



UpClose

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CSD gives NMSU students tools to succeed



Courtesy of American Indian Program
The Counseling and Student Development Center is located in Garcia Annex.

Once a place where students learned to deal with the emotional traumas of college, NMSU's Counseling and Student Development Center is now also where students take charge of their college experience and plan for the future.

Located in Garcia Annex, CSD has a counseling and psychology staff of nine, quiet, comfortable offices, and a bustling Career Exploration Center. CSD also provides services for students with disabilities, veteran's programs, testing services, and support for new faculty.

Responding to the changing needs of students, career counselor Eileen Winfree instituted a component to the Freshman Year Experience (University 150) course which fosters teamwork and inclusion through non-academic outdoor tasks. The segment also includes presentations on careers, encouraging students to start

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Program examines classroom absences

What should faculty do when they notice attendance dwindling as the semester wears on?

The Quick Connect Program is designed to address this question. Currently in the pilot stage at NMSU, Quick Connect is an intervention tool that helps faculty confront student absenteeism and poor performance. Ten classes piloted the program in the fall as part of the efforts of the Division of Student Success to increase retention.

Faculty with a course enrolled in Quick Connect use an online system to report students after their second absence. Staff 'responders' from various departments then contact students to discuss the absence, and, if appropriate, refer the student to campus services, including counseling, health services, and tutoring.

But establishing contact can be difficult. E-mail is impersonal, and NMSU often does not have current phone numbers for students. Responders also must maintain student confidentiality while trying to get students the help they need.

Preliminary results from the fall 2006 pilot are available from Judy Bosland, Director of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. Of the 1,735 students in pilot classes, 135 were referred for absences. Only 33 of these students were 'connected,' or successfully contacted by responders, and the program is seeking to improve contact methods next semester.

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Speaker Series

Sessions are 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. in Milton Hall, room 81.

Build it right and they will keep coming: The American Journeys Digital Library and Learning Center

Daniel Smith
Friday, January 26

Kick it up a notch

Ann Bock
Friday, February 9

Calendar of Events

ICT Training Services

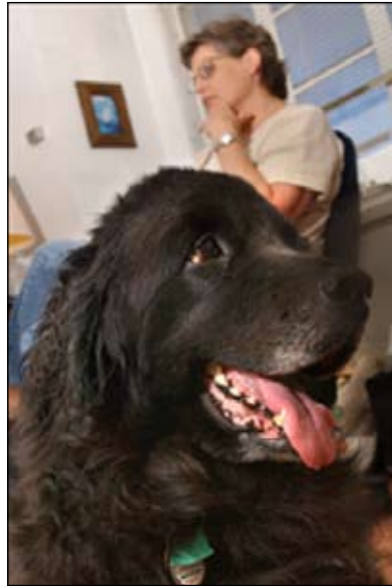
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Therapy dog receives posthumous award



D. Phillips/University Communications
Elsa, a Newfoundland, received an award for her service to students.

Elsa, the staff therapy dog at the Counseling and Student Development Center from 2001–2005, was posthumously voted into New Mexico's Pet Hall of Fame by the New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association. She was recognized for her work at NMSU, where she excelled at creating a home-like atmosphere and providing a sense of comfort, safety, and security for clients.

Unique to Elsa, a Newfoundland, were her disabilities. She had muscular dystrophy, and clients at the CSD often rose above their own issues to care for Elsa. "She was a kindred spirit who cared for clients in spite of their psychological pain and hurt," said psychologist and trainer Karen Schaeffer.

Schaeffer is currently training a new therapy dog to work with clients at the CSD. Named after the writer Nelle Harper Lee, Nellie is a 5-month-old Newfoundland who will one day be certified to work as a therapy dog. Though Elsa will be missed, clients will soon have another therapy dog to brighten their visits.

CSD center...

- Continued from page 1

thinking about the future. "If you don't have a direction, you will flounder as a student," says John Irvine, CSD's director.

The course also introduces students to CSD services at the beginning of their college careers. Students seeking help at CSD tend to be older, so informing younger students of services is important. Though some students are referred by faculty and staff CSD staff can't always approach students, students must also be willing to seek out help on their own.

Despite difficulties in outreach, students are taking advantage of CSD's counseling and services. Appointments were up 7% last year, totaling 5,200. Students typically seek help with depression, relationships, and academics. Counseling has also shifted to provide services for students suffering from severe mental illnesses, many of whom have experience in counseling before entering NMSU. Out of 240 medical withdrawals from the university in 2005–2006, 40% were related to mental illness.

Students who visit CSD will find a diverse staff spanning multiple departments. Counselors use innovative techniques, including the renowned therapy dog program, hypnosis, and group counseling.

Physical wellness is another major focus, and CSD has developed interactive tools to deal with stress and substance abuse. CSD houses WAVE, the Wellness, Alcohol, and Violence Education program. Computer programs e-CHUG and e-TOKE assess students' drug and alcohol use while educating them on the consequences of their choices. Peer educators work with students referred to the program.

Whether students are taking advantage of career exploration, counseling, or any other CSD services, the goal is for staff and students to work together to find the best solutions for each individual. Students "find out we're not here to tell them what to do," says Irvine.

News briefs

Creative Media Institute for Film and Digital Arts (CMI)

100 MPG, CMI's first production, was shown at the Beverly Hills Hi-Def Film Festival and the Santa Fe Film Festival in December.

CMI was recently awarded a grant for \$40,000 from the New Mexico Higher Education Department to Dr. Carmen Gonzales and Professor Amy Lanasa to fund scholarships for students to attend a 10-day film and digital media camp at NMSU.

Teaching Academy

Tara Gray and Jean Conway were invited to Guatemala, where they presented four workshops on teaching, time management, and publishing to large audiences of Guatemalan educators.

NMSU's ADVANCE program recently received a \$500,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for PAID (Partnerships for Adaptation, Implementation, and Dissemination). This grant will provide training opportunities at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Office of Student Marketing and Transition Programs

The Office of Student Marketing and Transition Programs partnered with the Alumni Association to host Family Weekend, November 3–4, 2006. Families of new freshmen visited colleges, attended a picnic, and tailgated prior to the football game. Siblings of freshmen spent the weekend in residence halls as part of Sibling Stays.

Recruiting

Aggie Experience (Senior Day) hosted 350 students and 760 total participants, making it one of the largest in recent years.

Strong recruiting efforts have resulted in more applications and admissions by December 1, 2006 of this year than we had by the same date in 2005. NMSU recruiters have completed their travels throughout the state and targeted areas of Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Arkansas, and Nevada.

Campus Activities

The first Student Leadership Conference was Saturday, October 28 with 70 students in attendance. The Conference was sponsored by Campus Activities, Housing and Residential Life, and ASNMSU. The Conference featured keynote addresses by Scott Moore, Dean of Students, and Jake Hill, outstanding NMSU graduate, as well as student presentations. The Conference is expected to become an annual event.

Classroom absences....

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Faculty and staff participants have been largely positive about the program. Even though he referred only two students from his Chemistry III course, Professor David Smith says Quick Connect changed his interaction with students. He feels a greater connection with students, notes their absences, and approaches them if he suspects a problem. Math professor Roger Beck agrees that "anything we can do to keep students in class and motivate them" should be considered.

Participants hope that with changes, the program will help retain students and address issues that are linked to absenteeism, such as poor academic performance. As Smith says, "Now more than ever, we have the resources to deal with attendance and retention."

Profile: Corey Vas

When it comes to treating anxiety, Counseling Psychologist Corey Vas uses more than talk. In addition to traditional counseling methods, which focus on discussion, Vas specializes in hypnosis and biofeedback.



After completing his PhD at Iowa State University, Vas interned at Tucson's Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where he learned hypnosis. He came to NMSU in 1999 after a year at UTEP.

Most students know the sources of their stress, Vas says, and they come to the CSD for ways to get past that anxiety. One technique Vas uses is biofeedback, which teaches how to control physiological reactions to reduce anxiety. For example, students can monitor their fingertip temperature via machine, which demonstrates how temperature drops during stress. As students learn to control stress, the temperature on the machine rises. Controlled breathing, muscle relaxation, and imagery help lower anxiety, and as anxiety drops, fingertip temperature rises.

Hypnosis, on the other hand, encourages relaxation through absorption in a single thought or idea and works well with people who concentrate on negatives rather than positives. Vas relies on his own instinct as well as cues from students when deciding which method is most appropriate to reduce student stress.

Vas says the CSD is in a unique position to address major issues in students' lives as they develop. He finds his job rewarding: "To see students use the things we teach to get through pain, decrease depression or anxiety, and even sometimes save their lives is the most rewarding thing I can think of."

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 on Higher Education* site [www.chronicle.com]

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

About UpClose

UpClose is published by the NMSU College of Extended Learning.

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

Largest recruitment event set for February

If you see a lot of young students wandering around February 19, welcome them to NMSU.

February 19 is Spring Visitors' Day, the year's biggest recruitment event. Past attendance has varied from 800 to 1,500 visitors. This year, NMSU will invite 18,000 prospective freshmen to campus, says Associate Director of Admissions Matt Hulett. Students will visit from New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Texas.

Visitors can tour campus and residence halls, receive financial advice, visit classes, and even audition for music scholarships. The program begins in the Pan Am Center with opening entertainment by the band and cheerleaders "to get visitors in the Aggie mood," Hulett said.

Admissions encourages the whole campus to get involved. Faculty can meet with visitors, discuss academics, and act as ambassadors for the university when they see prospective freshmen. "We are hoping to achieve a powerful connection between our faculty and our visitors," Hulett said.

For more information, visit http://www.nmsu.edu/spring_visitors/index.html

The Vice President's corner



The Division of Student Success is all about improving how we recruit students and doing a better job of serving the ones we have. This month's UpClose features stories on recruiting (Spring Visitor's Day, page 4) and retention (Center for Counseling and Student Development, page 1; Quick Connect, page 1). These stories reflect a challenge to the traditional paradigm that a university's responsibility to students is limited to classroom teaching.

Students considering coming to NMSU need to know that this campus is a friendly place where professors are accessible to students. We have an opportunity to demonstrate this at the 2007 Spring Visitor's Day on Monday, February 19. I encourage all faculty and staff to welcome our visitors that day, and to show them Aggie hospitality at its best.

Being accessible and reaching out to students needs to continue throughout their time at NMSU. Faculty report that one effect of the Quick Connect program (page 1) is to empower them to approach a student with poor attendance. Several faculty report that they feel more connected to their students because they have assumed the right to question their attendance. What we learn about students through such questions is that they have personal, family, and work issues, and sometimes they need help getting these issues back in balance. But we will often never know about these issues if we fail to ask.

Knowing about student's lives means we can be in a position to steer students toward campus resources when they need them. In addition, the special Quick List section of this UpClose lists services and contact information for resources such as the Center for Learning Assistance, Ethnic Programs, and Student Judicial Services. We have so many services at NMSU that can help students toward their goal of a college education, and as faculty and staff, if we open a dialogue with students, we can help them get services that can help them stay in school.