CRITERION 4. TEACHING AND LEARNING:
EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A.
The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to
ARGUMENT

The University of New Mexico is committed to ensuring that its academic programs are of high quality, adhere to New Mexico Higher Education Department requirements, meet national standards, and integrate sound innovative practices. The processes for review, evaluation and oversight of the curriculum and co-curriculum developed by UNM assure both the quality of the student learning experience and equal and inclusive access to that experience.

Academic Program Reviews

UNM has conducted regular and comprehensive Academic Program Review (APR) since 2005. APR is a fundamental tool for determinations of quality and effectiveness. Through Academic Program Review (APR), faculty, staff, community, and external reviewers collaborate to improve degree programs. APR entails reflection on and evaluation of the achievements and goals of academic programs over what is normally a seven-year cycle. Approximately eight APRs are conducted per year, following a published APR master schedule.

The APR ensures that academic programs 1) provide opportunities to learn that are of high quality and are in line with professional and national standards; 2) foster meaningful research; 3) engage with the life of the university; and 4) serve identified communities. APR offers faculty, deans, and Academic Affairs the information necessary for considering the role of the program in the university and for exploring the program's resources, strengths, and relation to university strategic goals. Lastly, APR secures documentation to demonstrate the value of UNM's programs to the state and to the community, while also satisfying criteria for Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation of the university as a whole. To serve these purposes, APR depends on the skills of campus administrators, faculty, and staff directly connected to and/or
associated with the department or program undergoing review. Ideally, it also incorporates communication with identified constituents or communities served by the department or program. The APR process provides the opportunity to review a unit, defined as all of the degree-granting programs grouped within a department or, in some cases, a degree-granting program that is independent of a single department.

Each review entails that the unit prepare a comprehensive Self-Study, followed by a site visit from one internal and two or three external reviewers, who are appropriately qualified to evaluate the unit. (The department chair coordinates with the dean and Office of the Provost on nomination of external and internal reviewers). The process culminates in a report from this review team, a subsequent response from the unit, and a plan of action that specifies how the unit plans to integrate improvements, as well as annual action plan updates. The entire process is outlined in a detailed APR manual reviewed every three years by a faculty committee convened by Academic Affairs. The APR (now in its eighth edition), unit self-studies, review team reports, action plans, and updates are posted on the Academic Program Review website via links to the digital repository where all APR documents are housed. While APR is a process internal to the University of New Mexico, coordination with national standards for accreditation is strategically valuable. Thus, units with discipline-specific external accreditation requirements may opt to coordinate external accreditation into UNM APR. This approach permits accredited units to draw upon their accrediting documents in completing the self-study, thereby aligning the internal program review with external frameworks and reporting requirements to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. It also provides units undergoing external accreditation an opportunity to leverage the program review process to help make improvements in advance of such discipline-specific accreditation cycles.

In 2013, the criteria used for UNM’s APR process were updated to align with the new accreditation criteria adopted by the Higher Learning Commission. In
2015, the action plan process was revised to directly align with the APR Criteria. In addition, updates were made to the overall APR process based upon recommendations from an internal audit (the APR Institutional Report 2006-16) of the Academic Program Review process. Informed by models published by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) and the Office for Planning and Institutional Improvement at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis (IUPUI) and by information in the 2017-18 APR institutional Report, the APR process now in place strengthens inclusion of evidence about faculty research and student learning, enhances flexibility for aligning APR with external accreditation, and incorporates a mid-cycle discussion with stakeholders so that APRs can better inform department-level and institution-level decisions.

The UNM main campus Office of Assessment and APR consults with key representatives from the Branch Campuses, HSC, and Law to offer support and coordination regarding their APR process and to archive documents. The APR process of the Branch Campuses (i.e., UNM-Gallup, UNM-Los Alamos, UNM-Taos, and UNM-Valencia) involves internal review of academic programs, beginning with a written report by the unit faculty and Chair, review by the institutional effectiveness committee for the campus, and review by the Dean of Instruction, who makes recommendations and solicits the unit’s response. An alignment matrix is provided demonstrating the correlation between the APR Criteria of all the Branch Campuses to that of the main campus, including which of the criteria of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) are targeted in the APR process of the Branch Campuses. The Health Sciences Center (HSC) (i.e., College of Nursing, College of Pharmacy, the new College of Population Health, and School of Medicine) and School of Law (Law) conduct program reviews that are heavily structured by external accreditation requirements, with primary archiving and publication responsibility housed in the HSC Colleges and School. (An alignment matrix has been developed for the School of Law). The Office of Program Evaluation, Education and Research (PEAR) is the internal evaluation team for the School of Medicine’s Medical Education curriculum. In support of accreditation and improvement in student outcomes,
PEAR evaluates all three phases of the medical school curriculum, including development of data on recruitment and admission, follow-up on graduates in residency, and health care providers in practice, culminating in a Data Collection Instrument for Full Accreditation Survey.

Recent APRs have drawn reviewer praise for the quality and commitment of faculty to research and teaching and have yielded a range of improvements. Departments have strengthened opportunities for internal collaboration through the APR process, for example between the Departments of Linguistics and Speech and Hearing Sciences or between the Department of Psychology and HSC. For example, the Department of Psychology clarified expectations on progress to degree in its graduate manual. Faculty in the Department of Geography redesigned the undergraduate curriculum and developed a joint doctoral program with New Mexico State University enhanced by the theoretical and applied expertise of each campus.

**Credit Transcripts and Transfer**

*Policies for transfer credit*, as well as standards for any transcripted credit, are maintained in compliance with New Mexico Higher Education Department guidelines to assure the integrity and consistency of the University’s education. These policies are posted in main and branch campus catalogs. The NM Authority Code, Public Post-Secondary Education General Provisions, Transfer and Articulation (Attachment H) describes the process on how transfer credits are accepted across state institutions. The Transfer Equivalency System (TES) provides a searchable database of commonly transferred courses to UNM. UNM Academic Departments maintain information on degree applicability of transfer courses. Relying on national standards, the Office of Community Engaged Learning and Research (described in section 3.B.3) consults on evaluation of experiential learning.

The University evaluates without prejudice courses from post-secondary institutions that are regionally accredited or are candidates for regional accreditation. Course work completed with a minimum grade of “C-” may be
accepted as transfer credit, provided the classes are similar or equivalent to
courses offered at the University. Transferable courses with grades of “D” from
New Mexico state institutions are accepted. As an overarching policy,
Technical/vocational, remedial, personal development or dogmatic religion
courses are not accepted. Credit is not awarded for work or life experience,
cooperative education or for courses from out-of-state in which the grade
received was lower than “C-”, except by petition to the Director of Admissions.
Transferable credits from an accredited junior college will be accepted up to a
maximum determined by the college in which the student enrolls and New
Mexico general education courses are accepted individually and as a
completed requirement fulfilled in its entirety at another HEI. Grades earned in
courses taken at other institutions are not included in calculation of the grade
point average. Credits and degrees from international institutions are
evaluated by the Global Education Office, which consults with faculty in a
relevant discipline in difficult or unusual cases and coordinates with
Admissions.

The Degree Audit and Transfer Articulation team in the Registrar's Office has
historically articulated lower-level courses. Following 2017 state legislation, a
New Mexico Higher Education Department Common Course Numbering
Project (CCN) has focused on facilitating transfer between state higher
education institutions. Lower division courses sharing 80 percent of student
learning outcomes receive a state common course number (four alpha and
four numeric digits, such as BIOL 1101). This common course numbering
system, which also integrates designation of lower-level courses that are
unique to an institution, will be effective for Fall 2019 registration. Upper level
courses are submitted to UNM departments for review through the TES.
Attachment A is the document used for transferring courses to UNM (other
than CCN). Attachment B is the document used for transferring technical or
program memo for transfer course allowance. Attachment C is the document
used for transferring international courses.
Course Quality, Student Learning Expectations, Resources, and Faculty Qualifications

With ultimate oversight from the Board of Regents and the NMHED, UNM faculty maintain course rigor, expectations, and prerequisites by relying on established procedures. Both main and north campus as well as branch campuses follow a Curriculum Workflow Process for changes to existing courses, course additions, and course deletions. This extensive process, which involves coordination and input from faculty and administration, itself signifies a commitment to the rigorous oversight of academic offerings. To make any change, addition, or deletion, the initiating department is required to address departmental, disciplinary, and institutional reasons and expected resource requirements on a curriculum form with supporting documentation. Proposed changes are reviewed for approval by the departmental chair or department-level curricula committee, the dean or college-level curricula committee, the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee, University Libraries, the provost or HSC chancellor, the Faculty Senate, and, in cases of addition or deletion of a degree program, the Academic/Student Affairs Regents' Committee, and the Board of Regents also provide review, before submission for final approval to the NMHED. Graduate programs undergo additional layers of review at the Faculty Senate level by the Graduate and Professional Committee and, externally, by the graduate deans of New Mexico HEIs and by the state legislative finance committee. As described in 3.B, additions or deletions to Gen Ed courses originate from the Curricula Committee of the Faculty Senate and necessitate particular justifications and plans for assessment. Only approved courses and programs may appear in the University Catalog, updated on a yearly basis. The Curricula Forms Process Manual provides information on the approval process and instructions on completing request forms. In addition, departments are asked to review their section of the catalog for accuracy on a yearly basis.

The Registrar’s Office maintains the various prerequisite standards for each degree and certificate. Prerequisite courses are developed at the departmental level and reviewed and approved via the Curriculum Workflow process. However, individual faculty may override by special approval by entering a
code into the online registration system. (Extra evidence: Faculty Handbook entries for Undergraduate Committee, Graduate Committee, and Curricula Committee). Suggested maps for planning progress towards completion of a degree program are available to students on the site degrees.unm.edu and are also communicated by advisors and via the catalog and departmental and program websites.

At UNM, we define the charge of ensuring access to learning resources broadly. Enrolled students may access UNMLearn, the learning platform associated with web-enhanced, hybrid, and online courses, and may use the resources of University Libraries in on-campus locations and electronically. A UNMLearn Support Team can be contacted through the system and is available by phone 24/7 to address questions. University libraries faculty and staff make available a full complement of searchable databases, reference materials, study guides, electronic articles, e-books, and digital film and visual archives, as well as and the university libraries catalog, can be accessed via the university libraries page. In addition to direct faculty communication with students, the Global Education Office coordinates and publishes study abroad opportunities, while Community Engaged Learning and Research similarly facilitates service-learning and community-based opportunities and ensures the quality of learning.

The Accessibility Resources Center enables students in making accessibility requests and helps faculty and students understand and negotiate the services provided by the center. These include ASL interpretation, testing accommodations, assistive mobile apps, alternative format course materials (including adaptive online materials), note taking, and a range of accommodations tailored to the needs of individual students. In 2016-2017, 1,117 students were eligible for ARC services and 994 sought services for a 189% increase in annual number of students served since 2007-2008. The overall grade point average of 2016-2017 students who benefited from accommodations was 3.136, while the return or graduate rate for students that same year was 83%.
Access also includes providing students with pathways for experiencing a sense of inclusion at UNM. UNM’s Student Affairs fields centers offering a menu of services to members of the many communities that make up our institution.

Under the leadership of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Services (OFAS) ensures recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion, retention, and oversight of faculty on main and branch campuses. For the Health Sciences Center, the Faculty Contracts Office reviews and processes contracts, recruitment and hiring. Both offices coordinate with the Human Relations Office and the Office of Equal Opportunity. Prior to 2015, hiring officers in departments and units used screening in the hiring process to recruit qualified candidates and verified faculty credentials on the basis of letters of reference, CVs or resumes, publications or creative works and, for professional programs, certification of completion of licensure. Evidence of these credentials is housed in departmental and college/school files, per UNM Faculty Handbook C70. In 2016 a Faculty Compensation Study allowed OFAS to capture degree information for all regular UNM-Main campus faculty as part of a broad effort to document and address possible inequities. Despite a limited budget, numerous incremental equity adjustments were made. A new UNM Teaching Credential Validation Online Form rolled out in Fall 2018; hiring officers’ departments must use this for validating the qualifications of all new regular faculty, visiting faculty, and returning part-time or term faculty. The Teaching Credential Validation has been used to register over 600 faculty to date. Via this platform, chairs and unit directors must verify that faculty have completed relevant and sufficient advanced coursework and/or training in a specific field well beyond the level of instruction. There are three alternative ways to demonstrate qualification: via an advanced degree if in an area specifically related to the area of instruction; or via 18 hours of graduate coursework related to the course of instruction; or via “other qualifications” such as research/scholarly work in the subject area, related work or professional
experience/licensure, certifications, honors, awards, other demonstrated competencies and achievements. Reviews of faculty credentials conducted by OFAS show that faculty on UNM-Main campus, UNM-Valencia, and UNM-Los Alamos have the requisite credentials. Continuing oversight of UNM-Gallup and UNM-Taos campuses is allowing OFAS to ensure that pathways for completion of the requisite credentials have been established on these two branch campuses for faculty who do not currently hold credentials appropriate to their teaching area (for example, a holder of an M.A. in a field that does not correspond to the field of instruction).

UNM is in the initial stages of developing its own in-house software to track scholarly and creative work, teaching, mentoring, community engagement, and international activity, as well as documenting service and faculty credentials (latter as mandated by HLC accreditation). The Faculty Annual Activity Recognition (FAAR) project strives to reduce the reporting burden on faculty by providing a once-annual on-line reporting system that outputs information for all faculty recognition, academic mission, and website needs.

In 2017, UNM applied for and received an HLC extension until 2022 for compliance on dual credit faculty qualifications. In support of that application, UNM assessed the numbers of dual degree faculty needing additional credit hours in order to satisfy the requirement of having a master’s degree and eighteen graduate credits in the relevant course academic discipline. We found that all faculty at UNM-Main had the requisite credentials and that deficiencies were concentrated at UNM-Gallup (where 11 associate degree dual credit faculty needed 19 or more credits) and at UNM-Taos (where 25 associate degree dual credit faculty needed 19 or more credits). While ensuring that CTE faculty meet appropriate standards with respect to work experience and licenses, UNM is collaborating with branch campuses on directing current associate degree dual credit faculty toward completion of necessary credit hours and degrees with a compliance deadline and on limiting new hires to appropriately credentialed candidates. UNM’s branch campuses play an important role in career and technical education (CTE), as well as in
associate's level academic preparation, in a heavily rural state. Faculty for academic dual credit courses are required to use syllabi and follow learning outcomes set by UNM-main campus departments. The New Mexico common course numbering project has added an additional layer of assurance that high school students enrolled in dual credit courses will encounter learning outcomes and levels of achievement in lower-level courses that are consistent with those across all New Mexico HEIs.

**Specialized Accreditation**

Accreditation of certain academic programs is carried out by specialized accrediting bodies that apply specific standards for curriculum and course content; for example, ABET accredits undergraduate programs in engineering. More than 40 accrediting bodies have reviewed and evaluated professional academic degree programs across the university. Websites for colleges, schools, departments publish information about accreditation status and the Office of Assessment and Academic Program Review maintains a calendar on its website coordinating APRs with accreditation. Accreditation contributes directly to outcomes measurement and improvement.

Rigorous processes for integrating assessment with curriculum design and teaching improvement at the School of Medicine attest to alignment of internal oversight and external accreditation. The UNM School of Medicine Curriculum Committee (CC) includes members of the faculty, administration and student body. They are tasked with the overall design, management, integration, evaluation and enhancement of the medical curriculum. Two subcommittees, the Phase I Block Chairs Committee and the Phase II/III Clerkship Directors Committee, plan, schedule and review the preclinical (Phase I) and clinical (Phase II/III) phases of the curriculum, and are responsible for the assessment of students. Each has members who serve on and report back to the CC.

The CC reviews and updates the School of Medicine Educational Competencies and Objectives every third year. The most recent review and
update took place in academic year 2016-17. The CC works closely with its subcommittees to ensure horizontal and vertical integration of the curriculum. The Phase I block chairs committee holds regular integration meetings for the leaders of concurrent Phase I blocks. The Transitions Block between Phase I and Phase II helps to ensure vertical integration between the phases as does having clinical faculty serve as co-block chairs, having a significant level of overlap in representation between the CC subcommittees, and having CC representation from all three phases of the curriculum.

The standardized process for monitoring the quality of individual courses in Phase I consists of CC evaluation teams reviewing each block or course every 1-2 years. Each of the Phase II clerkships submit an annual Clerkship Directors Report to the CC for review, discussion and recommendations for changes or monitoring. The overall quality and outcomes of Phase II/III as a whole are evaluated annually at the Curriculum Committee Business Meeting, as are educational policies and the outcome measures for the School of Medicine educational competencies and objectives. Plans to address any areas of concern are followed up at subsequent CC meetings or with assigned subcommittees.

The Phase I Curriculum underwent an in-depth review in 2013, resulting in a revised curriculum, which was rolled out in 2015-16. One significant change was a redesign of the Epidemiology, Biostatistics, and Evidence Based Medicine curriculum, according to student feedback and National Board exam (USMLE Step 1) performance. The new Quantitative Medicine (QM) course better prepares students for this material on USMLE Step 1 as evidenced by internal surveys on National Board exam subscores in this topic area. A Phase I Quality Improvement Study Team (a subgroup of the curriculum committee with representation from its subgroups, administration and students) was assembled in June 2018 for ongoing curricular improvement.

In Phase II, the required Neurology Clerkship underwent revisions in 2017 based on CC review and recommendations. The overall ratings for this
clerkship had been below the national average on the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire, and the internal end-of-clerkship student evaluations had cited issues with supervisor feedback. Recommendations included enhancing the educator roles of faculty and students, clearer roles for medical students, and providing more feedback that is effective. Clerkship student evaluations have improved since implementation of these changes, with the CC continuing to monitor the clerkship performance. The Data Collection Instrument for Full Accreditation provides evidence of the quality of health education at the School of Medicine on UNM's Health Sciences Center (North) campus.

**Evaluations of Graduate Success**

To inform improvement of student learning, the University maintains tools, with varying degrees of maturity, for gathering information on graduates. Data collected on specific and well-defined cohorts (for example, the decade-long tracking of McNair/ROP scholars) has proven to be the most effective in informing program improvement to date. The Anderson School of Management uses an online networking group with up-dated tracking of graduates. The College of Fine Arts participates in the Strategic National Arts Alumni Programs (SNAAP), which is an online survey, data management, and institutional improvement system designed to enhance the impact of arts-school education. SNAAP partners with degree-granting institutions to administer the survey to their arts graduates. The College of Education (COE) administers a graduate exit survey to all graduates in order to learn about and from their experiences as well as to contribute to the college's continuous improvement efforts regarding teacher preparation and field experiences. Also, COE collects survey results from Cooperating Teachers, University Supervisors, Student Teachers, and participating school districts. All graduate students in the Architecture Program in the School of Architecture and Planning must successfully pass a graduate review to ensure they have the criteria set forth by National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB). Graduate programs in the College of Arts & Sciences report placement of students in advanced degree programs, academic jobs, and related professional fields through the APR.
On a campus-wide scale, an exit survey is distributed to graduating students each semester from the Office of Institutional Analytics. Following a test run for CRP students in Spring 2016, beginning in spring 2018 a parallel online survey will provide information on how our students are applying their new skills and where they are employed one year after graduation. The UNM Career Services Office surveys all graduating students each year. The survey includes questions that determine student status following graduation (employment, graduate school, military service, etc.). The UNM Alumni Association gathers a range of alumni data, from demographic information to career data and graduate degrees obtained to volunteering preferences. Workforce Solutions provides information regarding past graduates in the state of New Mexico to the Institute of Design & Innovation (IDI), including information on the career paths that they have chosen. This data is used to create dashboards that visually demonstrate the success of the students throughout the state. Information includes year-to-year salaries as well as in state employment rates. This information includes not only UNM graduates, but graduates in colleges and universities throughout the state. Overall, UNM’s capacity to track placement in jobs, advanced degree programs, and internships on an institutional level, to relate this placement to cohort experiences, and to provide targeted information to degree programs about these outcomes is still developing. Improvement of UNM’s performance in this area, particularly measurement of outcomes for different demographic categories, constitutes a 2020 goal agreed upon by the Board of Regents, the President, and the Provost.
4.B.
The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution’s processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

ARGUMENT
In 2008, the University adopted a set of Student Learning Goals in line with its academic mission, and derived from the Liberal Education America’s Promise (LEAP) outcomes articulated by the American Association of Colleges and Universities:

- KNOWLEDGE of human cultures and the natural world, gained through study in the sciences and mathematics, social sciences, humanities, histories, languages and the arts.
- SKILLS, both intellectual and applied, demonstrated in written and oral communication, inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, quantitative literacy, information literacy, performance, teamwork and problem solving.
- RESPONSIBILITY, both personal and social, that will be manifested in civic knowledge and engagement, multicultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning.
With leadership from the institutional level Office of Assessment (OA) and from College Assessment Review Committees (CARCs), program faculty have developed assessment plans for academic programs and for General Education courses, aligning their student learning outcomes with these goals. All academic programs at UNM, all general education courses, and numerous co-curricular units are required to develop and submit an assessment plan and annual academic program assessment report organized by measurable student learning outcomes. Assessment is significantly more embedded in university culture as a widespread, robust, well-supported, and consistent practice at UNM than it was at the time of the last HLC accreditation. UNM relies on an internally developed Evaluation Kit to collect end of semester course student evaluations; 2017 Evaluation Kit responses for the College of Arts & Sciences indicate that 88% of students were aware or strongly aware of the student learning outcomes for their courses. Most undergraduate UNM degrees boast well-developed plans and regular assessment and increasing numbers of graduate degrees and certificates have published plans and data. During the 2016/17 academic year, UNM-Main campus submitted assessment documents for 85.7% of its undergraduate programs. Branch campuses submitted assessment documents for 46.8% of associate degree programs. An inventory of submissions is available in the Annual Institutional State of Assessment Report, 2017-2018. A digital repository housed in University Libraries and maintained by OA now stores over 1,520 assessment documents in an archive that can be searched for meta-data on institutional trends.

**Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

The University demonstrates institutional effectiveness through cyclic processes of assessment and improvement, grounded in articulated, measurable outcomes that conform with broad institutional goals. As outlined in some detail in the Academic Program Assessment Handbook, any systematized assessment program must be grounded in and follow from outcomes in student learning. The Office of Assessment (OA) oversees and guides effectiveness at an institutional level. A 2017-18 reorganization of the OA focused on building structures to better sustain and assist faculty and staff
investment in problem-focused assessment and to develop the assessment capacity to describe institutional-level learning outcomes. While providing day-to-day support on assessment design, cohort tracking, assessment management and reporting, the OA coordinates assessment strategy, and analyzes assessment results through coding and sampling of reports. At the institutional level, the OA archives and evaluates assessment plans and reports, with accompanying evidence, and synthesizes findings, as well as college-level reports, into the Annual Institutional State of Assessment Report for Academic Affairs.

The OA regularly convenes a working group of representatives from each college or school, the Provost’s Committee on Assessment. These representatives lead the College Assessment Review Committees (CARCs) that work in collaboration with the OA to oversee and monitor assessment activities, practices, and processes associated with institutional effectiveness at the program and college/school/branch levels. The CARCs are responsible for ensuring that the assessment plans of the academic programs in their respective colleges and schools are reviewed for updates at least once every seven years.

With guidance from the Office of Assessment and the PCA, CARCs provide feedback to programs on collected assessment plans and reports, relying on an Academic Program Assessment Maturity Rubric or a similar rubric to initially review and provide feedback to programs about their program assessment reports. The rubric emphasizes the need for articulated and measurable Student Learning Outcomes that align with the University mission and broad goals, as well as the need for appropriate data collection, analysis, and implementation of action on the basis of findings. Each CARC is responsible for developing and implementing an internal reporting process with deadlines prior to the institutional deadline for collecting, reviewing, and evaluating its academic programs’ annual assessment report and assessment plan and for providing a college-level report to OA.
Assessment within the College of Education since 2009 offers one example of CARC leadership in moving the culture of assessment to one of continuous improvement rather than simply compliance. CARC members worked within their respective departments to encourage discussions about assessment at department meetings and held a college-wide retreat on learning objectives in August 2016. Assessment data gathered during clinical practice revealed that teacher candidates had difficulties addressing the diverse needs of children in the classroom. The five Teacher Educator Preparation Programs revised the curriculum within the respective programs to incorporate more coursework on addressing children with special education needs and TESOL/bilingual needs; teacher candidates may choose a nine-hour focus in Special Education, Bilingual Education, TESOL, or Native American languages.

The College of Arts and Sciences overall has worked over the past five years to be consistent in expectations for assessment and to build in some rewards for programs that are using assessment to improve student learning. Since 2015, the College has given small monetary awards to programs with demonstrated use of assessment so that they could improve their process or their curriculum. Complete assessment reports are now one of the requirements for departments to gain access to the Dean’s discretionary raise pool. Specific examples of improvement include the Sociology Department’s improvement of quantitative methods teaching through revision and oversight of its methods courses and its reduction of the size of computer-based lab sections. After evaluation of assessment data, the Chemistry Department changed the curriculum in a required upper division laboratory for its majors so that there would be a greater opportunity to learn effective report writing skills. In 2008, many Arts & Sciences degree programs had at least draft assessment plans, but few were using those plans to conduct assessment. By 2015-16, 83 percent of 107 degree programs had assessment plans, with most outstanding plans in graduate degrees. 72 percent of 107 degrees in the College of Arts & Sciences were implementing those plans. These percentages are expected to be higher for 2016-17 because UNM academic leadership has continued to emphasize the importance of assessing student learning and to
reward departments with strong assessment programs. Indeed, faculty promotion guidelines for submission of teaching portfolios now request evidence of assessment and improvement.

Each Student Affairs program maintains a departmental assessment plan that articulates broad goals, learning or service outcomes, alignment with UNM strategic goals, and assessment methods and criteria. Assessment methods include such tools as: point-of-service assessments (i.e., comment cards, satisfaction surveys, and program evaluations), annual assessments (i.e., departmental surveys) and informal surveys (i.e., focus groups, student organization meetings, individual interviews). Many programs also complete additional assessments to meet funding or compliance regulations. In addition, each program also submits an annual impact report that quantifies student engagements throughout the year, and assesses impact on academic performance variables such as retention, GPA and graduation. The Division of Student Affairs has developed a division-wide demographics and outcomes report that standardizes and publishes these impact variables. The 2017 CEP report is included in the Evidence Library.

The Office of Advisement Strategies relies on multiple measures to determine the effectiveness of its services with a historic focus on measuring numbers and kinds of contacts with students. Its extensive 2016-17 assessment report provides strong evidence across all colleges and schools of consistent efforts to reach students at key moments in the academic cycle, to focus advisement meetings on pathways to degree completion, and to offer information about academic and advisement programs and enrichment. Given the high success rate documenting advisor to student contact and outreach, the Office will be redesigning assessments for the next cycle to focus on quality of interaction relative to student success.

By Spring 2018, the institutional assessment plan for the General Education Curriculum will have completed a cycle of course-level assessments for each of seven areas: I. Writing and Speaking; II. Mathematics; III. Physical and
Natural Sciences; IV. Social and Behavioral Sciences; V. Humanities; VI. Foreign Languages; VII. Creative and Fine Arts. In 2011-12, 47 percent of the General Education courses had developed SLOs, but very few were reporting on assessment results. By 2015-16, 83 percent of the General Education courses had reported on assessment results. Assessment of General Education at the branch campuses has improved both in scope and quality over the past ten years with the support of all of the chief academic officers. At Valencia Campus, for example, 100 percent of academic programs are being assessed. To provide one example of improvement, between 2014-15 and 2016-17 a positive outcome on a culture-related outcome in Sociology 101 at Valencia Campus increased from 59 to 80 percent of students.

We recognize that course-by-course level assessment allows only limited insight into General Education program effectiveness. The Office of the Provost, a special Faculty Senate Task Force on General Education, and the Office of Assessment are engaged in a coordinated effort to pilot program-level assessment by Fall 2019 along with the launch of a revised general education program (3.. Transformation of general education assessment will focus on highlighting student learning in the five essential skills adopted by the NMHED (i.e., Communication, Quantitative Literacy, Critical Thinking, Personal and Social Responsibility, and Information Literacy).

The University worked with external services to provide auxiliary forms of assessment to the student body in 2015-2016: ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (ACT CAAP), ACT WorkKeys, Education and Skills (E&S) Online, and Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+). The low participation rates on these provided little return on investment in the form of reliable data. Our analysis of internal data has proved more effective to date than reliance on external measures. Thus, in the 2013-14 academic year, the STEM Gateway program launched an extensive analysis of UNM data related to student achievement in STEM fields. This study identified specific gateway courses that were creating roadblocks to success for UNM students, particularly those from underrepresented populations. The study also
identified a need for co-curricular programming that would better engage first- and second-year STEM students. As a result of this study, course redesign initiatives were implemented in math and related disciplines, and a multi-million dollar grant was secured to create the STEM Collaborative, designed to expand co-curricular early STEM programming. A recent annual performance report of the STEM Collaborative is included in the Evidence Library. Development of analytic capacity in the Office of Institutional Analytics, the Office of Assessment, and Enrollment Management provides the foundation for understanding how UNM can better target and support specific populations with student success initiatives.

**Improvement of Student Learning**

The program of assessment outlined above is predicated on its function as a tool for improvement. In the academic program assessment process, maturity scores, defined by the OA’s rubric, take into account implementation of Program Improvements/Revisions, giving the highest score to those programs that demonstrate that specific improvement(s)/change(s) (in assessment process, curriculum, and student learning) has been implemented in response to needs identified in reported analysis and interpretation of assessment results.” As noted in 4.A, the Academic Program Review process entails programs’ response to the reports given by the review team through a scheduled plan of action to complete the entire process. In addition to general, departmental, or faculty-minded evaluations, the APR process is another avenue through which the assessment practices of academic programs and the associated academic advising units are reviewed. APR Criterion 3 of the APR Self-Study Report requires that academic programs discuss their assessment practices. APR Criterion 4C required the academic programs discuss the impact of the assessment practices of the advising unit associated with their college or school assessment practices on serving and retaining their students.
**Best Practices in Assessment**

Each internal assessment process, whether it concerns the General Education Curriculum, academic programs, or co-curricular programs, consists of formalized procedures involving faculty, staff and administrators in tandem. The centralized organization of assessment practices combined with program/course-level responsibilities entails broad participatory practice of assessment through all relevant levels of the university. UNM is embracing the challenge of strengthening assessment by providing more targeted support and responses to programs and units through: better staffing of the Office of Assessment; improved feedback mechanisms, including an initiative to shift scoring in our maturity rubrics towards an emphasis on findings and related plans for improvement; publication of innovative practices, such as the College of Arts & Sciences rewards system and the College of Education’s work on integrating assessments across programs; development of program-level general education assessment; and aggregation of findings in Academic Program Reviews. That UNM is in a position to strengthen its assessment culture in these ways speaks to the enormous progress that we have made in embedding assessment practices across the university since 2009.
4.C.

The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.

2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.

3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

4. The institution’s processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

ARGUMENT

UNM 2020, the strategic plan developed under the leadership of President Bob Frank, identifies an increase in timely degree completion as a crucial element in preparing students to be lifelong learners in academic and personal achievement, career, and leadership. With a 2019 target date, the plan sets the goals of achievement of a four-year graduation rate above 25 percent, achievement of a 10 percent increase in enrollment in shared undergraduate and graduate credit programs, an increase in degree completion and transfer rates at branch campuses. These goals have largely been met. (The Office of the UNM President registers progress on all 2020 goals on a performance monitoring dashboard).
Beginning in 2012-13, UNM pursued the Foundations of Excellence initiative in coordination with the Gardner Institute to improve retention and student success in the first year. As documented in UNM’s Quality Improvement Report to the HLC, reaped clear benefits in dramatically improving time to graduation rates. The project provided internal evidence of how high impact practices and student services support affect first-year retention and achievement. Within a national context, our improvement in four-year graduation rates since 2012-13 represents a remarkable marker of institutional goal-setting and success.

The University collects and analyzes a range of institutional data through the Division of Enrollment Management (EMRT) and the Office of Institutional Analytics (OIA), including IPEDS data. Both units provide easily accessible data visualizations and facts tables through their websites, including data that directly support the needs of departments undergoing Academic Program Review. Across the institution, data collection and analysis follow IPEDS definitions and support understanding of UNM’s distinct position as a Carnegie Category Research I, Hispanic-Serving, and majority-minority institution with a high number of first-generation college students. Information on student enrollment, freshman cohort tracking, degree-completion, retention, faculty, and staff can be searched by demographic characteristics, division, and campus. OIA maintains a calendar of critical reporting and meets federal, state and research group or media study deadlines. This includes Federal IPEDS reporting on students, employees, financial aid, and human resources, as well as reporting on enrollment (census and end-of-semester), degrees, and financial aid to the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED).

The OIA Factbook publishes yearlong reports on enrollments, degrees conferred, numbers of faculty and staff, and financial aid disbursed to students. The office maintains and publishes records on course enrollments and fail rates, time to degree by college and program, and student enrollment by residency status. It responds to specific data requests, such as how many students complete general education requirements prior to enrollment at main
campus to the Faculty Senate Task Force on General Education in 2017. OIA also coordinates with the UNM STEM Collaborative Center, a five-year initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education Title V Program, on tracking UNM undergraduate STEM achievement outcomes over time. The Office of the Provost maintains an institutional dashboard with easily understood graphics on UNM student outcomes and demographics. Colleges and schools, as well as departments and units, collect internal information and provide links to institutional data as well.

The overall drop in enrollment in 2018 and the drop in third-semester retention from its high point in 2015 represent new challenges that UNM seeks to address. A new Enrollment Management Task Force is charged with considering recruitment and retention strategies. UNM is participating in two American Public and Land Grant Universities initiatives, the APLU Student Experience Project and the APLU Powered by Publics project, focused on student success. UNM’s capacity to gather data about the student experience was a crucial factor in selection for participation on this first grant. We continue to draw lessons from our Quality Improvement Project and from OIA data as we move forward.