

# NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SUSANA MARTINEZ  
GOVERNOR



DR. BARBARA DAMRON  
CABINET SECRETARY

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### STATE-TRIBAL COLLABORATION ACT – JULY 2016

#### SECTION I.

##### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the requirements of the State-Tribal Collaboration Act (STCA), the Collaboration and Communication Policy of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) was adopted in 2009. In 2010, NMHED and NMPED staff met with representatives from the tribes to develop an overarching policy that, pursuant to the State Tribal Collaboration Act<sup>1</sup>:

- Promotes effective collaboration/communication between the agencies and tribes;
- Promotes positive government-to-government relations between the state and tribes;
- Promotes cultural competence in providing effective services to American Indians/Alaska Natives; and
- Establishes a method for notifying department employees of the provisions of the STCA and the resulting policy of the agency.

NMHED recognizes the American Indian Tribes are sovereign nations with the power of self-government under both federal, state and common law. American Indians are citizens of their respective nations and are also citizens of New Mexico. Therefore, the state and the tribal

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<sup>1</sup> This is a summary of the 14 page policy.

governments share a mutual interest in providing beneficial and efficient services. For the Higher Education Department, this interest includes five paramount goals:

1. Fostering a productive relationship with New Mexico's four tribal colleges;
2. Fostering support for American Indian students in New Mexico's colleges and universities;
3. Assisting in the preparation of tribal students for postsecondary education;
4. Assessing and honoring the higher education goals of the individual tribes; and
5. Providing access to higher education.

Providing access to higher education is multi-faceted and includes college readiness and on-campus support for Native students attending colleges and universities. The tribes and the tribal colleges report a lack of support and a lack of understanding of tribal cultures at many postsecondary institutions. That is a contributing factor to attrition and/or lack of retention for students beginning their postsecondary education and also for students transferring from tribal colleges, local community colleges and branch campuses to four-year institutions.

To achieve these goals, NMHED must continue to discuss these issues with the tribes, the colleges and universities, and the Native students. The department is committed to a process of collaboration with the tribes to identify higher education issues and problems and to create a mutually agreeable process to address these problems.

Dr. Barbara Damron, Cabinet Secretary, is responsible for development and implementation of the programs of the Higher Education Department that directly affect American Indian students in New Mexico. David Mathews, General Counsel, is acting Tribal Liaison. Both Secretary Damron and David Mathews can be reached at 505-476-8402.

## **SECTION II:**

### **AGENCY SUMMARY**

The New Mexico Higher Education Department has certain duties and responsibilities by statute that directly affects all postsecondary educational institutions in New Mexico except the four tribal colleges. The state has no jurisdiction over the tribal colleges, which were established by federal law. However, the department provides services to the tribal colleges by mutual agreement.

The department was established as a Cabinet agency in 2005 and assumed all roles and responsibilities of the former Commission on Higher Education. The Indian Education Division was created in 2009.

The goals of the Higher Education Department for the American Indian students and the tribes are:

- Decrease the postsecondary achievement gap by recognizing each tribe is an individual sovereign nation with individual higher education needs;
- Recognize that achievement gaps exist both post-high school and post-transfer from a two-year college to a four-year college or university;
- Communicate with every tribe and Pueblo in New Mexico to discuss the postsecondary needs of their youth;
- Foster an inclusive atmosphere for all tribal students at all New Mexico public postsecondary institutions; and
- Continue meetings between the Higher Education Department and the four New Mexico tribal colleges.

In this context, “Achievement Gap” is a difference in the performance of an identifiable group of students compared with other identifiable groups of students. While the achievement gap has decreased for African American and Hispanic students, it has not decreased for Native students.

New Mexico has one of the largest percentages of Native students in public postsecondary education (at 11.4% of total enrollment). In comparison, Alaska has 26.55%; Oklahoma has 18.92%; and Montana has 11.29%. New Mexico also has the fourth largest number of Native students in the U.S., following California, Arizona, and Oklahoma.

The four tribal colleges in New Mexico are:

1. Diné College;
2. The Institute of American Indian Art;
3. Navajo Technical University; and
4. Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute.

The department assists the tribal colleges in many ways, including conducting the hearings for the colleges’ capital projects and distributing the annual legislative appropriation for dual credit reimbursement. The tribal colleges are assisting the department by their participation in several department initiatives, including remediation reform, articulation and transfer, and common course numbering.

The department has been meeting quarterly with the four tribal colleges. These meetings as well as other conferences with the tribes have demonstrated the existence of the second achievement gap, which may occur when a Native student transfers from a two-year to a four-year postsecondary institution. Many of these transferring students experience a lack of cultural support at the four-year institutions. This problem can be especially acute when a student transfers from one of the tribal colleges. The most effective way to address this second achievement gap (i.e. retain Native students who transfer to the four-year colleges/universities) is to seek increased cultural support at the postsecondary level for native students.

The two-year institutions can provide greater preparation for Native students prior to the transfer and the four-year institutions can provide greater cultural support when they receive transferring Native students. The professional schools, such as the UNM Law School and the Health Sciences Center, have shown some success by working with the Native students prior to the beginning of their first semester. It is crucial this academic support continue throughout the student's educational career. Mentoring of the entering Native students by upper-class Native students is also helpful.

### **SECTION III.**

#### **MAJOR INITIATIVES**

Governor Susana Martinez has asked the Higher Education Department to work on four major initiatives:

1. Transfer and articulation;
2. General Education core reform;
3. Meta-Majors and degree mapping; and
4. Remediation reform.

The Department is working with all the public colleges and universities, including the tribal schools, to insure that courses not only transfer between all the other public schools but also count towards graduation in the student's field of study. In the past, courses generally transferred between colleges, however transferred courses do not always count toward a student's major. Course transfer, which is the acceptance by one institution of credit hours earned at another institution, is distinct from course articulation. When there is course articulation, a transferred course counts toward degree requirements.

The NMHED Policy division has received syllabi from all the public schools and sorted those syllabi into comparable courses. After the syllabi are sorted, they will be given to a faculty committee to write a composite course description and identify common student learning outcomes for each course within their discipline. A committee of math faculty is now reviewing all lower division math courses. A committee of English faculty has already reconciled all the lower division English courses. There will be a review period for this work in the fall. Following the review period, common course numbers will be assigned. NMHED expects all lower division courses will have been through this process and have common course numbers by mid-2017.

Reform of the General Education Core is necessary to insure that students graduate with the skills required for today's workforce. The current core courses are from the specific academic disciplines of communication, mathematics, laboratory science, social/behavioral sciences, and humanities/fine arts. The future General Education Core will require courses that develop specific skills and competencies. The number of General Education credit hours will likely be reduced to 30 credit hours.

The third initiative is building statewide meta-majors by analyzing degree requirements at institutions across the state. Meta-majors are a 1-2 semester map of coursework that will articulate to multiple degrees in a student's area of interest. Meta-majors ensure that students choose courses that will ultimately count as degree requirements for their major while still allowing them to explore their options. Meta-majors are a viable method to aid students in choosing a general major or area of interest before deciding on a more specific major or program of study ("Meta-Majors, an Essential First Step on the Path to College Completion" by Alexandra Waugh, July, 2016). Examples of meta-majors are broad fields such as health, science, engineering, mathematics or liberal arts.

NMHED is also addressing the remediation problem at our colleges and universities. About 84.6% percent of New Mexico college freshmen at our two-year institutions need remediation in one or more areas, particularly in English, mathematics or both. At our four-year schools, about 41.1% of our first-year students require remediation. The need for remediation increases the time required for completion and reduces retention. NMHED has convened an English and a Math remediation taskforce. Each taskforce was asked to study the current state of remediation in New Mexico and nationally and make recommendations for a method to improve outcomes for underprepared students. The taskforces are scheduled to complete their reports in July, 2016.

## **SECTION IV**

### **NATIVE STUDENTS IN NM HIGHER EDUCATION**

In the fall of 2015, there were 15,651 American Indian students enrolled in New Mexico public postsecondary institutions<sup>2</sup>. The number is 11.4% of total postsecondary enrollment. This figure does include the four tribal schools.

The enrollment at the four tribal colleges and universities was 3,007 students for fall 2015. Therefore, 12,644 American Indian students were enrolled at New Mexico public postsecondary, non-tribal, institutions during this time period. This is 9.2% of the total postsecondary enrollment

#### **Private School Division**

The Private and Proprietary School Division provides oversight and regulation of the private colleges and universities in New Mexico. That division also collects data from the private schools. About 1,411 Native students were attending about 56 non-public institutions of higher education in New Mexico. These schools offer a variety of certificates and degrees, including doctorate degrees. The private schools with the greatest number of Native students are Brookline

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<sup>2</sup> This ethnicity figure is reported to NMHED by the higher educational institutions. The total includes American Indians that may have reported mixed ethnicities.

College, Brown-Mackie College, Carrington College, Grand Canyon University, Pima Medical Institute, Walden University and the University of Phoenix.

### **Adult Education Division**

American Indian students are also represented in the HED Adult Education's programs. The most recent data available is for the 2014-2015 school year. In 2014-2015, NMHED's Adult Education (AE) Division served 15,353 students, of whom 1,467 (9.6%) were Native American. There are 27 AE programs in the state and four serve Native American Indians entirely. Those four programs are: Alamo Navajo School District, Diné College, Sage Xtreme Learning/Tepayac Consortium, and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute. Six of the AE programs also maintain remote sites in Indian Country. Those sites are UNM-Gallup, NMSU-Grants, UNM-Los Alamos, NMSU-Alamogordo, ENMU Ruidoso, and Catholic Charities. For example, UNM-Los Alamos offers program at Zia, Jemez and San Ildefonso Pueblos.

Almost every AE program, including NM Corrections, serves Native Americans. AE supports dedicated Native-serving programs by developing and using culturally sensitive curricula and adapting well-demonstrated best practices for student success for this population. Programs in and near Indian Country perform outreach to the Native population, and those associated with tribes have collaborative relationships with employment and social services operated by tribal governments for their members.

### **GEAR UP Division**

NMHED also assists with preparation for college through GEAR UP, New Mexico (GUNM). GEAR UP is the acronym for **G**aining **E**arly **A**wareness and **R**eadiness for **U**ndergraduate **P**rograms, which is a seven-year grant funded in 2012 by the U.S. Department of Education. GUNM serves eleven school districts and 9,213 students, the majority of which are 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup><sup>3</sup> graders from communities historically underrepresented in higher education. Of the total number of students GUNM serves, 2,682 (30%) are American Indian. Five of these 11 high schools have a population that is largely (40% or more) American Indian. Those schools are:

- 1). Bernalillo High School;
- 2). Grants High School;
- 3). Jemez Valley High School;
- 4). Shiprock High School, and
- 5). Walatowa High Charter School.

GUNM is designed to meet the following set of objectives:

- improve the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education;
- increase high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment;
- augment GUNM students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary options, readiness, and financing; and,

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<sup>3</sup> In addition, GUNM serves first-year college students who graduated from GEAR UP high schools the prior year.

- foster sustainable college and career readiness systems.

In pursuit of these goals, GUNM provides a range of services to students, including tutoring, mentoring, college visits, student leadership, supplemental reading instruction, financial planning for postsecondary options including Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, college entrance test prep, and professional development for staff.

These services are implemented in the five districts with 40% or more of American Indian students in a variety of ways in an effort to be responsive to local needs. Tutoring at Shiprock High School allows students who participate to have the opportunity not only to receive needed support but also make up days the student was tardy or absent. Grants High School is piloting a model intended to engage more American Indian students. Teachers are traveling to the local Pueblo education center to assist students. The desired outcome is that more students will participate because the tutoring is closer to their homes. This modification makes transportation to and from the tutoring site much easier, and lessens the disruption to evening routines.

Student Leadership is fostered by developing student clubs and mentoring. Bernalillo Public Schools use a group of volunteer student leaders (GEAR UP Ambassadors) to conduct transitional activities for its rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders. Twelfth graders mentor 9<sup>th</sup> graders at Shiprock High School and Walatowa High Charter School using FOCUS Training NM's Ignition program.

Bernalillo Public Schools, Central Consolidated School District, Grants-Cibola County Schools, and Walatowa High Charter School hold a number of well-attended Family Nights, which are academic ceremonies for students, parents, and community members that recognize student achievement.

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) Systems funded through GEAR UP include Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) at Jemez Valley Public Schools and Bernalillo Public Schools, ACT's Quality Core at Walatowa High Charter School, and K-12 Steam at Grants High School. Central Consolidated School District (CCSD) is developing a culturally relevant CCR System for its predominantly Navajo population.

The following table and chart provide a series of student outcomes in these five high schools relative to high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment. This data reflects a comparatively small number of students applicable only to these schools and do not represent state-wide trends. When analyzing data, one should be cautious not to attribute a set of circumstances to a single outcome, but rather understand that GUNM services are among many factors that contribute to student success.

Table 1: *Class of 2015 High School Graduation and Postsecondary Enrollment and Persistence of American Indian (AI) Students by school*

	<b>Cohort Graduation Rate for AI Students<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Cohort Graduation Rate<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Percent of AI Students with Postsecondary Enrollment<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Persistence Rate from First Semester to Second Semester for AI Students<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Persistence Rate from First Semester to Second Semester<sup>8</sup></b>
<b>Bernalillo High School</b>	59%	68%	22% n=15	87% n=13	91% n=62
<b>Grants High School</b>	59%	66%	15% n=13	77% n=10	81% n=68
<b>Jemez Valley High School</b>	90%	90%	45% n=5	100% n=5	100% n=11
<b>Shiprock High School</b>	72%	73%	100% n=53	79% n=42	79% n=42
<b>Walatowa High Charter</b>	86%	87%	88% n=7	86% n=6	88% n=7
<b>State of NM</b>	63%	69%			

<sup>4</sup> Source: [http://Ped.state.nm.us/ped/graduation\\_data.html](http://Ped.state.nm.us/ped/graduation_data.html)

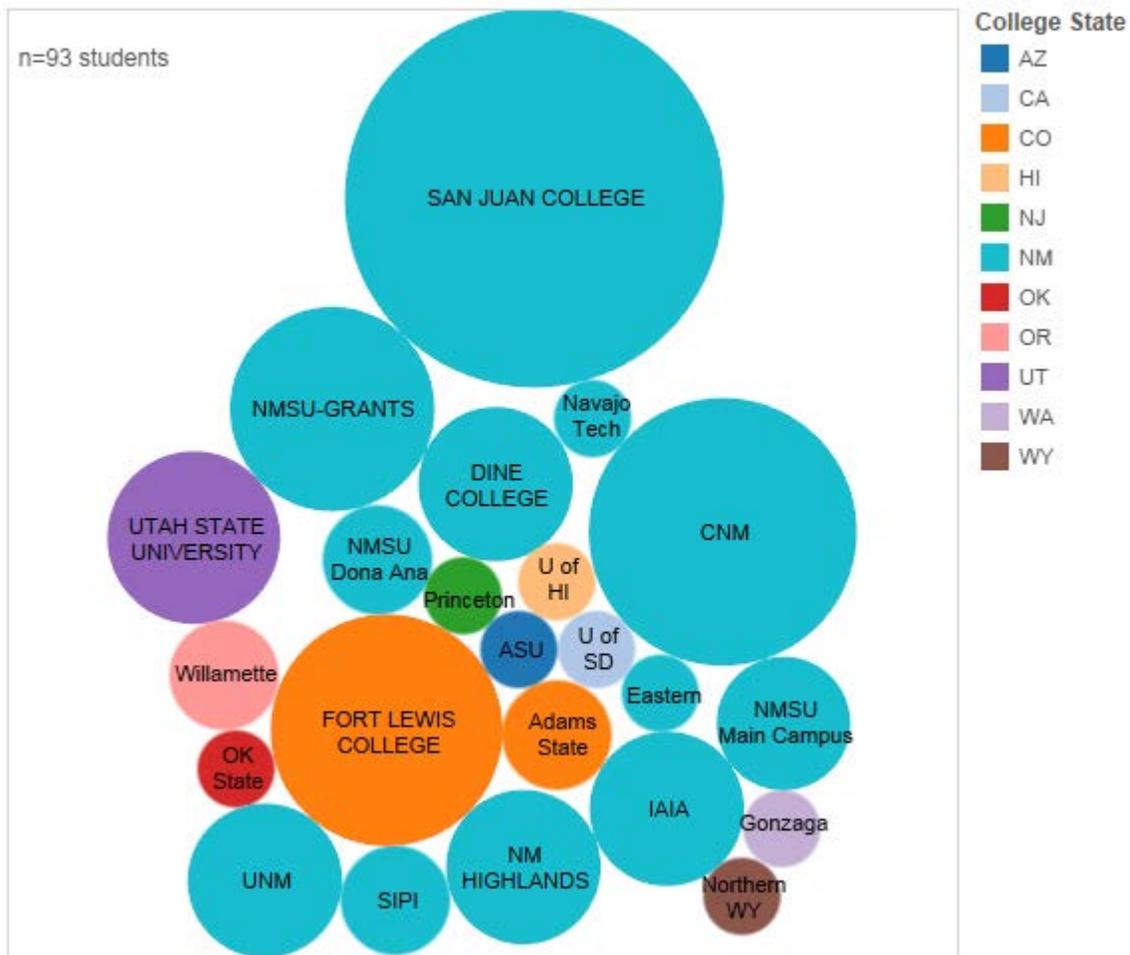
<sup>5</sup> Source: [http://Ped.state.nm.us/ped/graduation\\_data.html](http://Ped.state.nm.us/ped/graduation_data.html)

<sup>6</sup> Source: National Student Clearinghouse and NMHED eDEARs  
AI students with Postsecondary enrollment / GUNM students with postsecondary enrollment by school

<sup>7</sup> Source: National Student Clearinghouse and NMHED eDEARs  
AI Students who persist from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> semester / GUNM students who persist from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> semester

<sup>8</sup> Source: National Student Clearinghouse and NMHED eDEARs  
GUNM students who persisted from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> semester / GUNM students who entered 1<sup>st</sup> semester

Chart 1: *Class of 2015 Postsecondary Enrollment by College and/or University*



The objectives of GEAR UP are focused on increasing rates of high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment for New Mexico’s public school students. This focus coincides with many of the educational concerns and priorities of the state’s American Indian communities. This alignment provides numerous opportunities for NMHED and tribal entities throughout the state to work in concert serving students and their families.

## SECTION V

### CAPITAL PROJECTS AT THE TRIBAL COLLEGES

The four tribal colleges submit capital projects through NMHED. Tribal college projects will be heard by the NMHED Capital Projects Committee during the 2016 summer hearings that began on July 26<sup>th</sup> in Crownpoint.

These legislatively approved projects were part of the 2014 General Obligation Bond (GOB) election and are:

- 1) Diné College, \$550,000 to plan and design a math and science building;
- 2) Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA); \$2,000,000 to plan, design, construct, renovate, equip & furnish a multipurpose fitness and performing arts center; and
- 3) Navajo Technical University (NTU), \$2,000,000 to plan, design, construct, renovate equip & furnish multipurpose wellness and education center.

The 1015 Severance Tax Bond projects for the tribal colleges are:

- 1) Diné College, \$700,000 for a fire and safety access land, including fire hydrants and sidewalks, at the south Shiprock campus of Diné;
- 2) IAIA, \$800,000 to remove and replace the roof and evaporative cooling units on the academic building;
- 3) NTU, \$535,000 for health, security and safety improvements at the NTU campus in Crownpoint; and
- 4) SIPI, \$500,000 for fire alarm improvements.

In the 2016 session, the New Mexico Legislature approved the following proposed GOB projects for the tribal colleges:

- 1) Diné College, \$500,000 to renovate and construct roads and sidewalks at the Shiprock campus;
- 2) IAIA, \$2,000,000 for a fitness and performing arts center,
- 3) NTU, \$850,000 for the learning innovation center at the Crownpoint campus; and
- 4) SIPI, \$2,000,000 for a library.

These projects will be on the November 2016 ballot for voter approval.

## **SECTION VI**

### **OUTREACH TO THE TRIBES BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

HED Cabinet Secretary Dr. Barbara Damron has a long, successful working history with tribal leaders in the state of New Mexico. She had developed collaborations with numerous pueblos and tribes through her previous cancer education and research outreach work. Since becoming the HED Cabinet Secretary, she has met numerous times with tribal leaders to discuss the higher education needs of the tribes and how HED can work more collaboratively with the tribes to assist in the preparation for and attainment of higher education awards and degrees. She has also met with Indian Affairs Department Cabinet Secretary Kelly Zunie on numerous occasions to promote consistent collaboration and to seek advice from Cabinet Secretary Zunie. Secretary Damron has met with the presidents of the four tribal colleges. Secretary Damron and the tribal liaison attend the annual tribal summit and have discussed higher education issues with the tribes.

Some of the common issues raised at the tribal summit included lack of internet service; student debt, the high cost of attending private for-profit colleges and universities for the non-traditional students; the lack of training in technical fields and in the traditional tribal arts; language preservation; opportunities for studying abroad; better student counseling at both the secondary and postsecondary level; increased data sharing and increased dual credit opportunities. Some of the tribes were also interested in courses teaching students how to work in government. Such courses might include such topics as governmental accounting, grant writing and government employment in general. The tribes also desired a closer relationship with the tribal colleges.

## **SECTION VII**

### **A PATH FORWARD**

The Higher Education Department does acknowledge the unique qualities and needs of each of New Mexico's 23 tribes and is committed to honoring the distinct qualities of each of the pueblos, tribes and nations.

The department will encourage colleges and universities to diversify their Native student support offices to include more tribal representatives and more student counselors fluent in the Native languages. Postsecondary institutions will be encouraged to increase their course offerings on American Indian subjects and on topics of particular interest to Native students.

While the department recognizes the importance of increasing STEMH college graduates, we also acknowledge the important gifts given to our state by the arts, languages and cultures of the tribes.

The department will examine the dual credit offerings of the colleges and universities to the tribal students and support increased classes in the areas of interest noted by the tribes. Dual credit is intended to include courses leading to certificates and the Higher Education Department does not negate the importance of courses such as auto mechanics and woodworking/carpentry, as well as culturally-significant arts and language courses.

HED is committed to continue regular meetings with the tribal colleges on all issues and will support the tribal colleges' efforts to increase their dual credit offerings. The Capital Projects Committee of HED will continue to hear all tribal college presentations.