish retention system (subsequently rebranded LoboAchieve at UNM).

Finally, academic advising currently includes special attention to first-year students, as the University Advisement Center (UAC) serves University College students. The poor student-to-advisor ratio in University College, however, mitigates some of the benefit that might otherwise result from this arrangement. An important effort will be to shift more of the advising duties from the UAC to major- or college-specific advisors whose student-to-advisor ratios are currently lower.

Performance Indicator 2.3

To what degree does the structure indicated in Performance Indicator 2.1 result in an integrated approach that crosses division/unit lines (e.g., student affairs and academic affairs)?

There is considerable evidence that integration across division and unit lines could be improved. As one example, and given the evidence above about the effect of financial difficulties on student persistence, first-year funding and affordability should be considered as a potential success strategy. Such a strategy will require better coordination between Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Financial Aid office. In addition to an emphasis on student financial challenges, there should be a general support structure for students encountering problems that are not academic related. Two efforts to centralize resources for students are the electronic one-stop for students, which will be a website providing a myriad of student resources, and a physical one-stop. These easy-access resource centers will also require cross-campus coordination to be effective.

The need for organized support structures is evident: surveys conducted as part of the FoE program paint a clear picture of a gap in support of students who encounter difficulties during their first year. Students, faculty, and staff are fairly clear in knowing where to seek assistance for academic struggles. Figure 2.4 indicates that 89% of students have a moderate understanding of where to go for help related to the classroom, and nearly the same number of the faculty and staff feel they have some knowledge of where to send students with these needs. *Student*

Response:

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
To what degree do you understand how your institution is organized so that you know where to go if you need help with your coursework?	10.8%	21.3%	67.8%

Faculty and Staff Response:

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
Based on your understanding of this institution’s organizational structure, to what degree can you correctly refer first-year students regarding help with coursework?	11.2%	23.5%	65.3%

Figure 2.4 Student and Faculty and Staff responses to academic support questions

However, when asked the same question about where to send students with non-academic problems, students, faculty, and staff (see Figure 2.5) struggle with where to find support, with only 63.2% of the students and 67.7% of faculty and staff having a “Moderate” or higher degree of understanding of where to send students for assistance.

Student Response:

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
To what degree do you understand how your institution is organized so that you know where to go if you need help with non-academic matters (e.g., money management, family matters)?	36.8%	30.2%	33%

Faculty and Staff Response:

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
To what degree are resources (personnel and fiscal) adequate for the following: Courses that enroll first-year students?	35.2%	40%	24.8%

Figure 2.5 Student and Faculty and Staff responses to non-academic support questions

Performance Indicator 2.4

To what degree has the first-year organizational structure (as noted in PI 2.1) used evaluation results to improve its performance?

The committee concluded that there is little to no use of evaluation data to improve organization at UNM.

Performance Indicator 2.5

The following statement was selected as the best description of the role that UNM's first-year organizational structure plays in providing faculty and staff development to increase understanding of first-year issues: very limited or not attempted at all.

The first-year organizational structure plays a minimal role in providing faculty and staff members information or development opportunities to increase understanding of first-year issues. There are examples of good development opportunities. The Office for Support of Effective Teaching (OSET), for instance, runs faculty development programs, including for gateway courses. Staff opportunities related to first-year students are, however, lacking. Enrollment Management and the Office for Institutional Analytics provide data on each cohort of first-year students, though there is no evidence that many faculty or staff make use of the data, or that the data is presented in a form that faculty and staff find easy to access or use.

Performance Indicator 2.6

The following statement was selected as the best description of the financial resources devoted to the first-year organizational structure: insufficient evidence exists to judge the adequacy and consistency of funding (e.g., the structure(s) is/are newly established or highly dependent on external grant funding).

The committee concluded that more research is needed before determining the need for financial resources to support the first-year organizational structure. The first recommendation of this committee is the development of an oversight structure, which may require minimal new resources to be effective. The work of this committee, however, could certainly result in the identification of areas requiring additional financial resources.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

The University has stable leadership supportive of investment in the first-year experience and student success overall. This includes the president, provost, and deans (most significantly the Deans of the College of Arts and Sciences and University College). It has been a rarity at UNM for so many key positions to have the longevity needed to sustain meaningful change.

Academic departments are dedicated to improving course delivery in core areas such as English and math. Innovations in these areas have included modularized learning in a computer lab setting for introductory math and credit-bearing courses, replacing remedial in the freshman English curriculum. Many academic units have expressed interest in first-year outcomes and improving their roles in the instruction of these students. Figure 2.6 is the Faculty and Staff response inquiring if enough resources are invested in first-year courses. Improvements in course delivery will require investment and many on campus appear to realize this.

Figure 2.6 Faculty and staff perception of investment in first-year courses

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
To what degree are resources (personnel and fiscal) adequate for courses that enroll first-year students?	35.2%	40%	24.8%

A renewed emphasis to support academic units with technological advances that support best practice pedagogy and classroom infrastructure is underway with support from the Provost, Information Technologies, campus planning and scheduling departments. This has the potential to drastically improve the learning experience for first-year students in particular.

There is much activity emphasizing collaboration with the K-12 sector, which produces the vast majority of our first-year students. Aligning curriculum and preparation, providing constructive feedback on student outcomes, sharing resources, implementing Common Core State Standards, improving teacher preparation and professional development, and partnering for grant opportunities are key initiatives in progress. Impacting first-year students before they enter the UNM system is an effective method to improve their transition and outcomes at UNM.

UNM has invested in a data support and analysis structure, the Office of Institutional Analytics, that will comprehensively inform stakeholders regarding critical variables and the conjunction

of multiple influences that impact student success. This initiative can direct potential high-impact initiatives and evaluate the effectiveness first-year activities.

A spirit of collaboration exists among entities from across more than one hundred or so organizations, programs, and departments to make a difference for first-year students. There has always been passion and energy by a large number of participants who impact first-year students. The increased focus on improving the first-year experience has expanded this synergy and linked many groups together more formally in this effort.

New Mexico’s demographics foreshadow the nation’s demographics. A majority of students graduating from high school who are non-white has been the trend in New Mexico for many years, and Figure 2.7 indicates that this same trend will be taking place nationwide over the coming years.

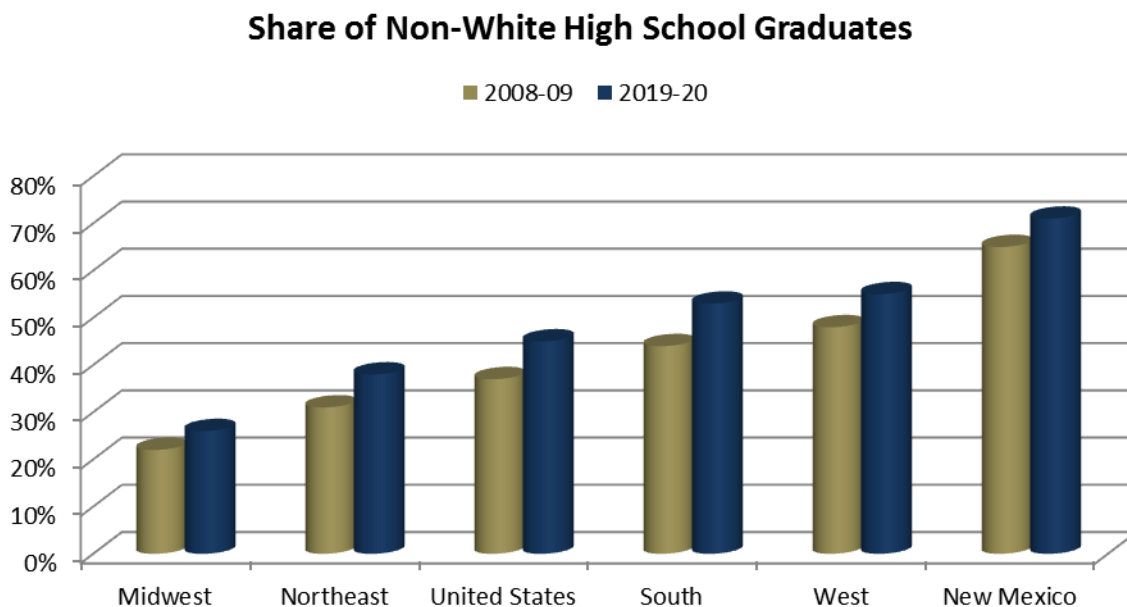


Figure 2.7 The increasing share of non-white high school graduates in the U.S. (WICHE: Knocking at the College Door)

UNM’s student population also reflects a majority-minority demographic. This trend is an exciting opportunity for access to our higher education institutions, but also brings the challenge of supporting students who are often the first in their family to pursue higher education. In addition, many of these students may come from homes where English is not the first language and, consequently, can have difficulty understanding the financial “puzzle” of attending a college or university. If UNM can create an environment with high levels of success for these

students, we will illuminate a path for others to follow nation-wide.

Challenges

As with most large public research institutions, UNM serves as many things to many people in the state. Even the primary educational mission is distributed among undergraduate, graduate, professional, part-time, full-time, traditional, non-traditional, and other kinds of students. At the same time, research, public service, economic development, and quality of life contributions are valued equally. Given the diversity of learners and breadth of mission, it is understandable why no focused or prolonged emphasis has been dedicated to first-year students. The value of continually emphasizing and improving the first-year must remain an institutional priority.

The disparate needs and vast resources required to support all of these critical elements of a research university stretches funding to its limits in many areas. The economic environment of higher education has changed forever; institutions will not be able to rely on expanded support from state budgets and there will be pressure to reduce expenses, increase degree production, and keep student costs affordable. This ultimately means some magnitude of reallocation and competition for diminishing resources. The implication is that justification, evaluation, and return will be crucial for securing support to improve the first-year experience.

There has been a tremendous amount of work recently on the advising issues the University has faced over the years. After the Higher Learning Commission requested a progress report following the 2009 comprehensive visit—due to an unacceptably high 770:1 University College (UC) student to advisor ratio—the University’s subsequent progress report to HLC included a calculation with several advisors added from various organizations that reduced the ratio to 335:1. In reality, the University Advisement Center (UAC), which serves UC students, remains overburdened in addressing the needs of the population. Thoughtful integration of pre-major students into courses and/or activities associated with the degree-conferring schools and colleges is likely a better solution to advisement improvement than simply posting advisors to lower the ratio. Linking faculty in an advising role or other connection to more first-year students is universally considered essential for student success. A question on the Transition Dimension component of the student survey asks if the institution connects students to faculty outside of the classroom. Figure 2.8 shows that less than 50% of UNM’s first-year students felt connected to faculty outside of class.

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
As a new student, to what degree has this institution connected you with faculty members outside of class?	50.1%	30.4%	19.5%

Figure 2.8 Student response to linking with faculty outside classroom

Utilizing cross-tabulations in the survey data also allows us to review how categories of respondents answered other questions. It is not surprising that this “connection to faculty question” has low scores correlating with dissatisfaction with other services. For example, the students who were not at all or only slightly satisfied with overall advising also indicated strongly that their connection to faculty was slight or not at all (Figure 2.9).

Connection to faculty from those students who were “not at all” satisfied with advising:	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
As a new student, to what degree has this institution connected you with faculty members outside of class?	80.7%	15.4%	3.8%
Connection to faculty from those students who were only “slightly” satisfied with advising:	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/Very High
As a new student, to what degree has this institution connected you with faculty members outside of class?	72%	20%	8%

Figure 2.9 Cross-tabulation for satisfaction with advisement and connection to faculty

The students responding with little or no connection to faculty also have negative ratings in several other categories, as might be expected.

Numerous units on campus provide services to first-year students. As we integrate and coordinate our services, reallocation and consolidation is possible in order to eliminate redundancy and maximize efficiency. Higher education institutions are not immune to “turf” issues, especially on large campuses. It is therefore incumbent upon those charged with developing the recommended coordinating structure to be cognizant of the challenges this may

pose to employees currently providing services. Processes should be developed that allow stakeholders to be supported and work together to create a structure that benefits first-year student success. Having several entities working together on a common cause can also be a positive dynamic. This should serve as more of a caution than as a depiction of the current climate at UNM. Figure 2.10 might be an indication of why there can be frustration among individuals. While there might often be departmental representation at discussions around first-year work, those interactions are unlikely to reach a majority of faculty and staff.

Question	Not at all/ Slight	Moderate	High/ Very High
To what degree do you, as a faculty or staff member, have a voice in decisions about first-year issues?	70.5%	20.3%	9.2%

Figure 2.10 Faculty and Staff response to their involvement in first-year issues

We previously noted the growing population of diverse students and families as an opportunity for New Mexico and UNM. This demographic must conversely be considered a challenge based on the magnitude of the issues that must be addressed to maximize preparedness for entry into post-secondary education in a manner that supports success in the first year and beyond.

There are many data points that emphasize the challenging aspects of New Mexico’s emerging demographics, including poverty measures, economic indicators, educational attainment, unemployment, etc. Two of the most telling are the overall wellness of children in New Mexico, and the achievement gap in reading and math as students enter high school.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Program gathers statistics on sixteen indicators from the four domains children need most to thrive—economic well-being, health, education, and family and community—and ranks all fifty states on overall child well-being. Indicators include things such as children living in poverty, child and teen deaths, high school students not graduating on time, and teen births, among several others. New Mexico ranked forty-six out of fifty states in 2011 and recently dropped to forty-ninth in the 2012 ranking.

The indicators of child well-being are major contributors to the wide achievement gap we have in New Mexico. If the share of non-white high school graduates is growing, then the achievement gap must narrow, or there will be an imminent decline in college ready students. Figures 2.11 and 2.12 illustrate that the achievement gap might be narrowing ever so slightly in some instances, but not at a pace sufficient to fill the spots needed for the college completion agenda.

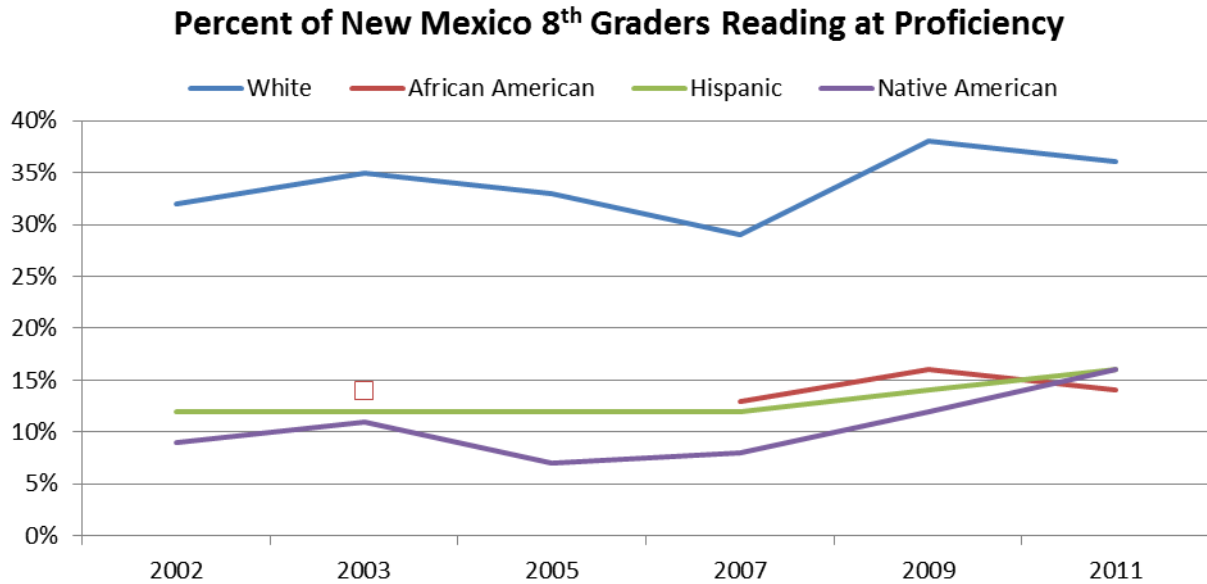


Figure 2.11 Achievement Gap in 8th Grade Reading

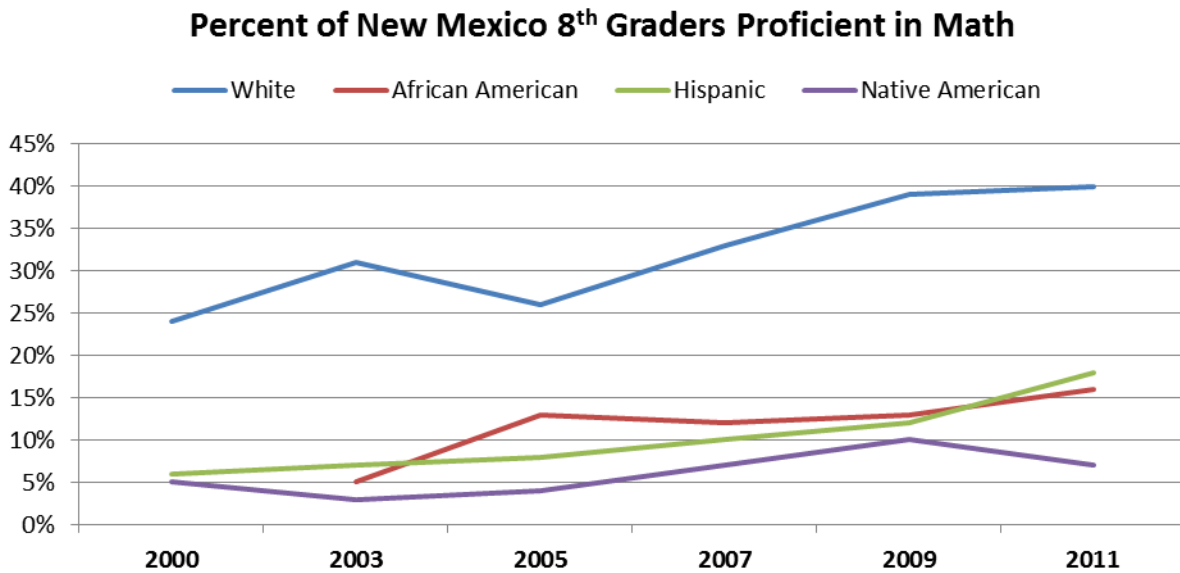


Figure 2.12 Achievement Gap in 8th Grade Math (National Assessment of Educational Progress, NCES U.S. Department of Education)

The action items suggested by the committee are derived from these challenges and opportunities, substantial data review, survey assessment and the vast experience of our committee participants. The emphasis of this report is to present a compelling case for the need to establish and maintain an organized University effort directed toward improving the first-year experience.

Recommended Grade: C

UNM has average organizational efforts surrounding the first year. Some units coordinate well, while others are not included in the planning effort. The committee felt that a first-year structure with goals and objectives which could be evaluated and improved would increase this grade to a B. A unified effort by all on campus who impact the first-year would likely increase this Dimension to an A rating.

Recommended Action Items

High Priority

1. Develop a central oversight structure charged with organizing, administering and evaluating the first-year experience.
 - This can take various forms but is likely to be a steering committee of leadership from entities with substantial involvement in the first-year.
 - There must be academic leadership for this group with authority to make decisions on first-year matters.
2. Communication regarding costs and financial aid as well as education on financial literacy and behavioral economics should be integrated and intentional with systematic procedures and structure.
 - Informing about costs, financial aid and money management early in the first-year before students attend orientation and at orientation is insufficient for the financial dilemmas that often quickly mount for first-year students.
 - A broader approach that incorporates prolonged education and systemic intervention for financial decisions that impact a student's ability to continue must be addressed.
 - First-year funding and affordability should be considered as a potential strategy for improving student success.

3. In addition to emphasis on student financial challenges, there should be a general support structure for students encountering problems that are not academic in nature.
 - This should be more than an ombudsman because it is not just addressing concerns about University actions.
 - Centralized support with a physical and/or virtual footprint is a key to making the path to assistance clear for students, faculty and staff.
4. First-year students should be linked to their intended major directly or through introductory courses and other means.
 - Engaging students early will result in better connections to programs and facilitate earlier decisions about compatibility with their majors.
 - Broad tracks, or selections of courses that count for many degrees within a field of study (e.g., STEM courses for STEM majors), could prevent students from “swirling” and losing costly time and credit toward degree.
5. Advisement responsibilities for first-year students should be extended to schools and colleges for intended majors.
 - The student-to-advisor ratio in the University Advisement Center (UAC) is exceptionally high and does not serve first-year students to the extent needed.
 - The UAC should be restructured to focus on the large number of undecided students.
6. Curricula with high or potentially high first-year student enrollments should have some coordination by a first-year advocate in addition to the standard structure.
 - The curricula is overseen by the faculty but just as there are first-year writing coordinators and gateway course coordinators in English and math, there should be a voice regarding these courses to represent perspectives that benefit the first-year student.
 - This could be a subcommittee of the oversight group that focuses on things like early alerts, classroom technology, communication strategies and a host of other topics.
7. Encourage improved preparation for first-year students and provide opportunities to minimize remedial course requirements.
 - Preparation includes early intervention, transition, and pre-entry.

- Reducing remedial requirements includes alternative course placements and options to master content outside of traditional semester course schedules.
8. Faculty and staff who have extensive interaction with first-year students should have the opportunity for professional development to learn more about the challenges and available resources for this population.
- Information could be provided via on-line learning or workshops.
 - Content should include the information that is most valuable and most lacking for faculty, staff, and students.
 - The steering entity should review the financial investment in the first-year as a part of assessment and determine new funding needs or reallocation strategies.
 - The financial investment in the first-year is not easily disaggregated from expenses associated with other student levels in most of the organizations primarily involved.
 - Some units do have identifiable funds devoted specifically to first-year initiatives, but focusing on these without including the overall picture would not promote financial reform or added investment to the first-year efforts.
10. Assessment of the first-year initiative is extremely important and specific goals and metrics should be put in place by the steering entity.
- Identification of key outcomes is a key component.
 - There are many success metrics other than retention rates that should be considered, such as the number of hours completed, percentage of the core curriculum completed, student performance in critical courses within a major, etc.

Medium Priority

11. Institutional data collection from first-year students, particularly surveys, should be coordinated to improve the quality of the process for evaluators and students.
- Survey fatigue may already be impeding discovery of real student challenges.
 - There are many good reasons for robust survey activity, but it must be managed.
12. The organization group should consider ways to engage those who have not felt they had a voice or input on issues surrounding first-year students.

- Many on campus do not feel they have a voice in the first-year experience.
- Others may not realize the importance of these efforts.

13. Pilot or new initiatives intended to improve the first-year experience should be vetted and approved through the central organization.

- This step ensures communication and assessment for program activity that involves first-year students.
- Initiatives that are successful should be considered candidates for scaling up and additional funding support.

Sources of Evidence

Academic Advising Program Review Report

<http://pca.unm.edu/NACADA%20Site%20Visit%202012.pdf>

Advising Progress Report – Accreditation Visit

http://www.unm.edu/~accred/SupportingDocuments/HLC%20Progres%20Report%20on%20Advising_Final.pdf

Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Program

<http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/KIDSCOUNT.aspx>

Assurance Section of Accreditation Comprehensive Visit

<http://www.unm.edu/~accred/SupportingDocuments/UNMAssurance.pdf>

College Affordability – Institute for Higher Education Policy

[http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/g-l/\(Issue_Brief\)_Is_College_Affordable_July_2012.pdf](http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/g-l/(Issue_Brief)_Is_College_Affordable_July_2012.pdf)

College Costs and Affordability

<http://collegecost.ed.gov/catc/>

High Fail Rate Courses

<http://em.unm.edu/dashboard/progress.html>

Knocking at the College Door

<http://www.wiche.edu/knocking-8th>

Official Enrollment Report

<http://registrar.unm.edu/reports--statistics/Fall2012OER.pdf>

Math 120 Redesign: the MaLL
<http://www.math.unm.edu/~jross/Math120/>

National Assessment of Educational Progress
<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

President's Strategic Advisory Team Recommendations
<http://www.unm.edu/president/documents/2011/PSAT-Recommendations.pdf>

Retention and Graduation Report
<http://em.unm.edu/Documents/retain-and-graduate.pdf>

Student and Staff Surveys - Foundations of Excellence®
<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

UNM Freshman Cohort Tracking
http://oir.unm.edu/FCT_Reports/Fall_2011/Fulltime_Total.pdf



Dimension Three

Learning

Foundations Institutions deliver intentional curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that engage students in order to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors consistent with the desired outcomes of higher education and the institution's philosophy and mission. Whether in or out of the classroom, learning also promotes increased competence in critical thinking, ethical development, and the lifelong pursuit of knowledge.

Dimension Committee members addressed the Performance Indicators and agreed to the following assessments of the current situation at UNM:

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 3.1

To what degree has the campus established learning goals specifically for the first year? To what degree has the campus measured outcomes for common learning goals for all first-year students?

The committee gave UNM a score of “very low” or “none” for both Performance Indicators in this section. Committee discussion centered on the fact that many individual units have developed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for their discipline, but there are no overarching, campus-wide learning goals for the first year. One hurdle with deriving overall goals for all first-year students is the fact that there is no single course all students take, although most (>70%) will take English 101 during their first year at UNM.

There is a distinction between student learning outcomes (SLOs) for the first year and SLOs for UNM's core curriculum courses. There is significant overlap—most students take core courses in their first year—but they are not identical in terms of students enrolled in the core courses or

the timing of when they take the courses. The committee requested information from the outcomes assessment planning manager at UNM, to help us answer this question by clarifying the department-level assessment compliance rates. The email correspondence is in the Evidence Library. We determined that we could not assess SLOs when none of them are specific to the first year (as opposed to the core curriculum). As noted in the correspondence, assessment at UNM is conducted on a course-by-course or degree program basis, not in a more broad-based way.

According to the FoE Surveys, students and faculty and staff agree that the institution has not communicated learning goals for the first year generally, but both noted that learning objectives, or expectations, were articulated for the particular course they taught/attended. Among faculty and staff, only 24% understood (rated high or very high) UNM's intended goals for the first year, but 78% reported developing course-specific learning goals. Among the students, fewer than half (~48 %) reported understanding the institution's learning goals, while nearly 68% reported communication of academic expectations for a particular course.

Performance Indicator 3.2

To what degree does the institution document instructional methods used in each course and evaluate their effectiveness in engaging students in learning?

We considered the following high-enrollment courses: English 101 and 102, Psychology 105, Math 120, and Sociology 101. We graded the current situation as “medium” for all courses except Sociology 101, which we scored “very low” or “none.” Committee discussion centered on the distinction between what we are doing currently and new initiatives being piloted or considered for next year. The math and English departments are in the process of significant changes in the delivery of high-enrollment courses.

Our assessment practices focus on documenting achievement of SLOs, not on instructional methods. We have a supportive teaching practices office in OSET, but again it is not systemic. Many individual instructors choose to attend OSET workshops; in some cases, individual departments adopt the practices they develop in those workshops.

Performance Indicator 3.3

To what degree does the institution document and evaluate student learning outcomes across all sections of each course?

English 101 and 102 were given a “high” rating; Psychology, Math, and Sociology were rated “very low” or “none.”

The English department has assessed SLOs for their core courses (101 & 102) since 2002. During the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years, they have conducted focus groups among faculty, staff, students, and community members, and are currently engaged in an Institutional Review Board-approved study for revising SLOs.

Assessment of Psychology 105 has involved significant data collection, but not specifically on learning outcomes. The MaLL (Math Learning Lab) pilot is a step in the right direction for Math 120. Final exam questions are linked to SLOs, but exam performance data are not collected on individual questions or SLOs. According to the email from the outcomes assessment planning manager, Sociology 101 has not been assessing SLOs recently.

Performance Indicator 3.4

To what degree does the institution attempt to address the causes of high DFWI rates in the courses reported in Table G2 or G3 of the Current Practices Inventory or other courses that enroll first-year students?

The committee gave UNM a “high” rating for this Performance Indicator. UNM has long tracked high failure-to-successfully-complete courses. The courses on that list have remained stable over the years and include many 100-level math classes. The committee hesitated before giving UNM a “high” rating because many members felt that, while we give a lot of attention to the so-called “killer course list,” we give less attention to why these courses are on the list, and thus insufficient attention to improving them.

The committee settled on the “high” grade because the English and Mathematics departments appear to be addressing the issues. For example, the MaLL is a new and aggressive attempt to address high DFWI rates in Math 120. English likewise is working on several new initiatives to enhance delivery of their core courses.

While these efforts have been inconsistent and limited to a few programs, the committee was encouraged by a new spirit of engagement with these issues that is for the first time gaining a

foothold across campus.

One approach to helping students at risk of failing to successfully complete a course is to ensure personal contact between faculty and students. UNM scored poorly on this measure on both the Faculty and Staff Survey and on the Student Survey. Fewer than half the students (45.8%) responded that instructors Often or Always provide individual attention. Among the faculty, only 14.5% said that institutional assurances of individualized attention were High or Very High.

Performance Indicator 3.5

To what degree does the campus intentionally place first-year students in appropriate courses to address deficiencies in academic preparation? To provide sufficient academic challenge for above-average students?

We assigned a score of “low” to this Performance Indicator.

With respect to “deficiencies in academic preparation,” UNM currently places approximately 30% of its students in at least one remedial course based on ACT scores. Current thinking on this, as expressed at a NMHED (New Mexico Higher Education) conference attended by many Dimension Committee members, is that a single high-stakes test is too blunt an instrument to best assess and address our students’ needs.

According to an analysis by our Office of Institutional Analysis, many students who score below an 18 on the Mathematics section of the ACT (the cut-off for remediation), but who are able to test out of remediation on appeal, are able to successfully complete the next-in-sequence math course.

We believe we can improve placements by offering students optional or supplemental placement procedures (e.g., portfolios) or by mitigating the severity of the placement (e.g., mainstreaming-plus-support rather than semester-long remediation). These new strategies will require more resources. Some of these strategies are being piloted in Spring 2013 and through the 2013-14 academic year. This summer (2013) the English department will offer a version of English 101 “stretched” over the summer and fall semesters to allow students who would otherwise place in a remedial English class extra time to develop the skills necessary to complete a college-level English course by the end of the first fall semester. Similarly, the math department will offer modules of Math 120 this summer to students who would otherwise place into remedial math courses in the fall.

Last year, UNM established an Honors College at UNM. One motivation was to provide top

students additional opportunities for challenging work. Another was to counter what some have seen as a “brain drain.” UNM attracts fewer high-achieving state residents than do Arizona State University or the University of Arizona.

The proposed Honors College, however, would serve only those students with ACT scores in the top 10%, not most of the above average students (the target of this Performance Indicator). The Honors Program does not, and the Honors College will not, necessarily provide appropriate opportunities to those above average students who are not interested or enrolled in honors.

Five of the FoE Student Survey questions asked students to rate the degree to which courses were too difficult, about right, or too easy. The mode response in all cases was “about right,” but for every question far more students responded that the course was “easy” or “too easy” than reported that it was “difficult” or “too difficult.” For all questions, approximately 20% (ranging from 18% to 20%) described the course as “easy” and another, smaller group, ranging from 3% to 11% rated the course as “too easy.” In contrast, between 7% and 15% rated the course as “difficult” and between 0.4% and 3% rated it as “too difficult.”

It would seem that a significant fraction of our students would welcome increased challenge or placement in a higher-level course. For example, fully 30% of our students said the course being rated was “easy” or “too easy” relative to their math preparation.

Performance Indicator 3.6

To what degree does the institution measure first-year students' learning outcomes for each of the following?

UNM offers all seven of the items listed for evaluation—first-year seminars, learning communities, leadership programs or courses, service learning, student affairs functions, residence life, and out-of-class activities—but does little to systematically establish and measure learning outcomes. Thus, each received either a “very low” or “none” or a “low” rating. The specific items were as follows:

First Year Seminar and Learning Communities. University College offers some First Year Seminars and Learning Communities, but these do not have established SLOs nor are they assessed overall. Some individual courses do assess their specific SLOs, but there is no shared set of learning objectives. Engineering, Honors, and Introductory Studies (i.e., remedial courses) also offer learning communities to first-year students. Over half of all student survey respondents participated in at least one of these. When Student Survey responses are filtered to include only students who participated in one of these communities, responses are more positive

for all Learning Dimension questions than are the responses for student survey respondents overall.

Service Learning. University College offers service learning courses, but not geared toward first-year students. The extent to which service learning components are included in first-year courses is not documented.

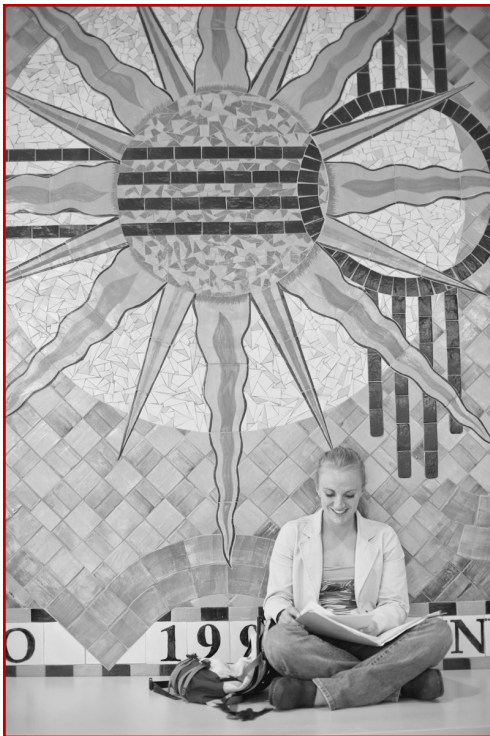
Student Affairs Functions. Student Affairs has just started developing learning outcomes for some of its activities, including New Student Orientation (NSO) and Freshman Week. Data are not available yet regarding assessment of those learning outcomes. Student survey data reveal moderate satisfaction with NSO learning objectives, including 41.3% who said NSO prepared them to succeed academically, 23% who said NSO prepared them to manage finances and fewer than 30% who reported that it prepared them to use UNM's IT services.

Residence Life. Residence Life surveys its students, but the surveys are primarily oriented toward assessing satisfaction.

Out-of-Class Activities. The student survey revealed that very few first-year students participated in the Lobo Reading Experience. Fewer than 10% of students responded that the Lobo Reading book was used in a class, and more than 85% said they had not read the book. 92.5% never discussed the book with friends or classmates outside of class.

Survey results also show very low satisfaction with encouragement for out-of-class learning opportunities. Just over half of faculty and staff respondents (52%) said their encouragement of

out-of-class events was high or very high; fewer than half of student respondents (48%) said this encouragement was high or very high. Thus, the surveys revealed a disconnect between faculty and students on this matter.



Opportunities and Challenges

A consistent theme throughout our deliberations was the decentralized nature of approaches to learning at UNM. As one member asked, “if individual units are doing fine, does it matter that there are no institution-level learning outcomes and assessment?” The fact that SLO development and assessment are not being done by all units, however, suggests that the institution should play a more active role in leading these efforts. The committee also noted that official assessment at UNM is done at the course and program level, not at a more general student body level.

A second and related challenge is the divergence between “first-year experiences” and the “core curriculum.” Because not all first-year students take the same core curriculum courses, there are few if any common learning environments across all first-year students. Even if UNM were to establish a set of essential learning goals, it would be a challenge to identify the course(s) in which those would be delivered to all students. The English core courses, English 101 and 102, come the closest to a shared learning experience for the freshman class, but almost 10% of first-time, first-year students test out of English 102. The English Department recognizes that a high ACT score does not necessarily indicate college-writing readiness and is willing to reconsider its first-year writing curriculum to offer new writing courses that would meet the needs of these students. In addition, given the importance of writing in the learning process, the English department would like to expand the reach of writing to the disciplines as was recommended in several of the documents included in the Evidence Library.

The committee observed promising pockets of intentional effort directed at improving the learning environment for our first-year students together with areas in which the University is not doing well; however, the decentralized organization has resulted in a lack of coordination across units, redundancy, and missed opportunities to provide high-impact experiences for UNM students. Survey results indicate that the students perceived learning objectives while the faculty did not. This is consistent with our observation that, in individual classes, SLOs are developed and assessed. This is what the students see, but the faculty and staff recognize the lack of uniformity and consistency in the assessment process.

Recommended Grade: C

We felt that some departments (e.g., Math) were already doing well in developing and assessing SLOs. We also identified specific programs (e.g., core writing) where learning was being assessed and innovative programs were being developed. But there were other courses and aspects of the first-year experience in which the University is doing little to identify and assess learning outcomes. De-centralized programming and decision making have led to mixed results.

Recommended Action Items

1. Create a set of broad Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the first year, with the understanding that these learning goals will only be effective when there is a system in place to ensure they are used and assessed. These SLOs should include:
 - A collaborative learning outcome that encourages students to create projects together and teach one another.
 - A civic literacy outcome that encourages students to engage meaningfully with their

local communities with the goal of addressing public problems.

- A diversity outcome that encourages students to engage with points of view that emanate from backgrounds different from their own, and with diverse fields of inquiry.
 - A set of community or campus ecology outcomes focused on social aspects of the first year.
2. Strengthen the University assessment office to include qualified and faculty-respected consultants to work with departments to develop department-level SLOs. If this is too resource intensive, find a model department and have them create a set of materials that other departments could use to guide them through this process. Another alternative is to incentivize departmental assessment; currently, departments received no extrinsic rewards for having or developing their assessment processes.
 3. Given the (slightly) higher degree of satisfaction reported by student survey respondents who were enrolled in a learning community, increase their reach and availability. Help students become more immersed in a discipline of their choice in the first year through writing-intensive subject-area courses, or writing-intensive learning communities. Writing instruction could be delivered by a cross-disciplinary office of University writing or an office of University communications (to include speaking, in addition to writing) with the goal of establishing a fully-resourced Writing Across the Curriculum program. Action items included in this recommendation include:
 - Providing incentives for departments or other units that develop innovative high-impact learning environments for their first-year students. (e.g., Miami of Ohio's Global Teaching and Learning Award)
 - Expanding and rejuvenating the Freshman Academic Choices, including residence-based programs, learning communities, and freshman seminars.
 - Including Research Service Learning Program courses in the core curriculum or in freshman seminars
 4. Develop SLOs for extracurricular and other out-of-classroom experiences, particularly for students who commute to campus. Develop student leadership and incentivize student activities that complement and augment classroom learning as described in the Communities of Achievement proposal.
 5. Seek more refined placement of students in courses that are appropriate to their levels of preparation instead of relying on ACT scores alone for placement. Develop supportive

curriculum and approaches that allow more students to enroll in and succeed in college-credit courses immediately rather than spending a semester or more in remedial courses.

Sources of Evidence

AAC&U VALUE Rubrics

http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=55171226&CFTOKEN=92509026

Benefits of Diversity

<http://chronicle.com/article/Diversity-Bolsters/135858/>

Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

http://www.unm.edu/~assess/SupportingFiles/UNM%20Student%20Learning%20Goals_3-08.pdf

Core Curriculum Task Force Report

http://www.unm.edu/~wac/CCFT/Core2010/CCTF_FinalReport_5-15-10.pdf

Draft Freshman Academic Choices Report

<http://freshman.unm.edu/>

FoE Surveys of Students and of Faculty and Staff

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

Global Teaching and Learning Award

<http://miamioh.edu/liberal-ed/faculty-staff/GTL-Award.html>

Handbook for New SLOs: English Department

<http://english.unm.edu/resources/documents/core-writing-instructor-handbook.pdf>

High Impact Practices Overview

<http://www.aacu.org/leap/hip.cfm>

Higher Learning Commission Report

<http://www.unm.edu/~accred/SupportingDocuments/UNM%20Self-Study%20Final%20Document.pdf>

Honors College Proposal

<http://provost.unm.edu/documents/honors-college-proposal.pdf>

Introduction to WILCs, “The Value of Writing Non-fiction”

<http://www.partiallyexaminedlife.com/2012/09/25/the-value-of-writing-non-fiction/#more-13725>

Lobo Reading Experience
<http://www.unm.edu/~lre/>

Low Pass Rate Courses
<http://em.unm.edu/dashboard/progress.html#>

Lumina Foundation Degree Qualifications Profile
http://www.luminafoundation.org/publications/The_Degree_Qualifications_Profile.pdf

Math 120 Proposal
<http://www.math.unm.edu/~jross/Math120/>

President's Strategic Action Team Report
<http://www.unm.edu/president/documents/2011/PSAT-Recommendations.pdf>



Dimension Four

Faculty

Foundations Institutions make the first college year a high priority for the faculty. These institutions are characterized by a culture of faculty responsibility for the first year that is realized through high-quality instruction in first-year classes and substantial interaction between faculty and first-year students both inside and outside the classroom. This culture of responsibility is nurtured by chief academic officers, deans, and department chairs and supported by the institutions' reward systems.

Dimension Committee members addressed the Performance Indicators and agreed to the following assessments of the current situation at UNM:

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 4.1

To what degree does the institution make the first year a priority for faculty teaching assignments, resource allocation to support first-year instruction, by rewarding high quality instruction for first-year students, rewarding substantial out-of-class faculty interaction with first-year students, or by rewarding faculty excellence in advising first-year students?

According to FoE Survey results and Faculty Dimension Committee discussions, the institution has not always made the first year a priority. Strategic plan documents from 2000 indicate the need for UNM to acknowledge its undergraduate teaching mission and discussed how faculty could be rewarded for “the crucial work of teaching our lower division students.” Yet the perception is that much work remains to be done in establishing the importance of teaching, advising, and the first year in faculty work. In the FoE Survey, the item “to what degree is faculty involvement with first-year students considered a priority by institution leaders,” received a mean score of 2.99 out of 5. (According to the Gardner Institute, any item receiving a

mean score below 3.5 warrants attention for improvement.) The item “to what degree is excellence in teaching first-year students acknowledged, recognized, and rewarded by institution leaders” received a mean score of 2.22. Faculty involvement appears somewhat more highly valued by department/unit leaders (mean score = 3.32) and faculty colleagues (mean score = 3.28). Faculty Dimension Committee members initially rated items in this section as “very low” to “low.” Currently, the institution does not prioritize faculty teaching assignments with first-year students in mind. Nor are faculty generally rewarded for high-quality instruction, advising, or interacting with first-year students.



Performance Indicator 4.2

To what degree do senior academic leaders encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses, understand campus-wide learning goals for the first year, understand the characteristics of first-year students at this campus, and understand broad trends and issues in the first year?

Faculty Dimension Committee members felt that senior academic leaders do not encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement with first-year students, understand the characteristics of first-year students at UNM, or understand broad trends and issues in the first year. Although the characteristics of UNM students are addressed in New Faculty Orientation, and the Office of Support for Effective Teaching provides workshops in

teaching diverse students, the committee expressed the need for faculty to know more about keeping our diverse students engaged in learning, rather than simply receiving demographic information.

Faculty members are generally not aware of campus-wide learning goals for the first year. At some point, UNM adopted three of the four LEAP essential outcomes, but the information is not contained in the UNM catalog or any other easily accessible venue for faculty or students. Conversations about establishing learning goals for the core curriculum have been in progress since at least 2010. The Provost’s Committee on Assessment is working on common learning goals for each of the seven areas of the core curriculum with the College of Arts and Sciences and the Faculty Senate Curricula Committee.

Performance Indicator 4.3

To what degree do unit-level academic administrators encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses, understand unit-level learning goals for entry-level courses, understand unit-level learning goals for entry-level courses, or understand the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses?

In the department chair survey, twenty-three chairs indicated that their departments teach first-year courses, and about half of those reported that tenure-track faculty are expected to teach freshmen. Most chairs (more than 80%) recommend that faculty involved in first-year classes seek assistance from the Office of Support for Effective Teaching. Specific mentoring for first-year teaching within departments, however, is uncommon, and few chairs reported spending any time at faculty meetings on strategies to improve first-year teaching. Most departments (around 80%) assess student learning outcomes for their first-year courses.

The Faculty Dimension Committee believed that, overall, unit-level administrators do not encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement, understand learning goals for entry-level courses, or understand discipline-specific issues related to entry-level courses. It was noted, however, that there is wide variation across departments.

Performance Indicator 4.4

To what degree are expectations for involvement with first-year students clearly communicated to newly hired full-time faculty, newly hired part-time/adjunct instructors, or continuing full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty?

The FoE Survey results indicated that responsibilities for faculty involvement with first-year students are not effectively communicated during the hiring process in position descriptions (mean score = 2.24) or candidate interviews (mean score = 2.30), nor have they been effectively addressed in New Faculty Orientation (mean score = 2.65). The Faculty Dimension Committee agreed that expectations are not clearly addressed for newly hired part-time/adjunct instructors and continuing full-time and part-time/adjunct faculty. The committee noted that the newly revised New Faculty Orientation program did address expectations for first-year involvement this year, and gave a score of “medium” to the “newly hired full-time faculty” indicator.

According to data supplied by the Center for Education Policy Research, only 17% of lower-division course sections in 2011-12 were taught by tenure-track faculty. 18% were taught

by lecturers, 38% were taught by teaching assistants (TAs), and 27% were taught by part-time/adjunct instructors (PTIs). Communication of expectations to PTIs may be particularly problematic as very few departments supply training for these instructors. Training for TAs varies significantly across departments. The Teaching Assistant Resource Center (TARC) in the Office of Graduate Studies provides training for domestic and international TAs through workshops and through a one-credit course (INFO 583). Relatively few graduate students (25 in Spring Semester 2013), however, enroll in the TARC course. The Office of Graduate Studies, in conjunction with the Center for Teaching Excellence, is proposing to offer a non-transcribed certificate in College Teaching for graduate students. The Department of English, unlike many departments, provides extensive training for TAs. First-time TAs who teach one section of freshman composition are required to take English 537 (Teaching Composition), a graded practicum that counts toward the required pedagogy hours of their degree program. In addition, the English department holds a teacher orientation each semester, runs a training program, and has a summative and formative evaluation process so that its TAs maintain effective practices and standards.



Opportunities and Challenges

The committee observed that some changes have taken place over the last several months. Notably, the proposed move to a responsibility-centered budget management, while presenting a considerable challenge, has focused attention on the importance of tuition, fees, and state funding formula dollars to the University, leading to the recognition of the importance of undergraduate teaching to the University's financial health. The Provost's Committee on Academic Success (PCAS) and other provost initiatives in the last year have begun to tackle several issues related to the first-year experience. For example, the Promoting Teaching Effectiveness subcommittee of the PCAS is considering how teaching might be more consistently rewarded in promotion and tenure. Efforts to address faculty salary inequities and to get departments to create more detailed criteria for tenure and promotion may provide opportunities to recognize teaching and advising excellence in the near future. Recently instituted promotion guidelines for lecturers may result in more focus on teaching effectiveness and rewards for teaching.

Involvement of a variety of faculty in first-year teaching is highlighted in a recent request from the Deans of University College and the College of Arts and Sciences. They have asked the University to fund lecturer and TA lines to create summer bridge programs in the Math and English departments and dramatically increase the number of learning communities offered to first-year students. This proposal includes establishing an English 101 "Studio" course (additional one-credit course while enrolled in English 101 for student who place into remedial English 100) and a summer bridge program version of Math 120 in the Math Learning Lab (MaLL) for students who place into the remedial Math 100. They propose to expand access to learning communities by offering those experiences in the spring semester as well as fall, and by offering learning communities connected with English 102 and English 219 in addition to the current English 101 pairings. In addition, the deans plan to expand the number of courses and disciplines paired with learning communities (e.g., more C&J 130 Public Speaking and Statistics 145 pairings, establish Math 111 Math for Elementary School Teachers with Explorations in Education, establish Natural Sciences pairings for future K-5 teachers). They seek to create learning communities that combine small sections of English Composition, Public Speaking, and similar courses with large lecture courses such as Psychology 105, Sociology 101, Biology 123, and Chemistry 111. Finally, they plan to establish learning community pairings that take advantage of English TAs from a variety of disciplines such as Art History 101, Music Appreciation 139, and Architecture 121. Obviously, greater resources for tenure-track faculty, lecturers, part-time instructors, and teaching assistants will be required for these changes, and obtaining them will be a significant challenge. Providing additional instructional resources to departments with a heavy first-year teaching commitment can make it possible for tenure-track faculty to teach in learning communities. If these instructors employ high-impact practices in learning communities, this early contact of first-year students with tenure-track faculty can promote deep learning and may lead to engaging more undergraduate

students in research earlier in their college careers.

Additionally, the new LoboAchieve advising system will promote more efficient and effective interactions between faculty and college advisors by allowing faculty to document advising and mentoring visits and to read college advisors' program recommendations for their students.

There are plans to encourage faculty members who teach lower division classes to use the LoboAchieve early alert feature to provide additional help to struggling undergraduate students.

Recommended Grade: C

The committee decided on a grade of C due to the number of promising projects and improvements initiated within the past several months, and these offset, at least to some extent, the long-term lack of focus on first-year teaching and the reward structure and support system for faculty.

Recommended Action Items

1. Ensure that faculty members are well prepared for teaching, advising, and interacting with first-year students:
 - Center for Teaching Excellence (Office of Support for Effective Teaching) will provide training for all instructors of first-year classes (except for those TAs enrolled in OGS or departmental training).
 - TARC will increase number of graduate students enrolled in INFO 583.
 - OGS will offer non-transcripted certificate for College Teaching.
 - Departments will compensate PTIs for participation in training activities.
 - Department hiring plans will address first-year teaching needs.
 - Departments will address responsibilities for first-year teaching in position descriptions and candidate interviews for all tenure-track faculty, lecturers, and part-time instructors.
 - LoboAchieve Steering Committee will create faculty training plans for faculty advising and early alert system.
 - Involve faculty members in course redesign program to improve first-year courses with high DFWI rates.

2. Ensure that excellent teaching and advising are rewarded by units and senior-level administration.
 - Use multiple methods to evaluate teaching, including summative course evaluations, effective peer evaluations, and achievement of learning outcomes.
 - University and college teaching awards will increase base salary.
 - Establish a teaching award for first-year courses.
 - Recognize excellence in teaching and advising in decisions regarding merit pay, tenure, and promotion.
3. Resources to support expanded first-year courses are adequate.
 - Substantially increase financial resources for faculty to teach courses proposed by Deans of University College and College of Arts and Sciences.
 - Establish paid summer fellowships to develop first-year courses.
 - Ensure greater participation of tenure track faculty and lecturers in all types of learning communities by linking the allocation of new lecturer positions and TA lines for departments to faculty participation in learning communities.
4. Faculty address University learning goals in first-year courses.
 - The Faculty Senate and Provost's Committee on Advising in conjunction with colleges and schools will create learning outcomes and assessment procedures for the core curriculum.
 - Learning outcomes for the core curriculum will be disseminated to faculty, students, and staff via the UNM Catalog and other avenues.
 - Core curriculum learning outcomes will be assessed by the University.

Sources of Evidence

LEAP Essential Outcomes

<http://www.aacu.org/leap/vision.cfm>

Student and Staff Surveys - Foundations of Excellence®

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

Survey of Department Chairs Conducted by the Faculty Dimension Committee in November and December, 2012 (not available online)



Dimension Five

Transitions

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with requirement and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear and curricular and co-curricular expectations and provide appropriate support for educational success. They are forthright about their responsibilities to students as well as students' responsibilities to themselves and the institution. They create and maintain curricular alignments with secondary schools and linkages with secondary school personnel, families, and other sources of support, as appropriate.

The Transitions Dimension Committee concluded that UNM students face significant challenges in transitioning from high school to college graduation. The committee considered the transition of a student through three different experiences: pre-college enrollment, post-college enrollment (focus on the first year of college and parental and community contact), and the academic advising experience. Through the consideration of these student experiences the Transitions Committee evaluated the current situation in New Mexico, including the current shift of statewide graduation requirements with future repercussions on University enrollment numbers and requirements. This report concludes with specific recommendations that are unique to UNM and its diverse population.

The Transition Dimension Performance Indicators, which constituted the focus of this committee with regard to measuring institutional performance, were as follows: PI 5.1 Communication Methods, PI 5.2 Communications to Students, PI 5.3 Communication with Families, PI 5.4 Communication to Others, PI 5.5 Facilitating Student Connections, and PI 5.6 Academic Advising. Those Performance Indicators were examined with regard to the three transition experiences noted above.

Current Situation

The University of New Mexico boasts an ethnically and culturally rich community, whose distinction is increased by being one of only four institutions designated as a Carnegie Very High Research Activity Institution and also a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. Our challenge is to continue to set a high standard while at the same time hold ourselves accountable in serving all New Mexico residents and communities. The following outlines a few of the most prevalent challenges we face as a state and university.

Poverty in the State of New Mexico

UNM is a U.S. Department of Education designated Postsecondary Minority Institution with high Hispanic enrollment, a Title V designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, and a Carnegie Research I University serving over 30,000 students. UNM is located in Albuquerque, New Mexico (NM), within Bernalillo County. Albuquerque is the state's largest city, home to over a quarter of New Mexico's population, and Bernalillo County holds about one-third of the state's population (U.S. 2010 Census). The Albuquerque Public School District (APS) is the 28th largest school district out of the 500 school districts in the United States (US Department of Education, 2009). UNM must increase its commitment to working with K-12 colleagues to pave the way for students to graduate from high school successfully and be better prepared for postsecondary education.

As documented in the *U.S. Census Report, Number and %age of People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months by State: 2009 and 2010*, NM is one of the poorest states in the country, with the percentage of persons below poverty level (2010) at 20% which is six percentage points higher than the 15% national level. New Mexico's poverty rate is second highest of all 50 states. Only Mississippi ranks lower at 22% (www.census.gov/prod/2011-pubs/acsbr10-01.pdf). In the Annie E. Casey's National KIDS Count Database (2009), the percentage of New Mexican children living in families whose income was less than 150% of the poverty (2009) percentage was 44%; again only Mississippi ranked lower at 47%.

Educational Attainment in the State of New Mexico

Relative to national averages, adult education attainment in New Mexico is mixed. Table 5.1 outlines target area percentages for education attainment level for the population twenty-five years or older. The table reveals that Albuquerque and Bernalillo County are home to a higher percentage of persons with bachelor's degrees (or higher) and graduate or professional degrees than either the state or the nation. The explanation for this is that Bernalillo County (actually Albuquerque within Bernalillo County), is home to Sandia National Laboratories (SNL) and

UNM. Areas of low attainment, such as in the South Valley, are offset by the relatively high number of PhD's employed by SNL and UNM. Statewide, New Mexico has a relatively low adult education attainment at the bachelor's level (14.2%), compared with 17.6% nationally. Statewide, however, New Mexico has slightly more holders of graduate and professional degrees: 10.8% relative to a national average of 10.3%.

Educational Attainment By Adults in New Mexico					
Education Attainment Level	Albuquerque%	Bernalillo County %	South Valley CDP %	NM%	US%
Less than 9 th Grade	5.6	6.0	14.2	7.6	6.2
9 th -12 th Grade; no diploma	7.4	7.8	15.6	9.1	8.7
High School Graduate (includes equivalency)	23.8	24.3	30.0	24.9	29.0
Some College, no degree	23.9	23.5	19.7	24.9	20.6
Associate's Degree	7.1	6.9	4.1	7.0	7.5
Bachelor's Degree	18.2	17.5	7.5	14.2	17.6
Grad. or Professional deg.	14.0	14.0	5.2	10.8	10.3
High school grad or higher	87.1	86.2	70.2	83.3	85.0
Bachelor's degree or higher	32.2	31.5	12.7	25.0	27.9

Table 5.1 Educational Attainment By Adults in New Mexico (Source: US Census ACS 2010 & US Census South Valley CPD)

Many students who choose to attend an institution of higher education must receive additional support to be academically successful. The Education Impact Of The APS/CNM/UNM Partnership: Current Results & Future Visions (2011) concludes of APS students attending CNM and UNM, 76.7% and 36.9%, respectively, take at least one remedial course. Researchers funded by Pew Center for the States have also developed a “Chance for Success” index evaluating how well young people in each state fare at key points in their development and education. The index generated a composite score for each state using a variety of key indicators including family income, steady employment, and educational factors. Out of a possible range from -26 to +26 points, New Mexico scored last at -23 (Editorial Projects’ Research Center report, Education Week, 01/04/07). The report’s synopsis concludes: “In the state ranked dead last on the index, New Mexico children are more likely than average to come from poor families and to have parents who never went to college and in many cases do not speak English fluently (edweek.org/ew/toc/2007/01/04/index.html).”

New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA)

The New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA) is the required state standardized test used to measure student proficiency in meeting grade-specific state standards and functions as the high school exit exam for the New Mexico high school students. Students must pass the reading, math, and science sections of the NMSBA by the end of their senior year in order to obtain a high school diploma. The exam is given to all students in 10th grade and to 11th grade and 12th grade students who have not reached proficiency in all sections of the test. High school students must pass all sections of the exam in order to graduate. The 2012 test results reveal that 48% of all New Mexico students did not reach proficiency in math or reading (NMPED, 2012). Currently, students who fail both the exam and the retake exam may use an Alternative Demonstration of Competency, which includes a range of options for reaching predetermined scores on the ACT, Accuplacer, an advanced placement course, AP, PLAN, PSAT score, and passing grades in core classes (APS, 2013). Students may also opt to obtain a high school certificate of completion instead of a diploma. The NMSBA results provide empirical data that will help parents, teachers, and students increase academic performance. NMSBA tests are also used to determine each school's Adequate Yearly Progress as required by the federal No Child Left behind Act. The state's new A-F school grading system relies heavily on NMSBA results.



Advising at the University of New Mexico

The University Advisement Center (UAC) continues to focus on improvement with limited resources. It serves University College, the primary college for 95% of incoming freshman students at UNM. The UAC ratio of students to advisors averages 770:1 while the nationally recommended maximum is no more than 350:1, according to the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) and the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). With student success and retention stated as top university priorities, the current advising structure needs reform to serve all UNM students effectively, particularly those students who are “first in family” or considered “at risk.”

Academic advising has historically been a decentralized service at UNM, a less than ideal arrangement considering that students who transition from college to college or change degree paths need consistent advice and extra support. Some groups, such as first-generation college students, require disproportionately more support services to succeed, and this need should be accounted for when designing new advisement models. In addition to the challenging student-advisor ratio, other examples of difficulties within the advising environment include high turn-over among entry-level advisors. This is possibly due to their pursuit of higher paying positions elsewhere, as well as the practice of hiring relatively less expensive administrative assistants who, among other duties, also provide advising services. The number of advisors on staff in the University Advising Center should be increased, or UNM should embrace a distributed model of advising where schools and colleges are responsible for engaging lower classmen earlier and in an impactful way. On a positive note, UAC advising, and other advising units, have been very fortunate in the last five years to have received several advising positions.

The committee agrees with the NACADA finding that clarification of duties is needed for some advising positions, particularly in identifying those with responsibility for advising students on curricular matters. Also needed is increased training for new advisors and development opportunities for faculty and professional advisors.

There are challenges with our current situation, but these provide UNM with the opportunity to be innovative in meeting them. UNM can lead the way in making attainable and sustainable changes for the betterment of all New Mexicans.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

The state is in a transitional phase in regard to educational standards such as NMSBA, dual credit courses, and the Gateway program. These new developments help students during the transition from high school to UNM, and they can be used as part of an overall effort to help incoming students with the particular set of challenges they face.

Dual credit courses are an opportunity to gain college credit prior to enrolling as a first-year college student, allowing them to get ahead on their college coursework.

The Gateway program was developed to assist those students who applied to UNM but did not meet minimum admission requirements. It allows students, if they accept, to be provisionally admitted to UNM with the requirement that they first go to a community college or branch campus to complete twenty-six college credits. At that point, the student can transition back to Main Campus. During that time there are opportunities for support: students can get a Lobo Card, access the Library, and request living arrangements in UNM housing.

Finally, we need to discuss communication with students that occurs prior to their matriculation at UNM.

Challenges

Certain types of communication with secondary school students and their families is inconsistent and insufficient. For one example, many parents and guardians do not understand the different confidentiality arrangements that exist under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and how to obtain information about college requirements and how best to support their student.

While current statewide changes in high school graduation requirements are an opportunity, the current state of flux also presents a challenge as University faculty and staff try to adapt to changing conditions.

Another challenge will be developing a more concise plan for communication with students, which should include rules for when and how information is transmitted, particularly in the period prior to the beginning of the first year. For example, the main UNM website, a primary source of information, is very broad and is only available in one language, despite the variety of languages spoken in New Mexico.

Students coming from rural areas often need additional support. For instance, a student moving to Albuquerque from a rural New Mexico community will experience a drastic change in

surroundings. It is not uncommon that a student's hometown high school population is as large as a Psychology 101 course. Helping them establish a connection to the UNM community is a challenge that deserves our focus.

Finally, there is no current mechanism of notification for advisors when students make changes that are potentially detrimental to maintaining their scholarship or graduation track. Designing and implementing such a mechanism presents an array of challenges.

Recommended Grade: C-

The Transitions Dimension Committee have given this dimension a grade of C- due to the high number of requested action items.

Recommended Action Items

1. Further develop and incorporate transition programs:
 - Provide funding to revive programs such as the Student Affairs Summer Bridge Program which worked with students the summer prior to their first year at UNM in completing two of their required remedial courses, as well as transition workshops which included study habits, financial literacy, and leadership and resource development topics. These topics prepared students to be academically and socially prepared to be successful at UNM. This program was last coordinated through the College Enrichment Program.
 - Dual credit courses allow New Mexico High School juniors and seniors to take college-level courses at UNM and also receive high school elective credits. New Mexico students must take an advanced placement class, honors class, or dual credit class in order to successfully graduate high school. UNM would have to meet the demand for such courses. The committee recommends further developing this program.
2. Reduce the student-advisor ratio from its current average of 770:1 to the NACADA recommended 350:1. This will be accomplished by shifting students sooner from UAC advisors to college- and major-specific advisors.
3. Improve communication to make it more consistent, remove unnecessary jargon, and explain University terminology to ensure students understand what is being communicated. This Performance Indicator focuses on only two advising periods. The task force may elect to consider other advising time periods, such as advising for the second semester.

4. Offer faculty advising to all students: faculty advising will be incorporated for all students upon selection of a degree track. This will allow students to connect with the field of choice to assist in success post graduation.
5. Require a freshman-year seminar for all students. A mandatory freshman seminar provides students with the opportunity to acclimate to University life in a smaller classroom setting, and makes help more easily available to students. The seminar would provide a venue for active learning, study skills, critical thinking and concept development, learning strategies, and direct interaction with faculty and advisors. Most importantly, a mandatory seminar allows students to develop connections with like-minded students who are striving for the same academic goals. In high quality advising, both the student and advisor discuss the rationale for the selection of courses so that the role of each course in the student's overall educational plan is known, understood, and based on educationally sound reasoning. Academic progress includes reviewing each student's grade point average, monitoring time to graduation, and discussing the student's progress toward his/her immediate and long-range academic goals.
6. Re-develop the UNM student website: this development will need to fit the specific needs of the incoming population. For example, the UNM website should be available in multiple languages, especially English and Spanish, and should promote opportunities for the students and family to connect to UNM as a resource and community away from home. By enhancing the website redevelopment, the lived experience of the student will be more effectively translated to parents/guardians, current and prospective students. The lived experience refers to the realities of campus life, both in and out of the classroom. This includes peer culture, academic experiences, student/faculty connections, and other interactions that shape the daily college experience of first-year students.

Sources of Evidence

Annie E. Casey's National KIDS Count Database
<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/KCDataBookProds.aspx>

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<http://www.edweek.org/ew/toc/2007/01/04/index.html>

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<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

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U.S. Census (2010)
<https://www.census.gov/2010census/>
U.S. Census South Valley CPD
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/35/3574520.html>

U.S. Census report- Number and %age of People in Poverty in the Past 12 Months by State: 2009 and 2010
<http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/acsbr10-05.pdf>

U.S. Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The table below specifies the survey questions that support the need for the respective recommendation. Survey questions (Foundations of Excellence® First-Year and Transfer-Focus Faculty and Staff Survey and Foundations of Excellence® New Student Survey) noted in the tables were selected from the Transitions Dimension survey questions with 50% or more of the responses being 3 or below.

Survey Group Questions Referenced:

Survey Group	Questions Referenced
Faculty and Staff- Transfer	125
Faculty and Staff- First Year	83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88
New Student- Transfer	18, 21, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37
New Student- First Year	21, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37



Dimension Six

All Students

Foundations of Excellence All Students Dimension believes that colleges and universities should be accountable for serving the academic and social needs of all students who are admitted. Particular student needs will vary. Some needs are related to specific demographic characteristics (e.g., commuting students, honor students, academically underprepared students, adult students), and others' needs are more general and will cross demographic lines (e.g., competent academic advising, assistance with academic or social problems).

The following report was developed by the FoE-All Students Dimension Committee as a call to action on reviewing and enhancing the first-year experience. The All Students Dimension Committee determined that the University of New Mexico (UNM) possesses a host of first-year experience programs focused on engagement and student-centered learning; however, it lacks the capacity currently to properly identify unique student needs and subpopulations (*e.g., first-generation, veteran, rural, LGBTQ, commuter students, etc.*) through the current application and recruitment processes. Freshman students do not have a common course that introduces them to higher education and the value of education as it relates to their future in the workforce and in society. Many programs, activities, courses, and institutional initiatives for student success exist within UNM with similar goals to increase learning, retention and graduation, but there is a lack of coordination of such programming targeted for our diverse study population. In addition, the communication and marketing of these initiatives lacks synergy and consistency in order to fully make students, staff and faculty aware of their existence.

Current Situation

The current University context calls for a restructuring of the freshman year, especially for at-risk students (e.g., low-income, first-generation, students of color, etc.) who are more likely to drop out due to financial reasons (Paulsen & St. John, 2002). With only 76.6% of freshmen returning for their third semester, UNM needs to take a position on making the freshman year more engaging, innovative, and meaningful for incoming students (Gándara, 1995; Kuh, 2010).

The University of New Mexico (UNM), New Mexico's flagship university, is the state's largest public, four-year degree-granting institution. Of UNM total student population, 40% are Hispanic and 11.6% are Native American. New Mexico (NM) has a population of 2.1 million and is one of only four majority-minority states in the U.S. with a 57.9% minority population, of which 46.7% are Hispanic (U.S. Census, 2010). UNM provides education to central New Mexico, the state's most populous area with over 46% of its population centered in and around Albuquerque, as well as to rural areas statewide through its four branch campuses. The state faces many challenges in supporting higher education for its socioeconomically diverse population. With 20.4% of New Mexicans living in poverty (compared to the national average of 15.3%), New Mexico ranks second in the nation in state poverty level. In terms of postsecondary educational attainment, NM also lags behind the national average. Only 14.2% of New Mexicans have earned a bachelor's degree, compared to 17.6% nationally. More than one-third of UNM undergraduates are Pell Grant recipients (*the largest proportion of any public flagship research university; J. Blacks Higher Ed., 2009*) and 44% of incoming freshmen are first-generation students (*UNM Freshmen orientation survey data, 2010-11*). Six-year graduation rates averaged just 45.8% over the last six years with differences in Hispanic (44.0%) and white, non-Hispanic (49%) graduation achievement rates (*UNM Institutional Research, 2010*).

The unique context of UNM and NM provides an opportunity through the FoE-All Students Dimension to really support its main purpose, which is that this dimension “believes that colleges and universities should be accountable for serving the academic and social needs of all students who are admitted.” Thus, the recommended action items and proposed logic model (found at the end of this report, pg. 75) that the FoE-All Students Dimension developed are innovative, student-centric, and an engaging restructuring of the freshman year experience. It is focused on providing all students from the many identified subpopulations at UNM an opportunity to engage in more centralized and strategic programming directed at inculcating critical skills for navigating the many challenges of college. The subpopulations at UNM comprise a majority of the student population, thus student success programming is developed with the “at risk” and “diverse” student in mind. In addition, students will learn how to apply what they are learning in the classroom through research experience and more college-focused advisement. This proposed model allows all students to explore, understand and

adjust to UNM in their freshman year and have more engaging and meaningful experiences.

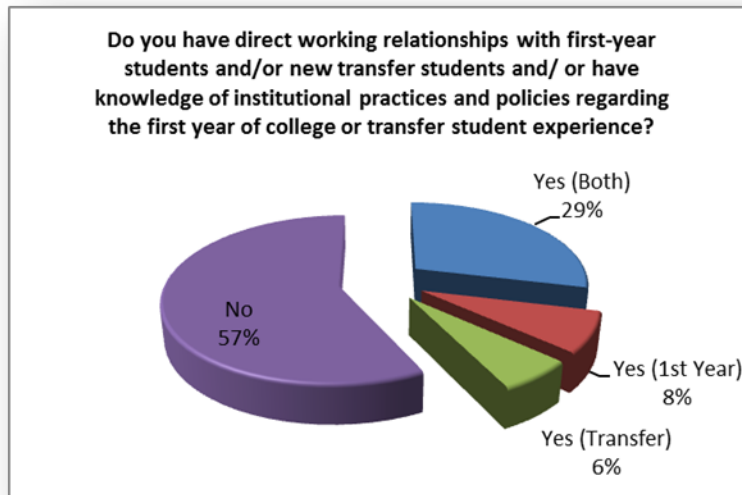
Students will be provided a context for holistic learning, cognitive apprenticeship, centralized communication, college-based advisement and research learning that will increase retention and academic success, especially for at-risk students (*Choy, 2001; Kuh, Pace & Verper, 1997*).

It is an opportunity for the University of New Mexico to provide a student-centric environment to nurture future student success and invest in connecting and making all students feel a part of the University early on in their academic career.

Students arrive at UNM through various ways and require different forms of support. Traditional students arrive right after high-school graduation. Other students are dual-credit status in which they are taking college-level courses while still enrolled in a high-school; thus when becoming a new UNM student, they are arriving with many college credit hours. Other students are arriving with low ACT/SAT scores and in need of remediation. These students may or may not be enrolled in development or remediation programming in order to help them succeed during their freshman year.

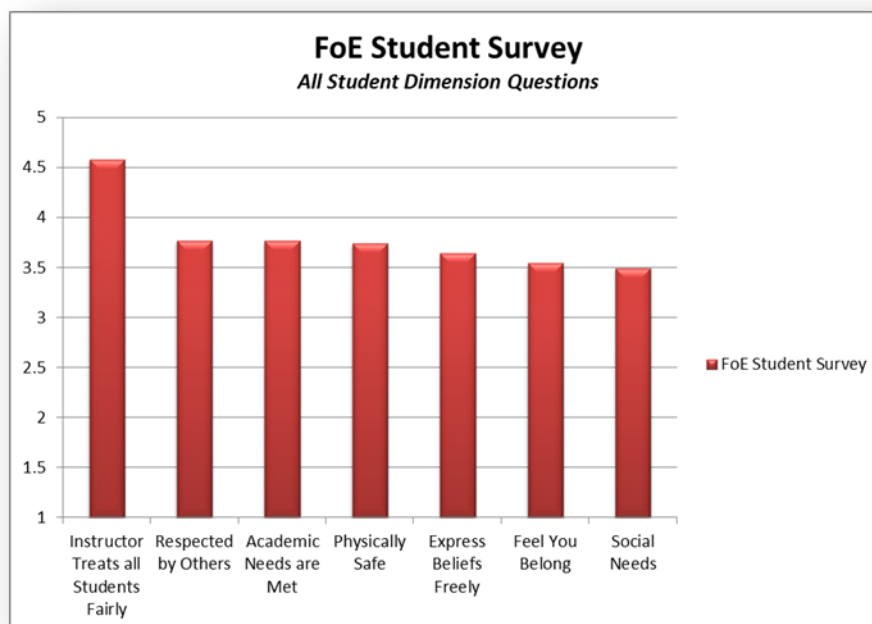
The FoE Faculty and Staff survey results revealed that:

- UNM does a good job addressing the needs of athlete-students, but not of any other subpopulation (e.g., students of color, students with a disability or remedial needs, etc.) thus providing evidence of the committee's low rating on performance indicator (PI) 6.1 *Identifying Needs of Individuals* and (PI) 6.2 *Addressing Needs of Individuals*.
- Of the 2,769 who responded, 43% have work responsibilities directly with freshmen and transfer students. This survey has informed us that we are not doing a very good job identifying the needs of all students and, although UNM has a great track record of programs designed for student success of the FoE subpopulations, being able to provide programming to all students due to the lack of coordination of such efforts.



The FoE Student survey results revealed that:

- UNM does a good job making students feel physically safe and that they belong, but UNM does a moderate job supporting students’ social needs and connecting them to programs outside the classroom. A majority of students indicated that they did not feel that their needs were being addressed supporting the low rating for *(PI) 6.2 Addressing Needs of Individuals*.
- On a scale from 1 (*Not at All*), 2 (*Slightly*), 3 (*Moderately*), 4 (*High*), and 5 (*Very High*), 876 students responded to the following questions:



Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

The lack of communication and coordination of programming for first-year students presents the University of New Mexico with a challenging mission and opportunity for improving first-year programming and overall retention and graduation through holistic methods. This is evidenced and inferred by the consistent response on the FoE Faculty Staff and Student surveys that indicate UNM is not identifying and addressing the needs of all its students, thus impacting the latter PIs. As identified by the All Student Committee, UNM does a wonderful job with the availability of its student programming (i.e., Accessibility Resource Center, Center for Academic Program Support, College Enrichment Program, Student Support Services (TRiO), Veterans Resource Center, etc.); however, the absence of a strategic way to identify and recruit students into these programs is limiting their impact. Participation in the FoE process allows for UNM to be cognizant of the many ways that leadership can develop and implement strategic ways to identify and address the needs of its student body. Students are not connected to programming outside the classroom that can be critical in their student success and support.

Challenges

There are several challenges facing the development and implementation of a systematic identification of unique student needs. The first challenge is using the research on student needs at UNM and in the literature to develop a unique program that will support the diverse demographic that UNM serves—New Mexico. The institution needs to create a system by which all departments and programs have access to the same data in order to make data-driven decisions regarding student success that are consistent with the current student population. In addition to access to the data, this effort needs to be tied to a comprehensive institutional effort to streamline freshman academic and support programs to eliminate duplication. Restructuring the freshman year has been ongoing at UNM for some time; many of the recommendations coming from the All Student Dimension are not new but have been recommended in the past. The question is, will this data and use of best practices be implemented in the future? With renewed energy and focus and a campus-wide initiative—in addition to the FoE effort, UNM has also received a Title V grant initiating student engagement and development—this dimension focuses on emphasizing and growing the current undergraduate freshman learning experiences of particular importance to UNM with its diverse student population. Many social factors influence diverse UNM student success including role models for our students in the ranks of faculty, upper administration and graduate programs. Additional students lack adequate college preparation, have limited resources and other responsibilities including family and jobs. Therefore, extensive research on the type of student who may enroll at UNM, and yet fail to persevere and graduate is ongoing. Supported by research from *Excelencia in Education* (2009),

the Association of American Colleges & Universities (2008) and Nelson Laird et al. (2008), these social and academic programs should be designed and based on learning characteristics at universities with higher-than-expected persistence and graduation rates. These characteristics are identified in the following table:

Research-Based Best Practices for High Persistence in Postsecondary Education

- | |
|--|
| 1. Supportive Campus Environment: Institutional emphasis on support and the quality of student relationships with other students, faculty, and administrators. |
| 2. Active & Experiential Learning: Within and outside classroom learning focused on discussion, presentation, connection to community and solving real world problems. |
| 3. High Level of Academic Challenge: Reading and writing for courses, emphasis on higher-order thinking skills, as well as student time on task and effort.. |

The above best practices were critical in the development of the FoE All Student Dimension recommendations and logic model (pg. 75).

The second challenge is finding the appropriate strategic framework for coordinating freshman success programs, activities, etc.

- *Where will this take place?*
- *How will this be communicated and coordinated?*
- *How will we identify students?*

The third challenge is developing a system to track students and use data for informed decision making.

- *Where will the data be stored?*
- *How will the data be accessed and disseminated?*

Recommended Grade: C +

The University has made positive strides to address many of the needs of the freshman student; however, we have done a poor job of creating a coherent and holistic process to be effective with existing and new programs. We lack the ability to communicate and coordinate our academic support programs and student life initiatives at a level that will provide greater student success. Throughout the discussions in the All Student Dimension, the theme that emerged was the need for greater communication across programs, departments, and divisions with the need for a shared vision and goal, building on existing programs, and leveraging programs and resources.

Recommended Action Items

The following recommendations evolved out of the work of this committee and are strongly supported throughout by each of its members. This committee puts forth these recommendations with strong faith that they will be an integral part of institutional policies and practices pertaining to the first-year experience.

It is important to note that under the various “Indicators” the recommendations may be repeated as they address a specific matter. In addition, implementation plans have not yet been developed, but all students’ needs will be taken into consideration in the development, implementation, and assessment of each recommendation item.



Performance Indicator 6.1

To what degree does your campus identify the needs of individual first-year students in the following areas?

Develop a first-year required course (*taught through every college and school across campus*) that encompasses study skills, career information, transition to the University, connection to University resources, research skills, etc. and have a uniform curriculum/schedule so that students placed in each course (*grouped by major/interest/demographic characteristic/ etc.*) have the opportunity to attend workshops/sessions from other sections in order to explore diverse career and educational pathways. This course would be one of the first tools to build communication of programs/resources available to students. Understanding the purpose and value of a postsecondary degree. All the time developing a path for students to build their academic and career goals.

Develop a central office that oversees first-year student success. This office will serve as a centralized connection point for the collection of all first-year program information that will compile and disseminate information about all first-year programs to students, faculty, staff, and other community members in order to ensure better communication. The center will employ freshman advocates (*undergraduate peer mentors*) to support first-year students and serve as mentors/guides/a first stop so that students can easily ask for help.

(Enhance the) Develop an early alert system through which faculty, staff, and students (*can be updated on what is happening with the alert and where in the process is the student*) are all in the loop. (*LoboAchieve is upcoming and will be used to identify areas that students are struggling in and will link students to appropriate resources*).

Develop a more comprehensive data system that handles academic and support data collected from students and unifies data systems across colleges and the University as a whole. It should have different levels of access (*e.g., general, restricted, etc.*). This system will be integral in maintaining data and reporting this data across student programs.

Improve the application form & process by, for example, collecting demographic information and identifying student needs during the application and recruitment process, rather than relying on disparate data sources to fill in the gaps. The application should be clearer to students and indicate that their answers to the questions on the application (**e.g., first generation, extracurricular activities, etc.**) are used to make their college experience as engaging and simple as possible. In addition, the application should include an opportunity for students to indicate three potential career choices during this process to aid in advisement.

Performance Indicator 6.2

To what degree does your campus address the identified needs of individual first-year students?

Develop a central office that oversees first-year student success, which would be the clearinghouse for the various programs and be responsible for communicating the various resources to all first-year students. It would serve as a “one stop” service for students (and be a place to which faculty and staff could direct students) that mirrors *CNM Connect*, a “no wrong door” approach. A task force should be created to examine regional models such as *CNM Connect* in order to identify the most efficient program that may be adapted for UNM.

Re-envision the UNIV 101 curriculum/structure to make it more like a First-Year Experience program. It should be mandatory for all students to enroll in a section, but they can attend workshops and presentations across sections to get more information about various majors/ programs. The set curriculum should include study strategies and partnerships with organizations around campus. The course should incorporate the use of the *LoboAchieve* system to track whether students are using various resources. The course should also be connected with the career center. Students will choose a section in which to enroll based on either major, demographic characteristic, or general interest; part of the course is creating a success roadmap for each student that makes the first year less overwhelming.

Decrease the advisement ratio of the number of staff to the number of students served. (The NACADA recommended ratio is 350 students to 1 staff member). Currently, UNM’s ratio is skewed because the average for the advisement ratio is measured and varies across colleges.

Develop virtual one-stop for first-year technology (*website/mobile app/call-in number*) that allows students to easily search for available support services, student groups, and campus programs. This technology should be specifically directed towards first-year students with engaging material and minimal text. Drill-down options would help students search for answers to their questions with planned prompts, making it easier for students to ask for help. The development of a freshman newsletter/website that would direct students to the various resources available to them and assistance with the website would be part of this process so that students can more easily access the information for which they are searching.

Create a handout for faculty and staff to aid them in assisting freshman and directing students to various resources and include a virtual communication process facilitated by the One-Stop.

Performance Indicator 6.3

To what degree does your campus assure that all first-year students experience the following?

Re-envision the UNIV 101 curriculum/structure to make it more like a first-year experience program. It should be mandatory for all students to enroll in a section, but they can attend workshops and presentations across sections to get more information about various majors/programs. The set curriculum should include study strategies and partnerships with organizations around campus. The course should incorporate the use of the *LoboAchieve* system to track whether students are using various resources. The course should also be connected with the career center. Students will choose a section in which to enroll based on either major, demographic characteristic, or general interest; part of the course is creating a success roadmap for each student that makes the first year less overwhelming.

Develop a central office that oversees first-year student success, which would help students with their problems. Often students do not know where to go with their questions or concerns. This office would have a strong understanding of campus resources and the various offices and their functions, putting this office in a great position to help students make the right connections. This office would also serve to advocate for students who are struggling with University systems.

Increase the quality of advising for first-year students so that it matches the quality of advising students get once they've declared their majors.

Create a culture of faculty, staff, and administration engagement with first-year students, perhaps, for example, through the creation of faculty and staff teaching awards.

Increase faculty engagement with students. Provide teacher education workshops focused on teaching freshman classes, engaging and relating to first-year students, making office hours more flexible, (*providing*) research and mentoring (*opportunities*), etc.

Performance Indicator 6.4

To what degree does your institution respond to the unique needs of the following subpopulations of first-year students?

Enhance the tracking system for various subgroup populations on campus. This starts at the application stage but continues through the first year. Student interests are put into a system that will suggest various student services and groups based on particular demographics and interest

responses. Students need to be made aware as to why it's important to answer the application questions (e.g., to make the University experience more exciting and tailored to them so that they, for example, don't get announcements about things that don't interest them). Find and use a better tracking system (LoboAchieve?) for these subgroups so that we know who is coming into UNM and what needs they have.

Develop an improved approach for addressing subpopulations. Part of the referral process should help students connect with social and academic supports that are tailored to the demographic categories; however, these same subpopulations should have other means for getting social and academic support.

Offer advisement hours by (*the school's and college's advisors*) the colleges in the individualized ethnic and resource centers.

Develop a central advising location where students can go to address their needs. At this location, there would be one level of coaches/advisors (i.e., generalists) who work with the whole student. The generalist can then help students decide if they have more specific needs that would be better met by a second level of coaches/advisors (i.e., specialists). These specialists would provide advisement and support for students not only according to their majors but according to particular demographics (e.g., first generation students, international students, women, LGBTQ, men of color, etc). **Create a culture of engagement and belonging** by establishing a collective message from UNM as an institution to make first-year students feel they belong and are welcomed.

Identify targeted subpopulations (e.g., first generation students, first-year commuter students, developmental students, veterans, etc.) and design more specific support services for these students. Designate a center on campus specifically for these students (e.g., within Student Affairs) that serves as a "home base" where they can get information regarding their specific needs. Offer a targeted transition course for these populations (i.e., Veteran Transitions course—that allows vets to discuss resilience, adult learning issues, studying, etc.). Create a structure to support and advise students from these subpopulations.

Performance Indicator 6.5

To what degree does your institution assure a campus environment in which first-year students are physically and psychologically safe?

Create a first-year student success office that (*reaches out to students offering*) deals with outreach and offers psychological support for first-year students. The office will give students a confidential and easy-to-find starting point for dealing with issues that arise on campus.

Require (increased) cultural sensitivity awareness/training for students, faculty, and staff and training for faculty and staff regarding the psychological health of student populations.

Improve security within buildings (e.g., provide key card access to buildings where it doesn't exist; improve lighting on campus; provide efficient emergency blue poles with an interactive app that shows where the lights are located for students who cross campus at night).

Increase the presence of police on campus (walking, biking, etc.). Increase funding for campus police so that they have an increased presence on campus to enforce policies. Enforce better pedestrian safety on campus walkways (e.g., protection from bicycles, skateboards, etc.) and provide a better, safer physical environment for accessibility.

Improve suicide prevention programs on campus, making them more prevalent and available.

Sources of Evidence

The following data reports and resources were utilized to review our opportunities and challenges with identifying and addressing students' needs, experience, subpopulations, and the physical and psychological safety of the UNM student population:

Agora

<http://www.unm.edu/~agora/>

Campus-Wide Safety Report, Policies, and Procedures

<http://police.unm.edu/safetyandsecurity.html>

CAPS Annual Report 2010-2011

<http://caps.unm.edu/pdf/Annual%20Report%202010-11.pdf>

College Enrichment Program Website

<http://cep.unm.edu/>

COSAP

<http://cosap.unm.edu/>

Daily Lobo article "Fewer students, more advice" by Hunter Riley

http://www.dailylobo.com/index.php/article/2011/04/fewer_students_more_advice

Division for Equity & Inclusion

<http://diverse.unm.edu/>

Enrollment Management

<http://em.unm.edu/>

New Student Orientation and College Enrichment Program
<http://provostcloud.unm.edu/NSO%20Documents/NSO%20Documents.html>

New Student Orientation Website
<http://nso.unm.edu/>

OIA Data
<http://oir.unm.edu/>

Program directory
<http://catalog.unm.edu/catalogs/2012-2013/degrees-offered.html>

Social Media Guidelines
<http://webmaster.unm.edu/web-advisory/files/social-media-guidelines-draft.pdf>

Student Activities Center calendar and website
<http://sac.unm.edu/>

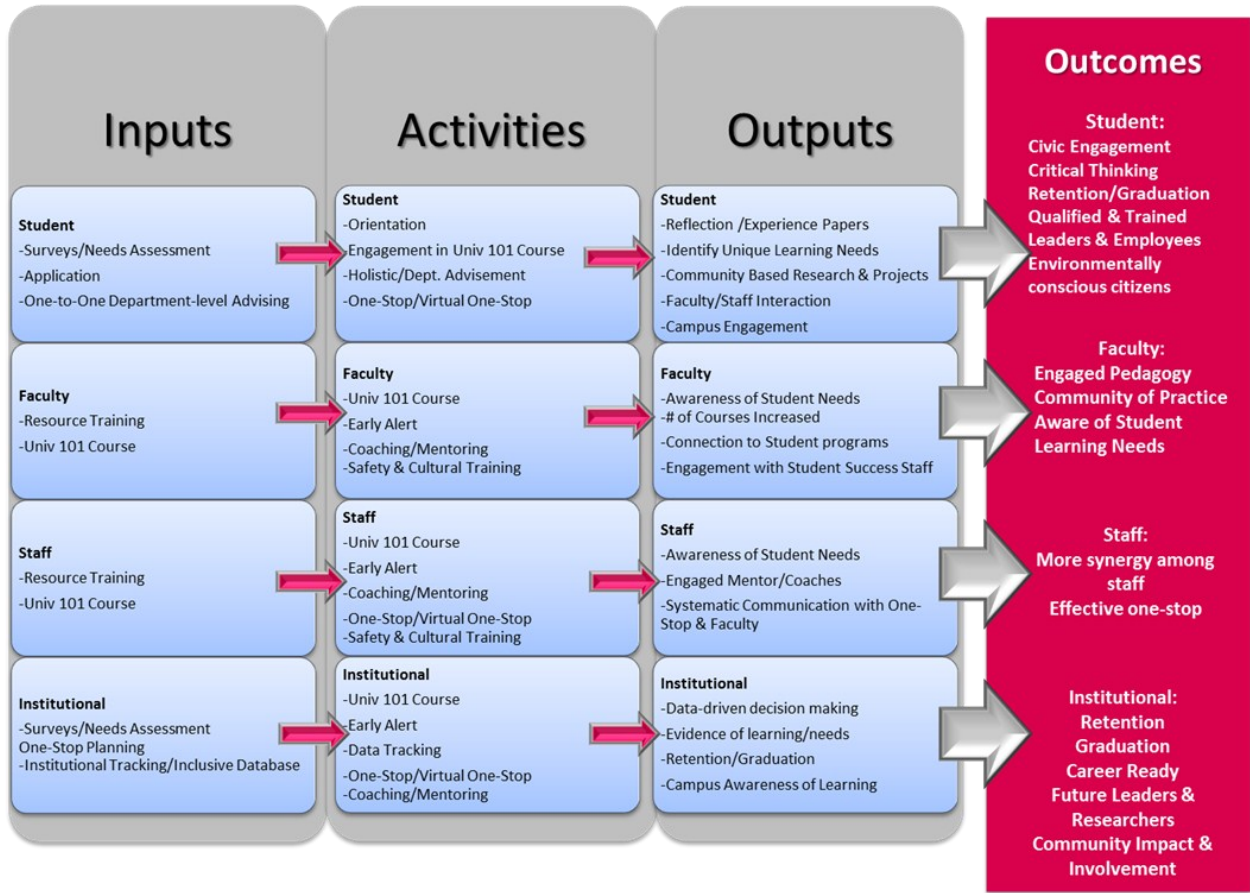
University Advisement Center
<http://www.unm.edu/~ucac/>

UNM Police
<http://police.unm.edu/>

UNM Scholarship Office
<http://scholarship.unm.edu/>

Volunteer Academic Coaching
<http://success.unm.edu/academic%20coaching%20and%20volunteering/>

FoE-All Students Dimension Proposed Logic Model





Dimension Seven

Diversity

Foundations Institutions ensure that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Whatever their demographic composition, institutions structure experiences in which students interact in an open and civil community with people from backgrounds and cultures different from their own, reflect on ideas and values different from those they currently hold, and explore their own cultures and the cultures of others.

The objective of this report is to create a self-study, assessing institutional context, learning opportunities, and experiences. This self-study examines first-year undergraduate students' engagement with diversity, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 7.1

To what degree does the institution assure that first-year students experience diverse ideas and world views through initiatives based in the curriculum, initiatives based in the co-curriculum (campus sponsored out-of-class activities), and initiatives integrated across the curriculum and co-curriculum (e.g., service learning, arts and cultural experiences)?

Preparing undergraduate students for lifelong learning requires sustained focus on critical thinking and reflection on how we are preparing students for successful participation in a pluralistic society. Unlike other universities that struggle to attract diverse students to their campuses, UNM already has a diverse student population which includes diversity across race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographic origin, nationality, language, religion, class,

ability, etc., as a minority-serving institution. We must be particularly intentional, however, with regard to race and ethnicity, especially given our low retention and graduation rates for racial and ethnic minorities. (See the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities Diversity Statement, last accessed 3/22/13: <http://www.aplu.org/page.aspx?pid=15661>.)

Race, Ethnicity, Immigration Status, Gender	Fall 2011 21-day enrollment
American Indian	11%
Asian	3%
Black	2%
Hispanic	37%
White	38%
International Students	3%
Female	57%
Male	43%
Total Student (absolute #)	N=36,742

Figure 7.1 Enrollment All Students, all UNM Campuses (Fall 2011).

There is less diversity among faculty; only 19% of faculty are from underrepresented backgrounds. And, there are alarming race-gender gaps in UNM’s graduation rates. While the overall six-year graduation rate for all UNM undergraduates is 45%, it is even lower among Native American, Black, and Hispanic students, ranging from 22%-43% respectively (See figure 7.2, below).

Race, Ethnicity, Immigration Status, Gender	(Cohort Entering in 2005, Graduated by 2011)	Male	Female
American Indian	22%	22%	22%
Asian	67%	47%	62%
Black	37%	41%	34%
Hispanic	43%	38%	44%
White	57%	45%	53%
International Students	70%	67%	73%
Female	47%	-	-
Male	41%	-	-
Total Student	45%	-	-

Table 7.2 Race-Gender Gap in Six-Year Cohort UNM Undergraduate Graduation Rates (Full-time Freshman entering in Fall 2005 and graduating by Spring 2011, Total N=3,017)

While conventional reasoning may explain these gaps by pointing to the unique challenges faced by first-generation college students, our data show that the racial achievement gap persists among students that had parents with some college.

Race, Ethnicity by Parental Education Attainment	No College/ Unknown	Some College
American Indian	17%	27%
Asian	52%	58%
Black	40%	35%
Hispanic	38%	48%

Figure 7.3 Race-Socioeconomic Status Gap in Six-Year Cohort UNM Undergraduate Graduation Rates (Full-time Freshmen who filled out financial aid forms, entered in Fall 2005 and graduated by Spring 2011). Office of Institutional Research. The University of New Mexico. It is important that this table only includes students who filled out financial aid forms (approximately 60% of students).

Twenty-six percent of survey respondents indicated that the curriculum experienced by first-year students included attention to diverse ideas and worldviews while the majority indicated a moderate to very high inclusion. A similar response pattern occurred concerning exposure to diverse ideas and worldviews in out-of-class activities.

The benefits of our diverse student population are not automatic. Thus, our subcommittee contextualized the FoE definition of diversity to engage the unique strengths present in New Mexico. Among the questions we posed were: How does UNM engage in exposing students to diversity? To what extent does our curriculum include diversity learning outcomes? Does the core curriculum undergraduate major/minor include specific learning outcomes that prepare you to work with broadly diverse communities by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, disability and religion in the U.S. or global context? Are there opportunities for diversity learning outcomes both inside the classroom and outside of the classroom? Do we engage with the diverse local, regional or international communities? How can our department and University systems of accreditation create systems of accountability for diversity learning outcomes? It is telling that at our FoE presentation to a ballroom filled with over a hundred participants, during my presentation I asked how many of the attendees attended a university with a diversity requirement and only a handful besides myself raised their hands. This raises a question: how can faculty, staff, administrators, and students who have not been exposed to the historical and on-going dynamics of diversity and inclusion in the U.S. and global context be given opportunities to do professional development in these areas?

To answer these questions, our subcommittee worked closely with the curriculum committee

and other subcommittees of the Provost's Diversity Council who specifically guided our work in the document *UNM Provost's Diversity Council Framework for Strategic Action Plan* (available at: diverse.unm.edu (last accessed 3/22/13)). We departed from an understanding of diversity described by UNM's College of Education Five Year Strategic Plan of 2005, and then contextualized the definition of diversity to speak directly to the unique landscape of New Mexico, as can be seen in the following:

We must acknowledge how power—social, economic, political and cultural—shapes curriculum, instruction, policy and research in education ... Diversity is the multiplicity of people, cultures, and ideas that contribute to the richness and quality of life. Diversity includes: race, ethnicity, social class, national origin, language, exceptionality, religion/spirituality, age, sexual orientation and gender/gender identity ... Diversity embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives.[i]

We also include the Association of Public Land Grant Universities Diversity Statement, which:

takes seriously our leadership responsibility to provide equal access and equal opportunity through the development of policies and initiatives that foster academic excellence, diversity and inclusion (<http://www.aplu.org/page.aspx?pid=1566>).

This means that definitions of diversity must be anchored in the outcomes that demonstrate that the University embodies inclusive excellence.

We also reviewed the FoE Survey results with students, faculty, and staff and found that those who participated in the survey reported that UNM does not do a particularly good job of exposing first-year students to diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures. The Student Survey in particular included open-ended questions where students reported that they had experienced disrespect related to their sexual orientation, religion, and race. Recent and historic events that have included hate/bias incidents involving African American students and faculty on campus are regrettable and reprehensible events that can be proactively addressed if the focus of the Diversity Dimension is inclusion, exclusion and inclusive excellence. These results led us to create several strategic action items as follows.

Diversity Requirement

Through our self-study, we discovered that several accreditation bodies require that we prepare students to engage. Our peer institutions have already created diversity requirements at their own institutions that in some cases require undergraduate students to take anywhere from one to three diversity content courses as a requirement for graduation.

As an outgrowth of our self-study and the yearlong development of UNM's Diversity Council Strategic Action Plan (diverse.unm.edu), we propose the creation of a University-wide undergraduate degree requirement (3-credits) entitled, "U.S. & Global Diversity & Inclusion." The main learning outcome of the diversity requirement course is to understand inclusion and exclusion among diverse groups of people in the U.S. or in the global context who have experienced historic and/or contemporary inequitable treatment vis-à-vis gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability in the U.S. and/or global context. This requirement could be fulfilled through both first-year courses and upper-level courses (at the 100-400 level). This requirement would not add additional credits to the degree as all of the courses would double count with other degree requirements. Through the work of the Curriculum Committee of Diversity Council we have already compiled 70 syllabi (emailed to: usglobaldiversity@unm.edu). These syllabi include both study abroad, classroom based courses, and service learning, experiential courses that span the natural and social sciences and pre-professional programs.

There are several reasons why this requirement would enhance the undergraduate outcomes of UNM students. First, UNM's mission statement emphasizes our strength through diversity in the Vision and Values Statements. Diversity is our unique strategic advantage. Over 60% of our students come from underrepresented groups including race, ethnicity, country of origin, sexual orientation, gender, ability, etc. Moreover, we are in a state with the 4th largest percentage of Native Americans and the largest percentage of Latinos; however, our faculty demographic over the past two decades indicate that we need to create dramatic strategic action plans to increase faculty diversity. Specifically, 2012 data from the UNM Factbook produced by the Office of Institutional Research, indicate that less than a quarter of our faculty are from underrepresented groups and only 40% are women.

Second, diversity learning outcomes are valued by multiple accreditation agencies for different professions and disciplines. Our national peers recognize this face and have instituted anywhere from 3-9 credit courses in Diversity for all undergraduates (see chart on pg. 88). These learning outcomes will ensure that students will be more prepared to function successfully in an increasingly diverse nation and within the global context.

And finally, diversity learning outcomes have been linked to a positive impact on retention and graduation. Dr. George Kuh's research with national data on over four million undergraduate students found that students who had had an infusion of diversity experiences had better

engagement, retention, and graduation rates than their similarly located peers who had not had such experiences (Kuh, 2005). This finding is particularly relevant for students from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds (Ibarra, 2001). In particular, at UNM we know that we have a race-gender gap in graduation rates, where less than half (22%-43%) of our students of color are graduating.

The second part of Performance Indicator 7.1 is to assess (emphasis mine) “to what degree does this institution’s **out-of-class activities** for first-year students include appropriate attention to diverse ideas and world views?”

Performance Indicator 7.2

To what degree does the institution structure opportunities for first-year students to interact with faculty and staff, other students, or individuals from outside the institution who are from backgrounds and cultures different from their own?

In assessing opportunities for first-year students to interact with individuals from differing backgrounds/cultures, 85% rated those opportunities at moderate to very high levels with other students, 75% with faculty and staff, and 52% with individuals outside the University.

Freshman – 3,341	Total Students – 29,056
Ages: 18 to 19 (3,277)	Ages: 20 or older (64)
Residency: New Mexico (2,883)	Non-resident (458)
Living on Campus: 32%	

Figure 7.4 Basic facts from UNM Office of Institutional Research Fact Book 2011-12 (Observations on Current Situation)

UNM, very rich in cultural diversity, has supported student-centered programs that emphasize diversity, including El Centro de la Raza, American Indian Student Services, Afro-American Student Services, Women’s Resource Center, LGBTQ Center, Accessibility Resource Center, and Veterans’ Services. These centers support diverse student groups but also work to educate the entire campus about the importance of diversity. In addition, a Division for Equity and Inclusion was established in 2007 and programming that addresses diversity, equity and inclusion for all diversity groups related to race, ethnicity, ability/disability, gender, gender

identification, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, etc. has been on-going in exposing students to various topics as well as engaging the students in critical dialogues. However, many students at UNM fail to take advantage of the opportunities available to them for a variety of reasons:

- Students who live in campus residence halls have some exposure to diversity through regular orientation, activities, and interactions with diverse students in their living units. There are many international students living in the residence halls, but only a handful of international first-year students are enrolled at UNM.
- The progressive privatization of UNM residence halls has made it more difficult for the University to provide special programs for campus residents that reflect University values and priorities.
- The overwhelming majority of first-year students are commuter students who have fewer opportunities outside of classes to interact with other students.
- There are some 400 chartered student clubs in which all students can get involved, some of which are involved with diversity issues of various kinds. There is anecdotal evidence that students who join organizations are exposed to diversity, for instance in sports, internationally-themed organizations, student government, political groups, etc. However, there is also evidence that many of the organizations cater to very specific clientele and contribute to the “silo effect.”
- There are no data available on how many first-year students get involved with student organizations or other extracurricular activities. There are so many clubs and opportunities for extracurricular activities that many freshmen, especially commuter students, may find it difficult to locate them. They may also feel overwhelmed by academic, employment, or other social activities.
- Many incoming first-year students express interest in study abroad, but the structure of most of our international education programs does not encourage first-year student participation.
- University College has offered a strong menu of first-year student academic programs, many of which involve very valuable extracurricular activities that expose students to diversity. However, these programs only involve a small percentage of first-year students, and some, for instance commuter students, have fewer options to participate. These programs are currently being reorganized and redesigned.
- Presently, there are no organized campus-wide events or programs that are specifically designed to expose first-year students (or others) to diverse populations outside the classroom.

- Opportunities are limited for programs provided by the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) to reach the general population that allow them to normalize disability and explain it as a natural part of life. Other current ARC activities include (1) training orientation leaders for the College Enrichment Program, Classroom mentors, and College Enrichment and Outreach Program; (2) presenting at OSET August training and the CEP student orientations; (4) advising student organizations linked to disability awareness; and (5) responding to random requests to discuss services to a class studying disability.



Performance Indicator 7.3

To what degree does the institution convey to first-year students the standards of behavior it expects for participants in a diverse, open, and civil campus community?

The committee concluded that current efforts to convey to first-year students expected standards of behavior are insufficient. There is some time devoted to discussion of behavior during New Student Orientation, as well as in some high-enrollment freshman courses. Additionally, the

student handbook and other University resources clearly state rules and policies for behavior. Recent events in residence halls, however, show that there is much work that needs to be done to raise standards of behavior and create an open and civil environment.

Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

There are several promising opportunities for increased exposure to diversity at UNM, which include residence hall experiences, such as activities and other interactions, with diverse students in living units. The large number of chartered student clubs provide opportunities to interact with students from a multiplicity of backgrounds, and encouraging students to join these clubs could capitalize on the opportunities. There are also opportunities for increasing diverse curricular content. In University College, for instance, there are many offerings of first-year academic programs, and some of those even have extra-curricular components to them.

Challenges

Even with the opportunities for programmatic initiatives to increase diversity offerings, the overwhelming majority of first-year students are commuter students who have fewer opportunities outside of class to take advantage of them. Finding ways to reach these students will be a challenge. While the number of student clubs is encouraging, avoiding the problems associated with “silo effects,” in which certain organizations cater to specific clientele is an issue warranting attention. Finally, some experiences, such as study abroad, which have shown a high impact on student success, are prohibitively expensive. Opening these experiences to more students is a tough financial challenge.

Recommended Grade: D

While there are small areas of real strength at UNM, the committee concluded that far too much work remains to expose UNM freshman to diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures. The Diversity Dimension of the Foundations of Excellence® provides a point of departure for contextualizing diversity learning opportunities in the first year in the unique landscape of New Mexico. We must always be attentive to how our undergraduate first-year experience, as well as the experience in the major/minor, includes specific learning outcomes that prepare our students to work with broadly diverse communities by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, disability, and religion in the U.S. or global context. While there are some existing resources that address the unique diversity of lived experiences, cultures and worldviews already present in the University of New Mexico and beyond, this report finds that there is much more that needs to be done. If UNM is to lead in the area of diversity which includes race, ethnicity, gender, gender identification, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ability/disability, etc. and take advantage of the diversity that is part of the New Mexico landscape, opportunities for first-year students should be varied and numerous. A curriculum, the 3-credit diversity requirement will serve a first step and one key milestone in the evolution of our flagship university as the embodiment of diversity, equity and inclusion. Such a course will provide opportunities for students to have common experiences that will prepare them to live and work in a diverse society. It will also prepare them to be critical thinkers and leaders that understand their role in creating a more equitable and inclusive world. In addition, multiple opportunities have to be developed and sustained for students to experience diverse interactions. Some of these opportunities will need to be made more deliberate and not left to chance. Exposure to diversity should be designed to reach our traditional and non-traditional first-year students as well as resident and commuting students. It will need to involve the University as a whole rather than continuing to be the domain of those programs that have served our diverse student population.

Recommended Action Items

1. Establish a 3-credit diversity requirement for all students that prepares them to understand the diverse society (national and international) that we live in and creates critical thinking through exposure to topics of power, social justice, oppression, etc.
2. Create University-wide involvement and accountability in developing diversity, equity and inclusion as an important part of the fabric of our institution in enhancing inclusive excellence.
 - Create structures of accountability vis-à-vis annual department and unit level action plans for critical reflection on how diversity learning outcomes are part of their degree requirements and learning opportunities. The focus on diversity can be an explicit part of the academic program reviews for all departments and accreditation of the University.
 - Include a proactive statement for all faculty and staff hires that value prospective candidates' demonstrated commitment and contributions to working with broadly diverse students and communities.
 - Create learning communities for the professional development of all new faculty and staff to engage in a semester long experience focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion as a prerequisite for tenure and promotion and/or annual evaluations.
 - Rebrand the “public face” of UNM with a “Diversity” Tab on the homepage of the University. This link can serve as a hub for all the diversity learning opportunities on campus.
 - Capitalize on the value-added by the diverse and international graduate students and part-time instructors already on campus to teach these courses.
 - Support theme-based dorms, including those with an international component and focus on the diverse cultures of the U.S.
 - Expand the set of programs in University College and the new Honors College to involve more first-year students, including commuter students, and focus more deliberately on including diversity issues and opportunities for broad interactions among students.
 - Expand offerings in service learning and community-engaged research that engages undergraduates both with local communities and in global contexts.
 - Conduct regular University-wide surveys on diversity, equity and inclusion in the first year.

- Design specific campus wide activities to foster experience with and respect for diversity, for instance an expanded first-year reading and reflection experience; a diversity day (week or month) when the entire University focuses on those issues through a variety of well-publicized events.
 - A first-year community service requirement could be instituted that would provide opportunities for students to work on community projects that expose them to diversity or bring groups of students to work together on specific activities modeled on the current Spring Storm and other existing volunteer programs.
 - Additional diversity requirements should be set for students attending orientation. This could include a requirement that each student write a cultural autobiography prior to the start of their first year. Alternatively, a first-year course required for all new students could focus on developing a cultural autobiography. This exercise could lay the foundation for meaningful conversations on culture.
3. Leverage the newly re-envisioned Global Education Office and the focus on recruiting more international students as a way of expanding diversity and inclusive excellence on our campus.
- Residence Life should greatly expand its diversity impact by providing more special interest programs such as pairing U.S. and international students, foreign language or international interest living areas, and formal diversity programming that involves every campus resident. The new private dorms should be required to participate in this effort.
 - The study abroad program should develop and encourage broad participation in specific, cost-effective short-term international experiences for students before, during and just after their first year.

Sources of Evidence

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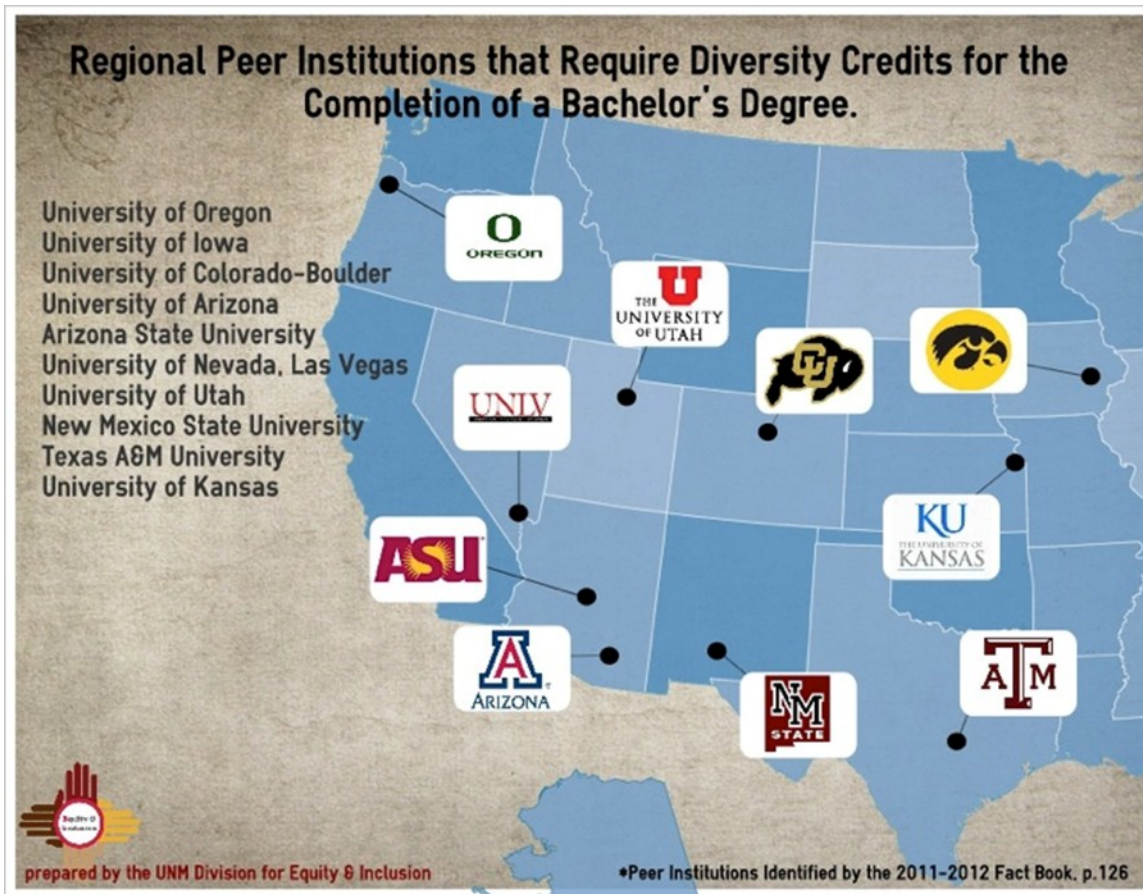
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Native Pride: the Politics of Curriculum and Instruction in an Urban Public School. Martinez, G. 2010. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

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Peer Institutions Requiring Diversity Credits for a BA/BS Degree





Dimension Eight

Roles and Purposes

Foundations Institutions promote student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, both for the individual and society. These roles and purposes include knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. Institutions encourage first-year students to examine systematically their motivation and goals with regard to higher education in general and to their own college/university. Students are exposed to the value of general education as well as to the value of more focused, in-depth study of a field or fields of knowledge (i.e. the major).

The Roles and Purposes Dimension at the University of New Mexico (UNM) was a committee of forty members: eight faculty, fifteen staff, and seventeen students. We met formally a total of eight times, and conducted some business via email. In exploring the issue of the high rate of students who “stop out” of college before starting their third semester, our task was to focus on UNM’s effectiveness in communicating about and fostering the critical learning that takes place in areas less directly associated with getting a job/career. The belief was that there is a relationship between students remaining in college and recognizing that the college experience itself offers many opportunities for personal growth (as well as for becoming an engaged citizen, learning to serve the public, etc). Our committee opted to characterize students’ experience as a “journey”: (a) pre-UNM days when future college students are still children or adolescents, (b) the summer before students’ first year at UNM, and (c) the first to the third semester at UNM. In the process of discussing this journey, a considerable number of potential pitfalls were identified, and yet innumerable solutions were generated. In selecting our Recommended Action Items, a concerted effort was made to focus on relatively inexpensive recommendations, and ones that would appeal to today’s college student. Thus, a fair number of suggestions involve electronic communication (e.g., video clips of upper-class students describing their personal growth stories that unfolded in college over time, faculty offering online “office” hours specifically to discuss personal growth issues). Furthermore, we strove to make recommendations that would not be perceived as overly burdensome for any subset of the UNM community, and in fact had meaningful (and affordable) incentives associated with them.

According to the overall results of the Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) survey that was administered to first-year UNM students, the aspects of the college experience that fall under the domain of the Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee were among those found to be least satisfying. Still, students consistently rated these items higher than did faculty and staff (see Figure 8.1). When each item was discussed during the initial Roles and Purposes Dimension Committee meeting, our ratings were even lower; “2” across the board. Conceivably our first-year students were not as critical of the job being done as were faculty, staff, and the members of our own committee (which included many upper-class students) perhaps because they had not yet been trained to view the world and their experiences with a critical eye, and they were unaware of the manner in which these important roles/purposes could actually enhance their college experience.

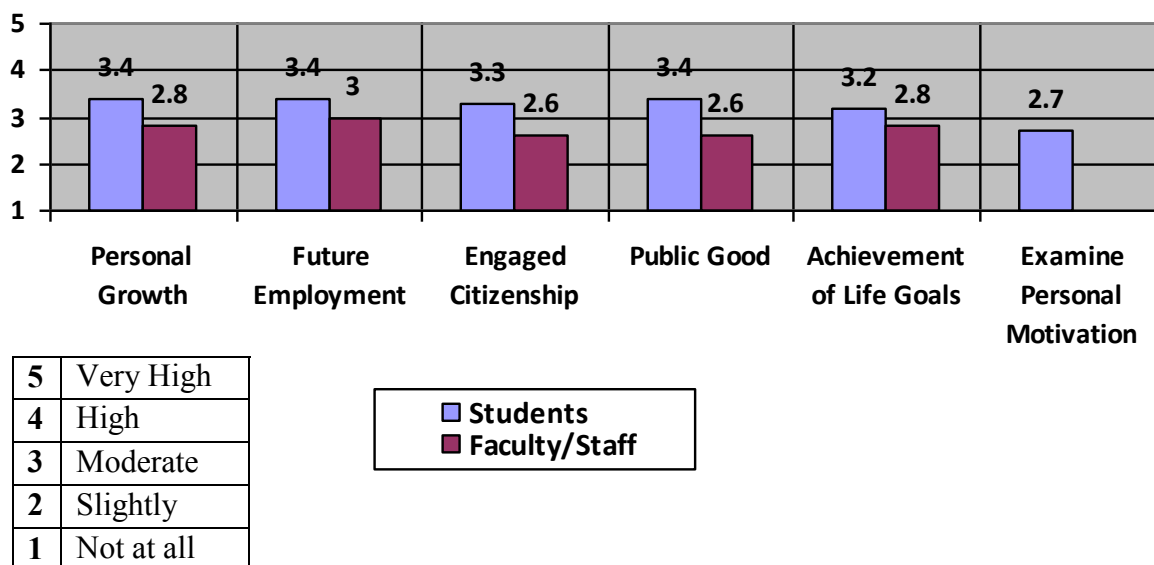


Figure 8.1 The graph presents the results of the two FoE Surveys, one for students, the other for faculty and staff. The items represent the questions (which are distributed throughout this report). Each question asked about the degree to which UNM effectively communicated to new students about various “other” purposes of higher education (e.g., knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning for serving the public good, etc.).

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 8.1

To what degree does the institution effectively communicate to new students its vision for the following purposes of higher education?

(a) Knowledge acquisition for personal growth

Perhaps like many institutions, UNM seems to focus on the ability of a college education to address students' employment concerns, rather than communicating about the acquisition of skills and self-knowledge that will promote personal growth. More generally, the question was raised as to whether UNM effectively conveys the value of a liberal arts education.

When the FoE Survey asked new first-year students, "To what degree does this institution help you understand how attending college increases knowledge for personal growth?" nearly half (49.5%) reported a "4" or a "5" (*high, very high*), but the average was 3.4 (on a 5-point scale). When the survey asked faculty and staff, "To what degree does this institution help first-year students explore the following purpose of higher education: knowledge for personal growth?" almost the opposite was reported, as 39% reported a "1" or a "2" (*not at all, slightly*); the average response for this item was 2.8. One might speculate that the discrepancy was due to first-year students simply viewing the novelty of their new college experience as "personal growth", whereas faculty and staff were thinking more specifically about what UNM actually does to foster the basic knowledge for this growth.

(b) Learning to prepare for future employment

There are a number of ways in which a university can communicate to students about how best to prepare for future employment. Offering a sufficient number and variety of actual work experiences is one concrete type of preparation. Student employment opportunities are quite limited at UNM, in large part because most departmental budgets rely on hiring students who are work-study qualified. Although there are regular student employment positions as well, these are very competitive, and many of them do not have comprehensive skills-building plans in place. And while UNM has already established some off-campus student positions with companies, these positions also are quite competitive. Studies have demonstrated that college students who participate in student employment have a higher retention rate, feel a sense of community, and learn work skills. Importantly, student employees are frequently exposed to future employment opportunities through their supervisors or the connections they establish at their work sites. A separate but related issue is the fact that many individuals in the UNM community appear unaware of the Career Services programs that are available.

When the FoE Survey asked new first-year students, "To what degree does this institution help you understand how attending college increases knowledge for your future employment?" almost half of them (49.1%) reported either a "4" or a "5"; the average was 3.4. When the survey asked faculty and staff, "To what degree does this institution help first-year students explore the following purpose of higher education: Preparation for future employment?" the most common response was a "3" (40.8%), and the average response was 3.0. One might

imagine that the first- year students were responding to the obvious link between college and job preparation, but faculty and staff were instead thinking about the broader question of how UNM helps students carefully consider and explore career options.

(c) Learning for engaged citizenship

Although new students are exposed to a number of opportunities for engaging in good citizenship, such as at New Student Orientation and Welcome Back Days, we are not necessarily doing a good job *communicating* about the importance of being a good citizen. We seem to focus more on the extracurricular aspect instead of the citizenship aspect of such activities. Still, there are some excellent programs/opportunities such as the Community Engagement Center, Service Learning Program, and Spring Storm that offer classes, workshops, and projects to engage students in working for their communities. Unfortunately, since the availability of some of these recognized programs is limited due to funding, not all students are able to take advantage of these experiences. Furthermore, the fact that these programs exist is unknown to many students and to individuals who conceivably could refer them (e.g., faculty, staff).

When the FoE Survey asked new first-year students, “To what degree does this institution help you understand how attending college prepares you to be an involved member of your community?” 44.5% reported either a “4” or a “5”; the average was 3.3. When the survey asked faculty and staff, “To what degree does this institution help first-year students explore the following purpose of higher education: Active engagement in the community?” a mere 15.9% reported a “4” or a “5”. The other extreme (“1” or “2”) was endorsed by 48.2%; the average response was 2.6. Conceivably the first-year students were responding with the belief that



college would indeed help prepare them to become better members of the community, whereas faculty and staff were critically evaluating UNM’s specific efforts to ensure that this routinely happens. Alternatively, this could be explained by faculty and staff not being aware of what many students do outside the classroom.

(d) Learning for serving the public good

Although the idea of serving the public good seems quite basic and *is* part of UNM’s overall mission, the fact that the message to do so is not a routine part of UNM’s communication to students (especially during their first year) prompted a particularly interesting committee discussion. UNM’s established vision for providing public good to our state and local communities does not appear to get translated into the day-to-day operations with students. Instead, there seems to be more of an emphasis on individual advancement than on getting students to think in terms of the collective good. Many committee members reported that it is rare that we talk about justice, freedom, equality, or the betterment of society in general on campus.

When the FoE Survey asked new first-year students, “To what degree does this institution help you understand how attending college prepares you to contribute to the betterment of society?” almost half (49.4%) reported a “4” or a “5”; the average was 3.4. When the survey asked faculty and staff, “To what degree does this institution help first-year students explore the following purpose of higher education: Contributions to the betterment of society?” close to half (46.6%) reported the *other* extreme (“1” or “2”); the average response was 2.6. Again, the data seems to indicate that first-year students idealistically assumed they would be learning how to make such a contribution, and faculty and staff assumed that this particular type of training/preparation was not formalized and therefore was unreliable.

Performance Indicator 8.2

To what degree does the institution intentionally provide opportunities for first-year students to examine their personal motivation for pursuing higher education?

Despite the fact that ongoing opportunities exist for students to explore their personal motivations for attending college, UNM does not appear to deliberately and routinely promote such explorations. In-depth conversations on the topic tend to occur sporadically within small groups, or as part of activities within organizations. In sum, no formal structure is in place.

When the FoE Survey asked new first-year students, “To what degree have faculty/staff helped you examine your personal reasons for getting a college education?”, the more common responses (43.7%) fell in the “1” or “2” categories; the average response was 2.7. This was the lowest rating given by students for the questions within the Roles and Purposes Dimension. It is possible that students interpreted this question about *personal* reasons to be one that necessitated *individual* attention from faculty or staff in order to rate it highly - which the majority of these students likely had not received to date. Regardless, the issue must be addressed.

Performance Indicator 8.3

To what degree does the institution effectively communicate its rationale for the following?

(a) Required courses (e.g., core curriculum, distribution, & general education)

The core requirements typically are presented to students as a “checklist” without a clear rationale. They are viewed by students as a stumbling block; something that must be tolerated or completed before they can move on to the more interesting and worthwhile courses.

(b) Required competencies (e.g., library skills, computing, writing)

The problem in this area is more basic than a simple lack of communication about required competencies. Currently there is no assessment of students’ computing or library skills. Although most institutions assume that students are technologically savvy, the reality is that students enter the University with varying levels of these required competencies. Communication about writing skills only occurs indirectly, by advisors informing them as to which English writing class their ACT or SAT scores place them.

(c) Requirements for entry into programs/majors

Students are often not formally exposed to program or major requirements until they attend New Student Orientation. And although the course catalog (which contains the requirements) is available online, many students are unaware that this exists. As far as communicating the rationale for the requirements, there does not appear to be a standard mechanism in place to do this.

Opportunities and Challenges

UNM has great potential to help students recognize and take advantage of the link between higher education and personal growth, beginning with a host of programs and services that lend themselves to personal enrichment experiences. Yet opportunities are lost on a daily basis, because it appears that the majority of faculty (and many staff) are unaware of the existence of these programs, and thus cannot readily refer students to them. Our committee also believes that UNM faculty are ideally suited to play a more visible role in helping students grow personally from their college experience, in part because faculty have extensive ongoing access to students through classes (see Recommended Action Items). Furthermore, given today’s

advanced technological environment and college students' affinity for it, electronic communication is one highly-preferred method for highlighting the college/personal growth link, whether it comes from faculty, upper-level students, alumni, or staff. As noted above, the committee also believes that it is vital to start making the link between college and personal growth early, such as when future UNM students are still young (See Recommended Action Items).

UNM should develop a plan to increase student employment opportunities both on and off campus. These new and current positions should include provisions for supervisors to create a curriculum that would help the student employees build their skills for future jobs. Obviously, University finances and the local economy will limit the degree to which this plan can be executed. Additionally, students can gain valuable insight into career options, paths, and the requisite skills by speaking directly with faculty. For example, most UNM students do not realize that in order to be competitive for admission to many graduate programs they need experience in research labs (e.g., through Independent Study). And for those students who do know that research experience is important for graduate school admission, they typically gain this knowledge late in the process instead of hearing it (or having it "register") as first-year students. Finally, UNM alumni are ideal individuals to offer insight into methods for preparing for future employment while still an undergraduate, and consequently their involvement in such activities (e.g., through the Alumni Office) should be increased and made more visible.

Much of the committee's discussion centered on first finding methods to increase awareness of already-available opportunities for engaged citizenship, and then broadly communicating the message that UNM values good citizenship. Again, electronic communication was suggested as a viable method for delivering the message. For example, Public Service Announcements could be made during athletic events that highlight a "good citizen of the week" (a picture of this student, staff, or faculty member could be displayed on the large screens as well), or "stories" of good citizens in action could be added to the president's weekly online letter to the UNM community. The students on the committee felt strongly about the need to make the process by which a student becomes an engaged citizen clear, and there was support for getting faculty to regularly promote the topic of engaged citizenship in the classroom. Developing new approaches to promoting good citizenship could be done by exploring materials on the topic offered through the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Many of the suggestions offered by the committee regarding public service were similar to those noted for enhancing communication about engaged citizenship. Overall, it was believed that UNM primarily needed to do a better job raising awareness of the many public service acts the UNM community already provides, with the goals of both highlighting the importance of such acts and offering models of good public service to students. A concise and unified messaging campaign both inside and outside of the classroom could help students understand

the role higher education plays in contributing to the greater society. The task of delivering this message would be shared by administrators, faculty, staff, and upper-level students.

There were three themes that kept re-emerging as the committee discussed personal motivation for higher education: (1) In theory, New Student Orientation is an excellent opportunity to get students to start exploring their personal motivation(s) for attending college. And there were many, many suggestions regarding how this could be done; however, the reality is that New Student Orientation is already filled to capacity with activities and speakers. Consequently, other formats or occasions for planting the seeds for this important exercise appear needed. (2) As stated in response to several other questions posed by the FoE to our committee, UNM needs to maximize its use of electronic communication. Although a small initial financial investment would be required to get this started, over time it would be cost-effective to have such a system maintained and updated. A number of specific suggestions for maximizing our use of electronic communication are found in the Recommended Action Items. (3) Tenured and tenure-track faculty should be encouraged to play a bigger role in first-year teaching, given the faculty's unique perspective on the role that research involvement can play in helping new college students examine their own reasons for being at UNM. The belief was that faculty could be involved in teaching freshman students in many ways that did not necessarily require them to teach an entire freshman course. For example, faculty could do guest lectures in classes, in part to get students excited about research and to recruit students for Independent Study credits. The challenge would entail offering sufficient incentives to faculty for this service (in addition to the opportunity to recruit research assistants). The committee believed that faculty might respond favorably if either "teaching credit" or "service credit" was accrued for such lectures.

The committee decided that, although we could ask that student advisors be trained to deliver a clear message about the importance of the core, it might be more powerful to have that message instead come from peers, alumni, faculty in the classrooms, and even potential employers. Of course, the challenge would be to organize how these messages would be collected and delivered—again, electronic media could be used (e.g., taped, brief interviews).

We need to formally assess computing and library skills prior to the start of the first year. If an unsatisfactory level of competence is discovered, the rationale for requiring special training should be delivered, and the appropriate training sessions should be offered.

There are two parts to the issue of entry requirements for majors and programs: (1) finding a way to notify students in a timely manner about the actual requirements for programs/majors, and (2) communicating the rationale for the requirements. The committee easily came up with a number of ideas that could address (1), but ensuring that the reasoning behind the requirements would be included proved more problematic. Regarding the former, it was believed that having departmental brochures readily available (e.g., online at department websites, in print at high school guidance counselors' offices) and providing UNM student advisors with interactive templates (according to major) to guide course selection and planning would be an excellent

start. As far as offering rationales for the program and major requirements, individual departments would need to be contacted for this information. Once collected, it could be added to expandable online brochures, or short video clips (featuring some students, faculty) could be made to supply this information in an engaging manner.

Recommended Grade: D+

The committee concluded that UNM generally does a poor job promoting student understanding of the various roles and purposes of higher education, including knowledge acquisition for personal growth, learning to prepare for future employment, learning to become engaged citizens, and learning to serve the public good. While there are some excellent programs and practices on campus, much work remains to expose students to the value of general education, and to help students examine their own motivation and goals with regard to higher education.

Recommended Action Items

As noted in the report summary, the selected recommendations are relatively inexpensive, practical (in terms of not presenting too much of a burden to any one group, and building in incentives for participation), and appealing to today's young (tech savvy) adults in many cases.

(A) Pre-UNM

We believe it is never too early to start planting the seed regarding the many roles/purposes of a college education. UNM is uniquely positioned to have early contact with many potential future students, given that a large percent of undergraduates grow up near or in Albuquerque and have access to much of what the University offers.

Electronic Communication:

- Develop an application for smart phones that enables teens to explore various motives for attending college (8.2) (*high priority*)
- Create a YouTube video for teens that explains the many things UNM has to offer besides just a chance for a better job (8.1) (*high priority*)
 - Upper-level students probably would be the most convincing “actors” for this video

- Make it a University-wide contest or ask relevant departments/classes to make it an extra credit class assignment
- Start a “Good Student Citizen of the Week” and “Good Faculty/Staff Citizen of the Month” program (8.1, 8.2) (*high priority*)
 - Use the video monitors (screens) and public service announcements (PSAs) at sporting events, Popejoy productions, etc. to highlight people from UNM who have demonstrated that they are engaged citizens, or are serving the public good
 - Videos could be shot/edited by student interns from Marketing & Communications
- Make the UNM website much easier to navigate (8.3) (*high priority*)

“Ambassadors”:

- “Ambassadors” could be established; namely, faculty, lecturers, alumni, or students who visit high schools and deliver specific messages about the many things UNM offers (regarding personal growth, personal motivation for college, etc) (8.1, 8.2) (*medium priority*)
 - Incentives of some type would be needed to reward the ambassadors (e.g., “credit” towards teaching that could accrue and eventually lead to a course release, service “credit” for faculty, comp time for staff)
 - Basic powerpoint presentations that highlight different departments’ research could be created and sent with the ambassadors to instill motivation
 - Ongoing evaluation would need to be done to determine the effectiveness of the ambassador program (i.e., do the visited students attend UNM, and do they graduate/succeed?)

(B) Summer before First Semester at UNM

Electronic Communication:

- [the same recommendations apply from the Pre-UNM section]
- Place interactive templates (“visual maps”) online to help students build their course plan (for core and major requirements); have an expandable section that offers rationales for each requirement (8.3) (*medium priority*)
- Conduct online assessment of computer and library competencies; direct students toward

programs to address shortcomings and provide rationale for needing those skills (8.3)
(*medium priority*)

New Student Orientation:

- The orientation should have a unifying (roles/purposes-type) theme each year that carries across the different presentations (e.g., personal growth, citizenship, public service) (8.1, 8.2) (*high priority*)
 - Each presenter (from various groups) would tie into the theme
 - The theme would be prominent in the brochures and electronic communications
- Selected faculty, lecturers, and alumni would “tell their story” regarding how they discovered their passion in college (e.g., in the process of completing core courses or major requirements) (8.3) (*medium priority*)

(C) First -Third Semester at UNM

Electronic Communication:

- [the same recommendations apply from the Pre-UNM section]
- Have UNM president, Dr. Frank, add a brief statement to his Monday newsletter in which he honors the “Good Student Citizen of the Week” or the “Good Faculty/Staff Citizen of the Month” (8.1, 8.2) (*medium priority*)
- Have a few faculty from each department create a brief video that describes their research. This could be available at department websites, but additionally should be played widely (e.g., in the SUB Food Court) (8.1, 8.2) (*high priority*)
 - Students might become motivated to make a public service contribution, or they could experience personal growth from research involvement
 - Students could lay the groundwork for getting into graduate school by early research involvement
- Have faculty create a brief online vignette that explains the rationale behind the requirements for the major (8.3) (*medium priority*)
- The clip could be posted on the department website; the department with the most engaging clip would win a contest

- The clip could be shown during a department’s orientation for the major
- Have faculty and lecturers offer online “chats” (“office” hours) periodically that are specifically designed to address questions about career paths, major requirements, community applications of principles learned in class, etc. (8.1, 8.2, 8.3) (*high priority*)
- Have alumni who are local employers create online clips about how basic core requirements had an unexpected influence on their lives (e.g., in terms of career path, self discovery/growth) (8.1) (*medium priority*)
- Have upper-level students and alumni compete in a UNM-sponsored contest that requires them to prepare a video, “How the Core Courses Changed My Life”. Show the videos during campus-sponsored events (e.g., Welcome Back Days) (8.3) (*high priority*)
- Have relevant staff develop an online presentation for faculty and staff (i.e., those individuals who are in a position to refer students) that reviews the many services and programs that UNM offers but which often seem “invisible”. The programs may be associated with engaged citizenship (e.g., Community Engagement Center, Service Learning Program), future employment (e.g., Careers Services, Student Employment Fair, Alumni Office), etc. Faculty and staff should be given incentives for viewing the presentation, such as a lottery entry for a prize, and the department with the highest percent of participants should win a prize as well (8.1) (*high priority*)

Faculty/Classes

- Recruit some of the best faculty (or lecturers) to teach freshman courses (8.1, 8.2, 8.3) (*high priority*)
 - Have them weave in sections which show students how the basic principles are applicable to their lives, and provide examples of how course involvement can contribute to students’ ability to become engaged citizens, or to get active in public service
 - Have them give class-relevant assignments to investigate ideas/examples for promoting citizenship offered by the Association of American Colleges and Universities
 - For each required course, have them include in their course syllabus a rationale for the course
 - Provide worthwhile incentives for these instructors to teach these courses (e.g., build in higher point values on the faculty teaching workload for large freshman classes)

- Have faculty regularly provide guest lectures in freshman classes that are taught by graduate students or part-time instructors (8.1, 8.2, 8.3) (*high priority*)
 - Allow faculty to accrue teaching “credits” for guest lectures that can eventually entitle them to a course release
- Add faculty to the coaching/mentoring program for high-risk students (8.1, 8.2, 8.3) (*medium priority*)
 - Allow faculty to accrue teaching “credits” for these hours

Student Employment

- Increase student jobs on campus, but also include a plan to have curricula in place to help students develop skills that are important for future careers (8.1) (*medium priority*)
- Increase our relationships with companies near campus that can set up regular student employment positions, and work with them to use the same curricula noted above for the on-campus positions (8.1) (*medium priority*)

Sources of Evidence

College Enrichment Program Website

<http://cep.unm.edu/>

Core Course Worksheet

<http://advisement.unm.edu/academic-forms/Core%20Sheet%202012.8.22.pdf>

Core Curriculum Task Force Report. May 15, 2010.

http://www.unm.edu/~wac/CCFT/Core2010/CCTF_FinalReport_5-15-10.pdf

Freshman Academic Communities

<http://freshman.unm.edu/>

New Student Orientation and College Enrichment Program

<http://provostcloud.unm.edu/NSO%20Documents/NSO%20Documents.html>

New Student Orientation Website

<http://nso.unm.edu/>

Student and Staff Surveys - Foundations of Excellence®

<https://foetec.fyfoundations.org/foetec/surveys.aspx>

University Advisement Center
<http://www.unm.edu/~ucac/>

UNM website
<http://www.unm.edu/>



Dimension Nine

Improvement

Foundations Institutions conduct assessment and maintain associations with other institutions and relevant professional organizations in order to achieve ongoing first-year improvement. This assessment is specific to the first year as a unit of analysis—a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institutions' overall assessment. Assessment results are an integral part of institutional planning, resource allocation, decision-making, and ongoing improvement of programs and policies as they affect first-year students. As part of the enhancement process and as a way to achieve ongoing improvement, institutions are familiar with current practices at other institutions as well as with research

Dimension Committee members addressed the Performance Indicators and agreed to the following assessments of the current situation at UNM:

Current Situation

Performance Indicator 9.1

To what degree does each initiative include systematic assessment?

- University Advisement Center: Still working on developing student learning outcomes (SLOs); they have assessed students' learning from academic advising delivered to freshmen during new student orientation every year since Fall 2007 and used the results to improve the data collection instrument (survey); they are implementing NACADA recommendations after a review of UNM advising processes. Using an online survey, UAC has conducted an annual assessment of student learning from the academic advising component of new student orientation every year 2007-2012.

- College Enrichment Programs: this year added assessment of two SLOs to annual assessment survey given at end of CEP orientation to both students and parents. Data analysis by the Program Director has been used every year to improve the orientation experience.
- Center for Academic Program Support (CAPS): There is a lot of usage data and analysis. They have SLOs for each program but not assessment (of the SLO's) yet.
- LOBOrientation: Did first assessment this last summer of 4 of 11 SLOs, collected measures, analyzed data and is making changes to NSO and assessment tools given that data. Also did a satisfaction survey.
- Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs): Analysis of CLA performance of graduating seniors revealed no significant difference in performance by former FLC students compared to the general student population. Linked GenEd courses (may) have SLOs, but no SLOs for the FLCs themselves.



Performance Indicator 9.2

To what degree have assessment results been used to improve existing practices across the following initiatives?

- University Advisement Center: They are implementing NACADA recommendations after a review of UNM advising processes. Use of the NACADA review to focus their outcomes (e.g., student schedules during orientation). The use of LoboAchieve Advisement Software (which records advice given) and applying a rubric to the advice that was given will enable the Advisement Center to check whether the correct advice was given.
- College Enrichment Programs: Not using their data to improve their program that we know of.
- CAPS: CAPS uses both qualitative and quantitative data to improve existing practices for all services. Tracking software is used to capture every student visit (including time, course, and location) in order to accurately see how services are being used. Weekly "stats meetings" are held with staff to review data and make immediate and long-term changes to service offerings (eg. open lab times). Monthly usage and comparison reports are used to evaluate bigger trends in usage across programs and locations. Semester reports provide the same overview for planning from one Fall to the next (for example). CAPS also administers tutor and service evaluations to students each semester that capture qualitative feedback from student users. Changes are made each semester to program practices based on these evaluations. See evidence (Doc#s 130 and 131)
- LOBOrientation: See evidence (Docs #48, 58, 59, 187, 188) Does make changes given data each year; assessed four student learning outcomes this year and has used results to change the data collection instrument (survey) and to send pre-orientation information and practice tasks to incoming freshmen. This information has resulted in changes to the upcoming LOBOrientation presentations, etc. starting in June.
- FLCs: Last year the Dean of University College used ten years of student data to measure the marginal impact of programs targeting freshmen. This was the first time the FLCs had been rigorously assessed, although each semester a mid-semester evaluation akin to student satisfaction had been conducted. The data-based inquiry revealed that, controlling for socio-economic status, high school preparation, race, ethnicity and other observable characteristics, participation in a Freshman Learning Community was associated with higher GPA, retention and 6-year graduation rate (see "Draft: Freshman Academic Choices Report" in the Evidence Library). In response, UNM President Frank approved expansion of the FLC program. In Spring 2013 ten new FLCs are being offered, the first time FLCs

have been offered in the spring semester. Because the FLCs are highly varied in content and discipline, no Student Learning Outcomes had ever been established for the FLCs, thus there had been no basis for assessment of learning outcomes. This year Associate Dean Rankin (in University College) convened an Advisory Board to select and require explicit AAC&U VALUE Learning Outcomes to be addressed in every FLC. This fall each FLC will incorporate and measure Integrative Learning, Teamwork, Critical Thinking and a fourth outcome of the instructor's choice. These learning outcomes are drawn from the AAC&U VALUE learning outcomes and rubrics (see Evidence Library for the AAC&U rubrics), and will be assessed using those tools. So, while we have not assessed student learning in the FLCs in the past, we are embarking on a new system of requiring and assessing these foundational skills in each FLC.

Performance Indicator 9.3

To what degree does your institution routinely disseminate to faculty and staff the following first-year student data?

- Demographic characteristics: Available through a webpage. Not pushed to faculty and staff. Academic profile of entering students: Academic profile available through a webpage (eg, ACT scores), but non-cognitive assessment (e.g., motivation) may not be. Not pushed to faculty and staff.
- Intended majors: This is very difficult to get even at the department level. Therefore, not "disseminated" at all.
- Retention and graduation rates: Available through a webpage. Disseminated through President's and Provost's messages. We meet federal requirements. We fully recognize that these are minimum expectations and that UNM needs to do better.
- Demographic characteristics, academic profile of entering students, and retention and graduation rates are provided at Faculty Orientation; distribution of intended majors is not.

Performance Indicator 9.4

To what degree have recent assessment activities improved campus understanding of how the following factors impact student success?

In general, assessment activities that measure these factors are compartmentalized and results

are not shared across organizations/departments. Most organizations/departments don't collect or assess data related to these student success factors. Those campus organizations that provide student services and connections, such as the Ethnic Centers, CAPS, student groups, DoS office, Advising, etc. don't often "close the loop" and share information about these services with the greater campus community. CAPS shares some of this information by sending student visit information to faculty (with students' permission), publishing aggregated usage information, and assessing correlations between usage of CAPS and academic success measures. Although this CAPS information is disseminated, it is not widely used in the greater campus community. Other groups may similarly share this information, but this is not general campus knowledge used to make decisions.

There is currently no uniform way to collect and share any of this information. Data is collected in silos for very specific purposes rather than generally collected for sharing across the campus. Thus, any "patterns" of student involvement are hard to identify.

Performance Indicator 9.5

To what degree have the following strategies been used by your campus to improve the first year?

Attendance at higher education meetings (e.g., conferences, institutes, workshops): Faculty Survey Q060 (attending conferences regarding the first-year at this institution): Faculty mean response was 2.36, administrator mean response was 2.56, professional staff mean response was 2.61. These scores were on a five-point scale of (1) Not at all, (2) Slight, (3) Moderate, (4) High, (5) Very High. Average scores less than 3.00 are disappointing; average scores closer to 2.00 are discouraging. Faculty Survey Q061 (attending national/regional conferences regarding the first-year): Faculty mean response was 2.17, administrator mean response was 2.38, professional staff mean response was 2.08. We rated this as low.

The other professional-development ratings were also similarly low.

Opportunities and Challenges

We see four categories of challenges preventing improvement of the first-year experience. These are (1) the need for clear and explicit student learning objectives (SLOs), (2) alignment of these SLOs across the curriculum and with co-curricular activities, (3) surmounting the current siloing of disciplines and units, and (4) insufficient follow-through of productive efforts.

Need for SLOs

There are several other dimensions that have discussed the need for better first-year learning outcomes and assessment. This broad recognition that clear learning outcomes and assessment are important for measuring and improving first-year success provides a foundation upon which to build a culture of assessment.

Alignment

A focus on single-course assessment creates the challenge of aligning course goals with program goals. Ultimately, every course must contribute to the achievement of program goals, or it is redundant at best, irrelevant at worst. Many (most?) first-year courses are foundational and preparatory for more than one program. For example, math and English courses are required for all students, whether they graduate with an Engineering degree, an Education degree, or an English degree. Aligning the needs of each, and every, one of these programs within the assessment of the first-year courses is an obvious challenge.

The opportunity exists to develop first-year experiences that are foundational to many, if not all, programs. The assessment of success for these introductory courses then becomes part of program evaluation. This requires developing feedback loops from programs to foundational/core courses. Success in the first year cannot be evaluated in isolation, and programs cannot criticize the first-year courses unless they are willing to provide the necessary feedback. This is an opportunity for greater integration across the entire undergraduate experience.

Silos

The isolated assessment of courses is a consequence of silo-ing disciplines and Colleges. The challenges faced by first-year courses are ones of moving beyond the high school curriculum, and preparing students for moving to focused study in disciplines. As introductory and foundational courses they are program inputs, rather than outputs in their own right. Basically, the value of first-year courses is only realized in each of the degree programs, and only after the passage of some time. As was the case with Alignment, the opportunity here is to integrate assessment of first-year courses with program assessment. In order to do this, silo walls must be scaled and broken down. (In this regard, we can turn to Interdisciplinary Studies Programs for guidance how to assess courses with goals across traditional disciplinary boundaries.)

Currently there are no formal committee structures in the Provost's Office or in the UNM Faculty Senate for a Freshman-Year Program. In the UNM Faculty Senate there is an Undergraduate Committee as well as a Curriculum Committee, and within the Provost's Office there exists a Provost's Committee on Student Academic Success (PCAS). While these

committees are to one degree or another responsible for student academic matters and student academic success, they do not specifically focus on the first-year experience. With respect to the decision-making processes, UNM faculty are responsible for all curricular aspects of student success, while PCAS is serving the purpose of coordinating student success activities across campus, including assessment, advisement, and other campus-wide programmatic student success activities. This bifurcated structure seems to disconnect what goes on in the classroom with what occurs outside of it. This is kind of like disconnecting the mind from the body. Some members of the Improvement Dimension suggested a single committee to oversee First-Year Programs that blended faculty, administration, students, and staff.

Opportunities need to be strengthened to share best practices and data of student learning that impacts other departments. This relates to coordination of across the first-year experience in terms of data, etc. It also relates to sharing of best practices as learned from some faculty (when, for example, they attend conferences on improvement in higher education) but not currently disseminated across the institution.

Relevant constituencies are interested in the learning outcomes and data from the Gen. Ed. core courses. For example, how well are students entering an Engineering course prepared from their Math and English courses?

Follow-through

While there is much data collection, there is little follow-through with analyzing assessment data and implementing changes for improvement. Currently, there is no coordination of surveys that would enable consistent and systematic collection of data from students, nor is there any central repository of survey data. Both areas could be improved substantially by assigning these responsibilities to a central office or a coordinating team to ensure that survey data is collected systematically, without duplication and redundancy across areas and types of students. The reliability and comprehensiveness of the data collected could also be improved by linking survey completion to required-attendance events (perhaps an assessment half-day to replace classes, where a broad set of assessment instruments could be applied).

A coordinating body on the first-year may help with such follow through.

The shift to Responsibility Center Management with Performance Based Budgeting presents an opportunity for assessment to be an element of the performance based budgeting. High quality assessment processes in the departments and colleges should be rewarded in the budget process.

Recommended Grade: D+

There are some units—such as CAPS—that engage in all elements of assessment for improvement: having learning objectives, collecting relevant data, analyzing that data, and completing the loop by changing activities for student improvement. There is much data collection, which is to be commended. Other assessment activities are isolated and disconnected. With respect to analysis, dissemination, and completing the loop, the rest of the University needs to catch up, unit by unit and as a whole.

Recommended Action Items

- Alignment of Stated Outcomes and Mission

Programs should have formal learning and/or success outcomes that are aligned with their mission.

There should be a common core of indicators regarding student success. Programs would link their student success outcomes to these indicators (allowing for their own measures as well).

- Widespread and systematic explorations in factors impacting student success

UNM, through the Associate Provost for Curriculum, should sponsor and coordinate explorations in factors impacting student success, such as encouraging the collection of data on student attendance, student/faculty interactions, and student success measures.

- Collect student data regarding their activities

Requiring students to attend an advising session once a year during which data would be collected on their allocation of their time, attendance patterns, engagement with other students, contact with faculty, student involvement on campus prior to being able to register for classes. (This data would later be analyzed against student success.)

We also discussed tracking "card swipe" data to know, e.g., who is using Johnson Center and how often. Currently, the software is an obstacle.

- All linked gen ed courses used in FLCs must have published student learning outcomes statements.

Currently many--but not all--gen ed core courses have published SLOs. A requirement by

UC FLCs that linked gen ed courses must have published SLOs to participate would apply additional pressure to comply with a standing University expectation.

- Assessment of student learning in NSO must collect data to improve learning in second assmt. cycle.
- Complete, test, and publish a set of highest priority learning outcomes for Academic Advising
- Pilot assessment of one or more SLOs in a CAPs program.
- Coordination of First-Year Success Issues

Many units on campus affect the experiences of first-year students, but none has as its primary responsibility to coordinate the improvement of the overall first-year experience.

- We recommend that a permanent body be established to coordinate the improvement of the overall first-year experience (e.g., a First-Year Steering Committee). This body would be representative of the units that currently affect the first-year students and have representatives from both the Administration and the Faculty Senate. This body would review student success and student learning data regarding the first-year and, in consultation with relevant units, make recommendations for improvements based on these data. This would also involve determining high-impact experiences for UNM freshmen, matching students to these experiences, assessing the effectiveness of specific experiences, and recommending improvements going forward.
- Centralized point of data collection for student success factors

The campus must have a central location for any data regarding student involvement (attendance, use of services, connections, etc.) to be housed that can also disseminate this information to interested parties.

- Attend and disseminate information from Higher Ed Meetings

The appropriate VPs should encourage and promote attendance by professional staff and faculty at higher education meetings focused on the first year. Staff and faculty who attend such meetings should be encouraged to disseminate that information to others on campus, perhaps through the Office of Student Success.

- Greater dissemination of assessment data

Assessment results need to be made more public than they presently are.

- Data regarding intended majors

Data regarding intended majors should be more easily accessible and disseminated to appropriate units.

Sources of Evidence

AAC&U VALUE Rubrics

http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=55171226&CFTOKEN=92509026

Advising Progress Report Dashboard

<http://pca.unm.edu/progress/index.php>

Center for Academic Program Support: Vision, Mission, and Student Learning Outcomes

<http://caps.unm.edu/info/mission>

Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

http://www.unm.edu/~assess/SupportingFiles/UNM%20Student%20Learning%20Goals_3-08.pdf

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) Results 2009-2010

http://www.unm.edu/~assess/SupportingFiles/GeneralEdAssessment/CLA_09-10_report.pdf

Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) Results 2010-2011

<http://www.unm.edu/~assess/SupportingFiles/CLA%2010-11%20results%20Executive%20Summary%20Draft3.pdf>

New Student Orientation Documents

<http://provostcloud.unm.edu/NSO%20Douments/NSO%20Documents.html>



Appendix: Proposal

Action Plan for Implementing Foundations of Excellence Recommendations

The task force recommends the creation of a steering committee led by a representative of the Provost, and acting under his or her authority, as a necessary pre-condition to implementing many of the other recommendations listed below. This steering committee would provide coordination and oversight of implementation of the improvements considered essential for promoting first-year student success at UNM.

First Year Steering Committee (FYSC)

The First Year Steering Committee (FYSC) will coordinate, assess, and manage improvements for all first-year programs. The committee will inform funding of all first-year initiatives and review all proposals for first-year programming to ensure promising practices are featured and that resources are used efficiently and effectively in concert with programs that serve students beyond the first year. The FYSC will include representatives from schools, colleges, and administrative units that serve first-year students. These include Arts and Sciences, University College, College of Fine Arts, School of Engineering, the Honors College, the Provost's Office, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, Advising, Faculty Senate, and student organization leaders. This group will be under the Provost's authority and chaired by his or her representative.

First steps for the FYSC include developing a system for tracking the new student cohort for the 2013-14 academic year, developing an active support plan for these students, which includes a system for matching students with high-impact programs and practices. Furthermore, the FYSC will collect, compile, and broadly disseminate information about current efforts to enhance and support first-year students to ensure better communication and a visible profile.

Mission and Vision

The FYSC will orient its work around a version of the Philosophy Statement for the First Year adopted by campus, the initial draft of which was developed as part of the FoE exercise:

As this state's flagship research university serving a highly diverse student body, the University of New Mexico is committed to offering a high-quality education marked by a challenging and supportive environment that provides all students with the foundation for academic and personal success in the first year and beyond.

This statement is considered to be a living document and will be modified as changing needs and circumstances warrant.

The committee will work closely with the Faculty Senate and Provost's Office committees to create, disseminate, and assess UNM's desired outcomes for the first year, and ensure the learning outcomes align with the First-Year Philosophy Statement, the UNM Strategic Plan, and the AAC&U VALUE Learning Outcomes.

Improvement

The FYSC, or various subcommittees thereof, will be responsible for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data that inform and assess first-year policies, and working with units and offices on campus, such as the Office of Institutional Analytics and the Assessment Office. Data tracking of students will begin at the application stage and continue through the first year. The data system will also be used to create targeted messages about various student services and groups based on particular demographics and interest responses. The FYSC will identify or develop an effective tracking system for these subgroups so that the University can better anticipate demand for services (e.g., first-generation students, first-year commuter students, developmental students, veterans, etc.). Specific elements of this effort include:

1. A comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting system, including data drawn from the LoboAchieve Early Alert system;
2. Data on student participation in extracurricular activities, advisement, and class attendance, incorporating the use of card swipe data as it becomes available;
3. Coordinated, centralized survey data collection to avoid survey fatigue by collecting student survey data in one meta-instrument, possibly administered at designated intervals over the school year (e.g., orientation, January, May). Encourage student response to survey questions by telling them how their responses will benefit them (e.g., to make the University experience more exciting and tailored to their interests). Include student experience with diversity, equity and inclusion in the survey.

The data will be disseminated so that those who interact with students have more complete information about the hurdles and opportunities they face. The data can then be used to:

1. Identify factors that impact student success, positively or negatively, for students with different biographical characteristics;
2. Coordinate interventions that focus on factors associated with student success, such as student class attendance, student/faculty interactions, and student success measures;
3. Disseminate data on intended majors to academic units;
4. Identify particular needs and intervention possibilities for specific subgroups of students.

The FYSC will review evaluations of first-year efforts, including academic, co-curricular, and other activities through the Offices of Institutional Analytics and Assessment. Units that work with first-year students will be provided with models of good assessment plans and rubrics.

A Challenging and Supportive Experience for All Students

UNM is committed to offering a high-quality education, which requires preparing students to meet high academic expectations. Reaching these expectations in turn requires excellent support and service to help students navigate the multiple challenges they face—academic, transitional, and interpersonal. We are likewise committed to removing unnecessary impediments to progress and to providing the resources students need to be successful in their first year and beyond.

New Student Orientation

Enhancing learning in New Student Orientation (NSO) will be an important part of the effort to provide an excellent first-year experience for incoming students, and one that is already underway. An NSO Steering Committee, which will ultimately be a subcommittee of the FYSC, has begun to meet to gather information and track data necessary to making improvements for this year and beyond. Improvements being considered for this year include increasing the consistency of advising messages throughout NSO sessions, such as communication about the importance of taking 15 credit hours, and encouraging graduation in four years. Other potential improvements to NSO include:

1. Increasing academic content and communication of high academic expectations.

2. Introducing material on the new study abroad savings program.
3. Creating unifying themes each year that carry across the multiple presentations (e.g. personal growth, citizenship, public service).
4. Inviting faculty and alumni to talk about discovering their passion in college (e.g., in the process of completing core courses or major requirements).
5. Creating a video or other presentation, given by advanced students, that demonstrates positive and negative examples of respectful debate about a current controversial topic.
6. Adding online components to NSO, including information about course scheduling, upcoming events and requirements.
7. Incorporating the Lobo Reading Experience.
8. Communicating student learning outcomes for NSO by having last year's freshmen create a video to show at the beginning of orientation.

Preparing students for their first year will require opportunities outside New Student Orientation, which runs for a day and a half. Other early preparation opportunities could be used to conduct online assessment of computer and library competencies and direct students toward programs to address shortcomings.

Campus Quality and Safety

In the FYSC's efforts to improve the first-year experience, the quality and safety of campus should not be overlooked. The physical campus must be inviting to students who are new to UNM and unfamiliar with building locations, particularly students who need or would benefit from accessibility assistance. Students should be informed about accessibility features in each building, about the importance of pedestrian safety on campus walkways, safe routes for walking, biking, and skateboarding, and the proper use of bicycles, skateboards, and other kinds of on-campus transportation. Information about campus escort services and blue emergency phones should be distributed early on to students and posted on the first-year webpage. In response to several recent events, UNM Police have already increased the presence and visibility of police on campus. This is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that students have a safe physical environment.



In the Classroom

The FYSC will work with the appropriate campus constituents to develop a curriculum that provides a strong foundation for success. High priorities include reducing remediation, increasing high-impact offerings, adopting and assessing Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for the first year, and increasing intellectual and experiential diversity.

Reducing remediation will be accomplished by implementing more sensitive placement, and developing alternatives to placement in remedial courses. Specific initiatives include:

1. English 101 courses designed to support students who would have been placed in IS English:
 - The “Summer Stretch” course which allows students to complete English 101 over a period that includes the summer before the first year and the fall semester
 - English 101 “studio” courses that provide additional support for students who would have been placed in IS English.
2. Math 120, the Math Learning Lab (MaLL) was piloted Fall Semester 2012, and opened to all Math 120 students Spring Semester 2013. Further options include offering the MaLL during the summer for IS Math-placed students.

As mentioned previously, one of the FYSC’s primary responsibilities will be to ensure that all students receive high-impact practices, and that includes guaranteeing that students receive at least one classroom-based high-impact practice in their first year. We propose to do this by offering more:

1. Writing-intensive courses, especially in the discipline of intended major.
2. Service Learning courses and service learning requirements within degree programs.
3. Linked courses, i.e. two or more courses taught collaboratively. This could be accomplished by creating an expanded offering of learning communities, during both spring and fall semester (as is being piloted this spring), including the following pairings:
 - a. English 102 and English 219 courses with seminar courses for majors and pre-majors including Art History 101, Music Appreciation 139, and Architecture 121;
 - b. Topical seminars paired with C&J 130 Public Speaking and Statistics 145;
 - c. Math 111 (Math for Elementary School Teachers) and Natural Science for future K-5 teachers paired with Explorations in Education;

- d. Small sections of English Composition, Public Speaking, and similar courses paired with large lecture courses such as Psychology 105, Sociology 101, Biology 123, and Chemistry 111; some of these will pair TAs from a variety of disciplines such as Anthropology, American Studies and Psychology who have been trained as English 101 instructors with seminar courses from their home disciplines.
4. Make available to every first-year student a limited enrollment (25 or fewer students) course that is offered by every college and school across campus. The course will include some uniform curriculum elements and some elements specific to that school or college. Disseminated schedules will provide opportunities for students to sample workshops or sessions from other sections. Ideas for this course include:
- a. Specific curricular elements like study skills, career information, transition to the University, connection to University resources, research skills, etc.
 - b. Incorporation of the LoboAchieve system to track whether students are using various resources,
 - c. Different sections, chosen by the student, to address specific majors or interest areas,
 - d. Creation of a success roadmap for each student that makes the first year less overwhelming; and
 - e. Targeted transition courses for populations identified as having specific needs or interests similar to the Veterans transition course.

To bolster and ensure quality of education across the curriculum, the FYSC will develop, adopt, and assess specific and overarching Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) for the first year. Suggestions for SLOs are:

1. Financial literacy (coupled with cost and financial aid information)
2. Collaborative learning
3. Civic literacy
4. Diversity

Regarding the last SLO on the above list, diversity, the task force recommends ensuring that all first-year students experience diverse ideas, worldviews, and cultures as a means of enhancing their learning and preparing them to become members of pluralistic communities. Programs that

serve first-year students are encouraged to adopt and assess learning outcomes that:

1. Promote knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of all forms of human diversity. Whenever relevant, instructors will promote intellectual diversity by presenting topics through multiple perspectives, including:
 - a. Historical, to promote knowledge of diverse historical narratives, which can be useful in contextualizing present and future interactions that emphasize equity and inclusion;
 - b. Cultural, to promote awareness of cultural diversity within the contemporary U.S.;
 - c. International, to promote awareness of cultures and practices other than those of the U.S.
2. Help students develop the skills that will equip them to function effectively in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, which include:
 - a. Respectful discourse
 - b. Improved critical analysis and problem solving
 - c. Openness, cognitive flexibility, and engagement of alternative viewpoints
 - d. Civic participation and social engagement, especially occurring within multicultural contexts.

Co-Curricular

The task force recommends intentionally focusing on the learning that occurs outside classrooms, labs, and studios, both on and off the campus by encouraging progress on first-year Student Learning Outcomes (see above) in out-of-classroom activities, and enhancing learning in NSO (see above).

Recognizing that learning takes place outside of the classroom, and may have a profound impact on the first-year experience, support should be provided for out-of-classroom activities that meet SLO criteria. Residence Life and Student Groups could be rewarded for developing and assessing SLOs with increased funding and administrative support for their activities. Residence Life will support theme-based dorms, including those with an international component, and those that focus on the diverse cultures of the U.S.

The number of student jobs could be increased both on campus and at nearby businesses. A plan should be developed to have curricula in place that help students apply skills learned in

their on- or off-campus jobs to develop skills important for future careers. To increase the number of jobs off campus, appropriate UNM offices, or a possible subcommittee of the FYSC, could develop relationships with companies near campus that can set up regular student employment positions, and work with them to use the curricula noted above.



Faculty and Staff

Curricular and co-curricular efforts must be balanced by efforts to improve the support and development for those who serve first-year students—including faculty and staff, advisors, and others—as well as enhancing the services they provide and simplifying access to resources. Special attention must be paid to facilitating and rewarding best practices by faculty and staff, such as encouraging professional development, incentivizing best practices, and creating a culture that visibly values teaching lower-division courses.

Faculty and staff cannot serve first-year students better if they lack information about today's students and how to effectively engage them in their learning. UNM should provide high-quality professional development to faculty and staff, including:

1. Office for the Support of Effective Teaching (OSET) workshops that specifically focus on meeting the needs of first-year students;
2. Required Teaching Assistant Resource Center (TARC) or other training for all graduate students who will interact with first-year students;
3. Funds for attendance at conferences that address first-year issues;
4. Cultural sensitivity awareness training for students, faculty, and staff;
5. Training for faculty and staff regarding the psychological health of student populations;

6. High-quality data and information about the characteristics of each first-year class, which could be presented annually at faculty meetings, such as New Faculty Orientation;
7. Faculty-staff learning communities that provide opportunities to engage in dialogue about diversity, equity, and inclusion as a prerequisite for tenure and promotion and/or annual evaluations.

Faculty and staff will be more likely to engage in these best practices if they are recognized and rewarded for their efforts. A subcommittee of the Provost's Committee for Academic Success is currently developing rubrics to be used in the evaluation of teaching portfolios, which will allow structured and consistent evaluation of teaching effectiveness. Evaluation of teaching effectiveness must be met with increased incentives for excellence, including:

1. Compensation for time spent at training and workshops;
2. Specific Student Research Allocations Committee grants for faculty teaching courses with a high first-year enrollment;
3. Specific teaching awards (that increase base salary) for faculty teaching courses with a high first-year enrollment;
4. Explicit inclusion of success with the first year as a criteria for merit pay and promotion;
5. Awards to advisors of first-year students.

Departments could contribute to the creation of a culture that values the first year by encouraging faculty to teach in lower division courses or courses in the Learning Communities. Those departments could be encouraged to do so through hiring policies that give preference to hires who will be effective first-year instructors.

Additionally, departments should recruit, and be rewarded for recruiting, some of their best faculty (or lecturers) to teach freshmen courses. These courses could provide a rationale for the course in the syllabus, and could weave experiential-learning sections into regular content, especially concerning public service and citizenship. These instructors could be rewarded with a decreased workload by assigning higher point values on the faculty teaching workload for large freshmen classes, learning communities, or lower division courses that include experiential or service learning elements.

Courses taught by graduate students or part-time instructors could benefit from guest lectures by tenure or tenure-track faculty, and these faculty members might be allowed to accrue teaching "credits" for guest lectures that eventually entitle them to a course release.

Advising

The goal of restructuring advising is to lower the advisor-student ratio in the University Advisement Center. Earlier contact should be made between students and their major areas of study as a way of shifting advising duties to major-specific or college-specific advisors.

Increasing advisor availability for students can be accomplished by expanding services to new locations, and by cultivating peer-advising programs. Major- and college-specific advisors can increase availability to students by scheduling advisement hours in the ethnic and other interest-based student centers.

Core priorities for improving advising include the following:

1. Standardizing and centrally directing advisement efforts of all first-year students;
2. Bringing the student-advisor ratio closer to 350:1 across all units that advise students;
3. Assuring that the quality of advising in the first year is at least as high as advisement in the majors;
4. Certifying full, campus-wide use of the LoboAchieve portal, to ensure that advisors, faculty, and staff are making the most of its reporting and early alert system capabilities.

Simplified Access

There are two primary recommendations for simplifying student access to resources, both of which are already underway: creation of two centralized and well-known presences—one physical, the other electronic—or “one stops,” for first-year students and those who serve them.

The physical one-stop location will provide a single place where students can access all resources and information, academic and otherwise, that pertain to student academic success at UNM. The center will employ freshman advocates (including undergraduate peer mentors) to support first-year students and serve as mentors and guides so that students can easily ask for help and receive knowledgeable advice. Often students do not know where to go with their questions or concerns, or they are given the “run around” to various locations on our vast campus. This location would have comprehensive and detailed information about campus resources and the various offices and their functions, putting this service in a position to help students make the right connections. This would also serve to advocate for students who are struggling with University systems. It could provide outreach and referrals to? psychological support for freshmen. The office will give students a confidential and easy-to-find starting point for dealing with virtually any issue that arises on campus. It may need to have extended hours depending on student needs.

The electronic one-stop, or “e-stop” will be located on a dedicated webpage just for students and will include specific resources just for freshmen. The page will be accessible through a visible link on UNM’s home page and via apps and other mobile devices. The page will be designed to allow students to easily search for available support services, student groups, and campus programs. This technology should be specifically directed towards freshmen with engaging material and minimal text. Drill-down options would help students search for answers to their questions with planned prompts, making it easier for students to ask for help. Information located on the student e-stop will include links to cost of attendance and financial literacy information, a blog spot or other site where students can share their freshman

experiences and also alert administrators to inefficiencies and problems, and interactive templates or visual maps to help students build their course plan (for core and major requirements), including an expandable section that offers rationales for each requirement.

Throughout the FoE self-study, it was often pointed out that not only are students unaware of the many great services and resources UNM provides, but faculty and staff members are as well. Providing comprehensive and easily accessed information to faculty and staff will allow those who interact with students to give prompt and accurate information. To increase faculty and staff awareness of programs, the task force recommends creating a short list (paper and electronic) that lists all of the sources of support for first-year students. Additionally, faculty and staff who interact with first-year students should be able to easily, quickly, and confidentially provide “Early Alerts” to advisors when students are observed having difficulties or exhibiting activities detrimental to academic success. Further, the task force recommends that relevant staff develop an online presentation that reviews the many services and programs that UNM offers but which often seem “invisible.” The programs may be associated with engaged citizenship (e.g., Community Engagement Center, Service Learning Program), future employment (e.g., Careers Services, Student Employment Fair, Alumni Office), and so on. Faculty and staff could be given incentives for viewing the presentation, such as a lottery entry for a prize, and the department with the highest percentage of participants could win a prize as well.

Active Support

Simplifying access to resources will make it easier for students to find what they need when they look for it, but equally important will be the development of a model of active or intrusive support. Data-tracking that begins at the application stage will allow for the development of a system of communications or interventions triggered by student performance—such as poor attendance, missed assignments, not having registered, and so on. These communications and interventions should be standardized so that the process is transparent. Many pieces of this model already exist or are in development, but the FYSC should have a role in developing and coordinating these efforts.

The LoboAchieve portal, as described elsewhere in this report, has an early-alert tool that professors can use to alert advisors and support programs to issues with student performance. These support programs can then reach out to students.

Another recent active support program is the one-year-old Volunteer Academic Coaching program through the Student Academic Success Office. The volunteer academic coaches are trained and assigned to students from rural areas in New Mexico with one or two remedial needs, as we know that these students have more difficulty transitioning to a large university in an urban setting. Academic coaches maintain regular contact with their assigned students, through whatever means of communication the student prefers and responds to most readily. Coaches can help students anticipate potential challenges, stimulate problem solving, and encourage students to seek out additional resources. Plans are being considered for expanding this program, and those considerations should include adding faculty to the pool of coaches. As an incentive, faculty might be allowed to accrue teaching credits for these hours.

Other active support ideas include the creation of an electronic first-year newsletter sent to

students' email addresses monthly to highlight special events and direct students to resources. The newsletters could be specific to problems for that month, for example, mid-term study tips, registration reminders, and so on.

Communication

Improvements must be made to first-year communication to streamline messages to prospective and current students and their families, ensure that faculty and staff have the information they need to serve students, and to publicize UNM's contributions to the broader community. The following specific recommendations argue for better messaging to families, high school students, and communities. Given the importance of these efforts, the task force recommends creating a position in University Communication and Marketing (UCAM) focused on first-year communication.

All messaging, whether internal or external, should emphasize that UNM holds high academic expectations for all students. Additionally, communication should be provided in multiple languages for the many audiences with whom UNM communicates.

UNM's value-added and unique qualities should be publicized through electronic communication systems that appeal to potential and current students. The task force recommends developing an app for smart phones that enables middle and high school students to explore various motives for attending college, and creating YouTube videos for teens that explain the many things UNM has to offer, including reasons other than just a chance for a better job. Upper-level students would probably be the most convincing "actors" for this video, which could be developed as part of a University-wide contest or in relevant departments or classes as an extra-credit assignment.

Promotional and informational material is currently sent to prospective high school students including juniors, seniors, and all students in New Mexico taking the ACT or SAT and targeted regions of many other states. Both print and email communications are sent to high school students based not just on SAT/ACT scores but also from contact information obtained through other survey data, self-initiated inquiries, and more. Marketing material is provided to high school guidance offices for display, and posters advertise recruitment events. Workshops are hosted in the fall for New Mexico school counselors and in the spring for select regions in Arizona, California, and Texas, to inform high school staff of the benefits, opportunities and affordability of the UNM education and experience.

These activities should ensure that distinctive, valuable attributes of the student experience and life in Albuquerque and New Mexico are portrayed to students from out of town or out of state while emphasizing the academic expectations at UNM.

Additionally, UNM should:

1. Proactively recruit a diverse student body to the Honors College by branding diversity, equity, and inclusion as a strength of the program;
2. Invite high school counselors to the advisor institute;
3. Incentivize faculty, staff, or students by offering rewards such as "credit" toward teaching that could accrue and eventually lead to a course release, service "credit" for faculty, and comp time for staff;

4. Encourage alumni to serve as ambassadors to New Mexico high schools;
5. Provide basic PowerPoint presentations that highlight different departments' research to ambassadors to take with them to high schools in an effort to instill motivation in students.

UNM's contributions to the broader community should be broadcast more frequently and widely. The task force recommends the following:

1. Communicate evidence of student success back to students' communities;
2. Rebrand the "public face" of UNM with a "Diversity" Tab on the homepage of the University, which can serve as a hub for all the diversity learning opportunities on campus;
3. Market the significance of UNM contributions through data, student testimonials, etc.;
4. Start a "Good Student Citizen of the Week" and "Good Faculty/Staff Citizen of the Month" program, and consider using the video monitors and public service announcements (PSAs) at sporting events, Popejoy productions, etc., to highlight people from UNM who have demonstrated that they are engaged citizens, or are serving the public good. Videos could be shot/edited by student interns from Marketing & Communications, and these could be featured in President Frank's Monday message;
5. Have a few faculty from each department create a brief video that describes their research. This could be available at department websites, but additionally should be played widely (e.g., in the SUB Food Court).
 - a. Students might become motivated to make a public service contribution, or they could experience personal growth from research involvement;
 - b. Students could lay the groundwork for getting into graduate school by early research involvement;
6. Have faculty create a brief online vignette that explains the rationale behind the requirements for the major; the clip could be posted on the department website and shown during a department's orientation for the major. The department with the most engaging clips would be featured on the UNM website for a time and be archived;
7. Have faculty offer online "chats" periodically that are specifically designed to address questions about career paths, major requirements, community applications of principles learned in class, etc.;
8. Have alumni who are local employers create online clips about how basic core requirements had an unexpected influence on their lives (e.g., in terms of career path, self-discovery and growth);
9. Have upper-level students and alumni compete in a UNM-sponsored contest that requires them to prepare a video, "How the Core Courses Changed My Life." Show the videos during campus-sponsored events (e.g., Welcome Back Days).

Communication with parents and families of potential and current students should be a point of focus for the FYSC, which can work with UCAM, UNM's Parent Association, the Financial Aid Office, and possibly others on first-year specific communication. Marketing should be done in both English and Spanish, if not other languages. Communication with parents should start early, before New Student Orientation.





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