



## HLC Accreditation Evidence Document

**Title: News Article: "Incoming freshmen benefit from program aimed at cutting down course load"**

**Office of Origin: The UNM Newsroom**

**Description:** A news article reporting on undergraduate placement at UNM in 2017. Among other things, it explains the how CEP's initiative in 2017 led to work with the ACCUPLACER system, and the standard procedures for determining the proper reading and math courses a given freshmen student must take for their chosen major.

Date: 2017

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**College of Education's Center for Student Success**

# Incoming freshmen benefit from program aimed at cutting down course load

August 11, 2017

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Incoming freshman will graduate faster without going to class thanks to a new Student Affairs and Academic Affairs partnership. The College Enrichment Program (CEP) is spearheading the initiative to test hundreds of students this summer during New Student Orientation.

When registering for classes, ACT and SAT scores are used to determine course placement; these tests can sometimes be taken as early as sophomore year in high school and may not reflect current subject knowledge. In some cases, students' test scores place them into Foundational Math and Critical Text Analysis, which restrict them from taking some core courses.

For example, if a student wants to major in engineering, their first math class is Math 162. A student who tested lower on their ACT may be 1, 2, 3, or even 4 math classes away from Math 162. As a result, their 4-year degree looks more like 5 or 6 years.

This initiative allows students to complete the ACCUPLACER—a test designed to evaluate their current reading or math comprehension level. The results are then used to more accurately place students in courses that match their ability.

"Students have always had the opportunity to place out of classes, but they had to do it on their own time, off main campus, and that meant not many would test," said Jose Villar, a senior program manager of CEP. "We look up each student's test scores and any dual credit courses, determine which course they would place into based on that information, and offer math and reading tests, free of charge, to potentially place them into higher level coursework."

By uploading their ACCUPLACER results immediately, students are able to register for the appropriate courses during orientation, preventing them from taking a class they do not need.

"I wasn't expecting to have this opportunity," said incoming freshman Serena Bueno. "My ACT scores weren't so good on my reading, so they had me test again to be sure I was going to be in the right class and I ended up placing out."

University College, where Foundational Math and Critical Text Analysis are offered, is very pleased with the results.

"Through better placement, students can start at the right level of challenge," said Sonia Rankin, associate dean of University College. "We are so excited for the students who will move forward and the students who will be in our classes will be greeted by engaged instructors, committed CEP advisors, and connected peer mentor tutors. Together, we have built a strong network to support our students to be successful."

So far this summer, over 626 students have taken this opportunity and 750 tests have been administered; 531 in math and 219 in reading.

"We've been fortunate to work with the College of Education, who provided personnel, laptops, and space, to test this many students each week," said Leslie Armell, a CEP advisor who oversaw the logistics of this initiative. "Without their help, it would have been tough to accomplish everything we have done."

"By the end of summer, potentially 10 to 15 percent of the incoming class could be one step closer to their degree plan because of this effort," says Villar. "When the University works together across divisions in innovative ways, great things happen for our students."

**Tags:** [Center for Student Success](#) [Student Affairs](#) [Academic Affairs](#) [ACCUPLACER](#)

## Media Contact

**Katie Williams**

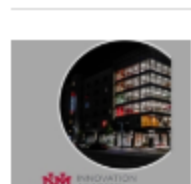
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[kvaroz@unm.edu](mailto:kvaroz@unm.edu)

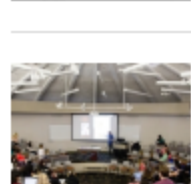
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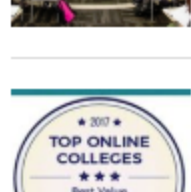
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