



**First Year Improvement –  
Actions for Comprehensive Transformation**

**FYI-ACT**

**Final Report  
Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> in the First College Year**

**New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, New Mexico**

**Spring 2008**



## Table of Contents

Preface.....	i
Executive Summary .....	1
The FoE Process at NMSU .....	1
Priority Action Items Overview.....	2
Priority Action Plan .....	4
Dimension Team Reports .....	17
Philosophy Dimension Team Report.....	17
Organization Dimension Team Report.....	20
Learning Dimension Team Report .....	31
Faculty Dimension Report.....	41
Transitions Dimension Team Report.....	47
All Students Dimension Team Report.....	56
Diversity Dimension Team Report.....	77
Roles and Purposes Dimension Team Report.....	86
Improvement Dimension Team Report .....	93
Appendix A: Foundations of Excellence® Participant Roster .....	100
Appendix B: Foundations of Excellence® Current Practices Inventory .....	104
Appendix C: Evidence Library Document List .....	132
Appendix D: Organizational Charts and Committees .....	137
Appendix E: The Foundations of Excellence® Report Card.....	139
Appendix F: Report on a Summit of the Leadership .....	142

## **Preface**

New Mexico State University's Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Task Force presents *First Year Improvements--Actions for Comprehensive Transformation* (FYI-ACT) as the final report and culmination of a year's work by numerous faculty, staff, and administrators dedicated to the success of New Mexico State University students. FYI-ACT also marks a transition from a comprehensive process of research, study, discussion, and analysis to implementation and action. The purpose of this report is to set the foundation for continued actions to improve the experiences of all our students, but especially our first-year students, to foster their success at NMSU, and to help them through the process of setting and realizing their educational goals. We believe the ideas and the Priority Action Plan presented in this report will further our students' success. We urge the administration to identify and utilize the resources that will maintain the dynamic process that began with the FoE self-study to implement the Priority Action Plan of this final report.

We look forward to presenting this final report to NMSU's chief administrative officers and the Policy Center on the First Year of College, and to making it available on our website and in the Resource Room for the HLC Self-Study Comprehensive Visit Site Team. We also look forward to our continued engagement with Dr. Cruzado, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and other high-level administrators to discuss this report, the initiatives already undertaken, and the ongoing endeavors aimed at improving the experiences of all NMSU students, especially our first-year students.

# **First Year Improvements-- Actions for Comprehensive Transformation**

**New Mexico State University**

**Las Cruces**

## **Executive Summary**

### **The FoE Process at NMSU**

The Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> (FoE) in the First College Year is a guided self-study and improvement process that focuses on the entire experience of first-year students at an institution, from an institutional perspective. It is based on nine principles, the Foundational Dimensions<sup>®</sup>, that have been developed to guide measurement and to provide an aspirational model for the complete first-year experience. This process engages faculty, staff, and administrators in a collaborative effort to focus on institutional behavior and to create an intentional comprehensive approach to the first-year experience. Extensive quantitative and qualitative research is encouraged in order to design a plan for significant improvements to the first year experience. This process was designed and is administered by the Policy Center on the First Year of College, with partial funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education, under the leadership of Dr. John Gardner and Dr. Betsy Barefoot. Additionally, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools approved this process as a “special emphasis” for accreditation. NMSU took advantage of this opportunity by making the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> process the special emphasis of its self-study for reaccreditation.

In Fall 2005, more than fifty faculty, staff, and administrators were introduced to the FoE process. They divided into nine “Dimension Teams” based on each of the nine Foundational Dimensions<sup>®</sup>. The faculty and staff member co-chairs of each team made up the FoE Task Force. (See Appendix A for Participant Roster.) Each team’s goal was to collect, review, and synthesize evidence regarding the current status of multiple facets of their particular Dimension at NMSU, and subsequently to define the necessary action items to significantly improve the first-year experience at NMSU. The Policy Center on

the First Year of College provided a set of “Performance Indicators” for each Dimension to serve as a basic structure for evidence gathering and creation of the Dimension Reports. Additionally, a Current Practices Inventory (CPI) was completed to provide a comprehensive inventory of procedures, policies, and committees relating to first-year students, as well as a repository of several first-year student demographics. (See Appendix B for CPI.)

During November and December 2005, the Foundations of Excellence Faculty and Staff Survey and First-Year Student Survey, both administered by Educational Benchmarking Incorporated (EBI), were conducted across campus. These surveys addressed issues related to first-year policies, students, etc. Over 75% (n=701) of teaching faculty and staff responded to the faculty and staff survey, and nearly 40% (n=794) of the Fall 2005 first-time freshman cohort responded to the student survey. An extensive compilation of the survey responses for both surveys was provided by EBI and was available to all of the teams. As teams gathered information for use in their study, much of the information was added to an Evidence Library that was also available to all team participants in the FoE endeavor. (See Appendix C for the list of contents of the Evidence Library.)

Out of this process, each team created a Dimension Report which was individually critiqued by Dr. Gardner of the Policy Center. Each report contained a description of the current status (as of 2005-2006) at NMSU, the areas of concern, a summary of evidence, and the action items necessary for improvement. All of the action items designated by each of the teams were reviewed, combined where appropriate, and evaluated by the FoE Task Force for inclusion in the Priority Action Plan. A brief overview of the Priority Action Items follows.

### **Priority Action Items Overview**

The FoE Task Force agreed that **three** of the Priority Action Items form a foundation for the process of enhancing the experiences of our first-year students. Implementation of these three foundational Priority Action Items will lay the groundwork for further success for first-year students at NMSU and for the implementation of other Priority Action items. First and foremost, the Task Force recommends that the University develop a **philosophy of the first year**. The philosophy, clearly articulated and broadly

disseminated, would provide impetus and coherence to all of NMSU's endeavors to improve our students' first-year experiences. Second, we recommend that the University develop an **organizational entity to oversee/manage the first-year experience**. This would assure the clear assignment of resources and of administrative responsibility for initiatives related to the first-year experience. Third, we recommend the **incorporation of assessment activities into all first-year initiatives**, including academic instruction. Systematic and periodic assessment will assure continuous improvement of programs.

The FoE Task Force believes the three action items discussed above will provide a solid foundation for pursuing the following additional recommended actions:

- Develop a comprehensive, consistent, and centralized first-year communications plan;
- Develop a first-year academic program that optimizes the first-year experience;
- Improve the collaboration between the Las Cruces and Doña Ana campuses in relation to first-year students;
- Coordinate and improve academic support, advising, mentoring, and tutoring services for ALL first year-students;
- Provide development opportunities for faculty teaching first-year students;
- Require new student orientation for all first-year students; and
- Involve families of first-year students in the college experience.

The complete Priority Action Plan appears below, together with the reports of the nine Dimension Teams. The FYI-ACT appendices include the Participant Roster, Evidence Library List, Current Practices Inventory, Organizational Charts, the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Report Card, and the Report on a Summit of the Leadership.

## **Priority Action Plan**

*The Priority Action Items listed below represent the culmination of a year's worth of work by nine dedicated groups (Dimension Teams) of faculty, staff, and administrators. Each Dimension Team independently created a list of action items based upon focused research within its dimension. Those fifty-plus action items were refined and combined to produce the ten clusters of items that make up the Priority Action Items. The original draft of this plan included the relative cost factor (\$ to \$\$\$\$), in addition to a suggested time frame for implementation. Following each recommendation, we have noted the specific dimension reports that provide support for that particular action item. Although the list of recommendations is extensive, few items are costly or time-consuming to implement. Most of the action items require further efforts by small, focused committees to craft policy. A few of the action items are controversial and will require additional research and discussion before implementing, if at all. The faculty, staff, and administrators involved in this effort believe that implementation of the Priority Action Plan will significantly improve the first-year experience of students who come to NMSU, and will move NMSU forward as a quality institution.*

### **I. Develop a first-year philosophy for NMSU**

*A. Develop, implement, and assess an explicit campus-wide philosophy statement addressing the first year of college. Include in the philosophy a definition for Diversity that promotes the interactions of a diverse community for a diverse society, and define what Diversity means for administration, faculty, staff, students, and the surrounding communities.*

- a. Create the small committee as detailed in the Leadership Summit report
- b. The committee will develop a first-year philosophy within four weeks
- c. The committee will then focus on methodologies for campus-wide implementation and assessment that incorporate the suggestions included in the FOE Dimension Reports

## Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Philosophy; Faculty; Diversity

B. *Revise the NMSU mission statement to include a specific focus on student learning.”*

Charge the first-year philosophy committee with revising the NMSU mission statement immediately following their completion of the first-year philosophy. The committee will provide recommended text to the President and Executive Vice President/Provost.

### Supporting Dimension Team Report: Philosophy

C. *Develop and implement a clearly written campus-wide policy for faculty involvement with first-year students. The policy would include expectations for faculty involvement with first-year students, and require that college promotion and tenure requirements recognize and sufficiently reward outstanding instruction, out-of-class interaction and advising of first-year students. It is suggested that a practice of assigning recognized outstanding faculty to teach first-year classes be included in the policy.*

- a. Create a small committee heavily weighted with faculty involved with first-year students. Include a liaison from the Faculty Senate’s Promotion and Tenure Task Force.
- b. The committee will develop the policy by the end of the Fall 2006 semester.
- c. The committee will work with the Faculty Senate to gain approval of the policy by the end of the 2006-07 academic year.
- d. The committee will then be given authority to review and mandate changes as necessary to all college promotion and tenure procedures to ensure alignment with the policy.
- e. The committee will develop measurements to assess the effectiveness of the policy.

### Supporting Dimension Team Report: Faculty



*D. Develop and implement a student creed that would help first-year students develop a personal code of ethics and values and, in association with the first-year philosophy, help guide expectations of students, faculty, staff and administrators at NMSU. It could serve as a basis for defining an "Aggie" and help to build school spirit and allegiance.*

- a. Create a small committee heavily weighted with students. Include a liaison from ASNMSU.
- b. The committee will develop the creed by the end of the Fall 2006 semester
- c. After developing the creed, the committee will focus on methodologies for campus-wide implementation and assessment of the effect of the creed.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Diversity**

## **II. Develop an organizational entity to oversee/manage the first-year experience**

*A. Create an organizational structure/entity that would provide cohesive and consistent support at the highest level of quality for first-year students at NMSU. Determine the line of authority and the degree to which this entity has the ability to create, assess, and revise activities/programs directed to the success of first-year students. This entity will be encouraged to identify redundancy of efforts and/or resources within the institution.*

- a. Create the small committee as detailed in the Leadership Summit report
- b. The committee will develop a detailed outline for the organizational entity to oversee/manage the first-year experience, including type of entity (committee, office, etc.), responsibilities, line of authority, and a minimum required base budget, by the end of the Fall 2006 semester. This committee will incorporate the recommendations from the FoE Organization Dimension Report and the Leadership Summit report in their development of this entity

- c. The committee will work with the Provost and the Vice-President for Student Success to designate the person(s) to serve as this entity by the end of January 2007. An initial budget for the entity will be provided for the spring semester, and sufficient funding will be described and provided for future fiscal years by the subsequent budget cycle
- d. The entity and the committee will jointly develop methodologies for assessment of the effectiveness of the entity in creating an excellent first-year experience at NMSU. Assessment will be conducted on an annual basis and reported to the campus community.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Organization**

**III. Develop a comprehensive, consistent and centralized first-year communications plan**

*A. Develop a comprehensive, consistent and centralized plan for communicating with first-year students, parents, faculty, staff, and other appropriate constituent groups regarding all aspects related to the first-year experience. Issues to be addressed include frequency, breadth, dual language, web page management, and software support, as well as the different needs of students living on versus off campus. Also included would be the dissemination of assessment results.*

- a. The first-year entity will work with University Communications, ASNMSU, ICT, Recruitment, and New Student Orientation to develop the plan with reference to the needs addressed in the entire Foundations of Excellence® Report and the Leadership Summit Report.
- b. This group will assign responsibility for implementing parts of the plan as appropriate, so that comprehensive and centralized communication can effectively begin by mid-spring 2007 for the Fall 2007 freshman class.

Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Philosophy; Organization; Learning; All  
Students; Transitions; Faculty, and Improvement

*B. Require the use of NMSU email addresses for official university communications.*

- a. Subcommittee of the group described in III.A.a will create policy for this requirement.
- b. Once Banner Student Module is in place, students will be able to update both their mailing and email addresses on-line.

Supporting Dimension Team Report: All Students

*C. Improve communications to students regarding appropriate academic and social behavior. Communications should be frequent, visible, and comprehensive. Efforts should be made to address multicultural perspectives and appropriate behavior in multicultural settings. Increase the coordination of activities on campus to assure consistent and visible behavior standards.*

- a. The committee that created the Student Creed will work with members of the committee in III.A.a to design and implement a communication plan focused on appropriate academic and social behavior. Guidance and recommendations should be solicited from Student Affairs, Greek Affairs, ASNMSU, etc.
- b. This committee will include methodology for assessing the effectiveness of the communication plan as well as the suitability of the messages communicated.

Supporting Dimension Team Report: Diversity

*D. Offer campus-wide forums to promote dialogue on Diversity including cultural, ethnic, religious, and political issues.*

- a. Interested offices (such as Ethnic Programs, student groups, etc.) will be asked to work cooperatively to plan and host the forums.

Entities that currently offer similar programming should be included with the goal of coordination of efforts.

- b. Evaluation of interest and attendance will be required in order to receive subsequent funding.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Diversity**

#### **IV. Develop a first-year academic program that optimizes the first-year experience**

*A. Develop and implement a core learning curriculum for first-year students that would result in a common set of student learning outcomes. This common core curriculum would strive to assist first-year students in making a smoother transition to both curricular and co-curricular activities at NMSU. Actively engage NMSU faculty, students and staff in curriculum design.*

**NOTE:** This action item is controversial as was highlighted in the discussions of the Leadership Summit. Careful consideration of the Learning Dimension Report and the All Students Dimension Report, along with inclusive dialog with all academic units which serve first-year students will be an essential first-step in creating an effective first-year curriculum for all first-year students regardless of major and proficiency that is acceptable to all departments and colleges. Although it is desirable that such a curriculum be instituted by Fall 2007, this may require additional time for discussion, planning, and implementation.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: All Students; Roles and Purposes**

*B. Establish and fund a First-Year Studies Program, centralized within an academic college, to articulate and integrate a wide variety of functions, including recruitment, admissions, orientation, advisement, and placement. The First-Year Studies Program would closely coordinate first-year gateway courses and other high enrollment first-year courses. Major First-Year Studies Program department stakeholders (English, Mathematics, and the Center for Learning Assistance's (CLA) UNIV 150) should play central roles in First-Year Studies Program design and implementation.*

**NOTE:** This action item is also controversial. There are strong similarities between this action item and the New Scholars Program currently housed in the College of Arts & Sciences. However, the expanded role of the First-Year Studies Program thus described would have a major impact on numerous academic and administrative units. This Action Item should be included as part of the discussions of 4A, but with an expanded audience. Given the far-reaching implications of this Program, and the necessity for in-depth conversations and planning, this Action Item will take time to implement.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Learning; Organization**

*C. Offer and fund sufficient sections of first-year courses to meet student demand and allow for best pedagogical practices.*

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Learning**

*D. “Continue to develop and fund supplemental instruction opportunities for high-risk gateway courses”*

- a. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the supplemental instruction for each course will be required at the end of each semester. Best practices, students served and demand will be reviewed.
- b. Additional supplemental instruction will be added for other high-risk gateway courses as demand merits.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: All Students**

*E. Expand the number of Living and Learning Communities and ensure that each Living and Learning Community has a strong diversity component.*

- a. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the living and learning communities will take place at the end of each academic year. Best practices, students served and demand will be reviewed.
- b. Expanding such communities to students who live off campus, especially to non-traditional students will be investigated and encouraged.

### Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Learning; Diversity

*F. Require course competencies/student learning outcomes for all first-year courses. These will be listed in the syllabi for all first-year courses as well as the stated means to assess proficiency. Provide support to faculty to integrate student learning outcomes addressing academic, professional, personal decision making, and other related skills into all first-year courses.*

- a. Outcomes Assessment Committee I (Academic) will be asked to review the learning outcomes of all first-year courses, and to evaluate the syllabi for those courses. They will have the authority to request that all departments comply.
- b. Define an entity (such as the Teaching Academy) or offer funds for faculty training addressing the development and assessment of student learning outcomes.

### Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Learning: Faculty; Roles and Purposes

*G. Provide first-year students with mentored research opportunities that enhance the undergraduate academic experience.*

- a. The Honors College will work with the Vice-Provost for Research to identify faculty who would be willing to participate in this program. Limited funds would be made available as incentives to encourage faculty and student participation.
- b. Involvement in mentoring first-year student research opportunities will be considered as faculty/student interactions for promotion and tenure under the guidelines to be developed in Action Item I.C.
- c. Evaluation of student and faculty participation and assessment of student learning outcomes will be accomplished on a yearly basis for all funded opportunities.

### Supporting Dimension Team Report: Transitions

*H. Evaluate and enhance the general first-year seminar by 1) providing sufficient funding for faculty to teach in UNIV 150 and include a faculty training component, and/or 2) developing a Freshman Seminar that would be taught by faculty and would introduce students to the wide range of subjects for exploration during their college career, and/or 3) establishing a Common Summer Reading List with a focus on diversity in all of its aspects including diverse ideas and cultures, and/or 4) requiring a brief writing assignment "Professional Futures.*

**NOTE:** This action item is controversial as there are numerous opinions concerning the role and reporting structure for the current first-year seminar (UNIV 150). This Action Item should be evaluated in concert with Action Items IV.A and IV.B. The Organization, Learning, All Students, and Diversity Dimension Reports should all be reviewed. Additional comments, suggestions, concerns, etc. should be gathered from all involved parties, including students and faculty prior to implementation of this Action Item so as to assure an excellent first-year seminar for all first-year students.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Faculty: Diversity: Transitions; Roles and Purposes**

**V. Improve the collaboration between the Las Cruces and Doña Ana campuses in relation to first-year students**

*A. Identify and strengthen existing collaborative efforts between the Las Cruces and Doña Ana campuses. Develop a plan to collaborate on student development, support, academic success, and future baccalaureate degree planning. Plans should include a clear definition of the status of students that share dual enrollment and a seamless transition from one campus to another.*

- a. A focused committee that includes Las Cruces and Doña Ana staff, faculty, administrators, and students will be formed immediately to
  - 1) define the areas of concerns and difficulties for first-year students in relation to crossing campuses, 2) prepare policies for addressing those difficulties, and 3) implement the policies by Fall 2007

- b. Review and discuss as needed with the New Scholars committee (original defining committee), faculty involved with first-year courses on both campuses, student support staff from both campuses, and students who have enrolled on both campuses
- c. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the new policies on student success and engagement for both campuses will take place in Fall 2008.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: All Students; Organization**

**VI. Coordinate and improve academic support, advising, mentoring, and tutoring services for ALL first-year students**

*A. Develop a plan to improve the coordination of academic support, advising, mentoring, and tutoring for traditional, transfer and nontraditional first-year students.*

- a. The entity defined in II.A.c will work with staff involved in these service units to identify areas needing improvement, and methods of improving coordination among the units; once identified, appropriate changes will be made
- b. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the changes will take place in Fall 2008.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Organization**

*B. Develop a centralized advising system for freshmen incorporating the distinct needs of various student groups such as undeclared majors. This would include issues such as a central advising location, common advising philosophy, career advising, faculty/staff advisor training, and strengthened connections with first-year students.*

- a. The entity defined in II.A.c will work with first-year advisors, both at the current advising centers and in those colleges/departments in which faculty are advisors to plan and implement a centralized advising system



by Fall 2007.

- b. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the changes will take place in Fall 2008

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: All Students; Transitions**

**VII. Provide development opportunities for faculty teaching first-year students**

*A. Provide and enhance training for instructors of first-year students addressing: first-year philosophy, pedagogy, use of technology, assessment of general education learning outcomes, curriculum, student characteristics, diversity, and student support services. Provide incentives for faculty to participate in training.*

- a. In coordination with the Teaching Academy, a small committee of faculty and staff will draft a plan for providing development opportunities for faculty teaching first-year students by the end of Fall 2006.
- b. All faculty teaching first-year students will be encouraged by their departments and deans to participate in the development opportunities, beginning in Spring 2007.
- c. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the trainings, the scope of the development opportunities, and the coverage of faculty will take place in Spring 2008.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Faculty; Organization; Learning, and Diversity**

**VIII. Require new student orientation for all first-year students**

*A. Require all first-year students to attend student orientation. Alternative formats may be needed to accommodate new traditional first-year students, non-traditional first-year students, as well as transfer students, and possibly, returning students. Include the orientation fee in the student fee structure, so that students could use federal financial aid funds to cover this fee.*

**NOTE:** This action item is controversial as was highlighted in the discussions at the Leadership Summit. Careful consideration of the Roles and Purposes

Dimension Report and the Transitions Dimension Report, comments from the Leadership Summit along with discussions with the Director of Marketing and Student Transitions, the Director of Student Financial Aid, and ASNMSU should occur before moving this Action Item forward.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Roles and Purposes; Transitions**

*B. Connect students with faculty during freshman orientation.*

- a. The Director of Marketing and Student Transitions will be encouraged to review the Transitions Dimension Report and discuss with faculty the opportunities for involvement in New Student Orientation, beginning with the Fall 2007 NSO.
- b. Faculty involvement in New Student Orientation will be included in the assessment of New Student Orientation that is conducted in the fall semester after each NSO.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Transitions**

**IX. Involve the families of first-year students in the college experience**

*A. Involve the families of first-year students in the college experience. Develop and implement more campus activities for students and their families. Include families of first-year students in appropriate assessment measures.*

- a. The entity will work with Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, ASNMSU, Campus events, Alumni Association, etc. to include families in as many events as possible, beginning by Summer 2007
- b. Assessment of each of the activities will include a component for families. Additionally, at least one major assessment will be conducted once every three years to measure family satisfaction with NMSU

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Transitions**

**X. Incorporate assessment activities into all first-year initiatives**

*A. Develop a systematic and periodic assessment of all first-year initiatives, including academic instruction. Incorporate feedback loop into assessment process to ensure continual improvement of programs and courses.*

- a. Other first-year initiatives, university-wide and smaller, not defined in the Action Items will also be reviewed for assessment activity
- b. The organization entity and/or the unit responsible for the initiative will be responsible for insuring that assessment is completed, the feedback loop implemented, and a report showing pathways for improvement is made available to the university on a periodic basis.

**Supporting Dimension Team Reports: Faculty; Transitions;  
Diversity; Roles and Purposes**

*B. Develop a measurable definition of student success and engagement.*

- a. A major issue at the Leadership Summit was the definition of “student success and engagement.” In order for definitive assessment to occur with many of the first-year initiatives, a measurable definition must be defined and approved
- b. The organization entity along with a small committee of FOE members, students and other interested faculty and staff will develop the definition by mid-spring, 2007. This definition will then be communicated to the NMSU community, suggestions implemented, and the definition refined as necessary to the satisfaction of the community.

**Supporting Dimension Team Report: Improvement**

## **Dimension Team Reports**

### **Philosophy Dimension Team Report**

*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.*

#### **Committee Leaders**

Jeffrey Brown, Academic Department Head, History

Cynda Clary, Special Assistant to the Provost

#### **Committee Members**

Ellen Castello, Director of Marketing Services, University Communications

Doug Kurtz, Associate Department Head, Mathematical Sciences

#### **Current Situation**

Mission statements may exist at NMSU. However, communication of mission statements may not. A philosophy statement regarding first-year students does not exist. In addition, no mission statements specifically address the first year experience of our students.

There is a general sense that it is important for freshman students to make a successful transition in both academic and developmental areas in the first year of college, but we (faculty, staff, and administrators at NMSU) have different ideas of exactly how this transition is defined and how to facilitate the transition process.

Here are some items of interest from the collection of NMSU mission statements:

Some common words in NMSU mission statements when students are addressed include “prepare,” “provide,” “careers,” “professional development,” “serve the people of New Mexico,” and “excellence in teaching.”

The mission of the Division of Student Affairs does not mention students.

While teaching excellence is often mentioned, a focus on student learning is lacking.

The Department of Housing and Residential Life serves 45% of NMSU's fall semester freshmen class. Given this service audience, one may assume that the department's mission statement refers to first-year students, even though this specific terminology is not used in the text.

Even though NMSU has no formally stated goals for the first year of college, a significant number of first-year students believe that NMSU has implicit goals for this year. For example, 41.8% of students surveyed by the Fall 2005 FoE Student Survey believed they had a high or very high understanding of the institution's educational goals for the first year of college, and 39.9% of students surveyed believed they had a high or very high understanding of the institution's goals for the personal development of students during the first year of college. In addition, 54.9% of the students surveyed believed the institution was highly or very highly committed to the success of first-year students.

In summary, there is no NMSU mission or philosophy statement addressing the first college year. However, according to the student survey, student respondents believed that a philosophy does exist and has been communicated to the student population. In the absence of an explicit statement, it appears that a sense of caring about students is being communicated through actions with students on a regular basis.

### **Areas of Concern**

A philosophy for the first college year (as evidenced in a mission, vision, or philosophy statement) provides the appropriate framework for evaluating the broad collection of curricular and co-curricular proposals addressing the first college year experience. A university-wide statement regarding the first college year would also provide legitimacy to these efforts by clearly stating the institution's commitment to these students.

NMSU needs a central philosophy to give focus to department/unit efforts and to campus initiatives such as the New College. Appropriate resources need to be tied to this central philosophy in order to carry out first year priorities.

Having an institutional philosophy is only the first step to incorporating the philosophy into the campus culture. It is critically important that the philosophy be communicated widely and often, and assessment of first-year initiatives include reference to the elements of the first year philosophy.

### **Summary of Evidence**

Mission Statements for NMSU Colleges/Departments

Student Service

Fall 2005 FoE Faculty/Staff Survey and Fall 2005 FoE Student Survey

**Recommended Grade: D-**

**Recommended Action Items**

Develop and adopt an explicit campus-wide philosophy statement addressing the first year of college. **(High priority)**

The FOE Task Force will develop a draft philosophy statement addressing the first college year. This statement will be submitted for revision and approval to appropriate campus committees/councils with the goal of final approval by the NMSU Board of Regents during 2006/07.

Revise the NMSU mission statement to include a specific focus on student learning. **(High priority)**

Revise the NMSU mission statement to include the concept of student learning both during a student's academic program and throughout the student's life.

Implement philosophy statements at academic and service unit levels. **(Medium priority)**

Require each academic and service unit to demonstrate how the philosophy statement is reflected in its policies, actions, and mission statement. Service unit mission statements should include a philosophy for supporting student learning and growth.

Communicate the revised mission statement to the internal NMSU audience and to prospective students, their parents, and the community. **(Medium priority)**

Communicate the revised mission statement to first-year Students. **(Medium priority)**

## **Organization Dimension Team Report**

*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.*

### **Committee Leaders**

Terry Cook, Associate Director, Center for Learning Assistance & Retention

Peter Gregware, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

### **Committee Members**

Claudia Billings, College Assistant Professor, College of Arts & Sciences

Debbie Hands, Associate Advisement Coordinator, College of Arts & Sciences

Sherry Mills, Professor, College of Business

Scott Moore, Dean of Students

Tyler Pruett, Director, Admissions & Financial Aid

Nick Sweeton, Assistant Director, Housing & Residential Life

### **Current Situation**

The best description of the current Organizational Structure at New Mexico State University is “Discrete structures that may operate independently on campus-wide first year issues, or may be highly coordinated efforts within a single college/unit. The key identifying characteristic is the lack of a formalized structure for communication and cooperation among the discrete structures.”

While there are instances of strong integration and collaboration between academic and student affairs units there is insufficient evidence to comprehensively describe the current status. Identified areas of strong integration are:

Collaboration between Arts & Sciences English Department and Counseling and Student Development Department. Decision-making and Harm Reduction Education Program integrated into English 111 course.

Counseling and Student Development Department collaboration with academic departments; Career Services presentations; Wellness, Alcohol, Violence Education (WAVE) presentations; Ropes Teambuilding Course; Services for Students with Disabilities collaboration with faculty.

Honors College collaboration with Housing and Residential Life - Initiatives to integrate mentoring, tutoring and Living and Learning Communities employing Crimson Scholar students.

The Freshman Year Experience (UNIV 150) Course - Instructors are faculty and staff from all colleges and student affairs units; Curriculum integrates presentations from University Library, Student Counseling and Development units, and student organizations.

First Year Scholars Program and the New College Curriculum Committee - Representation from NMSU administration, faculty, and professional staff from NMSU Dona Ana Community College and NMSU Las Cruces.

Note: The New College Task Force was convened in 2005 to consider ways to provide support to first-year students. Subsequently, in 2006 the First Year Scholars Program (FYSP) was initiated by the College of Extended Learning. Since Spring 2007, FYSP has been housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Provost's Roundtable with the First Year Initiatives Committee - Representation from administration, faculty, and professional staff.

Evidence of the use of evaluation results to improve performance is found in the following sources:

College of Arts & Sciences tracks success rates of first-year students in General Education courses and compares rates for a diversity of interventions within courses.

Colleges reported the pass/failure rates for courses characterized as "Gateway" or "Barrier" courses; Enrolling the highest number of first-year students, the College of Arts & Sciences has taken the following actions:

1. mandated a goal for improvement of success rates in Gateway and Barrier courses;
2. provided resources to faculty who proposed pedagogical changes to improve success rates;
3. invited all first-year faculty to attend Teaching Academy sponsored training.

Reports of retention and graduation rates from the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Outcomes Assessment.



College of Education utilizes follow-up questionnaires that ask recent graduates their perception of their experience with the advisement office which interacts with students in their first year and throughout.

Center for Learning Assistance assessments of UNIV course effectiveness; Survey assessment of reasons students enroll in mid-semester courses.

Housing and Residential Life conducts extensive assessments that explore the impact living on campus has on the overall campus experience. The results have been used to improve performance in the areas of academic integration, socialization, and delivery of services toward specific populations, including first-year students.

Outcomes Assessment Committees I & II report that academic and nonacademic areas set goals and objectives that are measured and used to enhance outcomes.

#### Faculty and Staff Development:

The Teaching Academy, whose purpose is to assist faculty and instructors to improve their teaching skills, provides a centralized service on campus for all colleges. From October 2004 to April 2006, 48 training courses were offered for a total of 4,900 training hours to 950 NMSU faculty members. However, it is unknown how many were faculty teaching first-year students. The Teaching Academy also provides individual consultation and observation to faculty and instructors upon request. It is unknown how often and at what levels this service is utilized.

The College of Arts & Sciences invited nationally recognized teaching experts to consult with and train faculty teaching in Barrier/High Risk courses. Faculty recommended changes to curriculum and were able to secure a stipend from the College to implement changes.

Colleges accredited by their professional bodies (e.g., engineering, business, education, nursing) establish and maintain professional development plans for faculty and staff to comply with accreditation standards. Faculty who teach first year courses and staff who assist freshmen are involved in the development of their own professional development plans.

The College of Education evaluates all instructors who teach in first year courses. If it is evident that an instructor or faculty member does not relate well to first-year students, they may be replaced or assigned to an academic teaching level to which they relate more effectively.

Some departments within the College of Engineering have informal mentorship pairings between new and senior faculty within the same department, but it is not specific to first year courses.

#### Financial Resources:

There is limited evidence in the FoE Current Practices Inventory (CPI) and Evidence Library concerning institutional or grant funding specific to first-year students at NMSU.

Current accounting information systems provide no information regarding the actual cost to serve freshmen students. The university does provide budget information for the various departments that support students, but this information is not broken down by grade level. Ideally, we would like to have an estimate of our costs per first-year student including education and support services.

In May 2006, the administration required a 2% budget cut across all colleges and student support units. A Budget Reallocation Memo dated May 19, 2006 outlined guidelines for submitting proposals to improve student recruitment and retention. It is anticipated that academic and student affairs units submitted proposals concerning first year initiatives, and that the university community will be informed concerning proposal funding prior to Fall 2006.

### **Areas of Concern**

Numerous and diverse organizational structures exist to support the first-year student at NMSU as evidenced in the three attached Organizational Charts. These departments, programs and committees are engaged in creating and implementing policy, programs and change that positively impacts entering students. However, there is no formal coordinating body or person responsible for oversight of these diverse initiatives. Many individual entities have an articulated philosophy, mission or vision statement, yet there is no single all encompassing statement to define our expectations for ourselves or for the first-year student. The Organization Dimension Committee has evidence that informal networks and cross membership on committees have been the primary means of communication between structures and groups. The NMSU Colleges, Student Services and Administration are intentional and focused in their desire to ensure student persistence and graduation. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of a methodology that communicates this information to students or to the university community. This decentralized approach 1) could affect our potential to realize strong collaborative efforts between academic and student affairs; 2) could affect the potential to maximize resources; and 3) does not create a singular message concerning options and opportunities in which students are eligible to participate that would support a cohesive experience for first-year students at NMSU. The Organizational Charts provided in the appendix may be helpful as a visual overview of our current structure. (See Appendix D.)

### **Integration**

There is a need to identify existing collaborative partnerships between academic and student affairs units on campus, and to develop new engagement platforms for academic and campus involvement.

There is a need for information structures that communicate integration to more positively impact first-year students' ability to navigate campus to locate essential academic and nonacademic support services.

How can we better organize to increase integration?

Would a survey of faculty and staff with a directive question concerning how they collaborate or how they perceive they are integrated yield more helpful information for assessment of this performance indicator?

Decisions made in one area concerning policy and services for first-year students may affect other areas serving the same student population.

How are decisions communicated to all interested parties?

Our knowledge of the commitment of academic departments to faculty/staff development activities is incomplete. Information from all of the colleges is needed to accurately state how faculty and staff teaching in courses with large first-year student enrollment receive on-going training to affect student learning outcomes. Committee Members are aware that all new employees attend an NMSU Orientation upon hire, but believe the focus is primarily on policies and procedures concerning pay and benefits. Colleges and departments are responsible for providing orientation for new faculty and staff, however, the Committee does not have knowledge of specifics conveyed to new staff.

#### Evaluation

There is evidence that academic and student affairs both collect quantitative and qualitative data that is used to improve course and service delivery. There is a lack of evidence concerning a specific focus on first-year students, actions taken and outcomes of action.

#### Faculty and Staff Development

On the premise that students' learning in the classroom is the most critical element of academic progress, persistence and graduation, the FYOS needs to continue to provide and enhance education and training opportunities for faculty and staff teaching first-year students. Increasing the recognition and reward opportunities for faculty and staff would convey the critical importance FYOS places on teaching excellence for students in their first year.

There was no on-going evaluation that measures faculty learning with regard to effective teaching practice for students in the first year. The Outcomes Assessment I Committee reviews the processes used by all college departments to assess their undergraduate and graduate programs. The departments' assessment results for these programs may be useful in supporting the assessment of first-year learning outcomes.

There is no evidence of training and development programs of graduate and teaching assistants assigned to courses with high levels of first-year student enrollment.

## Financial Resources

Although the University publishes its budget, the Committee found that the current Banner information system cannot distinguish the resources allocated specifically for first-year students.

There is no formal structure that communicates information about funding resources.

The Committee does not know what level of financial resources is invested in each first-year student.

Would a redesign of information systems to identify the academic and support services resources for first-year students help to develop performance measures that monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations, and to continuously improve our services?

If this information system were expanded, would this result in better management of academic and support services for all students?

## Summary of Evidence

The organizational structure supporting first-year students at NMSU may be characterized as consisting of three components:

1. Providers of direct service to students (Academic);
2. Providers of direct services to students (Student Support);
3. Committees charged with oversight of policy, procedure, and academic and student support program development and implementation that may result in direct or indirect impact on student transition, persistence and graduation.

The description of the current organizational structure for first-year students at New Mexico State University as a "Discrete Structure" succinctly depicts current policy and practice.

The Organization Dimension Committee reviewed the following documents to arrive at the conclusion that we have a complex structure in which departments, units and programs function independently of each other with no formal structure supporting information exchange of current practice:

FoE Current Practices Inventory (CPI) - The CPI represents the most comprehensive source of resources and efforts currently available for first-year students at NMSU. Notably many programs and college initiatives were not represented.

Documents in FoE Evidence Library - The Evidence Library contains documents indicating integration and collaboration between academic and student affairs. However, the Committee believes there are many other strong connections and points of integration taking place that are not in evidence. The Evidence Library is incomplete, indicative of the current status of communication within the organization.

Faculty, Staff & Student Fall 2005 FoE Surveys - The Organization Scaled Questions by Dimension for Student Respondents indicates we need to do a better job of informing students where they can find and receive information concerning in-class and out-of-class academic and student support resources. For example, on Question Q033, "To what degree do you understand how your institution is organized so that you know where to go if you - Have an administrative question (e.g. Financial Aid, registration, tuition payment)," (N=789) 191 students responded (3) moderate, 87 students responded (2) slight and 34 students selected (1) not at all.

Personal knowledge of organization structure of Organization Dimension Team Members.

Note: Discussion of existing organizational support structures not in "evidence" were added to the Organizational Charts.

## Integration

The Organization Dimension Committee reviewed documents in the Evidence Library and the Current Practices Inventory to arrive at the conclusion that we have a complex organization with both Academic Departments and Student Affairs units acting intentionally to address challenges faced by first-year students at New Mexico State University. There are also strong informal networks that work to serve students. However, departments, units and programs may be unaware of the objectives and activities of each other (creating a stove-pipe or silo effect) and function independently of each other. There does not appear to be a formal structure supporting information exchange of current practices.

## Evaluation

Review of Current Practices Inventory (CPI) and documents uploaded in Evidence Library.

## Faculty and Staff Development

Documents reviewed in Current Practices Inventory included:

1. Analysis of Gateway and Barrier Courses
2. UNIV 150 Instructor Handbook
3. Faculty Survey
4. Contact with Teaching Academy staff
5. Informal survey of Associate Deans of Colleges

#### Financial Resources

Review of Current Practices Inventory (CPI) and documents uploaded in Evidence Library.

**Recommended Grade:** C+

#### **Recommended Action Items**

The following Action Plan is recommended to address five Performance Indicators.  
(High priority)

1. Create an organizational structure that provides cohesive and consistent support at the highest level of quality for first-year students at NMSU, and invite a campus-wide group to collaborate on objectives and outcomes. Determine the line of authority and the degree to which "The Council" has the ability to create, maintain, or eliminate activities directed to first-year student success. It will report directly to the President and Provost. Restructure the Provost's First-Year Initiatives Committee to -

Suggested Titles: The First-Year Student Success Advisory Council, the Student Success Task Force, or the Student Success Action Team.

2. Develop an organizational system that promotes campus-wide collaboration and communication by developing a strategic plan to include:

- Mission statement
- Goals and objectives for each of the next five years
- Resource needs (budget) to accomplish these goals and objectives
- Assessment plan to evaluate and improve the activities directed to first-year student success.

3. Clarify the relationship "The Council" has with the "First-Year Scholars Program" and the "New College", including the identification of similar and different goals and objectives and the resources needed for each to operate.

4. Measure and monitor the success of the first-year program by working with ICT and Financial Services to design a cost information system that accumulates and communicates the costs of academic and support services for freshmen students. The system could include cost of resources to provide services, as well as cost drivers, such as number of freshmen, number of visits, time spent in providing service; and a cost per student. This information would be useful in monitoring services for budgeting and control purposes.

- Provides detailed or aggregated student information. Examples of information include: types of financial aid and number of semesters used; number of visits to a particular support service, number of semesters in campus housing; participation in orientation; pre-registered for school; times late making payments; scholarships lost. This information can be used to help academic and support services control costs, improve processes, justify more or less resource needs.

5. Review initiatives and actions of all committees currently charged with addressing concerns of first-year students to identify redundancy of efforts and/or resources.

Based upon review of Evidence Library documents, Current Practices Inventory and Organizational Dimension Committee meeting discussions, we offer the following suggestions for consideration:

#### Action Objectives

1. Review and prioritize Action Plans from nine Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Dimension Teams for implementation.
2. Develop the relationship between NMSU Las Cruces and NMSU Dona Ana to identify the challenges for first-year students who are co-enrolled on our campuses and who are facilitated by our organizational structure. Identify and strengthen existing collaborative efforts between the two campuses.
3. Develop a plan and oversee the coordination of the following support services for traditional, transfer and nontraditional first-year students - Academic Support, Advising, Mentoring, and Tutoring.
4. Create a centralized process to communicate coherent, consistent messages to first-year students that address their concerns (via NMSU website, web blogs, television, radio, and paper media).

5. Create a centralized process to communicate new initiatives and services, changes to and new policies and procedures to NMSU faculty and staff (via e-mail or website).

6. Enhance training for instructors of first-year student to improve pedagogy, use of technology, and assessment of general education learning outcomes.

Recommended Council Membership will be a two-tiered system

Tier 1: Advisory Council – will consist of a total of no more than five members, rotating within academic and student affairs units, with time-limited terms for representatives from the following areas:

College of Arts & Sciences

Student Affairs

Academic Support

Housing & Residential Life

Enrollment Management

Tier 2: Integrated Working Groups (Action Teams) – with suggested representation from the following areas:

Academic Affairs and Student Success Administration

Associate Deans Advisory Council (ADAC)

Academic Support Programs

Athletic Academic Programs

Campus Tutoring Program

Center for Learning Assistance

Enrollment Management

First-Year Scholars Program

Honors College

Housing & Residential Life

Institutional Research, Planning & Outcomes Assessment



Math Success Center

New Student Orientation & Transitions

NMSU Academic Advisors

NMSU Dona Ana Community College

Office of Business & Finance

Regents of New Mexico State University (Student Regent)

Student Advisory Groups

Student Affairs Division

Teaching Academy

University Library

Writing Center

Sponsored Programs:

Alliance for Minority Participation (SMET 101)

College Assistance Migrant Program

ENLACE

National Institutes of Health (Supplemental Instruction)

National Science Foundation (Supplemental Instruction)

TRiO (Upward Bound; Student Support Services)

## **Learning Dimension Team Report**

*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.*

### **Committee Members**

Roseanne Bensley, Assistant Director, Placement and Career Services

Chris Burnham, Regents Professor, English

James Caufield, Assistant Professor, Library

Cheryl Coker, Associate Professor, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

Lisa Kirby, Senior Advisor, Health and Social Services

Eric Lopez, Associate Professor, Special Education and Communication Disorders

### **Current Situation**

**Basic Academic Skills** - NMSU requires all students to demonstrate basic academic skills in both English and mathematics to ensure that they have the abilities to succeed in upper-division courses numbered 300 or higher. First-time students must meet both of these requirements before enrolling in any upper-division courses. While this is not stated as a goal specifically to be achieved by the end of the first year, many students will attempt to accomplish it in that time frame. The options students have for accomplishing this are listed in the summary evidence.

**Student Survey Responses** - Question 46 of the student survey asked the following: "To what degree do you understand your institution's educational goals for the first year of college?" According to the data, only 41.8 % of students clearly understand the institution's educational goals for the first year.

**Faculty Survey Responses** - Question 4 of the faculty survey also asks: "To what degree do you understand your institution's educational goals for the first year of college?" Results indicate that only 26.5% indicate that they have a clear understanding.

**Mission Documents** - The degree to which individuals believe that NMSU's mission documents address goals for student learning achievements during and beyond the first year was asked on the faculty/staff survey. 76.5% of respondents indicated very little to some.

Course Syllabi – A review of the syllabi from five of the gateway courses found no specifications regarding mandatory documentation of methods of "engagement." This subcommittee's interpretation of "engagement" assumed the word "communication" (collaborative learning), used in some syllabi, indicates methods. For example, percentages of grade for class participation might be interpreted as "engagement."

Five High Enrollment (Gateway) Courses –

ENGL 111 Rhetoric and Composition - degree of consistency of learning outcomes across all sections: Medium

Learning outcomes are listed in the course book for ENGL 111G *Paideia* 8. The book includes a course syllabus, a sequence of writing exercises, and topical readings. The department publishes a week-by-week schedule that is adjusted by individual instructors and distributed to students.

The writing assignments in the book include specific evaluation criteria for each project. Instructors apply the criteria and judge papers as acceptable or needing revision.

A portfolio assignment culminates the course. The portfolio contains a reflective exercise requiring students to review what they have learned through the course and how they plan on using their learning in subsequent courses. Students are referred to the course syllabus to refresh memory of learning objectives.

Instructors evaluate portfolios individually and assign grades. There is no evidence of departmental review of portfolios or of student writing to assure that outcomes have been met. There is a teacher training and faculty development program designed to assure that course instructors are applying criteria consistently across the program. However, the success of this effort is limited by the nature of teaching staff of ENGL 111G. Graduate Assistants staff the course; they typically teach only two or three semesters before completing their programs or moving to another course in the G-Writing sequence. There is no evidence of a common writing assignment scored by committee to check whether outcomes are being met.

A thorough outcomes assessment (OA) was completed about six years ago. That OA included portfolio review by English faculty. OA determined outcomes were being met. Lack of resources prevents additional outcomes assessment.

Until recently, the program used a holistically scored Common Exit Essay to assess students' exit competencies on one timed writing. The assessment approach was stopped as a result of concern that the one timed writing did not actually reflect student learning in the course. In addition, resources were not available to train and pay readers for scoring the timed essays.

CS 110 Computer Literacy - degree of consistency of learning outcomes across all sections is reported to be good, but the committee has no direct evidence for this.

There isn't a "common syllabus" but all sections have very similar syllabi. They cover the same topics, use the same textbook, etc. Outcomes are measured in two ways: quizzes covering the assigned material from the textbook and lab assignments that require the students to learn and demonstrate software skills. The same lab assignments are used in all sections on the Las Cruces campus except for the distance education section. The quizzes are created by the individual instructors but questions come from a large test bank provided by the textbook publisher.

MATH 115 Intermediate Algebra - degree of consistency of learning outcomes across all sections: High

Learning outcomes are rigorously assessed by a sequence of tests that determine a student's progress through the course. Students must succeed on one test before progressing to the next topic and test. Students are offered either lab-based instruction in the Mathematics Success Center (MSC) or a traditional lecture class.

Course topics that imply learning outcomes are listed in the University Catalog. However, the sequence of topics and testing are not easily accessible on the department's web page. Students gain access to additional information by enrolling in the course.

MATH 115 is the first credit-bearing course in the sequence leading to Calculus. Students are placed in the course based on a combination of ACT scores and HS GPA. Students can challenge placement by taking the Math Placement Exam (MPE) offered by the MSC.

The mathematics sequence is currently under review and a new sequence will be implemented in the fall. The new sequence responds to general concerns across the university, and especially within departments requiring the MATH sequence through any form of calculus. MATH 115 is seen as a "barrier" course that significantly impedes student progress through the required MATH sequence. The new sequence will be supported by the MSC in a way similar to the current MATH 115, with a sequence of hurdle tests and on-line tutorials with opportunities to earn extra points.

The new sequence separates the content of MATH 115 into two courses. The first course will be MATH 120 Intermediate Algebra with a pedagogy designed for less-well-prepared students (as identified by placement criteria or MPE) and offers a supportive collaborative, activity-based pedagogy. The second course, MATH 121 College Algebra, is designed for better-prepared students who still need preparatory work for calculus but are majoring in non-technical fields. The pedagogy will be activities-based. This course will articulate with mandated NM state-wide mathematics college-level competencies.

SOC 101G Introduction to Sociology - degree of consistency of learning outcomes across all sections: Unknown

The Sociology Department freely concedes that its SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology sections are not standardized. They claim this as a strength. There is a degree of

commonality, but no standardization. Some commonality across courses results from using sociology textbooks which generally treat the discipline in similar ways. Several different textbooks are used in the course; individual instructors select the textbook.

Several topics and themes appear across the spectrum of syllabi. These include several definitions of sociology as a discipline/field, frequent and consistent mention of "sociological perspectives," and mention of means of inquiry and research methods particular to sociology. There is no evidence that the department has agreed upon a set of common learning outcomes. The assessment schemes noted on each of the syllabi note the dates of tests but not the content that will be tested.

E-correspondence with both Department Head Dr. Brenda Benefit and Undergraduate Studies Director (USD) Dr. Lee Hamilton indicated that the department was quite aware that there was little commonality across the sections, but they determined that this is a strength. Allowing each of the faculty who teach the course to shape it and select the textbook allows them to take advantage of their individual strengths. The USD cited a 93% success rate in his section last semester as one justification for the non-standardized approach. The sociology faculty have made a conscious choice not to standardize across sections. A standardized course would target a fictive "average" student, and ignore the diverse needs of the population. In addition, a standardized approach would leave students ill-prepared for work at the upper-division and graduate levels because all students would have the same perspective.

UNIV 150 Freshman Year Experience - degree of consistency of learning outcomes across all sections: Low

Learning outcomes are not standardized across all sections. A final exam is required, though other assignments and quizzes are at the teacher's discretion. Grading is done by individual instructors.

While they do not speak directly to learning outcomes, student evaluations of the course are generally high. This is also reflected in the FOE Student Survey, which contains comments such as "University 150 is a great class. It helped with test taking, studying, and note taking." Approximately 20 students specifically mentioned University 150 as one of the top three ways this institution helped in the transition to college, and probably an equal number mentioned the course by content and not by name.

The University 150 program is in the process of asking all instructors to provide feedback about their individual learning outcomes for each of the objectives, but will not have this information compiled for some time. There is a standard training for University 150 instructors. This should assist in the standardization of learning outcomes.

Basic Skills Course Placement - Math placement is based on combined high school cumulative GPA and ACT math scores or the math placement exam. English placement is based on ACT English scores. All other placements are up to the individual student's

advisor. NMSU Student Undergraduate Catalog defines Basic Skill Requirement Options for placement in English and math.

The University Transition Program (UTP) provides an opportunity for freshmen applicants initially denied admission to the NMSU Las Cruces campus to gain admission to the University. UTP participants will be admitted to the University upon successful completion of an individualized course of study through Dona Ana Community College (DACC) on the NMSU Las Cruces campus.

TRIO Upward Bound Program Bridge students have ACT scores reviewed by the Academic Coordinator and are encouraged to re-take ACT if necessary and are advised of the MPE. Academic advising prior to early registrations held in April & June encourage addressing English & Math deficiencies by enrolling in summer courses at the student's home community college to be transferred to the university for fall enrollment in "college level" English and math.

Student-athletes are advised of their placement status in English and Math at NMSU or DACC. Student-athletes are given information regarding the MPE as opportunity for possible placement into a Las Cruces campus math course depending on their test scores. In addition, student-athletes are provided with an explanation regarding the allowable number of degree countable credit hours for developmental courses as governed by NCAA academic requirements.

Students have the opportunity to take advanced placement exams in the following areas: Art, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics, Language, Government, History, Math, Physics, Music and Psychology (CLEP/AP). These exams are typically initiated at the high school level but are student initiated at the college level.

#### Additional Information

FOE Student Survey - Question 54 asks the degree to which an identified (by the student) course is appropriate for their level of academic preparation. Only 58.3% of students indicated that the level was about right. 28.7% said that it was easy or too easy while 13% answered that the course was hard or too hard.

FOE Faculty Survey - Faculty were asked to rate the overall effectiveness of academic advising for first-year students. 34.7% thought it was good or excellent while 65.3% indicated that it was very poor to fair.

UNIV 150 includes course requirements which provide a grade for involvement in cultural events, student organizations, athletics, concerts, plays. No other gateway course has documentation for out-of-class learning requirements.

Student Affairs provides programs and activities for students but not necessarily just for freshman.

ASNMSU had Crimson Crew and Roadrunner to promote activities for freshman.

Greek Life heavily recruits students and documents the profiles of students.

### **Areas of Concern**

**Learning Goals** - The finding that 41.8 % of students clearly understand the institution's educational goals for the first year is interesting in that aside from the basic academic skills requirements, no learning goals exist. The fact that established written learning goals, endorsed by the institution, and shared widely do not exist is an obvious area of concern. Furthermore, there is a clear discrepancy in perception between students and faculty with respect to the existence of such goals.

**Engagement** - Documentation of instructional methods is not formally defined by the institution. There is a lack of consistency across academic departments. Evaluation of effectiveness of engagement is not clearly documented.

**Course Outcomes** -

**ENGL 111** - The course is substantive and well designed. However, we would like additional attention in teacher training and assessment to demonstrate the department is assuring that evaluation criteria are being used consistently and outcome competencies are being met.

**CS 110** - Quizzes can vary from class to class (though this might also be a strength). There is no outcomes assessment outside of the course assignments and quizzes.

**MATH 115** - The MSC is making a genuine effort to respond to university-wide concerns about this course. The new course sequence should be closely monitored in terms of validity of placement, clarity of learning outcomes, and articulation between learning outcomes and the testing sequence. The topics, skills, and concepts of the course should be advertised clearly to prospective students. Such transparency would also support New Mexico high school mathematics teachers who are preparing students for entry into NMSU and the required MATH sequence.

**SOC 101** - The department seems to have come to its decision not to standardize in a collegial fashion. Thus, they allow individual faculty to determine objectives for their sections. They do not seem concerned that they are serving a broad university population who may have some expectation of uniformity across several sections of a course with the same name. However, the course is listed as a General Education course. G-course protocols require that a university committee review course learning outcomes, syllabi, and assessment practices. We have asked department administration to provide the most recent G-review in order to see how the University GenEd Course Review Committee responded to the existing course structure.

UNIV 150 - The course is obviously appreciated by first-year students. While there is no standardized outcome assessment presently, the program is working on it. It should also be noted that some of their goals go beyond the standard academic categories (this is especially true of the more holistic social and personal goals). Standardized assessment of these outcomes might be difficult, yet they are valuable nonetheless.

Placement - The primary area of concern is whether placements made are in fact appropriate. Resources are needed to determine best "placement." Furthermore, advanced placement exams are student initiated. Are all students receiving communication that this opportunity is available? Students are given information on English and math placement typically at "early registration." Time is limited to explain options in remediation placement determined by ACT scores.

Out-of-Class Learning - The institution does not document first-year students' learning outcomes. If any reports are done they are not available for use by the university as a whole.

## **Summary of Evidence**

### Learning Goals

English and Math Basic Skill Requirement Options (see Evidence documentation).

In responding to question 46 on the FOE Student Survey, "To what degree do you understand your institution's intended educational goals for the first/freshman year of college?" 28.6% of students indicated a moderate understanding, with 16.2% as high.

In response to question 4 on the FOE Faculty-Staff Survey, "To what degree do you understand your institution's educational goals for the first year of college?" 34.4% of faculty and staff indicated a moderate understanding, with 28.3% as high.

Syllabuses from all five gateway courses were evaluated.

### Engaging Students

Statement defining "engagement" is borrowed from the Engagement & Service Subcommittee, Nov. 18, 2005 meeting minutes. The meaning of engagement:

\* a means to provide feedback

\* student engagement: awareness and ability to use resources

Subcommittee noted that "clickers" are used in biology courses and some instructors use "one-minute papers." It was not stated on any of the five gateway courses' syllabi that these particular methods were used.



## Course Outcomes

ENGL 111 - *Paediea 8* ENGL 111 Coursebook; Interviews and e-correspondence with program administrators.

CS 110 - Sample syllabus from CS 110; Email exchanges with program administrators.

MATH 115 - NMSU course catalog for MATH 115 Intermediate Algebra; NMSU Mathematics Department Homepage links to the Mathematics Success Center and "The New Pre-Calculus Sequence."

SOC 101 - Web search of current SOC 101G syllabi; E-correspondence with Department Head and Undergraduate Studies Director.

UNIV 150 - The Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Student Survey; Sample syllabi from University 150

Goals of University 150 found in the CPI; Discussion with program administrators.

## Placement

In responding to question 54 on the FoE Student Survey, "For courses identified earlier, to what degree is this course appropriate for your level of academic preparation?" 58.3% of the students indicated "about right." In responding to question 60 on the FoE Faculty-Staff Survey, "Rate the overall effectiveness of academic advising for first-year students at this institution," 37.2% of the staff/faculty indicated "fair", and 26.7% "good".

Course Placement for Student-Athletes.

Trio Program info from Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (CPI).

Items listed under evidence documentation.

Out-of-Class Learning – We were not able to locate any formal documentation to back up personal opinion. The last campus-wide survey, which was conducted by the Division of Student Services, was conducted somewhere in the years 1998-2000.

**Recommended Grade: C-**

## Recommended Action Items

Establish A First-Year Studies Program. (High priority)

To ensure accountability, centralize the program in an academic college with a dedicated, well-resourced structure and with leadership that can provide dynamic direction for the program. (Highest Priority)

The First-Year Studies Program would articulate and integrate a wide variety of functions, including recruitment, admissions, orientation, advisement, and placement. Placement should be customized, i.e., students complete performance assessments, in addition to ACT and high school GPA, in major skills areas, including English and Mathematics, and are placed in courses appropriate to their skills ability. These courses should be Las Cruces campus courses taught by Las Cruces campus departments.

The First-Year Studies Program would also closely coordinate first-year gateway courses and other highest enrollment first-year courses. All these courses should be identified and their curricula coordinated and assessed in relation to the service they provide first-year students and the University. To establish and maintain high academic and social standards, specific learning objectives need to be designed and advertised. The First-Year Studies Program must coordinate assessments measuring success in learning outcomes. Results of assessment will be disseminated to the communities served. The First-Year Studies curriculum should also include Integrated Learning Communities, service learning, internships, and co-op opportunities related to the students' area of academic interest.

Major First-Year Studies Program department stakeholders (English, Mathematics, and the Center for Learning Assistance's (CLA) UNIV 150) should play central roles in First-Year Studies Program design and implementation. The Center for Learning Assistance should be absorbed into the First-Year Studies Program. This would allow the CLA to assume a more "academic" purpose and assure proper recruitment and training of UNIV 150 instructors.

To support the First-Year Studies Program, the University must fund first-year studies. (High priority)

Departments that provide courses for first-year studies must be provided funding adequate to allow every first-year student the opportunity to enroll in these courses when desired. This would require additional funding for the Writing Program which currently can enroll only about one-half of the entering first-year students who want to enroll.

In addition, these courses must be funded in ways that allow best pedagogical practices. Class-size must be managed to assure first-year students the opportunity to not only survive but to thrive at NMSU. The current class-size of ENGL 111G on the Las Cruces campus is 27. The DACC currently limits class-size to 20, creating a potential quality asymmetry. NMSU Las Cruces ENGL 111G class-size should be reduced to 20, the high-end limit for a writing class that is recommend by professional organizations.

Support the First-Year Studies Program by providing faculty development for all. (High priority)

At a minimum this training should include making all first-year instructors aware of the philosophy statements for First-Year Studies and the full-range of resources and services

available to first-year students, including academic, social, psychological, and financial service.

This training should also address the pedagogical challenges confronting first-year program instructors and first-year students. Pedagogical support offered in the Teaching Academy and English Department, especially Writing Across the Curriculum and the Writing Center, can be coordinated to assure that faculty development is detailed and ongoing. First-Year Studies instructors should be compensated, either with time or money, for participating in on-going faculty development.

Establish a dedicated "First-Year Studies Web-Page." (High priority)

The web page could be used for outreach and marketing to communities beyond NMSU proper. The web page could also be used to inform students and faculty about programs and outcomes. First-Year Studies should be prominently featured on the University web page. Web visitors should be able to access the First-Year Studies web-page within three "clicks." This would establish NMSU as an institution committed to quality in first-year instruction and services and to the success of its first-year students.

## **Faculty Dimension Report**

*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 institution's reward systems.*

### **Committee Members**

Priscilla Bloomquist, Associate Professor, Hospitality, Tourism & Restaurant Management

Sue Brown, Director of Academic Excellence Programs, Center for Learning Assistance

Alyne Fulte, College Associate Professor, Math Learning Center

Stuart Munson-McGee, Professor, Chemical Engineering

Cheryl Wilson, Associate Dean, Library

### **Current Situation**

The Teaching Academy was funded through the Provost's Office to assist faculty in developing their teaching skills. The focus is on pedagogies of engagement. This indicates encouragement by a senior academic leader. Although the Academy is for all faculty, the majority of the users are junior faculty who tend to teach first-year courses.

There are initiatives in some of the colleges to look at barrier courses and to devise ways to use pedagogies of engagement to improve the learning outcomes. These initiatives are led by senior academic leaders. It is included in annual evaluations in at least one college. The dean of this college is also hosting a series of workshops on pedagogies of engagement for all first-year teachers. In general, faculty/staff feel that the institution's delivery of the first year demonstrates that the success of first-year students is an important institutional goal.

During the new faculty orientation, which all faculty are encouraged by senior academic leaders to attend, the characteristics of first-year students are discussed.

Faculty/staff indicated they feel that the institution is committed to the success of first-year students. The majority of faculty/staff feel that working with the first-year student was considered important by institution leaders. However, aside from a few initiatives there is not a great deal of encouragement from senior academic leaders for using pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses. Many of the classrooms have desks or chairs that are not moveable; this also discourages pedagogies of engagement.

Faculty/staff indicated that the majority of them understand the institution's intended educational goals for the first/freshman year of college. However there is no clear evidence that they understand the learning goals for the first year. A large percentage of them believe the institution's delivery of the first year demonstrates that the success of the first-year student is an important institutional goal.

There is no clear indication that senior academic leaders encourage faculty to understand the characteristics of first-year students at this campus.

Almost half of the faculty/staff who work with first-year students are engaged in professional activities such as attending conferences or meeting sessions related to the first year. More than half of the faculty/staff indicated they are reading professional materials related to the first year. However, fewer than one fourth are presenting at conferences or contributing to publications. This would indicate that senior academic leaders encourage to some degree, the understanding of broad trends and issues in the first year.

There is some evidence that unit-level academic administrators encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses. In a few departments, new initiatives are encouraged. The units are responsible for outcomes assessment; however, it is not clear whether faculty are encouraged to develop unit-level learning goals for entry-level courses. It is also not clear whether unit-level administrators encourage faculty to understand the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses.

It appears that NMSU rates "slight" to "not at all" when it comes to addressing the issue of first-year students during the hiring process. When faculty rated the degree to which responsibilities related to first-year students were addressed by means of position descriptions, candidate interviews or by new faculty/staff orientations, approximately two-thirds of the respondents rated NMSU as "slight" to "not at all."

In short, NMSU does little to formally reward faculty for excellence in teaching first-year students. The promotion and tenure documents that were reviewed focused on research accomplishments while the institutional bias towards research over teaching (in terms of rewarding faculty) was also noted in the recent Employee Climate Survey.

### **Areas of Concern**

Currently, there is limited campus-level encouragement from senior academic leaders for faculty to use pedagogies of engagement. While the education of first-year students is important, there needs to be more emphasis on learning goals by senior academic leaders. There also is a need for increased encouragement for understanding the characteristics of first-year students, and for understanding broad trends and issues in the first year.

There is not consistent encouragement by unit-level academic administrators for using pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses, for understanding unit-level learning

goals for entry-level courses, and for understanding the discipline-specific trends and issues related to entry-level courses.

No expectations for involvement with first-year students are clearly communicated to new faculty during the hiring process.

NMSU does not appear to formally value teaching of first-year students. For this to change, it may be necessary to completely re-evaluate the balance between teaching, research, and service and to develop a new evaluation procedure that recognizes the unique demands of each, and appropriately rewards faculty for their contributions. These issues are, perhaps, being addressed by two Faculty Senate taskforces.

### **Summary of Evidence**

**Pedagogies of Engagement** - There is not a great deal of overall evidence to indicate that senior academic leaders encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses. The College of Arts and Sciences, however, has a committee which is looking at barrier courses and is offering workshops which focus on pedagogies of engagement for first-year students in order to improve instruction in these courses. This initiative is headed by the Dean of the College. The funding of the Teaching Academy also supports the use of pedagogies of engagement.

**Understand campus-wide learning goals for the first year** - In responding to question 04 on the FoE Faculty/Staff Survey (Do you understand your institution's intended educational goals for the first/freshman year of college?), 55.2% of the faculty/staff indicated a moderate, high or very high response. In response to question 88, 64.5% of the faculty/staff indicated a moderate, high or very high response indicating that they feel that the institutions' delivery of the first year demonstrates that the success of first-year students is an important institutional goal. 81.9% of the faculty /staff indicated a moderate, high or very high response to question 05 concerning their belief that the institution is committed to the success of first-year students/freshmen.

**Understanding the characteristics of first-year students at this campus** - There is little evidence that senior academic leaders encourage faculty to do this.

**Understand broad trends and issues in the first year** - 45.4% of the faculty/staff indicated a moderate, high or very high response for attending conference or meeting sessions; 54.9% of the faculty/staff indicated a moderate, high or very high response to reading professional materials; and 23.2% of the faculty/staff were engaged in presenting at conferences or contributing to publications. (Questions 41, 42, and 43 of the FoE Faculty and Staff Survey, respectively.)

From limited informal interviews, there is some evidence that unit-level administrators encourage faculty to use pedagogies of engagement in first-year courses. There is evidence that working with first-year students is perceived as important by department/unit leaders. In question 56 of the FoE Faculty and Staff survey, over 63% of

all respondents indicate high or very high degree of importance. However, 17% of respondents indicated that their perception is that working with first-year students is not at all valued by their department/unit leader. Questions 83 and 84 examine the degree to which respondents perceive faculty are actively engaged by the administration in designing (83) and implementing (84) activities involving first-year students. 41.4% and 46.8%, respectively, indicate a high or very high level of engagement, while 35.9% and 30.2% indicate no level of engagement.

Evidence was drawn from five primary sources:

The 1996 "Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure of Academic Programs and Agricultural Experiment Station Faculty" published by the NMSU College of Agriculture and Home Economics (CAHE),

The draft revisions to the NMSU College of Engineering's (CEng) guidelines for promotion and tenure,

The NMSU 2004 "Employee Climate Survey"  
([http://www.nmsu.edu/Employee\\_Climate\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.nmsu.edu/Employee_Climate_Survey.pdf)),

The minutes of the NMSU Faculty Senate Roles and Rewards Task Force (link available at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~fsenate/>),

The minutes of the NMSU Faculty Senate Committee on Tenure and Promotion (link available at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~fsenate/>).  
(Note that guidelines from promotion and tenure from additional colleges are being sought and may modify some of the conclusions.)

The two referenced promotion and tenure guidelines do not explicitly differentiate between general teaching responsibilities and teaching of first-year students, although differentiation between graduate and undergraduate teaching is made. Also, both publications indicate that research is more highly valued than teaching. In the CAHE guidelines, in the General Statement (the first section of the document) in italics it is stated that "Publication in refereed scholarly journals precedes other evidence of professional stature." In the CEng document, the general requirements for promotion and tenure are listed as "high research productivity, adequate teaching, and some service."

The institutional bias towards emphasizing research is also apparent in the 2004 Employee Climate Survey as reflected in the questions with respect to promotion and tenure (page 87). Specifically, two of the 8 questions dealt with research issues (receiving reduced responsibilities to build a research program, and the relationship between research, teaching, and service) while only one (the same relationship question) dealt with teaching. None of the questions dealt with teaching satisfaction, accomplishment, or improvement.

The lone bright spot in this issue is that at least at the Faculty Senate level, the problem has been recognized. The two Faculty Senate taskforces referenced above have/are raising the issue of faculty evaluation. It is apparent from their reports and minutes of their meetings that they recognize the diversity of scholarship on campus and the necessity to reward and encourage it appropriately.

**Recommended Grade: C-**

### **Recommended Action Items**

Develop a clearly written campus-wide policy for faculty involvement with first-year students. **(High priority)** The policy would address:

- A. Recurring training with incentives for participation, and implementation of pedagogies of engagement in courses enrolling first-year students.
- B. Establishment of procedures for requiring course competencies or outcomes for all first-year courses.
- C. Increased funding needs for faculty workshops focused on the characteristics of first-year students on this campus.
- D. Sufficient funding for faculty to teach in established programs, e.g. UNIV 150, that serve first-year students, and include a faculty training component.
- E. Encourage participation for faculty development activities which focus on assisting faculty who teach first-year students to understand broad trends and issues in the first year, and provide funding as needed.
- F. Incentives for training on the discipline-specific trends and issues relating to the first-year student, and provide funding as needed.
- G. Expectations for involvement with first-year students to new faculty during the hiring process.
- H. Assignment of recognized outstanding faculty to teach first-year classes.
- I. Inclusion of outstanding instruction, out-of-class interaction and advising first-year students as a high priority in college promotion and tenure requirements; and also as a high priority measurement in college faculty evaluations.

To establish a mechanism to ensure that the policy is implemented and followed at all levels. **(High priority)**

- A. The policy would be finalized and implemented within two academic years.



B. The implementation will be a high priority in the performance evaluations of all senior academic leaders and department heads.

C. A committee focusing on the first-year action items relating to faculty would evaluate outcomes and make recommendations to senior level administrators on an annual basis.

## **Transitions Dimension Team Report**

*Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear 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.*

### **Committee Members**

William Eamon, Dean, Honors College

Jennifer Hiatt, Director, Housing and Residential Life

Matthew Hulett, Associate Director, Admissions

Bernadette Montoya, Assistant Vice-provost, Enrollment Management

Bill Quintana, Associate Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Martha Rowe, Associate Professor, Music

### **Current Situation**

Communications to Students - Several communication pieces are sent to students during the recruitment process as well as after admission both on paper and electronically. Students have many opportunities to become engaged prior to and after being admitted. Programs are offered throughout the state, and in some areas out of state giving students the opportunity to meet with NMSU faculty and staff. The Office of Student Financial Aid is becoming more engaged in the recruitment process giving more specific information to prospective students about financial aid opportunities. Many different departments (or colleges) continue to send information to students directly. An admitted student will receive individual mailings from each area recruiting the student. An example would be the packets of information admitted students receive from Housing and Residential Life after they are admitted. There is no control over content or style.

A comprehensive prospect management system, and communication plans are now being used to make more focused, more applicable communication efforts with students from the early inquiry stage through enrollment.

Communication to Others

Secondary school personnel: An annual high school counselor event is held here at NMSU-Las Cruces. The day-long program invites people from all around New Mexico to come and learn about NMSU and any changes. The Office of Admissions is in contact with these high school professionals throughout the year. Representatives from the Office of Admissions interact with these same professionals during campus visits.

Families of first-year students: Families of prospective students receive information from some departments (Housing and Residential Life, Honors College and College of Engineering are some examples) but there appears to be a lack of publications written solely in Spanish. In a survey conducted by Housing and Residential Life at Fall Move-in, families noted this. One family commented that a comprehensive publication in Spanish would help their transition. We are not fully aware of how the parents perceive our information as no survey has been done.

Other support networks: With a high percentage of first generation students and students from non-traditional family/home environments, we do not send information out to non-parents (i.e. grandparents, foster parents, etc.).

### Establishing Connections

The following information was derived from the FoE Student and Faculty Surveys –

Overall, students felt that NMSU does a good job at communicating basic information about academic opportunities, academic expectations, opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities, and information about tuition, living costs, and financial aid. Students also felt that NMSU was a welcoming place, and had an especially favorable impression of Aggie Welcome Week. They think that NMSU's teachers are helpful and caring.

Freshmen students also felt that the university did a good job connecting them with other first-year students. However, they did not feel that the university effectively connected them with upper-class students and faculty. The figures were especially alarming with respect to faculty connections: only 29% of students felt that the university connected them with faculty outside of class, an especially depressing figure for a university that prides itself on faculty accessibility. (On the other hand, students did feel that faculty themselves were helpful in explaining academic expectations and requirements and in communicating the importance of a college education.)

Nor, evidently, does NMSU do a very good job at communicating the importance of participation in extracurricular activities. Less than half of students felt that they were encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities or were provided with opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.

One area that clearly needs to be addressed is involving the parents and family in the college experience. When asked to what degree NMSU has "helped your family feel a

part of your college experience," only 27% of students responded 'high/very high,' while 42% responded 'slight/not at all.'

Another troubling indicator from the surveys is the apparently strong sentiment among faculty members that the administration does a poor job of supporting faculty who are committed to the first-year experience, and that the reward structure does not encourage faculty involvement in the first year.

Finally, students and faculty alike report that large class sizes tend to alienate students and prevent them from making connections with faculty.

### Co-curricular Programs

Aggie Welcome Week, the fall orientation program, appears to be the only coordinated, university-wide program specifically aimed at "establishing connections" among freshmen at NMSU. However, while the orientation program helps students establish connections with other freshmen, with upper division students, and with student support networks, it does not include mechanisms specifically aimed at helping students establish connections with faculty and has little faculty involvement. (The only exception is the Honors College's "Reading in Common" Program, a summer reading program that places freshmen in faculty and student-led discussion groups during orientation week).

In addition to Aggie Welcome Week, a number of college and student support programs help to establish connections, some quite effectively.

With regard to establishing connections with faculty, advising procedures appear to be the main formal structures currently in place. These vary widely from college to college and from department to department. For most freshmen, contact with faculty through advising probably means a brief meeting with a faculty member on staff at an advising center. Such meetings are designed mainly to select appropriate courses and it is doubtful that meaningful connections are established in any other area.

Students establish connections with other students through a variety of mechanisms, some formal and other informal. For example, many departments have academic clubs and societies that admit freshmen. Others host social events (e.g., the Honors College has an annual picnic lunch for all Crimson Scholars, to which freshman Crimson Scholars are invited). Several departments have programs that seek to promote contact with upper-level students (e.g., Chemistry's Supplementary Instruction Program brings upper-level students into a direct mentoring relationship with first-year students). Departments in the College of Engineering have open study lounges that provide space for communal studying and for the formation of peer study groups.

### Academic Programs

UNIV 150 (Freshman Year Experience) - In Fall 2005, 27 sections enrolled 655 students, including three Arts & Sciences Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS), a section for

ENLACE students, and another for College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) students. UNIV 150 is specifically designed "to support students' transition to the university environment." One of the goals of UNIV 150 is specifically designed "to establish a mentor relationship with a faculty or staff member on campus." Although these seminars do an excellent job of helping establish connections among students, unfortunately very few are taught by faculty. Hence, it does not appear that the Freshman Year Experience (FYE) seminar as currently structured has been very successful in connecting freshmen with faculty. Many students expressed disappointment with the FYE courses, stating that they lacked interest and challenge. One of the most surprising results of the faculty surveys was that many faculty feel the courses are doing a good job and that they should be made mandatory for all freshmen, a somewhat puzzling response given that faculty have so little experience with or knowledge of the courses.

The TRiO Upward Bound Program and the Summer Bridge Program - These provide a summer school transition experience to targeted students.

College of Arts and Sciences' Freshmen Interest Groups (FIG) - This program brings together groups of 25 students taking the same set of classes to provide for increased bonding and social contacts, as well as providing increased access to academic support services.

Crimson Scholar Residential Mentors Program - Developed by the Honors College, this places upper-class mentors in the Living and Learning Communities. The program will be doubled in size beginning next year, incorporating several new Living and Learning Communities (in addition to the Honors Living and Learning Community). In the Honors residence hall, upper-class mentors are assigned to teams of freshmen cohorts that continue throughout the freshman year. This program has proven to be highly successful in establishing contacts with upper-division students.

Ethnic Studies Programs - Chicano Programs, Black Studies, and American Indian Programs offer freshmen students support and opportunities to interact with students and faculty. More information is needed about the special learning requirements of these groups.

#### Academic Advising

College of Arts and Sciences – First-year students are advised by the College's Advising Center. There are exceptions, though, for first-year students. The following departments advise their own students: Chemistry, Communication Studies, Mathematics, Music, Physics and Theatre. The Advising Center does provide advising information and oversees advising on those departments. Students who become sophomores become the responsibility of the department they choose.

College of Business - There is mandatory advising for freshmen with advising being primarily the responsibility of the College Advising Center. In the last couple of years, the College has encouraged academic departments to make contact with students who

have identified a major within Business, but the College has not asked the departments to deal with advising in any formal way. On the College's advising web site (<http://business.nmsu.edu/academics/advising>), there is a generic checklist of required courses for all Business students along with checklists and sample schedules for each major.

College of Health and Social Services - This College has only three majors at the undergraduate level: Nursing, Social Work, and Community Health Education (Health Science). All incoming freshmen are advised by professional advisors for at least two years and are classified as pre-majors. Pre-nursing students compete for seats in the Nursing Program after two years. If accepted, they will then be "advised" by Nursing faculty until graduation. Social Work and Community Health also have admission processes to admit students into the "major," but once they have changed from the "pre" status to the major, they are still advised by professional advisors. Advising is mandatory for first-year students; however, they are not consistent about placing academic holds which would bar students from registration until advised. Information can be accessed through the College's web site ([http://www.nmsu.edu/~hlthsci/adv\\_index.html](http://www.nmsu.edu/~hlthsci/adv_index.html)). Informational letters and degree plans are accessible for Nursing and for Community Health. Social Work has only the "core" curriculum posted. The advising page explains the advising process for all incoming students.

College of Engineering - Students are advised by their departments. Some departments require advising each semester, some do not. Undeclared students are advised by the associate dean. There is no common core of classes that all engineering majors take, other than ENGL 111.

The Center for Learning Assistance has no formal role with regard to academic advising at NMSU but does provide a variety of support functions designed to communicate to students the importance of the role of their advisor in their overall academic success. Some examples of this support include:

Addressing the importance of developing a relationship with your adviser in sections of UNIV 150 (The Freshman Year Experience). Debbie Hands has developed a Catalog Quiz and provides a presentation on academic policies for students in UNIV 150.

Assisting individual students with questions and concerns regarding courses by regularly referring students to their adviser or advising center.

Serving as volunteer advisers for unclassified students in the College of Arts & Sciences during new student and peak registration periods.

Communicating new and updated information concerning UNIV course offerings to advisers via their listserv: [advisers@nmsu.edu](mailto:advisers@nmsu.edu).

Attend Advisers Monthly Meeting as needed to convey information regarding UNIV courses.

## Areas of Concern

The prospect management system (MATRIX) is not currently being used by all colleges and departments, so communication is somewhat sporadic. Communication plans are not yet complete, which adds to the challenge. It appears as if one clearinghouse of communication is needed where individual departments or colleges would go through prior to sending mailings. Up until this point, no single office or department is perceived as such. Nationally, students prefer to be communicated with electronically, yet we have not started to do this. Many of our processes require students to either communicate with us in person or by sending in paperwork.

Communication with secondary school personnel is through many different avenues. Some colleges speak with these professionals directly regarding changes and individual students. It appears that some high school professionals have more and/or better communication with NMSU faculty and staff than with others. A comprehensive perception survey of these high school professionals might yield some areas of improvement. It appears we need to reach some high school professionals in new and different ways. A more comprehensive, unified approach might have a positive impact.

The university does not have a formal, coordinated method or structure specifically designed to enable students to establish connections with faculty, other students, and student support services. It does not even appear that the university has ever really (until this year) "taken stock" and closely examined what programs are in place and what they are aimed at doing. Current programs, some of which may be very effective, are scattered among the various colleges and student support units. There appears to have been little effort to coordinate them (with the important exceptions of Aggie Welcome Week and the collaborative arrangement between the College of Arts and Sciences and the Center for Learning Assistance, which might be a useful model for other colleges). Indeed, it isn't even clear that "establishing connections" was in fact ever an important consideration in the development of our current programs.

We also see a need for changes in the UNIV 150 courses. Few are currently taught by regular faculty; all focus on the broad and somewhat vague subject "the freshman year." We recommend that, without eliminating the current FYE course, a new series of freshmen seminars, developed and taught by faculty, be created. Faculty should be provided incentives to develop and teach 1-credit seminars specifically for freshmen on real academic subjects.

The expansion of the Crimson Scholar Residential Mentoring Program (currently in the Honors College) to include Living and Learning Communities in other colleges should provide a more effective means for establishing connections among freshmen students, faculty, and upper-class students. However, the programs will be effective only as long as the colleges themselves take an active role in the new living and learning communities.

There is no central administration of advising. Each college is responsible for advising their own students, and there is no way to verify if students from the colleges have been

properly advised. A more centralized approach to advising, or at least an improvement in communication between colleges, will benefit the students greatly.

### **Summary of Evidence**

This area needs more research. A comprehensive survey of high school professionals, families and non-family support networks is necessary. With Banner Matrix, we will be better able to track communication with our students (and their support networks) but we still will not be able to control the quality. As one staff member from Admissions stated "we continue to recruit the recruited." If we could utilize software in a more effective manner, we may then be better suited to recruit students on the bubble of the decision-making cycle.

In addition to student and faculty surveys, evidence was collected from associate deans and support service personnel regarding their particular units' activities in the area. Information and data from the CPI was also used.

**Recommended Grade: C-**

### **Recommended Action Items**

Implement prospect management software for centralized communication. (High priority)

All entities recruiting students would need to buy-in for this to be successful. Currently, we have no way of ascertaining what materials prospective students have received. This software would help.

Web management. (High priority)

Similar to the overall management of our communications, our web presence needs more oversight. Many of our prospective students receive erroneous information.

Benchmark the level of satisfaction of the families of our first-year students. (High priority)

Use a national surveying tool to measure the satisfaction of the families of our first-year students. Without this information, we are left to make assumptions.

Standardization of communication. (High priority)

Offer our communications in paper and via the web, in Spanish. Maximize the use of our web presence, and ensure quality of all recruiting pages.

Involve the family in the College Experience. (High priority)



NMSU does not do a good job at involving parents and the family in the college experience. When asked to what degree has NMSU "helped your family feel a part of your college experience," only 27% of students in the survey responded 'high/very high,' while 42% responded 'slight/not at all.' We propose a pilot program to create a Parent's Weekend (or Family Weekend) during the first semester of the freshman year when parents and families of students are invited to spend the weekend on campus. The event should be coordinated at a time when a full menu of events, including concerts, athletic events, etc., can be scheduled.

#### Involve the Faculty in the Freshman Orientation. (High priority)

Our current freshmen orientation program, Aggie Welcome Week, was begun last year and was highly praised by students. The program does a good job of introducing students to the campus and connecting them to other students. However, there is little faculty involvement in the program. First-year students report the university provides little opportunity for establishing connections with the faculty outside the classroom. Therefore, we recommend the university explore ways to involve the faculty more in the orientation process. One way might be a summer reading program that would ask students to read a selected novel or other book and assign them to discussion groups led by faculty. Many universities have such programs and faculty are involved both in the selection of the assigned book, and in leading discussion groups. NMSU's Honors College also has a "Reading in Common" program that does this. Qualified upper-division students (such as Crimson Scholars) might also be recruited as volunteers to guide discussion groups. This might help address concerns that students felt they were offered few opportunities to make connections with upper-division students.

#### Rethinking the Freshman Seminar. (High priority)

The current Freshman Year Experience (FYE) seminar has not been very successful at enlisting faculty participation. Hence, one of the prime opportunities for connecting freshmen with faculty is lost. We recommend that, without eliminating the current FYE course, a new series of freshmen seminars be developed on a pilot basis. These would be proposed and taught by faculty, perhaps as 1-credit seminars on specific themes. Such seminars would not only help establish connections between freshmen students, but would also introduce students to the wide range of subjects that are possible for exploration during their college career. Several universities, including the University of Minnesota and UCLA, have similar programs that might serve as models. For such a program to be successful, of course, an appropriate faculty incentive system would also have to be developed. A model proposal for such a seminar series for NMSU, "Journeys of Discovery," is included in the evidence library.

#### Common Advising. (High priority)

The subcommittee recommends that the university consider developing a centralized advising system for freshmen. During advising, first-year students should be advised not only on courses needed to complete their majors, but on career exploration, the ideals of

the university, and the purposes of General Education. In other words, we advocate a more holistic approach to advising first-year students.

#### Incorporate Research Into the Undergraduate Experience. (High priority)

Recent research shows that providing first and second year students with mentored research opportunities can have a dramatic impact upon student success and retention. Students who engage in research projects with a faculty mentor are retained at a much higher rate than other students. For example, an NSF-sponsored study of the University of Michigan's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Office (UROP) showed the academic success and retention of students of color was improved dramatically through undergraduate research. The UROP at Michigan and other universities concentrate particularly upon providing research opportunities for first- and second-year students, because those programs have the most noticeable impact upon student success and retention.

In view of these findings (repeated in many studies), we propose that the university provide opportunities for undergraduate research by creating a UROP program similar to those established at many of our peer institutions. This program might be tied to the research clusters but it should provide research opportunities in all fields. However the program is structured, we need to capitalize on our research enterprise and make it count in the undergraduate's learning experience. Particularly for those students who need employment to stay in school, we need to provide on-campus employment opportunities that reinforce what students are studying rather than jobs in off-campus settings that distract their attention.

According to the University of Michigan study, "Programs like UROP enable faculty to make strong connections between their research and undergraduate teaching and underscore the fact that undergraduate student success and satisfaction at research universities need not be incongruous."

(<http://www.undergraduate.research.umich.edu/homeassessUROP.html>) We think that a comprehensive UROP program at NMSU could be a critical part of our efforts to establish better connections between faculty and first-year students.

## **All Students Dimension Team Report**

*Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students.*

### **Committee Leaders**

Lori McKee, Director, Student/Employee Health Centers

James Maupin, Academic Department Head, Criminal Justice

### **Committee Members**

Troy Franklin, Assistant Director, Athletics

Diana Keener, Student, Crimson Scholar

Kristy Mason, Program Coordinator, Agriculture & Home Economics

Valerie Pickett, Director, Student Marketing & Transitions

David Smith, Associate Professor, Chemistry/Biochemistry

### **Current Situation**

Identified Subpopulations:

1. Gender
2. First Generation
3. Disabilities (Learning/Physical)
4. Declared/Undeclared Student
5. Foreign
6. Ethnic Programs (Chicano, Black, American Indian)
7. Military/ROTC
8. Greeks

9. On-Campus Residents
10. Intercollegiate Athletes
11. Non-traditional
12. Commuter Students
13. Out-of-State
14. Las Cruces and Doña Ana (Dual Enrolled)
15. Transfer
16. Honors

1. Gender - There does not appear to be any active recruitment initiative targeted at gender specific students. Freshman cohort enrollments indicate that women (54%) enroll at a higher percentage than men (46%). Six questions from the FoE Student Survey associated with the All Student Dimension found that in the areas of academic, social/personal, and safety, 300 males or 38% of the respondents indicated a mean of 3.89, and 481 females or 62% of the respondents indicated a mean of 3.77 of feelings of safety, respect, freedom of expression, belonging, and academic/social needs being met. The residence halls are co-ed living, but each floor/section/patio is segregated by gender. Activities coordinated in the residence hall may be directed at an identified gender. Safety programs are often coordinated with the assistance of the NMSU Police Department and can be targeted at a specific gender, i.e. female self-protection, rape, abuse, etc. Intramural activities are available for each specific gender along with co-ed activities. The Student Counseling and Development Center has bi-lingual, male and female counselors and provide specialized groups for both genders. The Student Health Center has bi-lingual, male and female health care providers as well as a specialized women's health practitioner. Academic classes are open to all students but have specializations such as Women's Studies. Greek fraternities and sororities can be either gender specific or co-ed. The Stonewall Coalition Office, focusing on issues of the gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, and questioning student, is available for all students. Over 250 student organizations registered with Campus Activities have opportunities for all students.

2. First-generation - There is not a specific plan to target the recruitment of all first generation students. CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) is one organized program that has an active recruiter for their program. Enrollment in this program is limited by grant funding and eligibility requirements. The six All Student Dimension questions on the FoE Student Survey found that in the areas of academic, social/personal, and safety, 205 first generation students (highest education level of either parent= high school or less) or 26% of the total 794 respondents, indicated a mean of 3.85 for feelings

of safety, respect, freedom of expression, belonging, and academic/social needs being met.

3. Students with Disabilities - Approximately 75 freshmen students or 3.75% of the freshman cohort, are registered with SSD. The Office has a comprehensive web page that gives guidance to new and current students on obtaining disability services, and a Coordinator is available to assist the student in completing forms necessary for accommodations. Registered students have access to free tutoring through the Center for Learning Assistance. Assistive technology is provided by the University to meet the accommodation requirements. The Office also has a private testing area if instructors cannot make accommodations for the student. Personal items are provided by the student (glasses, wheelchairs, etc). ADA modifications have been in residence life to accommodate students with physical disabilities. Each residence hall has designated space. The new freshman residence hall (to open for Fall 2006) will meet the most recent ADA requirements. The university has a Disability Advisory Board that meets regularly on ADA issues.

4. Declared/Undeclared Students - Degree seeking first-time freshmen (based on IRPOA statistics) enroll in the various colleges at approximately the following rates: Agriculture & Home Economics - 9%, Arts & Sciences - 48%, Business - 14%, Education - 10%, Engineering - 13%, Health & Social Services - 6%. A majority of undeclared students are housed in the College of Arts and Sciences, although undeclared students may align with any college. Each college, and many academic departments, offers an introductory gateway course that serves to introduce the student to the Major and effectively serves the function of socialization into the discipline. Undeclared students are often guided to UNIV150 (Freshman Year Experience) which is a generalized introductory course to collegiate academic, social, personal, and safety needs. Declared students are advised within their designated colleges or departments (depends on the major), while undeclared students are usually advised by college advising centers.

5. Foreign (International) Students – These students account for approximately 1% of the entering cohort. Foreign student freshmen are not distinctly recruited by International Programs (CIP). Although CIP recruits for all disciplines, the majority of international students arrive as graduate or post-graduate students. All students are required to be tested in English skills and are placed into an ESL course based on their skill and performance. These classes are designed specifically for improving the speaking and writing English skills for the foreign students. For visa clearance, students must show proof of eligibility to pay for educational, living, and other expenses. Foreign students are only allowed to work in on-campus jobs. They receive a social security number after obtaining employment. Most foreign students prefer to live where they can prepare their own meals. The food choices in the cafeteria are not familiar to many of them, and there may be restrictions on their diet based on their religious affiliations. Most of these students come to campus without a connection to another person. No mentoring program has been established for these students; they tend to find community within the student groups organized through CIP. Students from the same countries or from similar cultures tend to group together. Generally, foreign students have a very low drop/stop out rate.

They cannot enroll in the University as undecided; they must declare a major upon admission. CIP serves as the students' main University contact. This office monitors grades, credit completion, waivers, job status, etc. Federal regulations require CIP to complete a variety of reports for students on visa status.

6. Ethnic Programs – The three ethnic programs are housed in the same building with separate offices for Chicano, Black, and American Indian Programs. Each program annually serves the following percentages of freshmen: American Indian-3.5%; Black-3.5%; Chicano- 49%. Each program has its own defined strategies for recruitment, enrollment, and retention. These include: mentoring, participation in recruitment activities, such as orientation, visitors days, high school visits, and workshops, and student ambassadors. All programs engage in marketing activities prior to freshmen enrollment which include pre- orientation letters, recruiting visits, special orientations and use of peer advisors. Chicano Programs has an EXITO Coordinator whose primary focus in on Hispanic freshmen with an composite ACT score of 17 or below. Every student in this program is paired with a faculty or professional staff mentor. All programs have active e-mail listservs to communicate with their specific populations. Chicano Programs also provides an advocacy service to any student who requests help on issues related to financial aid, scholarships, dealing with professors, balancing school, work, and family, etc. Black Programs services include the Black student organization, tutoring, personal and academic counseling, workshops, rap sessions, a typing service, resume design, Black Studies Library, and assistance in obtaining work.

7. Military/ROTC Programs – The two military programs on campus are well organized and have a strong network of local, state, and national support. Each semester approximately 40 or 2% of the freshmen population participate in one of these programs. These students often are recruited in high school through similar participation in ROTC programs. The military programs have their own dedicated college recruiter who works with the local military recruiters. Scholarships are available to cover four years of education or less depending on when the student contracts with the organization. The commitments to the military post-education range from three to eight years and can be in active, reserve or guard capacities. Participation in the program includes academic military science classes, physical fitness, leadership, and soldiering skills. The classes meet twice a week with a lab, and fitness is conducted three times a week. The military programs have a well established mentoring program which includes upper classmen as well as faculty, staff, and recruiting personnel. Each program offers its own version of academic counseling to complement the advising done by the student's chosen degree field. This includes the use of the STAR report, degree plans/auditing, and transcript/grade monitoring. The program provides the student with financial support once they have contracted, and opportunities for advancement and placement as an officer. Role modeling is very useful in this program in that many of the faculty and recruiters are career military personnel who themselves have used the education, leadership, officer training and other benefits provided by the service.

8. Greek Affairs - Approximately 200 or 10% of freshman students are members in a fraternity or sorority. Greek Life has a comprehensive web page designed to answer

questions about the Greek community for both parents and potential members. The Greek community and the individual chapters strive for excellence in academics as well as chapter and community involvement. Through various groups and programs, academics and social and safety needs are addressed. The five-year average for first-year retention rates and the six-year graduation rates are higher for Greek members. The most recent entering fall to following fall retention rate for Greek freshmen is 82.4% compared to 71% for first-time, full-time freshmen. Greek students graduated from NMSU within 6 years at a rate of 52.6% compared to the non-Greeks' rate of 42.4%.

9. On-campus Residents - Approximately 48-52% of freshmen live in on-campus housing. Currently, NMSU does not have a requirement for students to live on campus. It is strongly encouraged for first-time freshmen to live on campus in order to provide them with academic assistance, and to help the student get involved in campus life. The FoE student survey revealed that 48% of the respondents live in the campus residence halls. There are numerous on campus resident centers. Garcia Hall, Monagle Hall and the New Freshman dorm, which is currently under construction, are for first-time students. Various programs and facilities have been developed to help meet academic, social and safety needs. Living -Learning Communities have been developed to assist freshmen in their first year of college.

La Vista Learning Lounge is an area designed for students to study, hang-out and receive free tutoring. Another program places a Resident Assistant with residents in the dorms to help them through their semester.

10. Intercollegiate Athletes - NMSU participates in 14 organized sports. Approximately 100 or 5% of the entering freshmen come to the university with an athletic scholarship or join a sport in a walk-on capacity. Intercollegiate athletics is strictly guided by NCAA rules and regulations that cover the period from recruiting a student athlete through graduation. This governance establishes codes of conduct, and academic and eligibility requirements; all comprised in a Student/Athlete Handbook that is revised annually. The Athletic Program has resources and staffing to meet the varied needs of the student athlete which include: academic, mentoring, advising, tutoring, life skills, etc.

11. Non-traditional Students – These are defined as students who have had a break in their education, or attend the university through nontraditional ways. This includes older students attending college for the first time after raising families or because of career changes, home-schooled students, GED recipients and transfer students. As a result of this very broad definition it is difficult to determine exactly how many of these students are coming in every year. No formal recruitment plan exists in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to attract these students. For non-traditional students interested in distance education, the College of Extended Learning offers on-line degrees and local weekend courses. The College of Extended Learning does provide guidance for students enrolled in distance education courses. There are various organizations and departments that cater to the needs of non-traditional students. Non-traditional students have also founded a student organization (Non Traditional Student organization). Family housing is another amenity that allows for non traditional students to live on campus.



12. Commuter Students - There are various types of commuting students, including students who live locally off campus in their own homes/apartment, students who live with their parents locally, or in neighboring areas such as Anthony or El Paso. There are no specific data on exactly how many students fall into this category. Any student who is not living on campus can be considered to be a commuter student; however, the focus is on students who travel significant distances in order to attend class. There is a residence program that allows out-of-town commuters to arrange for housing during the week in order to lessen the amount of travel.

13. Out-of-State Students – In Fall 2005, there were 3,292 out-of-state students attending NMSU. Of this, 1,350 were from states other than Texas. No information was found regarding substantial outreach efforts for students outside of New Mexico and Texas. Likewise, once students are enrolled there are no specific efforts to address this subpopulation.

14. Las Cruces and Doña (Dual Enrolled) - There is a significant number of NMSU Las Cruces students enrolled in developmental math and English classes, and numerous other lower division courses at DACC, and a large number of DACC students enrolled at courses on the Las Cruces campus. Students can enroll at either or both campuses, and over 4,000 students do so every semester. There does not appear to be any formal plan for providing information to NMSU students enrolled at both NMSU Las Cruces and Doña Ana. For students enrolled through the University Transition Program at DACC, an extensive orientation program is held by the DABCC

Academic Advising Center. NMSU students enrolled in DACC classes receive information about these classes from either staff or faculty advisors.

15. Transfer Students - NMSU enrolls a diverse population of transfer students each semester. Students may be transfers from another New Mexico college or university, or from another state.

16. Honor Students - The Honors College was established in Fall 2004. The College provides eligible undergraduate students with opportunities to enrich their academic programs. Eligibility requirements for freshmen are an ACT Score of 26 or an ACT of 24 and a 3.75 high school GPA. The College offers a freshman honors dorm with Crimson Scholar residential mentors. This facility provides a safe and supportive environment for honors students in which they can establish and develop quality relationships with their academic peers in an otherwise diverse community. The Honors College has its own building and is open to students with a variety of dedicated spaces for their use both academically and socially. The College does not offer a degree, but supplements the degrees offered by the university's six academic colleges by awarding various levels of honors distinction- core honors, university honors, and distinction in university honors, to students who complete the prescribed honors track.

Academic Needs



1. Gender - There are no first-year gender specific programs or needs appraisals that are specific to gender. Emphasis is needed in the area of STEM disciplines, especially for women. This could include opportunities for living/learning residence communities that target women in science, technology, engineering and math.
2. First-generation - Housing and Residential Life has developed two programs targeted at first-generation students. These programs are Live-in Peer Tutors and the Living/Learning Communities. The CAMP (College Assistance Migrant Program) focuses on the first generation of migrant education. The program, subsidized by grant funding, allows first-year students who meet qualifications, free housing, meal plans, health exams and mentoring. They also participate in group activities, academic classes, and a group living environment. The Upward Bound Program is designed to prepare high school students from the Dona Ana area for college. The program offers students academic, career and personal advising, tutoring, mentoring, and instruction on the college campus after school, Saturdays and during the summer. This program is federally funded. The student survey revealed that 26% of the respondents were first-generation students coming from parents who had a high school education or less. These students may have more of a need for support services since they will be experiencing college without the benefit of a parental perspective.
3. Students with Disabilities - To qualify for services, students should have documentation of a hidden (learning) disability that includes recent testing (3-5 years). In the public schools, the teachers identify the students; in college the student must declare their disability. Many students have never been advocates for themselves or for disability accommodations. The SSD Coordinator is familiar with classes and with instructors who have experience teaching accommodated students. The Coordinator is not actively involved in advising, but is often engaged when problems with course schedules, testing, instructors, etc. arise. The Coordinator has no way of monitoring students' progress or grades to provide interventions for success.
4. Undeclared Students - These students typically have a greater advising need since they are in an undecided position. They may remain in this transitional state into their upper class semesters which impact their future financial aid, retention, and graduation rates. These students often have difficulties in gateway courses and do not have a vested advisor to mentor them toward a degree plan or career selection.
5. Foreign Students – The international students who come to NMSU as undergraduates are usually well prepared academically. Often, the most difficult area is English; such course work is completed as soon as possible after they enroll. There is no organized mentoring program, so new students often can be disoriented with the culture, surroundings, customs, etc., until they become connected in some fashion.
6. Ethnic Programs - Students involved with these programs typically arrive at the university with the same types of academic needs as all entering freshmen. These include: financial aid, preparation or lack of, for college courses, social transitions, and the need for sound advising. Program studies show that students who participate in the organized

ethnic programs tend to show improvement in grade point averages and retention rates. The programs monitor the GPAs of participating students. The student survey revealed that 54.3% of American Indians, 63.7% of Hispanics, and 70% of Blacks felt their academic needs were being met by the university. There are scholarship opportunities that directly target each of the ethnic groups. Academic support needs are referred to the Center for Learning Assistance.

7. Military/ROTC - These students have a minimum GPA requirement of 2.0 for non-contracted and 2.5 for scholarship recipients. Grade monitoring, advising, and mentoring are a major component of the program. The military recruiter serves as an adjunct advisor to the students outside their college or department.

8. Greek Students - Each fraternity and sorority has academic goals that have been set for their chapter. Each chapter has a chosen grade point average that each of its members must maintain in order to stay active. Academic assistance is offered through study hall areas, peer tutoring, and study sessions. Some chapters monitor academic progress with grade checks mid semester.

9. On-Campus Residents – Living/Learning Communities have been formed for first-year students. A student living in one of these communities is placed with other students who share common academic interests. These members experience greater academic support, which increases academic success.

Students can provide each other with peer-tutoring as well as other types of support. Freshmen are given a survey when they first move in to determine various aspects of student life such as how many hours a week they plan to study, if they plan to get involved with extra-curricular activities, and how many credit hours they are taking. At the end of the year a benchmarking analysis is performed.

10. Intercollegiate Athletes - The mission of the Athletics Academic Program (AAP) is to teach student-athletes to take personal responsibility for their role in balancing the time demands as well as the physical and mental expectations within their academic and athletic worlds. The AAP Staff understand that participating in NCAA Division I Athletics presents additional challenges for student-athletes. The Aggie Academic Center provides student-athletes with an environment that promotes respect and integrity for academic honesty and success. The NMSU AAP Staff are committed to coordinating and implementing a variety of support systems to encourage the academic success of student-athletes as they pursue their college degrees and athletic goals. The AAP offers several academic services to all student-athletes including expert tutoring, mentoring, and academic support available for all levels of course work. All services through the AAP emphasize the importance of education and guide student-athletes to develop the skills necessary to become independent and successful learners.

Additional services for the student athlete include:

Monitoring the Student-Athlete in Pre-Advising - Academic Advisors in the AAP work in cooperation with advisors in the various academic colleges to ensure degree progress, practice times, and travel schedules are addressed in the student-athlete's schedule of courses each semester. Pre-advising services are required for all freshmen during their first year, all first and second semester transfer students, all students who have not declared a major or who are interested in changing majors, all students with less than a 2.5 cumulative GPA, and all students identified as high-risk.

Academic Reports - A variety of academic reports such as midterm academic progress reports, eligibility monitoring reports, study lab reports, and tutor/mentor reports are sent to Head Coaches and/or Academic Liaisons regularly throughout each semester.

Weekly Conferences - Weekly meetings are established with Head Coaches/Academic Liaisons in each sport and the AAP Coordinator to discuss academic areas of concern.

Laptop Computers - These are available for student-athletes to use during team travel. There are rules for the technology usage.

Aggie Academic Center - The Center provides an environment conducive to study for all student-athletes, and includes an Internet Lab, Writing Lab, Learning Labs for individual or group study and tutor/mentor meetings, and a classroom for team study and/or presentations. In most cases, student-athletes are required to complete 8 hours of study each week in the Center. Study hours are required for all incoming freshmen, transfer students, and returning student-athletes with less than a 2.5 cumulative grade point average. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to sign-in and sign-out when using the Center. Student-athletes will be notified if they are required to complete study hours and they will be expected to do so until their academic status changes. All student-athletes using the Center must sign a Rules Contract acknowledging Center policies and procedures. Coaches are immediately notified when a student-athlete fails to follow the rules. Consequences for failure to follow the rules may result in the student-athlete's suspension from the Center. Coaches in each sport receive a weekly study lab report.

11. Non-traditional Students - No data were collected via the student survey on non-traditional students because too few students responded to create a sample. There are no first-year programs specific to non-traditional students. However, there are programs that offer aid to this group. Student Support Services and the Center for Learning Assistance both target non-traditional students as a group with specific challenges and needs. These two programs offer tutoring and mentoring as per the student's request. The Center for Learning Assistance offers "Project Success" workshops throughout the semester specifically for non-traditional students. No specific programming is provided during new student registrations for these students. During Aggie Welcome Week, non-traditional students are placed in groups together with a non-traditional-aged peer counselor.

12. Commuter Students - There are no first-year programs specific to commuter students.

13. Out-of-State Students - There are no first-year programs specific to out-of-state students.

14. Dual-Enrolled Students - Students in transition from Doña Ana to the Las Cruces campus or vice versa may take part in advising provided by either establishment. Specific individuals may be eligible for tutoring and other support through the TRIO programs. The only formal program designed to meet the needs of these students is the University Transition Program at DACC. It is unclear if the new "University College" concept currently being developed by NMSU will address this issue. No data is available on this group of students from the survey because no specific questions about this issue were raised. Many of these students are advised to take UNIV 150 where much of this information is covered; this is not a required course.

15. Transfer Students – All transfer students are invited to attend New Student Orientation activities held each semester. These activities are not mandatory, and no specific programming is done for these students. Information is sent to each student from the NSO office describing the transfer process, how transcripts are evaluated for credit, and whom to contact for academic advising. Based on the open-ended questions and comments on the student survey, a formal orientation program for transfer students is needed. In addition to a formal program, students commented there needed to be an easier way to obtain course information and degree requirements. On the scaled questions, only 8.3% responded that NMSU is not meeting their academic needs. The Center for Learning Assistance hosts seminars throughout the semester aimed at transfer students. These seminars include information about available resources on campus as well as tips for academic success. A formal communication plan for the first semester of enrollment for transfer students is under development for the Fall 2006 semester.

16. Honors Students - The primary focus of the Honors College is to meet the academic needs of the honors student. The College provides a wide range of courses tailored to these academic needs. Course enrollments for honors classes are capped at 30 (or less) students. This provides for an excellent academic framework and the opportunity for open class discussions. This environment fosters the student's ability to express their beliefs and opinions where they need not fear the response.

#### Social/Personal Needs

1. Gender - There are no first-year gender specific programs or needs appraisals that identify social/personal needs that are not being met.

2. First-Generation Students – The FoE Survey results indicate that social needs are being met for the first-generation student at a moderate to very high response rate of 86.2%.

3. Students with Disabilities – The SSD Office is the point of contact for students who are registered with disabilities. The Office has a bulletin area to post extracurricular

activities outside the classroom. There is no active list-serve or e-mail system for disabled students to use for notifying them of important information, activities, etc.

4. Undeclared Students - There are no first-year programs or needs appraisals that identify social/personal needs that are not being met for this group of students.

5. Foreign Students – These students generally prefer to live on campus since many come without transportation, etc. They often prefer to cook their native foods so they need facilities with kitchens. Currently, there is not a dedicated living/learning environment for foreign students, but plans have been made with Housing and Residential Life to create an I-House for international students. Most students find community through organized clubs. These clubs tend to be affiliated with the ethnicity or country of origin. Diversity is often difficult for these students when they first arrive in the U.S. FoE student survey results were not available for the foreign students as fewer than six responded.

6. Ethnic Programs - Diversity is a concern with these students as well as the need to preserve their personal cultures. There are no living/learning communities specifically for each of the ethnic programs; development of such living environments is under discussion. FoE student survey results indicate that 83.3% of American Indians, 89.9% of Hispanics, and 77.8% of Blacks feel their social needs are being met moderately to very high at the university. NMSU intends to construct a Native American Cultural Center with a proposed cost of \$6,000,000. The NACC will provide much needed space supporting NMSU efforts to recruit, retain, and educate American Indian students. Proposed programs within the Center include: Native American Studies Program, development of summer programs that focus on Native American writers and artists, Native Elders in Residence Program, and Visiting Native Scholars Program.

7. Military/ROTC - These students do not have an organized living/learning community outside their specialized military science classes. They are held to a code of conduct, UCMJ (Uniform Code of Military Justice) through their participation in the organized program. Violation of this code, based on severity, could lead to loss of benefits, contract termination, or dis-enrollment from the university and program. These students participate in a variety of community service projects as well as honorary projects.

8. Greek Students - Each chapter has a Big Brother or Big Sister program. This places an older member of the fraternity or sorority with new members. These individuals serve as mentors who help the new members learn about the organization and help them get involved with chapter events and campus or community events.

9. On-campus Residents - Resident Assistants are trained to talk to the students in their designated areas to find out how they are doing and possibly to determine what they need. There are numerous social functions for students to get involved. Socials can include floor parties or a few students getting together for dinner. Students who get involved tend to have higher retention rates. Activities and programs, along with students living and learning together contribute to students feeling connected to campus.

10. Intercollegiate Athletes - New Student-Athlete Orientation offers incoming student-athletes an opportunity to meet Athletics Department Administration and all head coaches. Mini-seminars are held to address NCAA and NMSU academic requirements and policies as well as the services offered through the Athletics Academic Program. The NCAA Champs Life Skills Program/Calendar was developed to help student-athletes take advantage of campus resources in preparation for life as productive citizens in our society. The Champs Life Skills Program is in place in over 400 NCAA institutions and is guided by five commitments: academic excellence, athletic excellence, community involvement, personal development, and career preparation. Each year, a Champs Calendar is created from a retreat with university departments. Life Skills will partner with each team making sure they incorporate valuable campus resources and departments (i.e., Counseling Center, Career Services, Health Center, WAVE, NMSU Police, ASNMSU, and other student activities and organizations). Programs are tailored to meet the needs and concerns of each athletic team. Other orientations are conducted by the compliance and Athletic Academic Support programs. Student athletes also have the opportunity to participate in living/learning communities through Housing and Residential Life.

11. Non-traditional Students - NMSU had a "Non-Traditional Student Organization" chartered through the Associated Students of NMSU for the past two years. This charter has expired. The Office of Residence Life offers specific housing for adults and families. The Counseling Office offers a group counseling program targeted at women over the age of 30.

12-13. There are no first-year programs specific to commuter or out-of-state students. Nor are there any needs appraisals that identify social/personal needs for these student groups. However, these groups are all retention risks which indicates there may be a variety of needs that they experience that if corrected, would result in higher retention.

14. Dual-Enrolled Students - Another concern for these students is the way they receive services for Services for Students with Disabilities, Counseling, etc. Students receive their primary services from the campus in which the majority of the hours are "housed." For example, a full-time NMSU student enrolled in 12 credits, 8 of which are at DACC, is required to use the support services at DACC. A full-time NMSU student enrolled in 12 credits, 4 of which are at DACC, is required to use the support services at the Las Cruces campus. In addition to support services, fees are charged differently based on the number of hours enrolled at DACC.

15. Transfer Students - Based on the open-ended questions and comments on the FoE student survey, we need to provide better information on the availability of student organizations and activities.

16. Honors Students - The Honors College, through the living/learning residential environment and the Honors building, provides an environment in which students can interact with their peers on both an academic and a social level. Honors students have



access to all the opportunities for campus involvement while also having the support of an organization specifically dedicated to their individual pursuit of honorary degrees.

### Safety Needs

1. Gender - Although 58% of females feel safe on campus, 42% feel moderately to not at all safe. Personal safety training, campus lighting, ASNMSU Escort Service and other safety initiatives require more exposure, access, and marketing to first-year freshmen.
2. First-Generation Students - The FoE student survey results indicate that safety needs are being met for the first generation student at a high to very high response rate of 70.8% and moderately of 21.3%.
3. Students with Disabilities - One safety need, of classes after dark (at night), was identified for the disabled students (low vision, blind, physical). Students can access the ASNMSU escort service to aid in the commute on campus, but students are required to arrange for the service on a nightly basis.
4. Undeclared Students – No issues for safety were identified for this specific student group.
5. Foreign Students - Since 911, foreign students of Middle Eastern origin have expressed limited concern over safety. All foreign students, before obtaining a visa, have been through federal background checks. Recent activity on campus (a bomb threat that was described as an Arab accent) has caused some foreign students to feel threatened and fearful of possible retaliation.
6. Ethnic Programs – The FoE student survey results reveal that safety isn't a major factor with ethnic students. Physical safety ratings ranged from 80.5% moderately to very high for American Indians, to 93.6% for Hispanics to 100% for Blacks.
7. Military/ROTC - Safety is a point of education in the military programs. Safety briefings are conducted in the context of classes as well as special programs. Each cadet who is contracted follows a chain of command that includes squad leaders up to battalion commanders.
8. Greeks - Fraternities and sororities have varying guidelines with regard to safety. For example, some sororities do not allow men in the rooms of their house. All students, including Greeks, can access the ASNMSU escort service for their commute on campus. Binge drinking is nationally recognized as a behavior that is seen in the Greek community. NMSU has had two recent student deaths related to binge drinking.
9. On-Campus Residents - Various security measures are taken to help ensure student safety in the dorms on campus. All students have access to the "Aggie Safe Walk Program" which is the ASNMSU escort service. If a resident loses their key or if it is stolen, the lock is changed and new keys are made. In resident halls, all exterior doors are

locked and closed for the security of those who live there. Fire drills are conducted periodically to allow residents to practice evacuation procedures. There are smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in each room.

10. Intercollegiate Athletes - Safety can be defined in several ways. Athletic trainers are available to provide proper medical assistance for preventative and rehabilitation of student athletes. Safety (bodily harm, and mental and physical protection) services are provided by AAP officials and Life Skills staff who are in contact with coaches and support service staff via e-mail and meetings. They regularly network with the student athletes. Safety resources are listed in the Student Athlete Handbook.

11-14. There does not appear to be any safety concerns nor needs specific to these subpopulations.

15. Transfer Students - Based on the FoE student survey, transfer students feel safe on campus.

16. Honors Students - There are no distinct safety needs for honor students that do not affect the student community at large.

#### Student Experiences

According to the FoE student survey questions that pertain to the All Students Dimension (Q. 39, 40, 41,42,43,44,59), most students felt that first-year students experienced individualized attention from faculty/staff; academic support outside of the classroom; opportunities for campus involvement; and an inclusive environment on campus. This view was also demonstrated in the open-ended responses to questions CT1, CT4, and CT5.

Individualized attention from faculty/staff - Question CT1 addressed the student's contact or connection with faculty/staff that has positively affected their experience. The top six answers ranked in order by most responses include: (1) Introductory English Instructor, (2) University 150 Instructor, (3) Advisor, (4) Math Instructor, (5) Residential Advisor, (6) Ethnic Programs. Numerous instructors, advisors, and staff members were mentioned by name, and there were resounding repeats of individuals whom students believed were most beneficial for individualized attention.

Academic support outside the classroom - Documentation presented in Performance Indicator 6.2 demonstrated the myriad array of academic support services available outside of the classroom. Most subpopulations of freshmen who were registered with an identified group, i.e. Athletics, Chicano Programs, etc. had access to campus-wide academic support services, specialty academic support services provided by their identified group, access to technology, mentors, advisors, and peers.

Opportunities for campus involvement - Question CT4 addressed the student's out-of-class activities that had been most beneficial to them. The top six answers ranked in order



by most responses include: (1) Intramurals/Activity Center, (2) Intercollegiate Sporting Events, (3) Greek Affiliation/Activities, (4) Residence Hall living, programming, and council involvement, (5) Religious affiliations, groups, or student organizations, and (6) Aggie Welcome Week. Numerous activities were listed in the responses. Students spoke highly of campus when they had made a connection with a person, activity, organization, living environment, or structured presentation where information was exchanged and an opportunity was presented for interpersonal communication.

Inclusive campus environment - Respondents to the FoE Student Survey, categorized by ethnicity, gender, age, living environment, etc. yielded results in the high-very high category, ranging from 57%-80% of the various subpopulations. These subpopulations felt physically safe on campus, felt respected by others, and felt like they belonged. Respondents from these subpopulations ranged from as few as 11 to 481 respondents, indicating that the majority of students responding, (more than 50%) felt that NMSU had an inclusive environment.

### **Areas of Concern**

These subpopulations were defined by the All Students Dimension Team. There is no university-recognized list of freshman subpopulations. Therefore, this list may be incomplete, and/or some subpopulations may not be recognized by the leadership of the university. Some of the subpopulations were not identified as a demographic category on the FoE Student Survey, so data from the survey could not be directly correlated with all of the student subpopulations.

Safety needs for all students, particularly in the areas of date rape, partner abuse, sexual orientation, and binge drinking, need to be addressed. Incidents are reported through Campus Police Statistics.

There is no generalized recruiting initiative targeted at all first-generation students. The targets are determined by ethnicity and income. Also, first-generation students are difficult to identify for contact purposes.

Advocacy training for students with disabilities is needed. The SSD Coordinator should be trained as an academic advisor; at least provide the SSD Coordinator access to grade monitoring during a student's first year. The cost/expense of learning disability diagnosis for students with no current testing on file needs to be addressed. There is a need for a communication plan directly to this student population. The night safety issue for students with physical disabilities is a concern.

Advising is the main area of concern for the undeclared student.

There is a need for living/learning communities for foreign students. A mentoring program would be helpful for new foreign students on campus to have a connection, either a domestic or foreign student, who has been through university processes, and can guide and mentor the student through the first-year experience.

Military students reiterate the need for strong advising at the college and department level. On occasion, students need access to emergency funding. The system is not easily accessed and methods of payback are often not in the most efficient method for the student.

Binge drinking is considered a concern for all underage students. Sororities and fraternities are in the critical spotlight more often for these behaviors. While Greeks have education programs directed at binge drinking and student choices, recent deaths at NMSU from binge drinking have been linked to Greek affiliations.

The perception of nothing to do on campus can contribute to student choices that cause harm, i.e. drinking/driving, binge drinking, sexual assault, violence, vandalism, etc. A large majority of students living in residence halls are under drinking age minors.

Because student athletes spend a large amount of their time committed to their intercollegiate sport, they are often isolated from a diverse university experience. Living/learning environments associated with their athletic status put these students with the same group in their competitive, academic, and living experiences. Mentoring programs have been utilized, but are not always effective in that student athletes tend to have very independent personalities and don't want the feeling of constantly being "watched" rather than supported or mentored.

Lack of childcare options and a dearth of distance education options have been a longstanding concern with this group. There is also a lack of connection with the NMSU community amongst this group, perhaps because many non-traditional students don't feel a part of the university.

Little to no attention has been paid to the special needs of commuter students. Like the non-traditional students, these students are likely to feel disconnected with the community and be less likely to participate in campus events. They are also less likely to participate in organizations outside of class, which is a known retention factor.

Students enrolled on the Las Cruces and Doña Ana campuses experience problems with transitioning to the Las Cruces campus which could result in low retention of these students and a lack of involvement in the university as a whole. A clear, comprehensive plan of how information is distributed to dual enrolled students about where and how they receive services, course information, etc. should be developed and made easily available to all students.

NMSU needs to develop a formal orientation process for transfer students.

The Honors College provides services specifically for students in pursuit of academic excellence and honors degrees; however, only 20% of eligible honors students actually enroll and pursue distinctions.

FoE Faculty/Staff survey results of questions related to the All Students Dimension scale indicated values lower than those perceived by the students. While the student mean was 3.82, faculty who recently taught first-year students had a mean score of 3.50 (N=213), faculty/staff with a primary or direct classroom connection with first-year students had a mean score of 3.59 (N=216), and faculty/staff who were an official academic advisor had a mean score of 3.63 (N=147). This lower ranking by faculty/staff could be a correlation of how they feel about their experience as an instructor/advisor.

Students often connected to the university through gateway courses that also serve as an orientation, first-year experience, and general education curriculum. These instructors play a significant role in the perception of individualized attention. If these courses become barriers to success (i.e. MATH 115, CHEM 111, ENGL 111) with high DWFI rates, students may become disenchanted with the educational process early in the freshmen semester, culminating in higher withdrawal and lower retention rates. The introduction of supplemental instruction opportunities for some of these gateway/barrier courses (ex: Survival Skills for CHEM 111, MATH 115) has increased success rates.

UNIV 150 is not recognized by all degree plans as an elective, yet it is recognized as the second highest course in which students receive individualized attention from faculty/staff on campus. English 111 was identified as the course in which freshmen they felt most connected to a faculty/staff member in the comments on the FoE Student Survey. This reinforces the need to collectively evaluate the gateway courses for academic success as well as the potential to a course to become a barrier.

### **Summary of Evidence**

The University does not have an established or recognized method of identifying targeted subpopulations for freshmen recruitment. Each subpopulation is recruited based on its organized function, capacity, funding, and presence on campus. Each subpopulation targets its individualized group of students and focuses on meeting the needs of that group independent of others. There is not a lot of cross collaboration between the subpopulations. When looking at the students' responses to the survey questions that measured the three performance indicators in the All Student Dimension, the overall response to the All Students scaled questions was a mean of 3.82, based on 787 responses for a response rate of 99.1%.

The evidence/data was collected by Dimension Team members through direct meetings, e-mail, available university statistics, and attached documentation. The evidence/documentation primarily used for this performance indicator were the FoE Student Survey results, including the responses to the open-ended questions, and the FoE Faculty/Staff Survey results. The student and faculty survey data added specific information when the subpopulation was a category in the analysis. Student survey comments allowed for insight into the numeric values. Most subpopulations are small when compared to the overall number of entering freshmen.

**Recommended Grade: B**

## **Recommended Action Items**

Develop common forms of experiences for all students. (High priority)

Enrollment Management has proposed that all new freshmen be required to go through a mandatory orientation program. This orientation program would be developed to be consistent with CAS recommendations for orientation activities. Specific orientation programs would be developed for adult learners and transfer students, including community college transfers students. Through the NMSU budget process for 2006-2007, EM requested \$30,000-\$142,000 to be allocated for orientation activities. If orientation is required, a fee would be built into the student fee structure so that students could use federal financial aid funds to cover the fee.

Develop additional supplemental instruction for high risk gateway courses. (High priority)

The College of Arts and Sciences has experienced dramatic success through the funding and implementation of formal supplemental instruction in "gateway" courses for the departments of Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics. Continued implementation of supplemental instruction in these courses will cost \$617,156 per academic year. We recommend the supplemental instruction program be continued in these courses, and each department with a gateway course designs a supplemental instruction component for the course, and develop an implementation strategy.

Define a specific plan for advising and degree exploration for undeclared students. (High priority)

Undeclared students make up a significant percentage of first-year students. Currently, all undeclared students are housed in Arts and Sciences where they go to the Advising Center to be advised. At the time of advising, various questions are asked to try to help determine what area the student may go into. Each semester, undeclared students return to the Advising Center to be advised by the next available person. There needs to be a specific plan for undeclared students and a recognized advising center for their support. Resources and effort need to be placed on this priority. We either need to have a model that places undeclared students with a transitional advisor until declaring a major, or we need to have a centralized advising center that can focus more on connecting with these students. The New Scholars Program would be a place that could offer this centralized advising center if the appropriate resources are made available. The New Scholars Program can offer mentoring from faculty and experienced students, intensified academic advising, and a cohort of students who are in the same classes.

Solidify the relationship between the DACC and the Las Cruces campus. (High priority)

Develop a plan to collaborate on student development, support, academic success, and future baccalaureate degree planning. Plans should include a clear definition of the status of students who are dual-enrolled to insure a seamless transition from one campus to

another. This action should be identified as a high priority for Executive Administration. Recommendation is being made that Executive Level Administration identify a task force specifically for the purpose of defining the future direction of these two institutions. Emphasis should be placed on defining the role as one institution or two institutions that operate independently. This determination should include the specific focus of dual-enrolled students, transfers, etc. The Task Force should be comprised of individuals from both sides of the affiliation. This action should be completed ASAP as the division between the two institutions is growing and causing barriers for advancement of both entities.

Develop a comprehensive communication plan for first-year students. (High priority)

Develop a communication plan that all first-year students can access, gain information, and use as a resource. Require the use of NMSU email for all university communications. Have one official (recognized) point (consistent) of communication where information could be collected to disseminate to first-year students, i.e. "First Year Office" possibly housed in Enrollment Management.

Create a common curriculum for major-specific gateway courses. (High priority)

Ensure that gateway courses in the larger majors, (i.e. Engineering, Criminal Justice, and Biological Sciences) have common information regarding issues of importance to first-year students. These issues should dovetail, as much as possible, with key curriculum contents of the UNIV 150 course.

#### Course Objectives:

Identify a core learning curriculum that will be constant in each 150 type course identified in each department for first-year students.

This common core curriculum should strive to assist first-year students in making a smoother transition to both curricular and co-curricular activities at NMSU.

Students will demonstrate mastery of the course objectives through completion of projects, self-reflection activities, class presentations, and exposure to campus resources linked to academic success and social and cultural adjustment to college.

#### Student Objectives:

Appreciate the goals, methods, and values of higher education.

Become independent, motivated, and reflective learners.

Establish a mentor relationship with a faculty or staff member on campus.

Become part of a community of fellow learners.

Become familiar with the campus resources and services available.

Enhance public speaking, critical thinking, library, and learning strategies.

Assess talents and interests in relation to career planning.

Examine and clarify roles.

Enhance understanding and awareness of diversity.

#### NOTES CONCERNING THE METHODOLOGY OF THIS ABOVE RECOMMENDATION

A number of course syllabi were examined, along with interviews from an advisor, the committee members on the NMSU Accreditation Committee, and a College Dean, related to course content of campus Freshman Intro/150 orientation-type courses.

The input gathered indicated that each college varies in the type of course content; some show consistency with a balance of curricular/co-curricular activities. However, there appeared to be no central campus-wide agreement on a common core experience that all first-year students should have in common; these were not just a variation of this model. This model should be in line with the Dimension Group on campus that has identified barriers related to student retention.

Listed below are common items that all first-year students should be exposed to in a UNIV 150-type curriculum. However, a committee should recommend which items are deemed necessary, knowing that all of these items may not be covered in a course due to departmental requirements. The UNIV 150 course offered by Chicano Programs at NMSU does a good job on the items listed in the syllabus. AGHE 111 has a good outline.

Electronic Mail & WebCT

Catering to Students with disabilities

Developing core for first-year students who are commuters

Campus organizations

Written Research Paper & Oral Presentation

Student Handbook & Planner

Campus Cultural Activities

Career Planning (can be major specific)

Faculty/Mentor Interview and meeting with mentor during semester

AMP Testing, Myers Briggs, Learning Styles

Critical Thinking (Expose/prepare students for intellectual and scholarly inquiry, and scientific handlers of knowledge, APA style, MLA, Etc)

Time Management

Note-taking and difference in studying in college vs. high school (lectures, reading load, how to study, reading to remember, midterm prep, brain storming, prep for tests)

Team Building and Group Study

## **Diversity Dimension Team Report**

*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.*

### **Committee Leaders**

Jim Peach, Professor, Economics & International Business

Cris Rodriguez, Assistant Director, Residential Communities

### **Committee Members**

Lisa Bond-Maupin, Associate Professor, Women Studies

Lisa Dalton, Associate Professor, Social Work

Don Pepion, Director, American Indian Program

Robert Smits, Assistant Professor, Mathematics

Judy Bosland, Director, Enrollment Planning

### **Current Situation**

Diverse Ideas - Within the curriculum, NMSU offers several courses that expose students to diverse ideas and world views. One of the stated purposes for the general education course requirements at NMSU is to "provide a historical consciousness, including an understanding of one's own heritage as well as respect for other peoples and cultures." (NMSU Undergraduate Catalog, 2005-06, page 14). Some of the freshman general education courses that would include diversity issues are ANTH 125G - Introduction to World Cultures, W S 202G - Representing Women, W S 201G - Introduction to Women's Studies, two courses in History that focus on East Asia, and HIST 221G - Introduction to Islamic Civilization. Several upper level courses are offered under the "Viewing A Wider World" component of general education which requires students to complete six credits of 300-400 level courses that address that perspective. Offered courses include Chicano, Latino, Women, American Indian, and world literature, religious studies, issues in rural America, and multicultural issues in society, to name just a few. In addition to general education courses, several departments including Government, History, Sociology, Women's Studies, and Languages & Linguistics offer a variety of courses across a spectrum of issues pertaining to diversity and world views. Students may elect to earn a



supplementary major in Chicano Studies, Latin American Studies, or Women's Studies. Additionally, three of the five gateway courses for first-year students include components that discuss diversity issues. These courses include English 111- Rhetoric & Composition, Sociology 101G - Introductory Sociology, and University 150 - The Freshman Year Experience.

Within the co-curricular experience, the Center for International Programs oversees the Office of Study Abroad whose purpose is to increase international educational opportunities for NMSU students, and offers exchange to over 40 countries. Each of the under-represented minority ethnic groups has an office on campus to support and guide ethnic minority students. These include Chicano Programs, the American Indian Program, and the Black Program. Additionally, a permanent location for the GLBTQ has been established.

No information was found relating to initiatives integrated across the curriculum and the co-curriculum. Although Service Learning is practiced on campus to bring students from the classroom to the community, no evidence was found that 1) this was consistently available to first-year students, and 2) that it was focused on, or related to, improving the diversity experience for students.

The effect of the curricula and co-curricular on students can be assessed by reviewing the quantitative data in the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Student Survey that relate to the Diversity Dimension. The mean response from students for three of the four questions about diversity (world cultures, political perspectives, and social class) in the classroom was "moderate." Exposure to world religions had the lowest mean score (2.73). Just under half (43%) of students indicated their exposure to world religions in courses to be either slight or non-existent. Faculty and staff believed NMSU provides, to a moderate degree (43%), an appropriate amount of attention to diverse ideas and world views in the curriculum.

With regard to the co-curricula, students indicated their out-of-class experiences exposed them to the diversity issues addressed in the survey to no greater extent than did their classroom experiences. Students, in general, were mixed in their opinions of their exposure to diversity issues with approximately one-third of respondents in each of the "not at all/slight," moderate," and "high/very high" response categories. This pattern was consistent across ethnic and gender lines. Student survey comments indicated students participated in the various ethnic programs, and benefited from those programs. However, there was no evidence to indicate these programs were effective in promoting diversity issues across ethnic lines.

Faculty and staff were slightly more positive than students when asked about the degree to which appropriate attention at the institution level is paid to diverse ideas and world views. The majority (79%) of the faculty and staff responding to questions 021 and 022 indicated a moderate, high, or very high level of attention to diverse ideas. However, nearly half (43% and 41%, respectively) selected "moderate."

Faculty and staff qualitative data do not include questions specifically focused on diverse ideas or on curricula and co-curricula in general. Of the responses related to the University's strengths in the first-year experience (T1), 26 responses specifically mentioned attention to diversity as among the existing top three strengths. These faculty and staff identified the following existing strengths: (1) student services focused on cultural diversity ("ethnic programs"), (2) a great deal of interaction in class with a diverse student body, (3) high levels of publicity about speakers on campus who address issues of diversity, (4) an institutional commitment to acceptance of diversity and mutual respect, (5) opportunities to interact with students from common backgrounds or life experiences, (6) diversity among faculty, (7) faculty and staff recognition of diversity in the student body, (8) diversity in course offerings, and (9) diversity in student organizations.

Interactions - NMSU has been recognized as a Hispanic-serving institution. At the undergraduate level, there are almost an equal number of Hispanic students and White/Other students. When the number of Black, American Indian and Asian-American students are added to the count, there are more minority students on campus than White non-Hispanic students. Although the number of international undergraduates is small, international students make up 15% of graduate students, many of whom are teaching assistants in first-year courses. In terms of gender diversity, 56% of the student population is female, and this percentage is reflected in the freshman class. There are no available statistics addressing religious affiliations on campus. However, there are nineteen religious-focused chartered student organizations on campus. Fourteen chartered student organizations have a cultural focus, including the Stonewall Coalition for gender diversity. Additionally, eight of 46 of the professional student organizations have a minority affiliation and two are focused on women.

In addition to cultural and gender diversity on campus, students at NMSU also represent a diverse perspective for social class/economic status as over 44% of undergraduate students are low income, 38% are first generation, and 32% come from rural counties in New Mexico.

Ethnic diversity is also visible in the demographics of the faculty and staff. NMSU has a high percentage of minority faculty in comparison with its peer institutions. A recent review conducted for NASA indicated that NMSU is meeting national standards for gender equity among faculty and staff, and has policies in place that promote equity. All chartered student organizations must have a faculty/staff advisor, which, theoretically, would enhance student-faculty interactions at these levels.

Based on the NMSU Las Cruces campus demographics described above, the opportunity to interact with individuals from different backgrounds is extremely high. Considering that nearly one-third of NMSU students in New Mexico come from small, highly culturally and economically segregated communities, it could lead to a perception by first-year students that they clearly find the opportunity to interact with individuals from backgrounds and cultures different from their own when they come to NMSU. According to responses on the FoE Student Survey, nearly half responded that NMSU

provides opportunities for interaction with other students of differing backgrounds and cultures to a high or very high degree. The mean response varied from 3.78 for Black students down to 3.13 for the multiracial students. However, opportunities for interaction with diverse faculty and staff was lower with only 36% responding high to very high, and means ranged from 3.23 for Hispanic students down to 2.71 for multiracial students. Interaction with diverse people outside of the institution was very low with almost 35% responding that such opportunities were slight to non-existent. The mean for this question varied from 2.96 for Hispanic students to a low of 2.00 for Asian students. These tend to be very low means in comparison with the means generated for all of the questions on the student survey, as 85% of the means for the questions on the FoE Student Survey were over 3.00.

A similar pattern of agreement on opportunities for interaction was present in the faculty and staff FoE survey responses. Forty-nine percent of respondents selected high to very high for opportunities for interaction with other students (mean of 3.43). Although fewer (41%) rated opportunities for faculty/staff interaction (mean=3.27) that high, faculty/staff were more positive about the interactions than were the students. However, 45% (mean=2.68) of faculty and staff believed opportunities for interaction outside the university were slight to non-existent which is considerably lower than the students' perceptions.

Respondents to both surveys commented on their perceptions of diversity. Several students mentioned how their exposure to diversity at NMSU helped with their transition. However, other students commented on problems with gay acceptance or the need for more political diversity. More than fifteen comments regarding NMSU's diverse student population were expressed on the faculty/staff survey. However, most of these comments were focused on the services NMSU offers such as the ethnic program offices. One comment addressed the issue that NMSU is culturally diverse but we don't seem to know how to deal with it.

Behaviors - The student handbook, which includes the student code of conduct, gives clear indications regarding the behavior expected of students in an open and civil community. NMSU also has a "Freedom of Expression" policy that details how material and speech are permitted on campus in the context of NMSU's "public land-grant heritage, support for diverse points of view, and commitment to excellence in education and research." The student newspaper, The Round UP, is often used as a forum for discussion regarding appropriate student behavior, either through articles related to active topics and/or editorials. Various student organizations may provide policies and guidelines for acceptable behavior. The Office of Greek Affairs provides a student guide and a parent guide to Greek life. The Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program (WAVE) has the goal to educate students on acceptable alcohol use, prevention of sexual abuse, and interpersonal violence. The freshman English composition course, English 111G, includes discussion of alcohol awareness. Perhaps the most comprehensive "program" is conducted by Housing and Residential Life through the "Social Justice Plan" which provides programs and opportunities to address student development in the campus residences through multicultural activities (many of which are "ecologically-

based"), multi-religious activities, disability awareness, etc., to change behaviors through messages of inclusion. Responses to the FoE surveys indicated students believe NMSU communicates the importance of respecting others with differing opinions to a high or very high degree (62%, mean=3.71). Faculty and staff see a somewhat different view, as only 38% (mean=3.16) believed NMSU communicates this to a high or very high degree. Student comments indicated that respect for ethnic and cultural diversity is present, but respect for gender diversity is somewhat lacking.

Somewhat related, responses by first-year students to the NSSE 2004 question of "developing a personal code of values and ethics" indicated that NMSU students (mean=2.42) were significantly less likely to develop such a code than students in the national comparison (2.61), and less likely, albeit not statistically different, than first-year students at doctoral-extensive institutions and other HSI institutions. However, NMSU seniors who participated in this survey were more likely to develop a code (mean=2.67) than the other two types of institutions (means of 2.57 and 2.48, respectively), and only slightly less than the national comparison (mean=2.72).

### **Areas of Concern**

Diverse Ideas - Although NMSU offers a range of courses that provide exposure to diversity issues and world views, many of these course offerings are not available to freshmen. The "Viewing the Wider World" curriculum is designed for upper classmen. There is not a focused effort by NMSU to ensure that diverse ideas and world views be provided to all students. NMSU proudly promotes itself as a multi-cultural institution, and attempts to insure gender, ethnic, political, and religious freedom and expression. However, it does not provide consistent, thoughtful, definitive methods of getting this message to the students.

Faculty and staff, in responding to the open-ended questions, identified the following weaknesses: (1) a lack of faculty and peer mentoring for freshmen by mentors of similar backgrounds, (2) inadequate orientation for students from rural areas or otherwise not familiar with college as a first generation college student, (3) a lack of tangible commitment to diversity and to a diverse staff and faculty recruitment and retention, (4) a lack of support for students with disabilities, and (5) faculty with inadequate understanding of or tools to educate students from diverse backgrounds.

Interactions - A consensus of many faculty, staff and students on campus is that students typically do not interact across groups in informal settings. Because of the considerable mix of diverse ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds of students and staff at NMSU, opportunities for learning and understanding diversity are present, but students, faculty and staff may not be taking advantage of those opportunities. The three ethnic programs, American Indian Programs, Black Programs, and Chicano Programs, as well as International Programs have offered activities on campus to educate and reach out to all students and staff, but these events are seldom attended by those outside of the particular group hosting the event.

A major challenge for the NMSU community is to create a greater and common understanding of what diversity is, at all types and levels. NMSU has yet to realize its full potential to achieve the benefits of increased "interactional" diversity opportunities on and off campus as there is not an intentional focus to educate our students to understand and to positively engage with those who are "different."

Behaviors - NMSU policy is predominantly based on regulations of what not to do; student policies or "rules" are put into place to maintain and manage student misbehavior which often leads towards consequences. The Student Code of Conduct is based solely on protecting the rights of students, and not on promoting and implementing any clear standards of socially just behavior and ethical responsibility.

Several of NMSU's current programs that work to affect behavior are not directly focused on first-year students, although first-year students can and do participate. More importantly, these programs are not focused on addressing diverse interactions at any level or, for that matter, promoting clear standards of socially just behavior and ethical responsibility. The Housing and Residential Life program, while effective, serves only students in the residence halls which included less than half of the Fall 2005 freshman class. Despite the implementation of stricter regulation of alcohol use on campus and several campaigns to teach students to use alcohol responsibly, alcohol abuse by students is still common. Because of a perception of limited entertainment (especially for the "below 21" students), it is a common practice for students to travel to Juarez for entertainment, contributing to alcohol abuse and drunk driving. "Thursday Night" has become popular for late night partying in part because several of the bars in El Paso allow 18 to 20 year olds entrance on that night.

### **Summary of Evidence**

Diverse Ideas - Course descriptions in the Undergraduate Catalogue provided evidence for the curricular offerings, and some definition as to what the courses are meant to provide. However, there was no statement in the Catalogue describing a philosophy for promoting greater understanding and awareness of diversity issues and world views for freshmen. Course syllabi posted on the Web for three of the top five gateway courses were reviewed for evidence of systematic treatment of diversity issues in the classroom.

Mean scores for the FoE survey questions related to diverse ideas on staff/faculty and student surveys provided the supporting evidence for faculty, staff and student perceptions. Faculty and staff provided pertinent comments, but comments specific to curricular and co-curricular experiences related to diversity and world views were lacking in the student survey. The lack of evidence, more so than evidence of the contrary, indicated that NMSU is assuring first-year students experience diverse ideas and world views only at a superficial level, and that no cross-curricular/co-curricular experiences are purposefully available.

Interactions - Some evidence is based on qualitative/anecdotal data collection from the following areas by students, staff and administrators: Stonewall Coalition, Chicano

Programs, American Indian Programs, Black Programs, International Programs, GLBTQ Student Resource Center, Women Studies, and the Hispanic Faculty Staff Caucus. The following statements from the three ethnic programs describe the missions of the programs:

A. "Black Programs is concerned about the educational, cultural and financial growth of each of NMSU's black students. Meeting the needs of the individual is the basis for all their special programs, which include academic counseling, advocacy, black student organizations, black studies courses, black studies library, financial aid counseling, and job placement assistance."

B. "Chicano Programs offers programs for the recruitment and retention of Chicano and U.S. Latino students. As a part of this mission, Chicano Programs offers assistance in navigating what for many ethnic students is a complicated and unfamiliar university environment. The primary goal of our office is to help qualified students to overcome any cultural or institutional barriers that may prevent them from enrolling in the university and graduating with a four-year degree."

C. "American Indian Program provides programs and services designed to enable American Indian Students to successfully achieve their post-secondary goals. The Program's vision is for all American Indian graduates to be self-actualized, successful, role models who are viable contributing members to the health, welfare, and peace of tribal communities and humanity. The stated purpose of the Program is to recruit, retain, and graduate American Indian students in higher education."

Behaviors - The Student Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct are available on the NMSU website. This is written in a "legal" format that is not student-friendly. The Freedom of Speech policy is available on the NMSU website. The introductory paragraph is: "New Mexico State University recognizes and promotes an intellectually open campus. The free exchange of ideas through written, spoken, and other forms of expression reflects its public land-grant heritage, support of diverse points of view, and commitment to excellence in education and research."

Information for WAVE is on the NMSU Website. Its Mission Statement reads: "The Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program (WAVE) is a harm reduction program which educates the campus community on issues of personal safety and well-being. WAVE's Peer Educators provide fellow students with information and strategies regarding alcohol use and the prevention of sexual assault and other forms of interpersonal violence. Employing a dynamic and comprehensive plan, we create bridges between campus entities to cultivate safe environments for the NMSU community. WAVE provides services and supports to students regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion or national origin."

**Recommended Grade: B-**

**Recommended Action Items**



Establish a Common Summer Reading List. (High priority)

Establish a common summer reading list for incoming freshmen with a focus on diversity in all of its aspects, including diverse ideas and cultures. The proposed reading list could provide a common background and basis for discussion of diversity issues during Aggie Welcome Week and in gateway courses such as University 150, English 111 and Sociology 101. A common reading list would also send a strong message to freshmen that reading is an integral part of their overall university experience, and facilitate discussions of diversity across disciplines.

Include Diversity in the first-year student philosophy. (High priority)

Add a statement supporting diversity to the first-year philosophy statement with a clear definition of what “Diversity” means for Administration, Faculty, Staff, Students, and the surrounding communities

Expand Living and Learning Communities, and include a diversity component. (High priority)

Expand NMSU's "Living and Learning Communities" program and ensure that each Living and Learning Community has a strong diversity component. The expansion of the Living and Learning Communities program could become a primary means of expanding opportunities for increasing diversity interactions on campus among first-year students.

Promote clear standards and improve communications to students regarding appropriate behavior. (High priority)

Promote clear standards and improve communication to first-year students about appropriate behavior in a student-friendly format. Communications should be frequent, visible, and comprehensive. Efforts should be made to address multicultural perspectives and appropriate behavior in multicultural settings. Increase the coordination of activities on campus to assure consistent and visible behavior standards

Offer campus-wide forums to promote dialogue on “Diversity.” (High priority)

Offer regular campus-wide forums promoting dialogue on Diversity. These could address cultural, ethnic, religious, political, etc. issues with a focus on balanced, open discussion and information. Such forums would change the level of intellectual activity in relation with how NMSU currently copes with issues of diversity. All administration, faculty, staff, and students should be encouraged to attend these forums.

Create a student creed. (Medium priority)

Creating a student creed would help freshmen to develop a personal code of ethics and values and, in association with the first-year philosophy, help guide expectations of

students and NMSU. It could serve as a basis for defining an "Aggie" and help to build school spirit and allegiance.

Increase Service Learning for first-year students. (Medium priority)

Increase the number of courses with a service learning component available to first-year students as a means of encouraging interactional diversity between students and the local community.



## **Roles and Purposes Dimension Team Report**

*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).*

### **Committee Leaders**

Stuart Brown, Professor, English

Kim Huddleston, Associate Director, Office of Student Financial Aid

### **Committee Members**

Bobbie Derlin, Assistant Vice Provost, College of Extended Learning

Cheryl Nims, College Assistant Professor, English

### **Current Situation**

#### **Purposes**

Knowledge acquisition for personal growth - University 150 (Freshman Year Experience) is a three-credit course that includes activities related to personal growth, e.g., decision making, choosing your major, time management, and so on. However, this is not a required course for all first-year students. A one credit freshman orientation course for the College of Agriculture and Home Economics (AG E 111) is offered, and there may be other similar orientation courses or sessions in the various colleges, but all are offered on a voluntary basis.

English 111 includes activities related to personal growth, including projects that have students investigate majors and explore personal decisions such as alcohol use. A required course for first-year students, many students transfer in this course credit or test out of it via CLEP or AP, and are not exposed to the specific NMSU English 111 curriculum. Increasing class sizes may hinder personal attention.

Future Employment - NMSU offers many Job Fairs through its Placement and Career Services that are available both centrally and at the college and department level. The most recent strategic plan, "Living the Vision," focuses on meeting demands in the job

market, economic development, NMSU branding, new academic offerings (e.g., creative media) and future employment in NM.

Engaged Citizenship and Serving the Public Good - It is difficult to separate "engaged citizenship" and "serving the public good" in meaningful ways. English 111 uses a text, *Paideia 8* that focuses on writing assignments exploring issues of citizenship and service to a common purpose (public good). Additionally, all English 111 students are required to read a trade book such as *Fast Food Nation* or *Affluenza*, the purpose of which is to ask students to think critically about important social issues.

The NMSU General Education curriculum includes upper division courses called "Viewing the Wider World" that explore complex topics related to citizenship and "serving the public good", but only a small proportion of students encounter these courses in their first year. As a land-grant university, the NMSU mission statement explicitly references the importance of service. Quite a few of the student organizations require participating students to perform community service (e.g., fraternities and sororities, etc.). More recently, "service learning" is being included in various courses. However, none of these service experiences are required of first-year students.

#### Motivation

NMSU is not presently very intentional in providing a common experience for first-year students. Only about a third of the freshman population enrolls in University 150 (Freshman Year Experience). There are some activities under development that intend to change this situation, but none of these are fully implemented at this time, nor are any broadly applied to influence student success. For example, the First Year Scholars Program (FYSP) will enroll about 300 - 400 freshmen for Fall 2006. FYSP combines structured courses in a cohort model that includes University 150 (Freshman Year Experience) and supplemental instruction. The Center for Learning Assistance also provides a series of learning experiences and service to FYSP participants.

There are different means to examine student interests in the first year: For example, English 111 includes activities that allow students to investigate areas of interest and write about their intended majors; Placement and Career Services offers students the opportunity to complete self study assessments; Academic Advisors and Faculty Advisors work with students one-on-one to examine student academic and professional interests. Each college, and in some cases academic units, have their own advisor handbooks which may or may not closely follow the NMSU Undergraduate Catalog which, despite best efforts, lags practice by a considerable margin. This FoE Study is an opportunity to examine what we do now, and to identify how we might proceed to provide a more common experience for first-year students. The recent reorganization of enrollment management services is another university-wide effort to increase information about student interests to the academic units. While NMSU offers Aggie Welcome Week (AWW), an orientation program, this program has been in transition repeatedly, it hasn't always been a "week" for example, and is voluntary. Participation in AWW is voluntary

on the part of students, and faculty and staff engagement varies across academic and service units at NMSU in part because their participation is primarily voluntary too.

## Rationale

Required Courses - While requirements are clearly articulated in the NMSU Undergraduate Catalog and other sources, rationale for the requirements is absent, incomplete, or inconsistent across academic units. Other academic requirements, e.g., general education, are adequately described in printed materials at all levels. However, there are numerous exceptions to stated requirements allowed at the college and department level; often, the approval of an associate dean for academics or the College Dean is required.

Required competencies - There are syllabus guidelines that include required language related to equal opportunity and ADA policy and procedures. While course syllabi typically include course goals and objectives, integration of a student learning outcome or competency approach is not required and is not consistently applied; exceptions are most commonly associated with discipline- or profession-specific accreditation.

State-level work groups for five general education areas have been formulated and are in the process of developing competencies for communications, mathematics, laboratory science, social/behavioral sciences, and humanities and fine arts. While NMSU departments and colleges are actively engaged in submitting general education courses for approval by the NM Higher Education Department, there is presently no plan to incorporate the general education competencies into course syllabi. State-level general education areas now exclude explicit reference to related student learning outcomes previously included in the NMSU general education program, e.g., library skills, technology applications proficiency, and so on.

Requirements for entry into majors - Academic requirements for entry into majors and course prerequisites are adequately described in printed materials at all levels. While requirements are clearly articulated for entry into majors in the NMSU Undergraduate Catalog and other sources, the rationales for the requirements are absent, incomplete, or inconsistent across academic units.

## Areas of Concern

### Purposes

UNIV 150 is not required for all first-year students; no one course or set of courses is required to consistently provide support for first-year students' self reflection on these topics. Large class sizes for first-year courses are common, which often limits discussion of sensitive issues, allowing minimal contact between faculty and first-year students.

Knowledge acquisition for personal growth - Few required courses for first-year students meet individualized needs (e.g., University 150: Freshman Year Experience and other

orientation activities are not required). As a result, personal growth and development experiences of first-year students are not consistent.

**Future Employment** - The connection between an undergraduate degree and future employment has become more explicit here, just as it has on the national level. With this emphasis, the value of higher education is becoming narrow and is getting too tightly tied to vocational and professional interests. Curricular approaches at NMSU seem to be losing the broader sense of what it means to be an "educated person." Recent changes to general education at the state-level place considerable emphasis on "skills" and appear to be more about transfer and articulation, and time-to-degree completion, rather than fostering intellectual and social development of students.

**Engaged Citizenship and Serving the Public Good** - Based on the results of the faculty and student FoE surveys, it appears faculty and student perceptions are disconnected. The faculty perceives that the university does not do a very good job in supporting these important aspects of student development. The faculty does not see how the curriculum supports students in making the important transitions from adolescent "self-centeredness" to becoming mature "other-regarding" members of a community. The students, on the other hand, feel their academic and other experiences here do support them in becoming good citizens and learning to serve others and the common interest.

The student survey was taken only by first-year students, but the faculty survey was open to any faculty member, whether they taught first-year students or not. This may be one of the reasons for the observed disconnect. The results indicate there is very little contact between many faculty and first-year students. Generally, the same small group of faculty members consistently teaches first-year courses year after year. First-year courses are often taught by graduate students and part-time faculty members, rather than more senior tenure track faculty. There are often large class sizes for first-year courses that make it difficult to discuss the more sensitive issues. Strategies to provide smaller group opportunities like supplemental instruction may be available broadly, but are voluntary rather than required of first-year students. Said again, there is no consistent first-year student experience. Other typical small group settings, e.g., discussion and laboratory sections, typically do not engage faculty but are provided by graduate assistants where consistent content and quality are difficult to achieve.

The changes to the general education curriculum are intended to achieve a state-wide common core that will foster smooth transfer and articulation between two-year and four-year degree granting institutions in New Mexico. There are also various state mandates to restructure postsecondary education and achieve a K-16 educational delivery system rather than the prior K-12 system that was quite separate from postsecondary education. One of the present concerns is that these changes are emergent and therefore, it is not possible to obtain clarification from a single source, nor is it clear how this will affect NMSU's capacity to address citizenship and "serving the public good" consistently in its curriculum.

Presently, NMSU does not adequately recognize or support faculty involvement in the community. As a doctoral degree-granting research institution, present promotion and tenure policies, procedures, and practices more strongly emphasize research, while attention to teaching and service are given less credit. What emphasis there is on service is oriented toward extending academic services to the State or to other departmental activities rather than individual acts of serving the public good. There has been a "Roles and Rewards Taskforce," but implementation of the recommendations is not yet complete. Personnel policies do not encourage faculty or staff participation in leadership roles in community organizations as they do at some other institutions. Consequently, it is difficult for faculty and staff to model good citizenship and "serving the public good." Also, if support or recognition for individual faculty serving the community as good citizens and servants is absent, there is little incentive to address these values in teaching.

### Motivation

Different efforts to increase enrollment and retention, and to support student success are all disconnected. New student orientation is not required which limits this opportunity to communicate positive messages about the motivation to pursue a higher education to first-year students.

NMSU does not require any activities of its first-year students. This results in an inconsistent and incomplete first-year experience for our students. Also, the allocation of resources at NMSU is related to student enrollments, so there is a financial incentive for academic units to maintain student enrollment in particular majors and in particular courses, rather than fully reflecting student preferences.

The most substantial concern is that all the different efforts that are happening on campus to increase enrollment, increase retention and support student success are disconnected one from the other. As a result, neither human nor financial resources are focused on students. Because the first-year student experience is so inconsistent, it is difficult to examine students' present motivation to attend and to stay in the university system, and to address how improvements in service might influence them.

### Rationale

NMSU clearly communicates what is required in its curriculum in various vehicles, but the rationale for the requirements is varied across programs, is often unclear, or is not communicated to the student at all.

Syllabus guidelines do not require a competency-based approach and, as a result, syllabi vary widely in identifying what students will know and do as a result of participating in courses.

There is no institutional review or plan to implement a competency based approach beyond the future implementation of state-level general education competencies.

## Summary of Evidence

### Purposes

These observations are grounded in NMSU personnel and other policies, and FoE faculty and student survey questions, Q35, Q78, and Q50 (re: future employment), and experiences of this Dimension team. Faculty and students both say they rate the university's communications about future employment as effective and high. The team also considered their personal knowledge of student assignments in University 150 (Freshman Year Experience) and English 111.

### Motivation

These observations are grounded in NMSU undergraduate policies, curriculum, offered support services, and experiences of the Dimension team. Other university communications, e.g., FYSP brochure, were also considered. Websites for support services and academic units were also considered.

### Rationale

These observations are grounded in NMSU undergraduate policies, NMSU Undergraduate Catalog's department and course descriptions, NMSU curriculum, and websites for academic units.

## Recommended Grade: **D**

### Recommended Action Items

Provide a common curriculum for first-year students. **(High priority)**

Provide a common curriculum for first-year students, and actively engage NMSU faculty, students and staff in curriculum design. This curriculum should include a theoretical underpinning that addresses some of the larger purposes of higher education and NMSU. While varying student proficiency entry levels require differentiation in some academic areas, e.g., mathematics and writing, adoption of a curriculum that will create even modest consistency in the first-year experience will be a significant change for NMSU. Faculty, students, and staff should all have a platform to contribute to the first-year curriculum.

Require all first-year students to attend student orientation. **(High priority)**

Require all first-year students to attend student orientation in whatever desirable format is chosen. Varied formats are recommended - e.g., the traditional AWW may be the most appropriate format for new first-year students. For other first-year students, e.g., transfer students, returning students, alternative formats may be needed - e.g., several short sessions over the first semester.

Provide support to faculty to re-envision 100-level undergraduate courses. (High priority)

Provide support to faculty to re-envision 100-level undergraduate courses in order to integrate academic, professional, and personal decision making and other related skills. Specify two or three student learning outcomes related to academic, professional, and personal decision making and their competencies. Require these to be included in all 100-level course syllabi so that faculty will have the opportunity to apply these skills to content-related material. This will require more faculty, teaching assistants, etc., to recognize and assume responsibility for these student learning outcomes.

Require a common writing assignment for first-year students. (High priority)

Require a common writing assignment in first-year courses (where feasible) to have students reflect on personal and professional futures. Example of an assignment: Please prepare a one or two paragraph describing how "....." relates to your personal and professional future. Your written response should not exceed one single spaced typed page. Specify two or three student learning outcomes related to this assignment and their competencies. Require these to be included in all major course syllabi. This will provide faculty with an opportunity to examine student writing and integrate thinking skills to content material. Such a common writing assignment across the curriculum with a "writing skills" rubric could also serve as a tool for university-wide writing assessment of student learning outcomes.

Require student learning outcomes and competencies for all syllabi. (High priority)

Require student learning outcomes and competencies for all syllabi. Make explicit the rationale for required courses and competencies. Revise NMSU's syllabus guidelines to include student learning outcomes and related competencies for all syllabi. In addition, require that the stated means to assess proficiency be included in the syllabi.



## **Improvement Dimension Team Report**

*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 as a distinct time period and set of experiences, academic and otherwise, in the lives of students. It is also linked systemically to the institution's 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 and scholarship on the first college year.*

### **Committee Members**

David Daniel, Associate Professor, Experimental Statistics

Gerry Hawkes, Assistant Professor, Agricultural Economics & Agricultural Business

Ralph Preszler, Assistant Professor, Biology

Carmen Santana-Melgoza, Director, Institutional Research, Planning & Outcomes Assessment

Nicholas Sweeton, Assistant Director, Housing & Residential Life

### **Current Situation**

Aggie Welcome Week (AWW) is currently assessed in three ways: general program evaluation for students, program evaluation for parents/families, and a survey which tests pre-post orientation perspectives about several elements of student life. The program evaluation for students is used to appraise student perceptions and value of the overall experience as well as individual presentations and programs. The family program evaluation is used to discover how families perceive the quality and value of each of the presentations as well as gaps in the information desired by families. It also serves to guide the communication plan throughout the transitioning process. The philosophy behind the survey evaluation is that a comprehensive orientation program effects changes in student perceptions and beliefs relative to being a successful student. The pre-post test administration process allows for measurement of changes in perceptions and attitudes. Results of the program evaluation have been used to develop the program for Spring 2006 for both students and families, and to guide the communication plan with families during the transition process between high school and college.

UNIV 150 is currently assessed with a student evaluation, a peer educator (a junior or senior student who serves as a "co-instructor" for the course) evaluation, and an instructor evaluation. Students also evaluate the course near the end of the semester.



These evaluations measure perceptions of the UNIV 150 experience and have been used to "tweak" the course and its nine objectives. Results of these assessments have been used to improve perceptions of the course and course content, and to expand the course sections as overall, it has been proven to be a beneficial tool.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Outcomes Assessment does a regular review of UNIV 150, looking at the profile of students who enroll (race, gender, etc.) and comparing their GPA and retention rates to their peers who do not enroll. The data show that students who enroll in UNIV 150 have a higher GPA. Retention rates appear to be slightly higher for students who take UNIV 150, particularly American Indian and Black students.

There is a slightly positive difference in retention for Hispanic students and White students. There have been some years (about 3 out of the 9 years analyzed) where the retention rate differences are statistically significant (more than 10%).

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a broadly successful program used at over 600 institutions. The underlying goal of SI is to improve students' general learning skills. Supplemental Instruction programs offer active learning sessions tied to at-risk courses (courses in which at least 30% of students earn a W, D, or F). The sessions are facilitated by peer instructors who have successfully passed the course. The use of SI at NMSU can best be described as "spotty." The Center for Learning Assistance has individuals who have been trained in SI and are available to train and monitor SI facilitators. Some departments (e.g. Chemistry, Biology) have faculty who have attended SI training workshops at the University of Missouri. The NMSU Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry obtained external support from the CDC (Glenn Kuehn grant # U10/CCU619259-04) to offer SI associated with BIOL 211, CHEM 111, 112, 313, 314 beginning in Spring 2001. After external support for the program ran out, BIOL 211 SI was dropped. The Biology Department has written grants in an effort to initiate an SI program for BIOL 111 and 211. As of Spring 2006, these efforts have been unsuccessful. Supplemental Instruction programs are also tied to Psychology 201 and MATH 115. The MATH 115 program is supported by external funds obtained from Hewlett Packard.

Advising and Mentoring - Advising of freshman students is conducted differently in different colleges. Some colleges have faculty advise students while others have some form of an advising center where students are advised by staff (see "College Advising & Mentoring Survey" in the Evidence Library). Assessment of advising is generally by observation of quantity and types of problems students have enrolling in courses that require prerequisites, and of problems seniors have trying to complete their degree requirements. Mentoring, in a formal sense, is almost non-existent at the college level, though some colleges have clubs that serve some of the same purposes by getting students involved with other students and some faculty who choose to participate. As there are no formal assessments for advising, programs don't have much to work with, although they naturally try to learn from problems that have arisen in recent registration periods.

Two recent assessments have great potential for increasing understanding of the above and other factors of student success. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to a sample of first year and senior students in 2000 and 2004. The results were recently posted to the Institutional Research website and a message was sent alerting all FoE task force members to the site. Additionally, the results of the FoE student survey were made available to the FoE Task Force and all dimension team members. There are plans underway for wider campus distribution of both assessments through a campus leadership summit scheduled for August 2006.

Based on the current FoE faculty survey, responses to the question on attending conferences or meetings focusing on the first year revealed that 54.6% of those responding had no/slight participation in such conferences. Approximately 24% of respondents answered that their attendance in those conferences was high or very high. Evidence of participation in multi-campus initiatives focused on the first year is not available on an institution-wide basis but this type of participation may take place by individuals in colleges/departments which have a special emphasis on first-year students. Initiatives that include exposure to external experts in the form of consultants, speakers, workshops, web/other on-campus conferences occur yearly and have increased in the past year with regard to topics related to the first-year experience. The last component above is not greatly developed at this point in time on campus but efforts are underway to improve knowledge of our first-year students.

### **Areas of Concern**

Aggie Welcome Week - Including all incoming students in the orientation is not possible due to limitations of space and other resources. Therefore, evaluation of AWW has generally been limited to those who participate and excludes those who do not. The three-day orientation includes many activities, and the one brief general program evaluation form that has been used thus far may not be adequate to thoroughly evaluate important aspects of the program. A small number of parents/families (86) participated in the Fall 2005 program evaluation. The delay in getting results of the evaluations back to the program administrators may cause them to plan the following semester's program without insight into how participants from the previous year's program felt about specific components of the program. Because the AWW evaluation forms may not be explicit or thorough enough, future improvements to the program may be limited unless a more comprehensive systematic assessment is undertaken.

While UNIV 150 (Freshman Year Seminar) does impact first-year retention rates, it appears to have no impact on two- and three-year retention rates, and may even have a negative impact on the overall graduate rate (although this can be explained by other factors). For example...if a student takes UNIV 150 and declares a major early in their college career, the overall impact is positive. It is also not clear why UNIV 150 affects GPA and retention - is it because it is seen as relatively "easy" and is a GPA booster, or because students really are learning the skills they need to be successful? Or a combination of both? Only particular groups of students have been shown to positively benefit. It is not clear how the students who do not seem to positively benefit (i.e.,

students whose GPA and retention rates are not significantly different from their peers who did not enroll in 150) skew the results of the assessment. It is also not clear exactly why UNIV 150 affects GPA and retention rates.

The dependence of supplemental instruction (SI) programs on external support and intermittent short-term NMSU support greatly reduces the quality of these programs at NMSU. It takes a consistent long-term commitment from the University for SI programs to become established. Mature successful programs have won the support of faculty and students through their demonstrated success; they have also been refined to fit the specific needs of each content area and the associated student populations. While SI is generally a successful program, it is not clear that it will be successful in lower-division courses at NMSU without modification of the standard SI model. Such modification and refinement will require support for individuals in each department who understand the content goals of the courses, the general learning goals of SI, as well as formative assessment methods.

Advising and Mentoring - Advising of students has been evolving in some departments towards having the students use the new STAR computer system rather than having detailed, in-person advising by an advisor. This may result in students not planning well for later semesters and eventual graduation. While having different advising mechanisms across departments and colleges may be appropriately handled, getting students motivated to obtain an appropriate level of advising for planning beyond the current semester may be problematic. Students need to be motivated early on to plan for later semesters, and consequently seek thorough advising. In some programs, prerequisites appear to be inconsistently enforced by different advisors (particularly faculty advisors where they are not centralized and advising is only a minor part of their job). Even if assessment was formally conducted on advising, if the information came from students, it may not be helpful information since students often are unfamiliar with what is needed in advising. Formal assessment would probably be best done by having each advisor keep records, summarizing the records for all advisors, and linking this to a database of resulting problems in registration and graduation applications. However, this could require substantial database creation and linking, which may be a substantial technical endeavor.

The ability to effect change in the educational experience on campus is limited by a lack of knowledge by faculty and administrators about what students experience inside and outside of the classroom and their personal circumstances, all of which affect their success. Until a culture of appreciation for sharing current information is established, those responsible for effecting change will continue to be hampered in their decision-making.

Broader exposure of knowledge dissemination concerning the first-year experience and the characteristics of NMSU's entering students is needed. Most committees/task forces concerned with this topic are made up of the same members with many individuals serving on several committees. Resources devoted primarily to the development of first-year programs and to allowing greater faculty development in this area are limited. The

FoE faculty survey revealed that the institution's assessment capabilities relevant to the first-year experience need to be improved.

### **Summary of Evidence**

Aggie Welcome Week - The evidence consisted of the results of the first program assessment for students and families in Fall 2005. Results of the pre and post surveys were not available. Over 600 students participated in the program evaluation and the majority of the responses for the eight statements were answered in the "agree" and "strongly agree" categories, indicating the students liked the programs which were presented for evaluation. The results of the family evaluation revealed that most respondents felt that the family programs were "good," "very good" or "excellent." The Program Director, during an interview, provided information concerning the use of the evaluation results, and revealed that some programs had been dropped due to evaluation results and replaced by others. Also, methods of dissemination were changed to improve return rates for both student and family program evaluations.

All things considered, UNIV 150 appears to positively impact the one-year retention rates of three groups of students, those from minority ethnic groups, those who enter as unclassified students, and those who are scholastically challenged. While more data are needed to further understand why UNIV 150 works, it is still one of the best tools we have.

Supplemental Instruction is a program with the demonstrated potential to improve student learning. Large national meta-analyses have shown that students participating in voluntary SI sessions have a success (A, B, or C) rate in the associated at-risk content courses that is approximately 15% higher than students choosing not to participate in SI. When covariates are used in order to factor out differences in initial motivation between the two groups of students, the improvement associated with SI is 10%. A 10% increase in pass rate in challenging courses represents a tremendous improvement in student learning.

The potential benefits of SI have not been fully utilized at NSMU. Supplemental Instruction is currently available for only a handful of courses. The SI model will need to be refined to meet the specific needs of NMSU students. Students from Biology 211, and Chemistry 111, 112, 313, and 314 who have participated in the SI program offered by the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry have higher pass rates than students who have not participated. However, student participation in the lower-division (BIOL 211, CHEM 111, 112) SI courses generally has been less than 25%. Student participation in SI associated with CHEM 313 and 314 has been nearly 50%. This suggests that changes which enhance student participation may need to be made in the design of SI for lower-division science courses at NMSU.

Advising and Mentoring - A survey was taken of each academic college - see the "College Advising & Mentoring Survey" in an Excel document among the Evidence Documentation. The survey was generally administered to a dean or dean's assistant in

each college. Aside from the survey, informal conversations with the respondent and conversations with other faculty and administrators provided peripheral information about advising and mentoring.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Outcomes Assessment (IRPOA) administered and collected the results of both NSSE administrations. General results have been posted to the IRPOA webpage. The FoE student survey also provided insight into the dimensions of student success. Approximately 44% of the respondents felt that the institution had connected them very poorly to faculty members outside of class. The 2004 NSSE results indicated that on a scale of 1 (worst) - 7 (best) first-year students felt that their relationships with faculty members fell at approximately 5.6 on the scale. With regard to the allocation of time, the NSEE results indicated that first-year students, in comparison to their peer groups at other institutions work more hours, have responsibilities to care for dependents, and, understandably, have less time to devote to studying, homework, etc. or relaxing. With regard to student class attendance patterns, there appears to be no evidence of that element on a campus-wide basis. Student use of campus services may be monitored by the services themselves, such as required sign-in and presentation of student IDs when using computer labs, counseling services, etc.

**Recommended Grade: C**

### **Recommended Action Items**

Build a culture of shared information. (High priority)

Build a campus-wide culture of information sharing. While much information is generated in many different areas of the university (student services, academic units, administration, etc.) it appears that much information is "siloesd" and remains within a particular area, shared with some individuals but not with the entire campus community. Naturally, some information must be kept confidential if required by law or circumstances, but the majority of information can be shared. Thus, data such as retention rates, graduation rates, special studies done in certain colleges/departments, assessments of all kinds, policy decisions, and state and national data/indicators can be shared.

Information should flow from all directions, not just from the top down. But the shift in culture from non-sharing to sharing must be supported by the top layers of the institution and communicated, implemented and reinforced at all levels. Mechanisms (web sites, electronic, paper, oral, etc.) for distributing and sharing information must be in place to facilitate the practice of information sharing. Ideally, the campus community should arrive at a point where posting information to the appropriate venue becomes a routine matter and not an exception to normal practice.

The expertise found in the University Communications Department should be utilized to help the campus achieve open communication sharing. Identifying internal and external constituencies who are major information suppliers and instituting mechanisms that facilitate the flow of information throughout campus and beyond are important elements

that a communications plan should address. On-going news about campus developments and where to access further information should also be addressed by the communication plan. In general, the plan's overall objective should be to keep the campus informed in a timely and accurate manner.

Better assessment targets. (High priority)

A serious difficulty with many assessment programs is attempting to establish causality as opposed to just establishing a correlation between student participation in a program and student success. For example, perhaps many students participate in UNIV 150 courses BECAUSE they have an attribute necessary for success at the university, and consequently, participation in UNIV 150 appears to be linked to success at the university when, in reality, success is due to the attribute that motivated them to participate in UNIV 150. Without some random selection and control groups, the actual causality will be difficult to establish.

A primary issue that appears to be common to some programs examined is what assessment activities are aimed at addressing. Assessment is generally implemented to determine whether students have improved in specific skills and abilities that are targeted by a specific program. However, assessment is NOT generally aimed at evaluating the overall success of students at the university. This is a much more difficult, but probably a more essential, assessment goal. The problem with skill specific assessments is although students may improve specific skills, deficiency in these skills may not be substantial reasons for their not being successful at the university in general. For example, a student involved in the Writing Program may increase his or her writing skills, but if writing skills do not constitute a critical problem in that student's overall success at the university, then participation in the Writing Program will not address the primary obstacles to the student's general success at the university.

Consequently, there is a need for programs to assess where students are most likely to have difficulties in being GENERALLY successful at the university. This should include assessment of financial and social obstacles as these can potentially be substantial deterrents to student success. Also, assessment needs to be more directly tied to students' overall success at the university, not just improvement of specific skills targeted by specific programs. Such general assessment will only show positive results if students are sufficiently participating in programs targeted at issues that are obstacles to their overall success. While assessment has certainly been used to evolve programs, it is unclear how useful assessment has been in improving the overall success of students at the university. Students participating in programs need to be tracked for longer periods of time so that assessment of overall success at the university can be evaluated. Of course, addition of relevant assessment strategies would improve the potential use of assessment.



## **Appendix A: Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Participant Roster**

Last Updated May 5, 2006

### **Process Co-Leaders**

Brad Bankhead, Associate Vice-provost for Enrollment Management

Judy Bosland, Director, Enrollment Planning

Cynda Clary, Special Assistant to the Provost

### **Steering Committee**

William Flores, Provost and Executive Vice-President

Jozi De Leon, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

William McCarthy, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

Brad Bankhead, Associate Vice-provost for Enrollment Management

Judy Bosland, Director, Enrollment Planning

Cynda Clary, Special Assistant to the Provost

### **Dimension Teams**

#### **Philosophy**

Co-chair (F) Jeffrey Brown, Academic Department Head, Department of History

Co-chair (S) Cynda Clary, Special Assistant to the Provost

Ellen Castello, Director of Marketing Services, University Communications

Doug Kurtz, Associate Department Head, Department of Mathematics

#### **Organization**

Co-chair (F) Peter Gregware, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Co-chair (S) Terry Cook, Associate Director, Center for Learning Assistance & Retention

Claudia Billings, College Assistant Professor, Department of Theatre Arts

Debbie Hands, Associate Advisement Coordinator, College of Arts & Sciences

Sherry Mills, Professor, Department of Accounting & Business Computer Systems

Scott Moore, Dean of Students

Tyler Pruett, Director, Admissions, Financial Aid & Scholarships

Nicholas Sweeton, Assistant Director, Housing & Residential Life

### **Learning**

Co-chair (F) Christopher Burnham, Regents Professor, Department of English

Co-chair (S) Lisa Kirby, Senior Advisor, College of Health & Social Services

Roseanne Bensley, Assistant Director, Placement & Career Services

James Caufield, Assistant Professor, Library

Cheryl Coker, Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

Eric Lopez, Associate Professor, Department of Special Education & Communication Disorders

### **Faculty**

Co-chair (F) Stuart Munson-McGee, Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering

Co-chair (S) Sue Brown, Director, Center for Learning Assistance & Retention

Priscilla Bloomquist, Assoc. Professor, Department of Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Management

Alyne Fulte, College Associate Professor, Mathematics Learning Center

Cheryl Wilson, Associate Dean, Library



## **Transitions**

Co-chair (F) William Eamon, Dean, Honors College

Co-chair (S) Jennifer Hiatt, Director, Housing & Residential Life

Matthew Hulett, Associate Director, Admissions

Bernadette Montoya, Assistant Vice-provost, Enrollment Management

William Quintana, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Martha Rowe, Associate Professor, Department of Music

## **All Students**

Co-chair (F) James Maupin, Academic Department Head, Department of Criminal Justice

Co-chair (S) Lori McKee, Director, Student/Employee Health Centers

Troy Franklin, Associate Athletic Director, Athletics Student Development

Kristy Mason, Program Coordinator, College of Agriculture & Home Economics

Valerie Pickett, Director, Student Marketing & Transitions

David Smith, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry

Diana Keener, Student & Crimson Scholar

## **Diversity**

Co-chair (F) Jim Peach, Regents Professor, Department of Economics & International Business

Co-chair Cris Rodriguez, Assistant Director, Housing & Residential Life

Co-chair (S) Judy Bosland, Director, Enrollment Planning

Lisa Bond-Maupin, Associate Professor, Department of Criminal Justice

Lisa Dalton, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work

Don Pepion, Director, American Indian Program

Robert Smits, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics

### **Roles and Purposes**

Co-chair (F) Stuart Brown, Professor, Department of English

Co-chair (S) Kim Huddleston, Associate Director, Financial Aid & Scholarships

Bobbie Derlin, Assistant Vice-provost, College of Extended Learning

Cheryl Nims, College Assistant Professor, Department of English

### **Improvement**

Co-chair (F) Ralph Preszler, Assistant Professor, Department of Biology

Co-chair (S) Carmen Santana-Melgoza, Director, Institutional Research,  
Planning & Outcomes Assessment

David Daniel, Associate Professor, Department of Economics & International  
Business

Gerry Hawkes, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics &  
Ag. Business

Nicholas Sweeton, Assistant Director, Housing & Residential Life

## **Appendix B: Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Current Practices Inventory**

*Randy L. Swing, Ph.D.*

*Policy Center on the First Year of College*

Good practice in assessment and measurement begins with a review that identifies what a campus already knows about first-year students, practices, and outcomes. This type of review assures that time and resources are used wisely and ultimately speeds the assessment process. Thus, the Policy Center has developed the Current Practices Inventory (CPI) as the first step in the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> self-study of the first college year.

The intent of the CPI is to create an information base that will be useful to:

Assure that each member of the task force has a campus-wide perspective of the first year

Serve as an index of first-year initiatives and data sources that will underpin later efforts to measure each of the Foundational Dimensions<sup>®</sup>.

The task force may elect to limit its work on the CPI by restricting the inventory to the campus's "key" first-year initiatives or noting areas that are too complex to be undertaken in the scope of the current work. It is anticipated that the CPI will be a "work in progress" throughout the self-study process.

The CPI consists of both information that is regularly collected by institutions and "new" information specifically designed for this process. Some items will require estimating data (note that estimating is not guessing!) Estimates should be based on the best information available so that reasonable extrapolations can be rendered. Whenever possible, estimates should be created by the persons most familiar with the requested information. While it is important to complete the CPI accurately, the task force should not spend a great deal of time on any one CPI component. As the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> process unfolds, it is likely that estimates will be refined and updated.

### Defining the First-Year Student

The CPI definition of first-year student includes all degree-seeking undergraduates who are – according to your institution's criteria – classified as first-year students (freshmen) without counting advanced placement credit. Typically, first-year status is defined as being less than some established number of semester/quarter hours of earned credit (e.g., 25, 30, etc.), but not including advanced placement credit.

*All first-year students must be:*

*degree seeking*

*undergraduate students*

*classified as first-year students by your institution's criteria – but not including advanced placement credit hours*

This definition means that first-year students may be of "traditional" age or "nontraditional age", enrolled full-time or part-time, be first time in any college or transferring from another institution, in the first calendar year of enrollment or continuing beyond the first calendar year, and be enrolled in day, evening, weekend, or distance education courses. As such, the

definition of first-year student used by the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Institutions is broader than First Time First Year (FTFY) that is often used in federal reporting.

#### Current Practices Inventory Structure

The Current Practices Inventory (CPI) is divided into six parts. Each part is briefly described below.

Part A. Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions: The task force will inventory first-year programs/interventions that shape the experiences of new students.

Part B. Inventory of Committees and Councils: The task force will identify committees and councils that set policy, advise, and/or monitor aspects of the first year.

Part C. Inventory of First-Year Policies: The task force will inventory first-year policies that define the experiences of new students.

Part D. Inventory of Courses: The task force will identify the five courses that enroll the largest proportion of first-year students annually. Because these courses shape the curricular experience of a large proportion of new students, they will be given special attention during the self-study process.

Part E. Inventory of First-Year Demographic Information: The task force will collect information about enrollment patterns and institutional-specific methods of defining when a student is a "first-year" student.

Part F. Inventory of First-Year Data and Assessments: The task force will inventory currently available assessment data on the first year of college and first-year students.

Few campuses will have prior experience with inventories such as those defined by Parts A, B, C and F. To complete these sections, the task force might use a variety of techniques as starting points such as:

brainstorming

identifying student contact points by following "student footprints" from first contact with the institution through entry into the second year

conducting a review of the college catalog, student handbook, and other pertinent documents

interviewing students about their experiences

Parts D and E use data commonly collected by offices of institutional research, but seldom synthesized into a single document. The task force will likely use the support of the institutional research office and/or campus registrar to develop these parts of the Current Practices Inventory.

**Part A. Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions:**

Campuses have a variety of programs/interventions (e.g., advising, learning communities, first-year seminars, placement testing) that have a significant impact on how first-year students experience higher education. The task force will identify the major programs/interventions that, by design or circumstance, have a unique impact on first-year students.

Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions: For each program/intervention, identify the following:

Name: Provide the campus-specific name for the program/intervention.

Description: Provide a summary description.

% of 1<sup>st</sup>-Yr Students: Provide a “best estimate” of the percentage of first-year students that are served annually by this program/intervention.

Administrative Home: Name the unit that has responsibility for administering the program/intervention.

Summarize Goals: Summarize the program/intervention’s key explicit or implicit goals.

Additional Comments: Provide any comments about this program/intervention (e.g., new, to be phased out starting next year, under review) that will be helpful to your task force members.

Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions		
<b>Advising First Semester Freshmen</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Academic advising	100%	Six Colleges/Provost
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Assist new freshmen in choosing courses appropriate to the state core curriculum, NMSU general education requirements and their chosen major or area of interest. Advising for most entering first semester freshmen occurs in early registration programs in April and new student registration programs in June. Other advising occurs on a walk in basis throughout Spring of the senior year and the summer.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Currently, the advising function for freshmen is done at the college level by either faculty or professional advising staff or a combination thereof depending on the college. There currently exists an affiliation of professional advisors that meet monthly to discuss any university wide policy affecting student success as well as methodology for advisement. However, this group is unofficial and does not have a formalized method of making recommendations, nor does it have a formal charge. In addition, this group does not include any faculty advisors.		
<b>Aggie Welcome Week</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Freshman Orientation	35%	Enrollment Management
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
3 day experience prior to first class day where new freshmen establish high levels of comfort, confidence, and critical connections to faculty, staff, and other students.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Fall 05 - 685 participants Goal for 06 is 50% of freshman class Currently advertising for Director of New student Programs		

**Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)**

<b>Athletics Academic Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Academic Support Services for NMSU Student-Athletes	5%	Center for Learning Assistance & Retention
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Meet NCAA & NMSU academic requirements to maintain academic eligibility and make progress toward degree completion		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
a. Assistance with the college admission process once a National Letter of Intent is signed b. Provide a New Student-Athlete Orientation c. Pre-advising services once an official transcript and test scores are received for initial registration information and throughout the academic year d. Mentor and tutorial assistance e. Conduct an initial assessment of high-risk student-athletes and complete an individualized learning plan f. Monitor attendance in a learning lab setting in the Aggie Academic Center g. Provide academic support when student-athletes travel to compete (i.e., professional staff to conduct study hall and laptop computers for papers or WEB CT course work) h. Provide academic reports such as midterm academic progress reports, eligibility monitoring reports, study lab reports, tutor/mentor session reports, full-time status reports, drop/add monitoring reports, and various end of the semester/academic year reports		
<b>Center for Learning Assistance Website</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Online access to information regarding all CLA Services	0%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
1. Provide timely and accurate online access to information concerning all CLA services including course offering, workshop calendars, resources for students on academic probation and specifics of The Freshman Year Experience and Peer Education courses; 2. Provide informal assessment of learning strategies and online resources for students in their development of skills leading to academic excellence; 3. Inform students of CLA Lupe Torres Scholarship application submission requirements.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Webpage includes a description of all CLA services, courses, and staff contact information. The online webpage provides links to learning and study skills websites, as well as personal inventories that help students identify areas to strengthen their strategies/tools for academic success.		
<b>CHEM 111 Survival Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Outreach Presentation	10%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
CHEM 111 students identify strengths and challenges in their learning and study skills related to performing successfully in the CHEM 111 course. Goal to enhance students' awareness of skills required to successfully complete Chem 111--a course described as high-risk and to encourage students' use of campus support resources.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
An outreach presentation to every lab section of CHEM 111 on the first day of class; Students take chemistry appraisal assessment developed by the Chemistry Department and a learning and study skills assessment inventory. CLA Staff present information on university resources to assist CHEM 111 students, including Supplemental Instruction, Center for Learning Assistance, and other campus resources.		
In FA 709 students attended Chem Survival Presentations; Estimated 10% of first-year students attended presentations		

Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)

CHSS 100		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
College Success Course for CHSS majors	1%	CHSS Dean's Office
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Outside exploration of interests both curricular and non-curricular. Provide study strategies and skills instruction to improve academic success		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Course is geared toward CHSS majors only. Academic success skills as well as providing an interdisciplinary approach to CHSS professions.		
CLA Learning & Study Skills Workshops		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Weekly Workshops	9%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Provide study strategies and skills instruction on a wide variety of topics to improve academic success of all students at all levels.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
One-hour workshops offered on specific learning and study skills, such as note-taking and active listening, overcoming procrastination, increasing memory and concentration, critical reading, and time/stress management. Four programs require students to attend Learning and Study Skills workshops: College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), New Mexico Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP-Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology 101), and TRIO Student Support Services.		
CLA Outreach Presentations		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Classroom and Program Presentations	50%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to requests from university community for presentations of Center for Learning Assistance Services and learning and study strategy topics;</li> <li>2. Customize presentations according to faculty/instructor/program request;</li> <li>3. Enhance visibility of CLA Staff at events and in classrooms--goal to help students connect services with staff who will assist them;</li> <li>4. Presentations provide an opportunity to reach greater numbers of students in a variety of settings.</li> </ol>		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Classroom and program assistance presentations at the request of faculty and program staff to instruct on specific learning and study skills, such as: learning styles, test preparation and test-taking, managing academic stress, textbook reading, critical thinking and reading, and CLA services. CLA participates in orientation sessions for students by staffing an Information Table--providing information to first-year students about CLA services available to help them acquire skills and strategies for successful learning. Estimated 50% of first-year students attended an outreach presentation in FA04/SP05. The CLA sends a letter to all faculty and staff informing them of current outreach presentations, workshops, and updated CLA services for their students. Upon request, CLA staff will visit faculty meetings to present CLA services and presentation options.		
College of Business Advising Center		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Advising services for all freshmen and sophomore business majors	13%	College of Business
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Advises all lower division majors in the College of Business. Once students attain junior status, they are advised by a faculty member in the department of their chosen major.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		

**Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)**

<b>Crimson Scholar Residential Mentors Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Provides academic tutoring in La Vista learning center and mentoring to students in Monagle Hall Honors Residence.	0%	Honors College
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide academic tutoring in La Vista learning center to all students.</li> <li>2. Provide and mentoring to students in Monagle Hall Honors Residence.</li> <li>3. Organize and present extracurricular and academic programs in Monagle Hall.</li> </ol>		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Currently there are 6 Crimson Scholar Residential Mentors but the program will be expanded next year (FA 2006) to 12 mentors; 6 will be assigned to the Honors Residence Hall and the others to Living and Learning Communities sponsored by the various colleges.		
<b>Drop-In Services</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Walk-in academic assistance	5%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Students meet with a Learning Skills Facilitator who helps them to set specific academic goals and designs a customized study skills program. Progress is monitored. Goals: Continue tracking academic issues and challenges presented by drop-in students to ensure Learning Skills Facilitators receive training to address student needs and to assess whether new or alternative workshops should be implemented.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
<b>Greek Programs</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Fraternities and Sororities	0%	Office of Student Services
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
<b>LIB 101</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
One credit mini-course (Introduction to Research) is specifically targeted for First Year Students.	0%	University Library
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Utilizes online tutorials and instruction guides to build student's information literacy and competency skill sets.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
<b>Library Writing Center Partnership</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Writing Center provides writing support services in Zuhl Library for first and second-year undergraduates.	0%	Writing Center/Zuhl
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Assist undergraduates with writing skills and classroom success.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Free drop-in service evenings and weekends. Consultants work with students one-on-one at any stage in the writing process.		



**Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)**

<b>New Mexico Lottery Scholarship Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
	0%	Financial Aid
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Available to first-time freshmen during their second semester and through a total of 8 semesters thereafter if they retain eligibility.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Critical that students earn a 2.5 GPA and 12 credits or more during their first semester to become eligible. Must maintain same for continuation of scholarship.		
<b>Opportunity Scholarship Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
bridge scholarship for state lottery scholarship	35%	Financial Aid
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Available to entering freshman recently graduated from high school or GED. Must enroll in and complete 12 credits with a 2.5 or higher. Pays tuition.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
<b>Reading in Common Program</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Summer reading program for freshmen honors students.	0%	Honors College
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage honors students with faculty in small seminar discussion of assigned summer reading.</li> <li>2. Introduce students to Honors College opportunities</li> </ol>		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
The Summer Reading in Common Program is linked with ongoing activities related to the subject of the reading during the Fall semester.		
<b>Supplemental Instruction (SI)</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
SI Training for Facilitators in Barrier Courses	10%	Center for Learning Assistance
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Collaborate with requesting departments to provide training, resources and on-going support.		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		
Collaborate with academic departments to provide SI Training for peer facilitators. Consulting support and supervision of SI facilitators offered throughout the semester (e.g. observation of peer led SI sessions; training in presentation of learning and study strategies; offer use of study and learning resources available at the CLA). CLA has provided Supplemental Instruction support for: Biology Entry Level Courses; Chemistry 111, Organic Chemistry; Psychology 201 and Math 115. CLA Staff received trained in the Supplemental Instruction Model at SI Center, University of Missouri, Kansas City. Estimated 10% of first-year students served by SI in barrier courses.		
<b>TRIO Student Support Services</b>		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Provide academic services to qualified participants	1%	Center for Academic Success (formerly Center for Learning Assistance)
<i>Summarize Goals:</i>		
Provide peer mentoring and tutoring services for low-income/first generation college students; Other services include: individualized academic assessment; pre-advising; course attendance and academic progress monitoring; book and laptop loans; stipends for qualified students in good standing with program requirements		
<i>Additional Comments:</i>		

Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)

TRIO Upward Bound Program; Summer Bridge Program		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
High School to College Component	1%	Center for Learning Assistance
<p><i>Summarize Goals:</i>                      Successful High School to College Matriculation</p> <p><i>Additional Comments:</i>                      Services Provided Include:                      a. Assistance with college admissions process                      b. Enroll and complete 6-7 credit hour courses during summer session one at New Mexico State University (summer immediately after high school graduation)                      c. Provide a residential life experience/living and learning community                      d. Participate in academic and cultural activities                      e. Complete a six-week campus based internship                      f. Complete a college success seminar</p> <p>13 Students completed the Summer 2004 Bridge Program</p>		
UNIV 150 (The Freshman Year Experience)		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
3 Credit Graded Course	33%	Center for Learning Assistance
<p><i>Summarize Goals:</i>                      Nine learning objectives are addressed in the UNIV 150 course to support students' transition to the university environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To appreciate the goals, methods and values of higher education.</li> <li>2. To become independent, motivated and reflective learners.</li> <li>3. To establish a mentor relationship with a faculty or staff member on campus.</li> <li>4. To become part of a community of fellow learners.</li> <li>5. To become familiar with the campus resources and services available.</li> <li>6. To enhance public speaking, critical thinking, library, and learning strategies</li> <li>7. To assess talents and interests in relation to career planning.</li> <li>8. To examine and clarify values.</li> <li>9. To enhance understanding and awareness of diversity.</li> </ol> <p>The UNIV 150 course curriculum and effectiveness of a three credit one-semester format are currently being evaluated. Staff are currently researching model first-year orientation courses to recommend changes to administration. Learning community models that include themed academic content courses, learning-living communities and Freshmen Interest Groups with paired courses are the focus of current research.</p> <p><i>Additional Comments:</i>                      27 sections enrolled 655 students in Fall 2005; Three of the sections were Arts &amp; Sciences Freshman Interest Groups (FIGS); 1 section was designated for ENLACE students; 1 section for College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) students.</p> <p>The NMSU Office of Institutional Research tracks retention data for students enrolled in the course, 1991-2004 .</p> <p>In the Fall of 2006 all first-year student athletes will be required to enroll in a section of UNIV 150.</p>		
UNIV 150 Instructor Training		
<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Required Training Program	33%	Center for Learning Assistance
<p><i>Summarize Goals:</i>                      1. Continue to refine curriculum and review effectiveness of activities utilized to meet course objectives;                      2. Enhance instructor support program to include class observation, increased frequency of instructor meetings, expand instructor meetings to include presentations on course related topics and implement instructor/mentor program.</p>		

**Table A – Inventory of First-Year Programs/Interventions (Continued)**

*Additional Comments (Continued from UNIV 150 Instructor Training):*

New and returning UNIV 150 instructors participate in a required training program designed to:

1. Review course objectives and present content and activities designed to meet objectives;
2. Understand cognitive development of entering first year students;
3. Present demographics of NMSU first year students with a goal of helping instructors understand the needs and challenges of NMSU students;
4. Increase instructor awareness of freshman perspective, needs, strategies, and pedagogical methods that address learning styles;
5. Provide an opportunity for instructors to share and learn effective activities and techniques from each other;
6. Provide instruction in effective teaching and presentation strategies and an opportunity to explore and experience methods.

Prior to the first day of class UNIV 150 Instructors also participate in a joint training session of all peer educators and instructors of the course. Instructors are invited to attend Instructor Meetings that take place twice a month throughout the semester. These meetings are not required; Offered to provide support--instructors may bring any issue concerning their course or students to the meeting for discussion. In collaboration with staff at The Teaching Academy, implemented Peer Coaching Program-Fall 2005.

**UNIV 350**

<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Peer Education	33%	Center for Learning Assistance

*Summarize Goals:*

Junior and senior students from all colleges apply and are selected to assist an instructor in co-facilitating the UNIV 150 Freshman Year Experience course. Students enroll in UNIV 350, a three credit graded course and receive training in teaching and presentation skills. Peer Educators serve as a liaison between instructors and first-year students and supplies the peer perspective as a co-teacher in the UNIV 150 course. On the premise that student peers serve as a model of a successful student who has met academic and social challenges, peer education is a critical element of the UNIV 150 course.

*Additional Comments:*

Each year UNIV 150 students evaluate the role and effectiveness of the Peer Educator in their section of the UNIV 150 course. The Peer Education Component was introduced in 1997 and each year has been rated by students and instructors as an essential component.

**UNIV Mid-Semester Courses**

<i>Description:</i>	<i>% of 1st-Yr Students:</i>	<i>Administrative Home:</i>
Learning strategy courses offered at mid-semester	14%	Center for Learning Assistance

*Summarize Goals:*

1. Offer sufficient UNIV mid-semester courses for elective university credit to meet student demand;
2. Survey enrolled students to determine course topics for future mid-semester course offering;
3. Serve as a resource to colleges and program interested in offering mid-semester courses (e.g. course logistics, methods and effectiveness).

*Additional Comments:*

UNIV learning strategy courses are offered at mid-semester to help students acquire strategies to successfully complete coursework, maintain full-time status and continue qualification for financial assistance. Examples of courses offered: Speed Reading, Academic & Personal Effectiveness; Writing a Term/Research Paper; Math Study Skills. 99% of students surveyed enrolled in mid-semester courses indicate they have enrolled due to a need to maintain full-time status and/or to maintain eligibility for scholarships and financial aid.

**Part B. Inventory of Committees and Councils:**

Campuses have a variety of committees, councils and other governance structures that set policy, advise, and/or monitor aspects of the first year (e.g., admissions committee, retention committee, first-year council, general education curriculum committee). The task force will identify the committees and councils that have responsibility for aspects of the first year and describe each.

Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils: For each committee or council, please identify the following:

Name: Provide the campus-specific name for the committee/council.

Responsibility: Describe the committee/council's realm of responsibility for the first year.

Who Appoints: Name who appoints the committee/council.

Comments: Provide any comments about this committee/council (e.g., new, to be phased out starting next year, under review) that will be helpful to your committee members.

Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils			
Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
Academic Deans Council	academic and administrative policy recommendations, disseminate information, coordinate actions	position appointment	The Academic Deans Council (ADC) provides an administrative vehicle for the dissemination of information for matters of concern to the administration of the university on issues concerning academic programs and colleges; it makes recommendations to the President about problems relating to improvement in the administration of the institution; it makes recommendations to consider ways and means of improving the academic quality and other aspects of the colleges and institution; it coordinates efforts of the various deans and to provide for desirable uniformity in carrying out institutional policy.
Administrative Council	administrative policy/procedure recommendations	position appointment	The Administrative Council (AC) is responsible for communication; playing an advisory role, and providing recommendations for central administration.
Admissions Appeals Committee	review admissions petitions from first time freshmen	nominated by the dean of each college and appointed by the Provost	The Admission Appeals Committee (AAC) is responsible for reviewing all petitions for admission submitted by first-time freshmen that do not meet the new admission standards. It will be the responsibility of the petitioner to present a convincing rationale for granting an exception. The majority decision of the committee will be final in each case, with no appeal to any other person or group. A minimum of 5 committee members must be in attendance before a decision can be rendered on any petition. Alternates will be called as needed to participate in any meeting for which a minimum of 5 regular members cannot be present. The committee is chaired by the Director of Admissions. Members serve three-year staggered terms.

Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils (Continued)

Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
Associate Deans Academic Council	curriculum and student-related policies	position appointment	Includes the Associate Deans from each college (including the Graduate School, the Library, the Honors College, and the College of Extended Learning), the Associate VP of Enrollment Management, the Registrar, the Vice-Chair of the Faculty Senate, two representatives from the community college campuses, and a representative from the Provost's Office
Campus Planning Committee	recommendations regarding physical campus facilities and expansion plans	position and elected appointments	The Campus Planning Committee (CPC) will act in an advisory capacity to the President and Physical Plant Department to review plans for campus expansion and traffic flow, and to make recommendations on the location of new buildings and the effective use of existing facilities at New Mexico State University. Membership will be on a 3-year rotation basis (except for student members): one representative from each college (with a minimum of two deans); one member of the staff (elected by the Advisory Council on Administrative Policy); one student representative (appointed by the president of ASNMSU). Resource personnel to serve as staff for the committee: vice president for facilities, university space officer, and chief of police.
Corbett Center Student Union Board	recommends policies for use of Corbett Student Union Center	ASNMSU appointed and elected, faculty/staff appointments	The Corbett Center Student Union Board (CCSUB) recommends such policies as may be deemed necessary to govern the activities and conduct of members, guests, visitors, and organizations in, on, or about the premises. Such recommendations shall be subject to review and approval of the Vice President for Student Services prior to implementation. The CCSUB may formally consider matters directly and/or indirectly related to the operation, function, or activities of Corbett Center Student Union, including review and evaluation of attainment of the facility's purpose. The membership of the committee shall consist of the following members: The president of the Associated Students of NMSU (ASNMSU), or his/her designee, the vice president of ASNMSU, or his/her designee, A graduate student representative appointed by the Graduate Student Council, the president of the Union Program Council (UPC), as appointed during the spring semester, for a one-year term. Two student representatives, selected by the Residence Hall Association (RHA), during the fall semester, for a one-year term. Three students elected at large, one elected in the regular spring semester student elections and two students elected in the regular fall student elections. The Chair of the Faculty Senate, or his/her designee, as appointed in May for a one-year term. A university staff member (non-academic) recommended by the Advisory Council on Administrative Policy and appointed by the university President. One alumni member appointed by the Alumni Association Board for a two-year term. The director of Auxiliary Services who shall serve a continuous term as an ex-officio (nonvoting) member. The director of Corbett Center who shall serve a continuous term as an ex-officio (nonvoting)

Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils (Continued)

Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
Corbett Center Student Union Center Board (Continued)	recommends policies for use of Corbett Center	ASNMSU appointed and elected, faculty/staff appointments	(Continued) member and who shall also serve as the executive secretary of the Board and as such shall provide a recording secretary at meetings of the Board. Ex-officio members may be appointed by the Board to serve on the Board for a designated period of time not to exceed one year.
Disability Advisory Board	review concerns, ensure compliance with legal requirements	appointed by Provost	The purpose of the Disability Advisory Board (DAB) is to review concerns of persons with disabilities which come to its attention and to make recommendations to ensure NMSU's compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The committee chair and Vice President for Student Services recommend appointments to the Provost as needed.
Faculty Senate		elected	
Food Service Advisory Committee	recommendations related to NMSU Dining Services	students, staff, faculty appointments	The Food Service Advisory Committee (FSAC) shall have as its responsibility to recommend and advise the University Dining Services Director and the NMSU Liaison Officer (Director of Housing and Residential Life) on matters related to enhancements of the NMSU Dining Services. The primary emphasis of the committee shall focus on the boarding/dining operation. The secondary emphasis shall focus on the cash operations at various campus locations. Officers shall be elected from the membership by majority vote of the committee at its first regular meeting of the fall where a quorum is present. (It is preferred that the chairperson have one year of previous service on the committee.)
General Education Assessment Committee	provide assessment oversight for NMSU General Education Program	Provost	The purpose of the General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) is to provide oversight to the general education assessment program, identify strategies to enhance faculty involvement in the assessment program and assure that results are made available for use in program improvement. Members serve three-year staggered terms and may be appointed once.
General Education Course Certification Committee	review course proposals for compliance with the goals and requirements of the Gen Ed Curriculum	Provost	The purpose of the General Education Course Certification Committee (GECC) is to review general education course proposals and certify whether the courses meet the purposes of general education as specified in the approved Faculty Senate legislation. Recertification of courses will be required every four years, following an initial probationary period of one year. During the first year, the standing committee will meet with the faculty member in charge of each general education course to review the content and hear the faculty member's assessment of the effectiveness of the course in meeting the desired ends of the course.
Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee	recommendations to Associate Provost	position and selected appointments	The purpose of the Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee (MRRC) is to make recommendations to the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs on issues related to the recruitment and retention of minority students and faculty.

Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils (Continued)

Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
Outcomes Assessment Committee I	Assess Academic Achievement/Student Learning	appointed by Provost	Within the overall effort by NMSU to assess institutional effectiveness, Outcomes Assessment Committee 1 (OAC 1) has the following responsibilities: To design a program to assess the university's effectiveness in carrying out its mission in the area of academic achievement and student learning; to focus university attention on the success of academic programs in achieving student outcome goals; to monitor implementation of assessment processes in academic programs throughout the university, review outcomes information in light of institutional mission and goals and encourage use of assessment results in program planning and review. Members of the committee are appointed by the provost, with representation from each college and the library. The provost appoints the chairperson. The committee operates under the overall responsibility of the Office of the Provost.
Outcomes Assessment Committee II	Assess Student Academic Support/Campus Life	appointed by Provost	To design a program to assess the university's effectiveness in carrying out its mission in serving the educational support needs of a student body of various ages, interests, and cultural backgrounds; to focus university attention on the outcomes or impact of its academic support and campus life activities in achieving priority institutional goals; to monitor the implementation of assessment processes in academic support/campus life programs throughout the university, review outcomes information in light of institutional mission and goals, and encourage use of assessment results in program planning and review.
Parking Task Force	recommendations to Provost regarding parking issues	appointed by Provost	The purpose of the Parking Task Force (PTF) is to formulate recommendations to the provost on policies and procedures to implement and update NMSU's parking program and to review parking problems referred to the task force by the provost or the Police Department.
Provost's Committee for Coordination of First Year Initiatives	Coordinate and further develop a comprehensive strategy for revising the First Year Experience at NMSU	Provost	Formed by the Provost to coordinate the work of several entities including the Student Retention Advisory Team (SRAT), New College Initiative, FoE Project, NCA Re-accreditation Process, gateway and barrier course evaluation and the expansion of Learning Communities. First meeting held on Dec. 16, 2005 to review Provost's Position paper and committee charge. Copies of Challenging and Supporting the First Year Student and Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence were disseminated.
Residency Appeals Board	decisions on residency appeals	appointed by Provost	The Residency Appeals Board (RAB) hears the appeals of students regarding the registrar's decision of residency status for tuition purposes. The members are appointed by the provost and serve two-year terms.
Student Retention Advisory Team		President/Provost	



Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils (Continued)

Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
University Budget Committee	recommendations to President regarding budget priorities	position appointments	The University Budget Committee (UBC) is advisory to the president. The committee shall participate in annual budget hearings and shall recommend general funding priorities for the consideration of the president. The committee may also make recommendations pertaining to the budget process. The committee will annually receive a briefing on the budget from the vice president for business and finance. Faculty, staff, and student representatives will provide reports on committee actions to their respective organizations. Two Faculty Senate representatives will be elected by the Faculty Senate each April for two-year staggered terms, (each term beginning the day following the last official day of a spring semester and ending on the last official day of a spring semester). The Advisory Council on Administrative Policy representative will be elected by ACAP for a two-year term (each term beginning the day following the last official day of a spring semester and ending on the last official day of a spring semester).
University Discipline Committee	evaluate violations of Student Code of Conduct	appointed by VP Student Services	The purpose of the University Discipline Committee (UDC) is to serve the students, faculty, and staff by rendering prompt decisions on non-academic misconduct cases involving alleged student violation of the university's Student Code of Conduct. The Committee is composed of five administrative faculty members and four students. The faculty/staff members are appointed by the Vice President for Student Services to staggered 3-year terms from a pool of persons recommended each year by the Student Services Advisory Committee, and the students are appointed to 1-year term by the Vice President for Student Services from a group of persons recommended by the president of ASNMSU. The two faculty/staff members having seniority on the committee will serve as co-chairs for the UDC.
University Safety Committee		committee appointments?	The purpose of the University Safety Committee (USC) is to seek to recognize, evaluate, and recommend controls of university environmental factors which might cause impaired health, well-being, efficiency, or comfort. It guides and supports the work of the university's Safety Office toward these goals. It hopes to develop a positive attitude toward safety in the faculty and staff, as in the students, who expect NMSU to provide adequate training for their careers. The committee is representative of the university, with membership from areas involved in campus safety, those who have expressed an interest in membership, and who are recommended by the committee. Membership is continuous. Appointments are made with input from the committee and interested areas. The chair is appointed by the committee members.
University Fee Review Board	recommendations regarding fee proposals	position and selected appointments	The purpose of the University Fee Review Board (UFRB) is to improve communication between the Board of Regents and the Student Body on issues involving fees (except tuition). The board shall be used as a means of providing an avenue of student input to the administration on the collection and uses of student fees. The board shall meet 3 times a semester to review proposed changes in amount and



**Table B – Inventory of Committees and Councils (Continued)**

Name	Responsibility	Who Appoints	Additional Comments
University Fee Review Board (Continued)	recommendations regarding fee proposals	position and selected appointments	(Continued) use of fees charged to students, review distribution of student fee money, consult existing committees for input, initiate studies, and provide a channel of student ideas and suggestions on issues regarding fees. The board shall report its findings to the provost and the president of the university who shall review the findings and make a recommendation to the Board of Regents. The ASNMSU president will chair the board.
Women's Studies Steering Committee	Program recommendations	appointed by Women's Studies director?	The purpose of the Women's Studies Steering Committee (WSSC) is to assist the director of the Women's Studies Program in formulating and implementing policies that will further the goals of the program. To develop courses, programs, and research projects that offer students, faculty, and the community an opportunity to explore and analyze the historical, cultural, and social contributions of women previously not included in the regular curriculum. The committee meets once a month during the academic year and is chaired by the director.

**Part C. Inventory of First-Year Policies:**

The task force will inventory policies that are either solely aimed at first-year students or that particularly shape the experience of first-year students. Please consider policies that impact either the curricular and co-curricular experiences of students. Examples of first-year policies include parking/automobile restrictions for first-year students, required first-year courses, registration priority, and required orientation attendance.

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies: Indicate the following for each identified policy:

Name: Name or identify each policy.

Description: Provide a brief description of the policy.

Date: Indicate the approximate date when the policy was first established or most recently modified.

% of 1<sup>st</sup>-Yr Students: Report or estimate the percentage of first-year students who are directly affected by the policy.

Monitor/Enforcement: Describe how compliance is monitored and/or the policy is enforced.

Authority: Identify who has authority to: 1) modify or revoke the policy and 2) enforce the policy.

Additional Comments: Provide any comments about this policy that will be helpful to your committee members.

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies

Name	Description	% of 1st-Yr Students	Monitor/ Enforcement	Authority	Additional Comments
Deferred Payment Plan Policy	payment plan rules	0%	Business Office	Business Office, Office of the Provost	Students requesting a deferred payment plan arrangement must initially pay ten percent of tuition charges, with the balance due in four equal monthly installments within the semester. Summer sessions have one installment within the session. A carrying charge of \$3.50 per month will be assessed monthly for students using the deferred-payment plan. Any financial aid received must be paid towards balances owed. Additional penalty charges may be assessed for failure to make payments when due. The university reserves the right to deny a deferred payment plan to any student who has a poor credit rating or who has been negligent in making payments to the university for previous debts.
Early Admission Policy	for students who have not yet completed high school	0%	Department of Admissions	Admissions Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Deans Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	Currently enrolled high school students of superior academic ability may be admitted as early admission students prior to high school graduation. Documents to be submitted include regular application for admission, recommendation of the high school principal/counselor, parental permission, high school transcript, and ACT scores. Requirements to be admitted to the program are a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or an ACT of 19, and an interview with the director of admissions.
English Basic Skills Requirements		100%	Office of the Registrar	English Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	30 ACT English Score. Students may satisfy basic skills requirements in English by scoring 30 or higher on ACT English exams. However, students must still earn credit for ENGL 111G by one of these options: Students may satisfy English basic skills by passing ENGL 111G or ENGL 111H with a grade of C or higher. Students may earn credit for ENGL 111G or ENGL 111H by taking the College Level Examination Program subject exam in freshman college composition with a score of 57 (top quartile) or higher. Students may receive advanced placement credit for ENGL 111G or ENGL 111H by scoring 3, 4, or 5 on the English Advanced Placement Exam. Students may receive credit for another accredited institution. Students may receive credit for ENGL 111G by transferring 3 or more credits of college-level English composition with a grade of C or higher from a non- ENGL 111G by transferring 3 or more credits of college-level English composition, with

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies (continued)

Name	% of 1st-Yr Students	Monitor/ Enforcement	Authority	Additional Comments
English Basic Skills Requirements (Continued)	100%	Office of the Registrar	English Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	(Continued) a grade of C or above from accredited institution, and by writing a theme which is judged adequate by the Department of English. Foreign students who took the TOEFL examination must complete SPCD 111G with a satisfactory grade.  Developmental Courses. Students who score below 12 on the ACT English exam must pass two developmental English courses (CCDE 105N, CCDE 110N) before enrolling in ENGL 111G. Students who score 13 to 15 on the ACT English exam must pass one developmental English course (CCDE 110N) before enrolling in ENGL 111G. Developmental courses are included on the transcript and will be included in the calculation of the GPA; however, credits in developmental courses will not count toward a degree
GED Admissions Policy	0%	Department of Admissions	Admissions Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Deans Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	Any student who has successfully completed the GED may apply for admissions. The admission will depend upon satisfactory scores on the General Educational Development(GED) test and the American College Testing Program (ACT) test. If the student's original high school class was 1991 or later, an official high school transcript needs to be submitted to determine if the above listed high school preparation courses were completed.
General Admissions Policy	100%	admissions department level	Admissions Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Faculty Senate, Deans Council, Office of the Provost	Requirements for admission as a regular student include the following: Formal application for admission, accompanied by a \$15 nonrefundable application fee. An official transcript of the students' high school credits is to be sent directly from the high school to the Admissions Office. Official results of the American College Testing Program(ACT)battery are to be sent directly from the ACT Testing Center to the Admissions Office. Qualifications for undergraduate admission to NMSU are as follows: Graduation from any state high school or academy in the United States accredited by a regional accrediting association or approved by a state department of education or state universities. High school grade-point average of at least 2.0 and ACT standard composite score of at least 20; or high school grade-point average of at least 2.5; or ACT standard composite score of at least 21. Have met all but one of the minimum high school units listed below and have a high school grade point average of at least a 2.25 and an ACT standard composite score of 20.  The following minimum requirements with respect to high school preparation became effective with the class of 1991: English 4 units* Science 2 units beyond general science Mathematics 3 units** Foreign languages or fine arts 1 unit * Must include at least 2 units of composition, one of which must be a junior or senior-level course. ** From algebra I, algebra II, geometry, trigonometry, or advanced math.  First-time freshmen who do not meet the regular

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies (continued)

Name	% of 1st-Yr Students	Monitor/ Enforcement	Authority	Additional Comments
General Admissions Policy (Continued)	100%	admissions department level	Admissions Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Faculty Senate, Deans Council, Office of the Provost	(Continued) admission requirements will be refused admission and can appeal to the Admission Appeals Committee. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions.
Home School Student Admissions Policy	0%	Department of Admissions	Admissions Department, Associate Deans Academic Council, Deans Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	Students enrolled in a home school program may be accepted to NMSU if they meet the requirements for regular or provisional admission as previously stated. In addition, the home school educator must submit a transcript or document that lists the courses completed and grades earned by the student and also indicates the date the student completed or graduated from the home school program.
Late Registration Penalties	0%	Business Office	Business Office, Associate Deans Academic Council, Deans Council, Office of the Provost	A late registration or late payment penalty of \$25 for the first day and \$5 each additional day will be assessed if registration and payment or arrangements for payment have not been completed by the deadline as shown by the university calendar. Failure to make payment arrangements with the Business Office at the time of registration may result in additional liability.
Mandatory Academic Advising	0%	monitored at college level?	academic departments, academic colleges	This policy is not consistent across academic colleges.
Mandatory Meal Plan	0%			
NMSU Bookstore Charge Policy	0%	NMSU Bookstore	Business Office, Bookstore	<p>NMSU students are eligible to apply for a Student Charge Account at the NMSU Bookstore. Students can charge up to \$500 per semester. All charges will be billed to the student's university account. A new application must be completed each semester.</p> <p>A student must be currently enrolled in classes (minimum 6 credit hours) before an account can be opened.</p> <p>Upon receipt of the application, AN ACCOUNT WILL REQUIRE 24 HOURS or one business day to be activated. If a student is enrolled in 6 or more credit hours AND owes less than \$100, the student's NMSU account will be automatically approved and activated.</p> <p>The bookstore charge account will have a credit limit of \$500 per semester. It can be used at the NMSU Bookstore or the DABCC Bookstore. All charges will be billed to the student's university account. Refunds to an account will take two business days to post to the student's university account.</p> <p>The bookstore charge account will be closed for the semester on the last day of classes (Friday prior to finals week).</p> <p>The student must pay the account in full each semester through the University Accounts Receivable Office located in the Educational Services Center. An unpaid account will be subject to registration hold and non-renewal of the student's bookstore charge account.</p>

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies (continued)

Name	% of 1st-Yr Students	Monitor/ Enforcement	Authority	Additional Comments
NMSU Bookstore Charge Policy (continued)	0%	NMSU Bookstore	Business Office, Bookstore	(continued) The student will be required to renew the account each semester by filling out a new application. (The Student Charge Account is not available for the Summer sessions)
Non-Residential Requirement for Freshmen	0%			
Payment Methods	0%	Business Office	Business Office, Office of the Provost	Payment of charges can be completed with the Business Office by paying in full, arranging a deferred payment plan, processing a Financial Aid deferment, or third-party payment agreement. Course reservations may be Payments can be made by mail, web, telephone, or in person at the Business Office. Cash, checks, money orders and limited types of credit cards are accepted.
Provisional Admissions	0%	Department of Admissions	Department of Admissions, Associate Deans Council, Deans Council, Faculty Senate, Office of the Provost	A new student, other than a transfer student, who does not meet requirements for regular admission may be admitted to the College of Health and Social Services under the provisional program. To be admitted to provisional status, students must have a minimum high school grade point average of 2.25 and ACT composite score of 19 and meet the minimum high school preparation requirements listed above. Such a student must take at least 6, but not more than 12 credits, in a regular semester, and at least 3, but not more than 6 credits, in a single summer session. A provisional student earning a 2.0 grade-point average or higher in at least the minimum number of credits as stated above will be granted regular admission. Should the provisional student earn less than a 1.0 grade-point average in the first semester, further attendance will be denied.  A provisional student earning less than a 2.0 grade-point average, but more than a 1.0 grade-point average in at least the minimum number of credits as stated above, in the first semester may continue for one additional semester. However, a provisional student who fails to attain a 2.0 grade-point average during the second semester will be denied further attendance.
Resident Status for Tuition Purposes	0%	Office of the Registrar	New Mexico Department of Higher Education	
Student Academic Grievance Policy	0%	monitored at the department and college levels	Associate Deans Council, Office of the Provost	This policy was revised in 2004 to stop the process at the College Dean level. Previously, the final stage of appeal was to the Office of the Provost.
Student Account Policy	100%	Student Accounts Receivable	Student Accounts Receivable	Monetary balance of \$100 or less must be on student account for the student to register for Spring classes.
TB Policy	5%	Student Health Center	Student Health Center	If student does not complete testing before spring registration their account is blocked to prevent registering until TB test requirement is fulfilled.

Table C – Inventory of First-Year Policies (continued)

Name	% of 1st-Yr Monitor/ Students	Enforcement	Authority	Additional Comments
UNIV 150 Instructor Policies	0%	Center for Learning Assistance	CLA Director	Contains academic policies and course procedures for instructors of UNIV 150, The Freshman Year Experience course. Includes: activities required to meet course objectives and administrative policies concerning adding, dropping, tracking attendance and responding to student emergencies.
UNIV Study & Learning Strategy Course Syllabi	0%	Center for Learning Assistance	Center for Learning Assistance Director	Courses syllabi have detailed attendance and participation policies. Students enrolled in mid-semester courses are required to sign a copy of the policy indicating they have read and understand their rights and responsibilities of enrollment in the course.

#### Part D. Inventory of Courses:

There may be specific “first-year courses,” such as required courses for new students, or simply courses that, although open to any student, enroll a high proportion of first-year students. Because these “high enrollment” courses have a large impact on the first college year, they will be the focus of special attention during the self-study.

Table D1a is designed for campuses using a semester system and Table D1b is designed for campuses using a quarter system.

Table D1a - Inventory of High Enrollment First-Year Courses (Semester System): Identify the five courses that enroll the largest proportion of first-year students during the previous academic year. The task force should calculate the proportion of student enrollment using the formula provided in the following table. Course enrollment should be based on the campus’s census date (usually 10 – 14 days after classes start) using the most recent data available. Use the CPI definition of first-year student for all data points.

##### Column Descriptions

- Course Name: Provide the campus-specific course name.
- Fall Term - # 1st-Yr Students: Enter the total number of first-year students enrolled at the institution during the fall term (data point A1).
- Fall Term - #1st-Yr Students in Course: Enter the total number of first-year students enrolled for each course in the fall term (data point B1).
- Fall Term - % of 1st-Yr Students: Divide B1 by A1 to calculate the percentage of first-year students enrolled in each course (data point C1).
- Spring Term - # 1st-Yr Students: Enter the total number of first-year students enrolled at the institution during the spring term (data point A2).
- Spring Term - #1st-Yr Students in Course: Enter the total number of first-year students enrolled for each course in the spring term (data point B2).
- Spring Term - % of 1st-Yr Students: Divide B2 by A2 to calculate the percentage of first-year students enrolled in each course (data point C2).
- Year Total: To calculate the total first-year population served by these courses, add B1 + B2.

**Part D. Inventory of Courses (Continued):**

Table D1. Inventory of Courses  Course Name	Fall Term			Spring Term			Year Total
	# 1st-Yr Students (A1)	# 1st-Yr Students in Course (B1)	% of 1st-Yr Students in Course (C1 = B1/A1)	# 1st-Yr Students (A2)	# 1st-Yr Students in Course (B2)	% of 1st-Yr Students in Course (C2 = B2/A2)	B1 + B2
English 111	2111	999	47%	1851	538	29%	1537.00
Computer Sci 110	2111	540	26%	1851	354	19%	894.00
Mathematics 115	2111	440	21%	1851	320	17%	760.00
Sociology 101	2111	331	16%	1851	190	10%	521.00
University 150	2111	534	25%	1851	18	1%	552.00

Table D2 – DFWI Ratio for High Enrollment Courses: For each of the five courses identified in Table D1a or D1b, calculate the proportion of first-year students who earned a very low grade (a grade of D or equivalent), failed the course (a grade of F or equivalent), withdrew before completing the course, or received a grade of “incomplete” in the course. Using the campus’s grading scale for each course, calculate the percent of first-year students who received a grade of D, F, W, I (or equivalent) as follows.

**Column Descriptions**

Course Name: Provide the campus-specific course name used in Table D1a or D1b.

Total # 1st-Yr Students in Course (fall/winter/spring terms): For each course, please calculate the total enrollment of first-year students (fall + spring for semester institutions and fall + winter + spring for institutions on the quarter system.) For semester systems, sum  $X = A1 + A2$  from Table D1a. For quarter systems, sum  $X1 = A1 + A2 + A3$  from Table D1b.

Total # 1<sup>st</sup>-Yr Students Earning DFWI Grades (or equivalent): Determine the total number of first-year students with grades of D, F, W, or I at the end of each course (data point Y).

Percent DFWI: Divide the number of first-year students with DFWI grades by the total number of first-year students enrolled to calculate the percent of DFWI grades ( $Z = Y / X$ ).

Additional Comments: Provide any comments that will be helpful to your committee members.

Table D2. Inventory of Courses  Course Name	Total # 1st-Yr Students in Course (X)	Total # 1st-Yr Students Earning DFWI Grades (Y)	Percent DFWI (Z)	Comments
English 111	1537	271	18%	
Computer Sci 110	894	138	15%	
Mathematics 115	760	334	44%	
Sociology 101	521	130	25%	
University 150	552	75	14%	

Table D3 (optional) – Inventory of High DFWI Rated Courses: DFWI rates can be high in courses that do not enroll large numbers of first-year students and may be of interest to the task force. Ideally, the task force would identify the specific DFWI rate of all courses that enroll a significant number of first-year students (10% or more of the students enrolled in the course are first-year students, or any course with at least 5 first-year students enrolled). While table D3 is recommended, it is acknowledged that some institutions do not normally organize their student records such that these calculations could be performed without considerable programming costs. For each course, provide the following information:

**Part D. Inventory of Courses (Continued):**

Column Descriptions

Course Name: Provide the campus-specific course name.

DFWI Rate: Two options are presented. The task force may calculate the total DFWI percentage for any course, using the grades from all students in the course, or may calculate only the DFWI rate for first-year students in each course. The formula is the number of students who are classified as "DFWI" (either all students or first-year only) divided by the total enrollment in the course (using the same classification as in the first data).

Comments: Please provide any comments that will be helpful to your task force members.

**Table D3 DFWI Rate is not provided.**

**Part E. Inventory of First-Year Demographic Information:**

Because students enter college at various points in time and with differing academic backgrounds, it is not always easy to define the first-year student cohort for a particular academic year. The series of tables below will develop a composite demographic picture of first-year students and identify the various ways that first-year students can be grouped when studying and planning improvements to the first year.

Table E1 - Number of First-Year Students by Entry Point (Semester System): Please report the number and proportion of new first-year students who entered at each point (fall, spring, and summer terms) for the last academic year. You may also wish to provide this information for the two previous academic years and create a three-year average.

Number: Enter the number of newly entering first-year students (first time at your institution and who fit the CPI definition of first-year student). (NOTE: Institutions on semester systems should enter a zero for the "Winter Term" row; institutions on quarter systems should use this row.)

TOTAL: Sum the "Number" column to calculate the total number of first-year students entering across the academic year.

% of Total: Calculate the percentage of first-year students entering in each term. Divide the "Number" value for each semester/term by the "TOTAL" to create that percentage.

Table E1. Number of 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Students by Entry Point	Academic Year 2004		Academic Year 2003		Academic Year 2002		Three-Year Average	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Fall Term	2048	95%	2014	94%	1979	93%	2014	94%
Spring Term	53	2%	74	3%	75	4%	67	3%
Summer Term(s)	62	3%	52	2%	70	3%	61	3%
TOTAL	2163		2140		2124		2142	

Table E2 - First-Year Student Profile: Identify the approximate number of first-year students in each subpopulation listed below and calculate the percentage the group represents in the total first-year population (Number in Category / TOTAL enrollment from Table E1). You may also wish to provide this information for the two previous academic years and create a three-year average. (NOTE: Please save data in Table E1 prior to working with this table.)



**Part E. Inventory of First-Year Demographic Information (Continued):**

Table E2. 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Student Profile	Academic Year 2004		Academic Year 2003		Academic Year 2002		Three-Year Average	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Placed into only one developmental course	421	19%	455	21%	396	19%	424	20%
Placed into two or more developmental courses	268	12%	306	14%	295	14%	290	14%
Played on an Intercollegiate athletic team	85	4%	79	4%	69	3%	78	4%
Lived on campus			954	45%	950	45%		
Received financial aid	1941	90%	1875	88%	1888	89%	1901	89%
Enrolled full-time	2133	99%	2111	99%	2077	98%	2107	98%
Entered as a first-generation college student	853	39%	919	43%	949	45%	907	42%
Entered college over the age of 25	8		14	1%	22	1%	15	1%

Table E3 - First-Year Gender Information: Identify the approximate number of first-year students that are male or female in the table below. Also, calculate the percentage of the total first-year population (Number in Category/TOTAL enrollment from Table E1). The task force can elect to use a snapshot of the first year by looking at the most recent prior academic year, or develop an average of the last 3 academic years. (NOTE: Please save data in Table E1 prior to working with this table.)

Table E3. 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Gender	Academic Year 2004		Academic Year 2003		Academic Year 2002		Three-Year Average	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Male	986	46%	990	46%	935	44%	970	45%
Female	1177	54%	1150	54%	1189	56%	1172	55%

Table E4 - First-Year Race/Ethnicity Information: Identify the approximate number of first-year students in each racial/ethnic category in the table below. Also, calculate the percentage of the total first-year population (Number in Category / TOTAL enrollment from Table E1). The task force can elect to use a snapshot of the first year by looking at the most recent prior academic year, or develop an average of the last 3 academic years. NOTE: Race/Ethnic categories are identical to IPEDs categories. (NOTE: Please save data in Table E1 prior to working with this table.)

Table E 4. 1 <sup>st</sup> Year Race/Ethnicity Information	Academic Year 2004		Academic Year 2003		Academic Year 2002		Three-Year Average	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Nonresident alien	10		11	1%	19	1%	13	1%
Black, non-Hispanic	73	3%	60	3%	65	3%	66	3%
American Indian/Alaska Native	70	3%	80	4%	76	4%	75	4%
Asian/Pacific Islander	22	1%	34	2%	35	2%	30	1%
Hispanic	1003	46%	960	45%	919	43%	961	45%
White, non-Hispanic	985	46%	995	46%	1010	48%	997	47%
Race/ethnicity unknown								

**Part F: Inventory of First-Year Data and Assessments:**

The task force will inventory data sources and past assessment efforts that have been conducted over the past three years that are focused on the first year of college. Please note that the task force may wish to use these data at some point, but for the purposes of the CPI, the task is simply to determine what sources of data exist and where they are located.

Data should be entered into one of the tables that follow according to when the assessment is conducted or data are recorded. Tables are provided for data collected at four points in time, 1) Pre-Enrollment, 2) Pre-term, 3) First-year, and 4) Subsequent years. For each item entered, provide the following information:

Name of Data/Assessment: Provide a name of the data or assessment.

Description: Provide a summary description of the type of data/assessment.

Location of Data Base: Provide the location of the data (i.e., office, name of database and/or server, etc.)

Additional Comments: Provide any comments that would be helpful to task force members about each item.

Table F1 - Pre-Enrollment: Information is generally collected from a prospective student's first contact through initial matriculation to the campus. Example sources: admissions office, departmental recruiting, SAT/ACT profile data, etc.

Table F1 – Pre-Enrollment			
Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
TRiO Upward Bound Program	College Preparatory Program; Program Files/Evaluations/Federal Annual Performance Reports	Student Access Database, Hardman Hall Room 210	Funded by the United States Department of Education, the TRiO Upward Bound Program provides the skills and motivation necessary for 95 secondary students to successfully complete a secondary education while preparing for entry to and success in post-secondary education. The purpose is accomplished by recruiting high school students/parents (freshman-senior) to participate in the project's Saturday Academic Sessions, Academic Advising Sessions, workshops and the Summer Residential Program. The program's target population includes students who meet the federal income/first-generation criteria and the projects academic need policy.

Table F2 - Pre-Term: Between the point of formal acceptance to the institution and the first day of class, data might be collected in the form of placement testing, roommate preference surveys, and other new student surveys. Example sources: orientation office, residence life, placement, advising, etc.

Table F2 – Pre-Term

Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
TRiO Upward Bound Program	American College Testing Scores for Purpose of Course Placement	NMSU VISTAS/Program Files/UB Student Access Database/Hardman Hall 201, 210	Bridge students review their ACT scores with a Program Academic Coordinator. Students are advised of their placement status in English and Math at NMSU or DABCC. Students are encouraged to re-take the ACT if a higher score is required to place into college-level English/Math. Students are advised of the Math Placement Exam (MPE) as an alternative to re-taking the ACT for the purpose of placing into regular college-level math.

Table F3 - First Year: During the first year of college, data are regularly collected and added to student records automatically or are collected through surveys, focus groups, portfolios, and other data collection methods. Example sources: assessment office, registrar’s records, first-year seminars, academic departments, academic advising, student affairs, etc.

Table F3 – First Year

Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
Academic support services program tracking	Student-Athlete Database	Fulton Center, Room 130	<p>Participation in the NMSU Athletics Academic Program; Program Files/Program Evaluations; NCAA Academic Progress Reports; Continuing Eligibility Reports; End of the Semester and/or Academic Year Reports; Academic Honors Reports</p> <p>The mission of the Athletics Academic Program (AAP) is to teach student-athletes to take personal responsibility for their role in balancing the time demands as well as the physical and mental expectations within their academic and athletic worlds. The AAP Staff understand that participating in NCAA Division I athletics presents additional challenges for student-athletes. The Aggie Academic Center provides student-athletes with an environment that promotes respect and integrity for academic honesty and success. The AAP Staff are committed to coordinating and implementing a variety of support systems to encourage the academic success of our student-athletes as they pursue their college degrees and athletic goals.</p>

Table F3 – First Year (Continued)

Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
Course Placement for Student-Athletes	ACT Scores/NCAA Clearinghouse	VISTAS/NCAA Compliance Software/Student-Athlete Files/NCAA Clearinghouse, Fulton Center	Student-athletes are advised of their placement status in English and Math at NMSU or DABCC. Student-athletes are given information regarding the Math Placement Exam (MPE) as opportunity for possible placement into a Las Cruces campus math course depending on their test scores. In addition, student-athletes are provided with an explanation regarding the allowable number of degree countable credit hours for developmental courses as governed by NCAA academic requirements.
Eligibility Reports/Student-Athlete Evaluations	Student-athlete tracking/Individualized Learning Plans	Fulton Center, Aggie Academic Center, Room 130	<p>Student-athletes degree percentage, progress toward degree, semester and cumulative GPA are evaluated to determine the academic success and progress made toward meeting NCAA and NMSU academic requirements. An individual's academic status is discussed with him or her to ensure an understanding of all academic criteria. In addition, conferences take place with all Head Coaches to discuss their evaluation of program support services.</p> <p>Student-athletes complete an evaluation of services survey. The information gathered through their comments as well as those provided by Head Coaches provide the Athletics Academic Program Coordinator with an opportunity to make necessary changes to improve the overall effectiveness of the academic support services for future student-athletes.</p>
Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences	Self assessment tool for students to identify preferred learning styles	Center for Learning Assistance	
Learning/Study Skills Inventories	Self-assessment tool for students to gain an awareness of areas to improve study and learning strategies	Center for Learning Assistance	Assesses all major learning and study areas.

Table F3 – First Year (Continued)

Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
McGraw-Hill	Standardized instrument; Identifies students' strengths and challenges in: reading, writing, vocabulary and spelling	Center for Learning Assistance	Data from approximately 25 years of administration on file at CLA.
Nelson-Denny Reading Test	Standardized assessment students' reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading rate	Center for Learning Assistance	Used in UNIV courses and with individual students to assess reading ability. Results on file at CLA.
Student Housing Survey	Students are surveyed relative to their satisfaction with housing on-campus. Data is broken out by classifications to include satisfaction measures for 1st year students	Housing and Residential Life	Evaluation data and comments on file.
Student-Athlete Transcripts/Advising Rates Documents	NCAA Academic Success	Fulton Center, Aggie Academic Center, Room 130	Student-athletes are tracked through the completion of an undergraduate degree (occasionally a graduate degree if eligibility is not exhausted) for a period of five (5) years. NMSU and non-university databases are used to track enrollment status and a degree completion date.
TRiO Student Support Services	Program Outcomes Assessment/Student Participant Evaluation/Mentor/Tutor Evaluation	SSS Program Office, 143 Garcia Annex	Outcomes Reports on file Evaluation data and comments on file. Data is used to identify areas to improve program services.
TRiO Upward Bound Program	Bridge Student Grades and Evaluation	VISTAS, SAM, National Student Clearinghouse/Hardman Hall 201, 210; Program Files/ Hardman Hall	<p>Bridge student grades are reviewed to determine the academic success and progress made by participants based on university established criteria (e.g. good standing, etc). These grades are discussed with students on an individual basis for the purpose of ensuring students of their status with the university academic progress policies.</p> <p>Bridge students complete an evaluation of the TRiO Upward Bound Program's Bridge Component. The information is collected through the utilization of survey research methods that encompass quantitative and qualitative scientific practices. The information is then employed to make necessary changes to improve the overall effectiveness of the Bridge experience for future participants.</p>

Table F3 – First Year (Continued)			
Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
UNIV Course Evaluation	Results of student evaluation of all UNIV courses	Center for Learning Assistance	Compilation of course evaluations for UNIV 150 from 1991-2005 on file.
UNIV Workshop Evaluation	Students evaluate workshop content and effectiveness of presenter.	Center for Learning Assistance	Evaluation data and comments on file.

Table F4 - Subsequent Years: Understanding what happened in the first year often requires data collection at later points. For example, data on retention, ultimate choice of major, or various learning outcomes must be collected at points after the first year. Example sources: registrar's records, enrollment management records, assessment office, etc.

Table F4 – Subsequent Year			
Data/Assessment	Description	Location of Database	Comments
Analysis of Freshman Year Experience (UNIV 150) on Student Retention Fall 1991-Fall 2000	Report Date: November 28, 2001	Office of Institutional Research	Analysis of students enrolled in UNIV 150. Finding: 1. "The one-year retention rate all years combined was statistically higher overall and for many of the individual years for the FYE students than for the no-FYE students. The two-year rate was positive for the FYE freshmen, and was significantly higher for the three-year rate."
Analysis of Freshman Year Experience (UNIV 150) on Student Retention, Fall 2000-Fall 2002	Report Date: Spring 2003	Office of Institutional Research	Finding: 1. "Students who had not yet selected a major tended to stay at NMSU at a higher rate if they took UNIV 150 than unclassified students who did not (65% versus 59%, p=0.0015)." Finding: 2. "A large percentage of minority students and unclassified students continue to be served by the course, and continue to significantly benefit from it. The course also continues to benefit students who are less prepared for college according to their high school academic performance."
Faculty/Staff Survey of CLA Services	Data collected Fall 1999 & Fall 2004	Center for Learning Assistance	Survey of faculty/staff to: 1: assess faculty/staff knowledge of CLA Services; 2. Receive feedback re: perception of students' academic support needs
TRIO Upward Bound Program	Bridge student academic transcripts; UB Alumni college completion rates	VISTAS, SAM, National Student Clearinghouse/Hardman Hall 201, 210	Bridge students are tracked though the completion of a baccalaureate degree or a period of six academic years. University and non-university databases are utilized to confirm enrollment and college completion.

©2004-2006 Policy Center on the First Year of College  
 Foundations of Excellence® in the First College Year

## Appendix C: Evidence Library Document List

Last Updated July 11, 2006

Number	Title/Description
1.	Strategic Directions Retention Goals retention related targets found in the Strategic Directions Document
2	Undergraduate Catalog (the most current Undergraduate Catalog posted on the Web)
3	Student Handbook
4	Introductory Overview of Gateway Courses - Fall 2004
5	NMSU Scholarships Eligibility and continuation requirements for NMSU scholarships (ex. Regents Scholarship)
6	Living the Vision: A Performance Plan for Excellence (Version approved by the Regents) Cynda Clary
7	Student Characteristics Summary: 04-05 Academic Year Las Cruces Campus (all students, not sure Fall 04 or Spring 05)
8	Undergraduate Retention Rates Report: November 2004
9	NMSU Fall 2005 Factbook (Information on enrollments, student characteristics, faculty characteristics, etc.)
10	Memo re: SRAT Retention Inventory Spring/Fall 2005 Retention Inventory Description
11	SRAT Inventory Legend (created to describe retention efforts reported by Colleges and Student Services Division)
12	SRAT 2005 Retention Inventory Results
13	Provost Flores' View for the First-Year Experience (memo from Provost Flores to the Coordination of First Year Initiatives Committee, December 14, 2005)
14	Dimension Teams (List of Dimension Teams members, as of January 18, 2006)
15	Dimension Team Contact List (Excel file with contact information for Dimension Team members, as of January 18, 2006)
16	Mission Statements for NMSU Colleges/Departments (includes statements found on the web or provided to Cynda Clary)
17	Living the Vision (released in 09/05 as the mission statement of the institution)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title/Description</b>
18	Subpopulations in Faculty/Staff Survey (description of subpopulations in faculty/staff survey due to branching questions)
19	2nd National Survey of 1st Year Academic Practices (2002 survey conducted by the Policy Center on the First College Year)
20	Freshman Retention and Graduation Rates, Cohorts 1991 – 2004, Overall and by Gender and by Ethnicity
21	Fall 2005 Update to Gateway Courses (includes more courses than the top five listed in the CPI)
22	Freshman Scholarship Alumni Association
23	Services for Students with Disabilities (Information of how to register, access, and receive accommodations)
24	Institutional Research: Freshman Gender Statistics
25	First Generation Programs: CAMP
26	Library Services for First-year Students (letter from Dean Titus detailing library services for first and second year students)
27	Addressing diversity issues at NMSU - Dr. Don Pepion, Director of American Indian Programs
28	Chicano Programs
29	Black Programs
30	American Indian Programs
31	Army ROTC
32	Arts & Sciences Advising Document (description of advising policies, procedures, course placement and selection)
33	Greek Life
34	Students Residing on Campus Subpopulation
35	Athletics Subpopulation
36	CHANCE Task Force Report Description of the CHANCE program for addressing the issues of alcohol abuse and related problems for students.



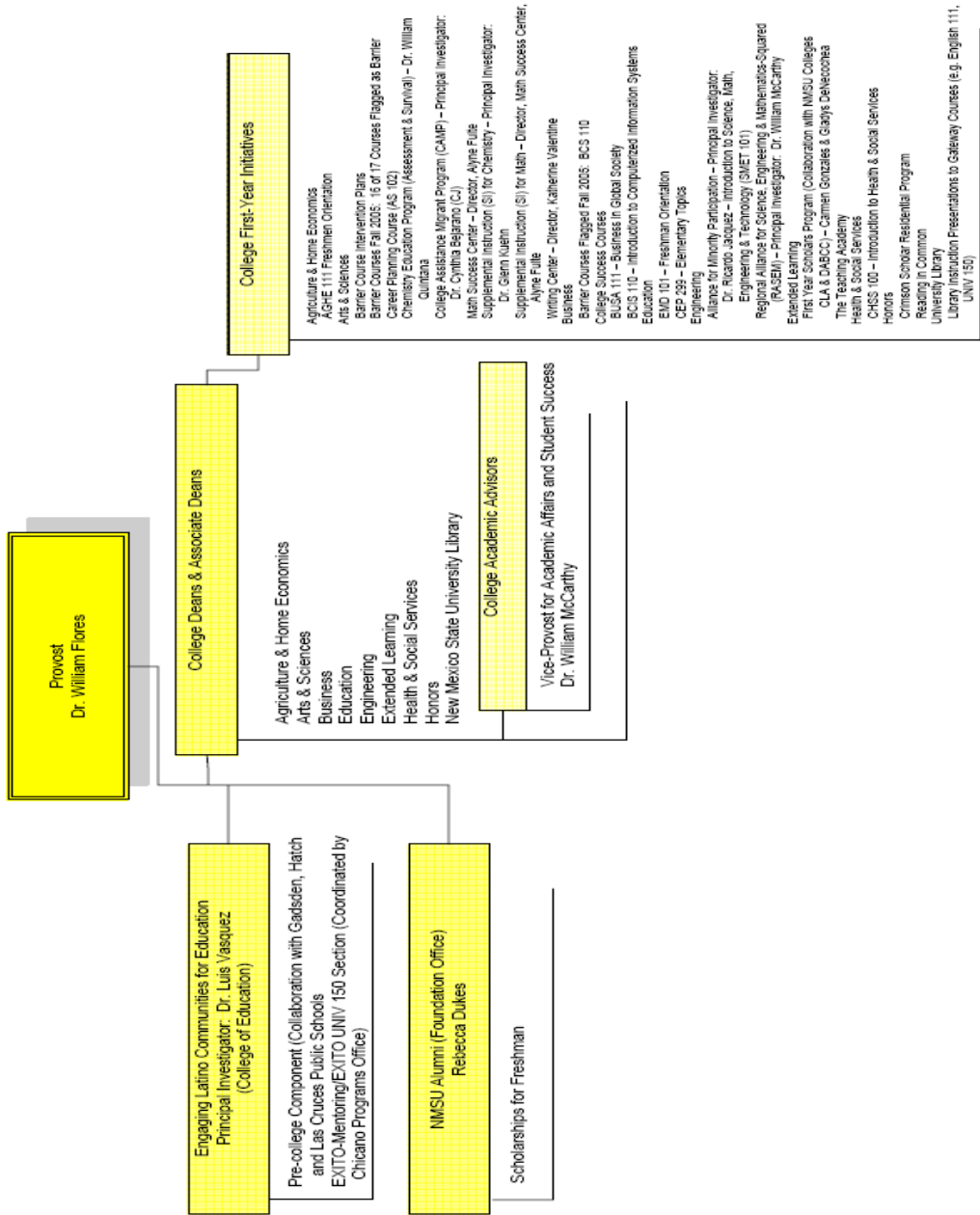
<b>Number</b>	<b>Title/Description</b>
37	Group Comparison of FoE Campus Climate Survey Means in Diversity Interactions and Behaviors Differing means can be observed based on groups for diversity interactions and behaviors
38	Transfer Students Subpopulation
39	Honors College Subpopulation
40	Fall 2005 UNIV 150 Course Evaluation Compilation Student Evaluations
41	Admitted Freshman Newsletter Example
42	Monthly on-line news letter
43	Post-Admissions Communication 06'
44	HS Counselor Student Registration Notification
45	Registration Notification-New Freshmen
46	Sample Freshman Admission Letter & Status Page
47	Honors College 'Reading in Common' Program A summer reading program for Honors College freshmen.
48	Basic Skills Requirements Options
49	Credit by Examination CLEP and advanced placement information
50	Math Placement Exam
51	Language Placement Exam
52	Advanced Placement Exams
53	University Transition Program
54	Trio Program
55	Upward Bound
56	Math/English Placement Matrix
57	Arts & Sciences Advising Center Link to the NMSU College of Arts & Sciences Advising Center web page
58	General Advice for Students: General Advising Help for Students (from the Counseling Center)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title/Description</b>
59	Health & Social Services Advising Center, NMSU College of Health & Social Services Advising Center web page
60	Biology Department Advising Link to the NMSU Department of Biology Advising web page
61	Civil & Geological Engineering Majors Advising Link to NMSU Department of Civil & Geological Engineering Advising web page
62	College of Business Advising Center Link to the NMSU College of Business Advising Center web page
63	College of Business Advising Document Link to the NMSU College of Business Advising document
64	College of Education Advising Center Link to the NMSU College of Education Advising Center web page
65	Department of Music Registration and Advising Link to NMSU Department of Music registration and advising information
66	AWW Graphs
67	AWW Family Summary
68	AWW Student Graphs
69	Organizational Chart Student Support
70	Organizational Charts: Academic/Academic Support & Committees
71	FYE (UNIV150/350) Program Hall of Fame Recognizing students, staff, faculty, administration
72	FYE Instructor Handbook 2006
73	"Journeys of Discovery" A proposal for a new 1-credit freshman seminar series to be developed and taught by faculty (William Eamon, Dean, Honors College)
74	UNIV 150 Class Assignment - Resume & Cover Letter Assignment for Freshmen in UNIV 150
75	UNIV 150 Class Research Assignment - Research Assignment on Career Choice
76	College Advising & Mentoring Survey Excel spreadsheet with the results from a survey of how colleges conduct advising and mentoring of first year students.
77	College of Arts & Sciences Summary of First Year Practices, 2005/2006

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title/Description</b>
78	College of Arts & Sciences First Year Student Faculty Training Program Summary of faculty development activities
79	American Indian Programs Native American Cultural Center
80	Update 7-11-06 Org Chart Acad & Comm Support Organization chart for units and committees that provide direct service to first-year students.

# Appendix D: Organizational Charts and Committees

## Provide Direct Service to First-Year Students (Academic/Academic Support)



## Provide Direct Service to First-Year Students

### COMMITTEES

Academic Dean's Council Provost	Faculty Senate Provost	New College Curriculum Planning Committee Provost	The University Budget Committee (UBC) Advisory to the President
Administrative Council President	Food Service Advisory Committee Advise University Dining Services Director, NMSU Liaison Officer	Outcomes Assessment Committee II Provost	Student Retention Advisory Team President/Provost
Admissions Appeals Committee Provost	General Education Assessment Committee Provost	Parking Task Force Provost	University Discipline Committee Dean, Student Services
Associate Deans Academic Council Larry Olsen, Chair	General Education Course Certification Committee Provost	Provost's Committee for the Coordination of First Year Initiatives Provost	University Fee Review Board ASNMSU President, Chair
Barrier Courses in the College of Arts & Sciences Dean & Associate Dean	Higher Learning Commission President/Provost	Recruitment & Retention Committee Associate Provost for Academic Affairs	University Safety Committee Sr. Vice President for Planning, Physical Resources and University Relations
Corbett Center Student Union Board (CCSUB) VP, Business & Finance	Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee Associate Provost for Academic Affairs	Residency Appeals Board Provost	Women's Studies Steering Committee Director, Chair
Disability Advisory Board Provost			

## **Appendix E: The Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Report Card**

*The following narrative was provided by the Policy Center on the First Year of College to explain the process and purpose of the following “Report Card.” Editorial changes have been made to align the narrative with New Mexico State University.*

This report card represents the final step in the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> process. It is the culmination of a nine- to twelve-month effort of analysis and planning focused on the experience of new students. This report card is based on an aspirational model of the first year produced in 2003 by the Policy Center on the First Year of College and its research partners, and 219 four-year colleges and universities. In 2005, the model was adapted for two-year higher education by 82 public and private two-year colleges working with the Policy Center. That model, consisting of nine Foundational Dimensions<sup>®</sup> identifies characteristics of excellence in the new student experience. Because the Dimensions focus on institutional structures, policies, and processes (the decisions institutions make about organizing and delivering the new student experience), the model is useful in confirming effective practice and/or providing direction for improvement efforts.

The core work of the project was conducted by NMSU’s Foundations of Excellence Task Force with assistance from the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Educational Benchmarking, Inc. By using a series of performance indicators and a variety of data sources, the Task Force carefully reviewed the campus efforts that align with each Dimension. These reviews resulted in a collective judgment about NMSU’s level of achievement on each of the performance indicators.

The final step in the process was to produce single-grade indicators of the institution's achievement of each Dimension. Because these grades are based on judgments made by the NMSU campus task force, they are not intended to be used in comparison to any other institution or in a ranking system. The Foundations Report Card can be used most effectively as an indicator of relative grades within NMSU. The grades reflect the best collective judgment of each Dimension Team and are supported by the evidence collected during the project. Grades will not be made public by the Policy Center in any manner that identifies individual institutions.

### **Foundational Dimensions Grades**

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. **Philosophy: D-**

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. **Organization: C+**

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. **Learning: C-**

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. **Faculty: C**

Foundations Institutions facilitate appropriate student transitions through policies and practices that are intentional and aligned with institutional mission. Beginning with recruitment and admissions and continuing through the first year, institutions communicate clear 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. **Transitions: C-**

Foundations Institutions serve all first-year students according to their varied needs. The process of anticipating, diagnosing, and addressing needs is ongoing and is subject to assessment and adjustment throughout the first year. Institutions provide services with respect for the students' abilities, backgrounds, interests, and experiences. Institutions also ensure a campus environment that is inclusive and safe for all students. **All Students: B**

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. **Diversity: B-**

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). **Roles & Purposes: D**

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 institution's 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 and scholarship on the first college year. **Improvement: C**



## **Appendix F: Report on a Summit of the Leadership**

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

August 10-11, 2006

To Consider and Develop Recommendations on  
The 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Success Initiative Proposals  
Prepared by the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Task Force

Submitted

to

Provost William Flores

August 29, 2006

## A SUMMIT OF THE LEADERSHIP-- NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

August 10-11, 2006

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) Task Force made eleven thematic recommendations. These recommendations provided the topics for seven work sessions on day one of the Summit. Fifteen groups of 9-10 people, carefully structured to provide diversity of expertise and perspective, worked in parallel on the same seven topics. The work sessions' results suggest that participants were philosophically and conceptually favorably disposed toward the FoE recommendations. This was manifest in a broad and constructive array of recommendations on practical considerations involved in implementation of the FoE recommendations. For each work session, groups made three recommendations, identified major barriers, and noted strategies to overcome those barriers. The groups also distributed 100 points between their three recommendations to indicate relative importance. The weights, summed for common themes across all fifteen groups, provided a nominal, aggregate sense and ranking of the relative importance of each of the themes.

In evaluating Summit outcomes, it is important to adopt the perspective that the grouping of common themes from each of the seven work sessions on an FoE recommendation and their relative rankings provide a useful sense of issues that fifteen groups, working in isolation found to be important. Their practical, objective value was to provide a broadly based, self-developed, common point of departure for discussion on day two of the Summit.

On day two, groups received the aggregated, thematically organized, and ranked results of day one's work. The groups then considered the top three themes that emerged from their collective work with the prerogative of adding a fourth, "wildcard" theme to address a critical issue not reflected in those top three themes. Groups then distributed 100 points between the themes (3 or 4) to indicate relative importance. With a common starting point, day two's work provides the basis for the following Thematic Outcomes and Action Item recommendations.

#### Thematic Outcomes

**Philosophy**—Reflects NMSU commitment to diversity, student growth and success, and the university's intent to be responsive to student needs

**Organization**—University-wide, organizationally cross-cutting in scope, responsive to immediate and long term needs of all constituencies (students, colleges, departments, programs), led by a senior administrator with direct report to the Provost, and authority and resources to act

**Faculty & Staff Development**—Incentives and rewards for student growth and success activities are on par with research; relevant professional development activities are mandatory for faculty and staff; and priority for student success in resource allocation supports this emphasis

Philosophy Implementation—Implementation will incorporate documentation for comprehensive assessment of outcomes with established baseline performance criteria and expectations from which individual and unit assessments are developed

Common Core Curriculum—The common core curriculum is compact, non-disciplinary, thematic, diverse in content, and oriented to providing students with the necessary tools to grow as individuals and students and to be successful in the academic path of their choosing and in their post-NMSU life

Required Orientation—The orientation program is experiential in nature and focused on rapidly and successfully transitioning 1<sup>st</sup> Year students (and relevant stakeholders, e.g., parents, spouses, children) from secondary school (and other backgrounds) to the university with all its diverse dimensions (academic and extra-curricular, social, cultural, etc.)—with appropriate extensions and variations in programming to address the needs of a highly diverse incoming student population

Communications Program—The student communication system is multimodal (including required NMSU Email), comprehensive in scope, inclusive (all students, families, alumni, faculty, staff, other stakeholders), interactive, biased toward the information needs of 1<sup>st</sup> Year students, and based on an information “push” model to insure all critical, important, and topical, student-oriented information is received by all students in a timely manner

The summit focused on needs and activities that cut across all intra-institutional boundaries. Discussions of participation in programming, incentives, etc., refer to involvement at the level of the whole institution—not the college, department or program—where much good work is already taking place. While there are implications for activity at those levels, the first and most important line of engagement is at the university level. It is development of and participation in a coherent, coordinated initiative to enhance the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student experience at the university level that is the goal of the work reported on here, and the emphasis of the action items that follow:

#### Action Items<sup>1</sup>

The following action items are presented in logical sequence (a critical path). To insure broadest possible support, actions must fully consider the recommendations, barriers, and mitigation strategies developed by Summit participants.

##### 1. Philosophy and Mission Statements

Develop an NMSU Philosophy Statement on 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Success, and,

Develop a Mission Statement for the NMSU entity responsible for implementing the NMSU philosophy at the university level

Responsible: A small group of individuals drawn from the FoE Task Force, Summit participants (including students), and others as appropriate

---

<sup>1</sup> Recommendations regarding *Faculty and Staff Development* (4A), *Common Core Curriculum* (4B), and (4C) *Orientation* are stated as contingent upon execution of Recommendations 1, 2A, and 2C. They are in the body of the document.

Time Frame: Two (2) weeks from date of charge by Provost

Products: Drafts for distribution and comment before submission to the NMSU Regents<sup>2</sup>

## 2A. Organization

Develop a proposed cross-cutting, organizational structure for a new entity responsible for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Success oriented programming

Responsible: A small group of individuals drawn from the FoE Task Force, Summit participants (including students), and others as appropriate

Time Frame: Four (4) weeks from date of receipt of the draft Philosophy and Mission statements (in anticipation approval by the NMSU Regents)

Products: Draft for distribution and comments before submission to the NMSU Regents.

## 2B. Communications

Begin design and development of student needs oriented communications program starting with immediate requirement that all students have and use an NMSU Email address (their NMSU Email may be redirected).

Responsible: A small group of individuals drawn from the FoE Task Force, Summit participants (including students), and others as appropriate

Time Frame: Four (4) weeks from date of receipt of the draft Philosophy and Mission statements—in anticipation of approval by the NMSU Regents

Products: Draft for distribution and comments before implementation by Provost

## 2C. Incentives For Participation

Develop an incentive structure to motivate faculty, staff, and student participation in highly focused 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student success related activities, e.g., teaching improvement, service, orientation, extra-curricular activities, etc.

Responsible: A small group of individuals drawn from the FoE Task Force, Summit participants (including faculty and students), additional faculty, and others as appropriate

Time Frame: Four (4) weeks from date of receipt of the draft Philosophy and Mission statements—in anticipation of their approval by the NMSU Regents

---

<sup>2</sup> Involvement and approval by the NMSU Regents is seen as an important step to, (i) institutionalize and fully legitimize the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student initiative across the whole university, and, (ii) build a platform for potential legislative initiatives for capital improvements or new programming funding deemed essential to fully implement the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Initiative

Products: Draft for distribution and comments before implementation by Provost

### 3. Resource Requirements

Develop resource requirements inventory (staff, space, equipment) for program implementation--to include the "high profile" one-stop service facility for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student needs

Responsible: Representative from Academic Affairs, Student Services, Facilities and Services, ICT, and all relevant entities as implied by the 1<sup>st</sup> Year Student Mission statement

Time Frame: Twelve (12) weeks from receipt of Draft documents from 2A, and 2B

Products: Draft development plan for distribution and comments before implementation