



UpClose

December 2007

Published by the New Mexico State University Division of Student Success

TRiO Creates a pathway for students

When Julio Ruiz graduates this December, he will have a double major in Geography and City and Regional Planning with a supplemental major of Linguistics. During his time at NMSU he conducted research in Brazil and has plans to earn a doctorate. Ruiz also has a long history with NMSU's federally-funded TRiO programs, run out of the Center for Academic Success.

Ruiz started out in Upward Bound. As a student at Gadsden High School, through Upward Bound, Ruiz spent summers studying at NMSU to prepare for college. He also learned how to apply for admission, financial aid, and had help in staying on track for college entrance testing.

Upward Bound, along with Educational Talent Search and Student Support Services, are TRiO programs, which help students prepare for college and support them academically once they get here. Educational Talent Search begins in the middle and high schools of the Gadsden Independent School District. Eligible students and their families get advice on how to get to college; topics range from what courses to take in high school to financial aid.

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Building a bridge to Native communities



Laura Grant/Division of Student Success
Members of the NMSU and surrounding communities gathered for the Native American Cultural Center ground breaking ceremonies October 12.

Two October events, the Native American Cultural Center ground breaking and Native American College Day, strengthened the link between New Mexico State University and Native cultures and communities.

Construction of the Native American Cultural Center will begin southeast of Corbett Center Student Union after five years of gathering support and planning. The Center will include spaces for learning, working together, studying, and meeting.

"The Center will be a place that our Native students can call their own. Its design reflects Indian traditions and communities, but it will bridge two worlds by supporting students as they work toward their educational goals," Vice President for Student Success Dr. Carmen L. Gonzales said during opening remarks at the Center's ground breaking ceremony, October 12.

"Of course, bridges go both ways, and the Center will be a place for students to reach out to others. At the Center, all of the NMSU community can come to share in American Indian traditions and practices, learn about American Indian history, and

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Calendar of Events

Teaching Academy

For additional registration details, visit teaching.nmsu.edu or call (575) 646-2204

December

- 13 CEL — Teaching in Second Life
- 13 Measuring student outcomes — Starlink Teleconference

January

- 16 or 22 Teaching scholars: A course on teaching from A to Z

February

- 1 CEL — Using concept mapping software to facilitate learning and assessment
- 4 CEL — Centra basics
- 7 Let's talk teaching: Join your colleagues for lunch and conversations about teaching
- 8 Learning 2.0: The changing landscape of teaching and learning
- 11 or 14 Peer coaching for classroom and distance educators
- 12 Team mentoring for graduate assistants who teach a class or lab
- 14 A free wheeling discussion for department heads
- 18 CEL — iTunesU — What is it and how does it apply to teaching?

Calendars

Academic

Fall semester

December

- 10-14 EXAM WEEK
- 14 Last day of classes
- 15 Commencement
- 15 Residence halls close
- 18 Final grades due

Spring semester

January

- 10 Faculty report
- 10-11 Curriculum study & improvement of instruction
- 14 Residence halls open
- 15 Spring convocation
- 15 Program/registration for new students
- 16 Instruction begins
- 16 Deadline for filing degree application
- 21 Martin Luther King holiday
- 22 Late registration
- 28 Deadline for registration/course addition

March

- 10 Last day to drop with a "W"
- 21 Spring holiday
- 24-28 Spring break

April

- 18 Last day to withdraw from the University

May

- 5-9 EXAM WEEK
- 9 Last day of classes
- 10 Commencement
- 10 Residence halls close
- 13 Final grades due

Public Service Career Showcase



Laura Grant/Division of Student Success

The NMSU and Las Cruces community visit with public service agencies during the Public Service Career Showcase hosted by NMSU Career Services on October 23 in Corbett Center.

Breakfast serves student leader scholarship

Eggs, bacon, hash browns, silver dollar pancakes, and generous donors are all necessary ingredients to yield scholarships for NMSU students demonstrating leadership through community service.

The Seventh Annual Danny Villanueva Scholarship Breakfast, hosted by Chicano Programs, was held at Corbett Center Student Union on October 18. Anna Cabral, the 42nd Treasurer at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, was the keynote speaker. Cabral has been active in improving Hispanic representation and ensuring that the concerns and needs of the Hispanic community are addressed throughout the private sector.

As the daughter of field workers, Cabral had a financially underprivileged childhood, yet had a strong sense of family responsibility and faith, she said. The work ethic exhibited by her parents helped her excel through higher education and beyond, but it was the encouragement she received from a teacher who recommended that she attend college that altered her future.

Cabral conveyed the importance of creating opportunities, such as the Danny Villanueva Scholarship, for students who may not have the means to seek higher education. Every student has the potential to be academically successful with some guidance, encouragement, and financial support, she said.

Since 1999 over 30 NMSU students have benefited from the Danny Villanueva Scholarship. Full-time students apply for the \$1,500 scholarship by submitting an application, two-page goal statement, letters of recommendation, an unofficial transcript, and their financial aid award notification.

All proceeds from the 500 tickets sold and corporate sponsorships go to the Danny Villanueva Scholarship Endowment. In the seventeen years since the inception of the scholarship, the Danny Villanueva Scholarship Endowment has reached half a million dollars.

TRiO....

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The success of these pre-college programs is evident in the numbers: 100 percent of the 2006 seniors graduated and 88 percent went on to post-secondary education. Nationally, Upward Bound students are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than students with similar backgrounds who are not TRiO participants.

But TRiO does not stop when a student matriculates to a university. Julio worked with a mentor from Student Support Services who, he says, "aided me and motivated me to remain in college." Participation in TRiO's Student Support Services doubles a student's chance of remaining in college compared to similar but non-participating students.

Tony Marin, Associate Director of the Center for Academic Success, sees these programs as targeting the students in the middle — those who don't get advice on courses to take, financial aid, and admissions. TRiO programs were created during Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty as a way to increase access to higher education for low income students. They are administered through the U.S. Department of Education and have increased access to higher education for millions of students since 1964.

Building a bridge....

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Laura Grant/Division of Student Success

A ceremonial song is performed during ground breaking at the future site of the Native American Cultural Center.

explored NMSU by touring the campus and residential halls, testing the meal plans, meeting with admissions, financial aid, scholarship and housing representatives, and listening to what current Native American students think about life as an Aggie.

These efforts communicate the importance of the Native American community to the future of NMSU. The University is working toward making NMSU's Native American student population, currently three percent, match the state's Native American population of ten percent.

For additional information about the American Indian Program, call 646-3330 or email amerind@nmsu.edu.



Laura Grant/Division of Student Success

NMSU Digital Pathways mentors Greg Jajola and Kathleen Yeppa discuss academic options with students during Native American College Day.

Profile: Ben Hillman

Ben Hillman, of Campus Tutoring Service (CTS) in the Center for Academic Success (CAS), recalls helping a student in an introductory economics course who did poorly on the first exam.



With weekly tutoring, she got a high B on her next exam. She ended the semester with an A on her third exam, and succeeded in her next econ course with no tutoring.

This is what Ben found rewarding — although the tutoring itself is enjoyable, even better is helping students learn how to learn. A good tutoring program, Ben says, "should teach you how to learn."

Ben is NMSU's first Coordinator for CTS, building the program under the direction of Terry Cook, Director of the Center for Academic Success, and Jennifer Hiatt, Assistant Vice President for Student Success. CTS hires tutors to complement services from places like the Writing Center and the Math Success Center and targets tutoring at courses with low pass rates.

Student convenience is also important for CTS. In addition to afternoon hours at the Center for Academic Success, tutors are available at the La Vista Learning Center on Sunday through Thursday evenings.

Next semester, Ben will use feedback from participating students to improve the program with the help of Marisa Ortman, Coordinator of Outreach and Tutoring Services at CAS. And after that? Ben will report on CTS' first year to the University at the end of the academic year. Then he graduates in May with a double major in Economics and Mathematics, and is off to graduate school.

Ben Hillman graduated from Eldorado High School in Albuquerque in 2004 and is a member of the NMSU class of 2008.

A look at Learning Communities at NMSU

In *Challenging & Supporting the First-Year Student*, Jodi Levine Laufgraben outlines the positive effects that participation in learning communities has on student achievement and retention and credits learning communities with improving first-year students' intellectual and social development and adaptation to the collegiate classroom environment.

Curricular learning communities are defined as "a variety of approaches that link or cluster classes during a given term, often around an interdisciplinary theme, that enroll a common cohort of students. This represents an intentional restructuring of students' time, credit, and learning experiences to build community among students, among students and their teachers, and among disciplines," according to presentation materials available from the Washington Center Learning Communities National Resource Center.

Several programs utilizing curricular learning communities are already in place across NMSU, including the First Year Scholars program in the College of Arts and Sciences, Integrated Learning Communities (ILCs) in the College of Engineering, and the MATCH program in the College of Health & Social Services. The College of Engineering's ILCs, supported by a grant from the Hewlett Foundation, model a number of best practices.

In the College of Engineering's ILCs, a group of no more than 20 students are enrolled together in four courses during their first semester, including two introductory engineering courses, math, and freshman English. The instructors of all four courses meet regularly to collaborate on integrating content across the courses and to identify students who may need extra support.

Foundations for the development and success of existing and prospective learning communities are already in place, such as first-year seminar and orientation courses within Colleges, according to NMSU Director of Learning Communities Jeff Long.

Some keys for the future will be fostering institutional commitment and creating incentives for faculty and staff to collaborate on these programs, Long said.

The Vice President's corner



This issue of *UpClose* features the Office of Student Success, which is tasked with helping students persist in higher education. Although our six-year graduation rate is one of the highest in the state, there is room for improvement.

Helping students persist is a big task. It involves understanding the myriad of reasons why students leave higher education, what will help them persist, and what resources NMSU has that can provide that help. In attempting to understand these issues, one fact has become clear: student success at NMSU cannot be the job of a single division.

The sum of a student's experience at a university reflects interactions with a wide range of staff and faculty. From recruitment to career placement, from classrooms to parking lots, what we all do affects the success of NMSU students.

Student success is everybody's business!

Dr. Carmen L. Gonzales
Vice President for Student Success
College of Extended Learning Dean

News and Events

For national and international events, visit the *DE Clearinghouse Conference Database* [www.uwex.edu/disted/conf/]

For recent distance education headlines, visit *Daily News* at Distance-Educator.com [www.distance-educator.com/news/]

For news for university faculty members and administrators, visit the *Chronicle of Higher Education* [www.chronicle.com]

For recent campus technology headlines visit *Syllabus* [www.syllabus.com]

About UpClose

UpClose is published by the NMSU Division of Student Success.

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We welcome your ideas, comments, and suggestions for UpClose.