

New Mexico State University Alamogordo Strategic Retention Plan 2016-2017

Goals

In alignment with the NMSU-A Strategic plan, the retention goals of NMSU-A are to:

- **“Achieve an 80% Fall to Spring Retention Rate for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen”**
- **“Achieve a 60% Fall to Fall Retention Rate for First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen”**

In keeping with the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (NMACC) the retention goals of NMSU-A are to:

- **“Attain a 55.0% rate of first-time in college, full-time degree-seeking students enrolled in a Fall term, who persist to the following Fall term”**
- **“Attain a 79.8% rate of first-time in college, full-time degree seeking students enrolled in a Fall term, who persist to the following Spring term”**

Strategies

NMSU-A will focus on four vital areas to attain its goals of improving and increasing retention in 2016-2017:

- Improve Advising Effectiveness
- Implement Student-Centered Scheduling
- Improve Internal/External Customer Service
- Improve Engagement of Diverse Student Populations

Glossary of Acronyms

The following abbreviations are used within the retention plan.

- Vice President for Academic Affairs – VPAA
- Vice President for Student Success – VPSS
- Associate Vice President for Extended Programs – AVPEP
- Director of Curriculum and Assessment – DCA
- Institutional Researcher – IR
- Director of Institutional Effectiveness – DIE
- Curriculum Services Coordinator - CSC
- Division Head – DH
- Assistant Division Head – ADH
- Standard Operating Procedure - SOP

NOTE: The term “student” refers to all students who attend classes at NMSU-A, whether face-to-face or online.

Improve Advising Effectiveness

1. Utilize NMSU training resources for current and new advisors. Cross-train advisors in degree programs, facilitated by the lead academic advisor.
 - Data will include records/reports of the type, number of training sessions provided and attended by advisors (internal and external training). Assessment document will be designed by the academic advisors
 - Collect qualitative input from the advisors re: effectiveness of training sessions and how information is utilized in the advising process
 - Document quality, appropriateness, consistency and depth of advisor training using assessment data

In order to stay current on advising best practices and available training throughout the NMSU system, the lead advisor will participate as the Alamogordo representative for the NMSU Advising Workgroup.

 - Lead advisor will provide updates of meeting activity to the VPSS and academic advisors
 - Lead advisor will track application of best practices, including effectiveness assessment
 - Provide insight through data analysis regarding the usefulness of continuing this involvement
2. Update and revise the Advising SOP Manual, including the use of additional advising assessment tools.
 - Lead advisor has primary responsibility with assistance from the academic advisors and the DIE
 - Review will include revision/update of all forms, instructional documents, etc.

The Advising Syllabus will be updated annually to reflect any changes in the academic advising process

 - The VPSS will be in charge of developing and maintaining this syllabus, with input from the academic advisors. Each advisor will follow the syllabus in the advising process.
 - Analyze both of these instruments to provide information re: their useful application to the advising process
3. Participate in the NMSU system-wide implementation of Ellucian CRM Advise. This software solution will help engage at-risk students, when they most need it, with the correct resources.
 - Collect data from within the CRM Advise software to provide information for assessment of the program
 - Assessment will be accomplished within the CRM Advise software by providing an understanding of when and why students have issues and by measuring which activities are most helpful to students in need
 - IR and the Lead Academic Advisor are responsible for collaborating with other NMSU system representatives to establish benchmarks, structural processes, etc.
4. The DIE, with support from IR, will collect supplementary student information to assess changes in student demographic and program needs, use of advising services, etc.
 - Collect data using supplementary surveys such as the Student Withdrawal survey, Graduate Exit survey, Student Admissions survey, military enrollment tracking, National Student Clearinghouse information on transfers, Blue Eon advising reports, etc.
 - Continuous data collection will track trends and identify reasons for low/high student retention and completion
 - Use assessment data to determine future actions re: student demographics, persistence and completion

5. The Academic Career counselor will facilitate and assess effective student use of the Career Resource center.
- Assessment instruments will be designed by the Career Counselor with the assistance of the academic advisors and the support of the DCA, DIE, and the IR to track student usage and identify areas of greatest relevance to students i.e. job searches, resume development, interviewing, etc.
- A Workforce Catalog for use in the Career Resource center will be developed.
- Collect data to identify local, regional, etc., workforce trends based on the programs offered by NMSU-A

Action	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Training opportunities	VPSS, Lead advisor, Academic advisors	Continual – as available and/or needed
Qualitative assessment tool design and implementation	VPSS, Lead advisor, Academic advisors	Implementation by November 1, 2016
Cross-training within advising	VPSS, Lead advisor, Academic advisors	Continual during slack advising periods
Advising SOP Manual – Maintenance, review	Lead advisor, Academic advisors, support from DIE	Completed by official start date each fall semester
Advising Syllabus – Review, update	VPSS, Academic advisors, support from DIE	Completed by official start date each fall semester
Ellucian CRM Advise - implement	Lead advisor, IR, support from Academic advisors, key faculty, Administrators	Initial implementation – Spring 2017
Collect and analyze supplementary student information	DIE, IR	Continual – report at end of each semester
Workforce Catalog – development and implementation	DIE, IR, VPSS, Academic advisors	Preliminary version by end of Spring semester 2017; Revised version by end of summer 2017
Analysis of aggregated data – short-term plan of action based on results	DIE and IE team	Semi-annual Review – end of each Fall and Spring semester

Implement Student-Centered Scheduling

1. Implement the use of a **“low-risk” core schedule** for late applicants/registrants.
 - Collect data to document semester records/reports tracking late applicants/registrants, i.e. number added post-deadlines, retained in following semester, registered for 2nd 8 week sessions, success rate etc.
 - Apply a low-risk core schedule within scheduling process for AY 2016-2017
 - Analyze data to assess the effectiveness of using the courses included in the core schedule, the number and timing of core sections accommodating late applicants/registrants, trends up/down of use by these students
2. Develop a **“2-year” schedule** to allow for viable course rotations within degree programs.
 - Collect historical data re: document last minute schedule adjustments, i.e. sections added/dropped, instructor changes, etc.
 - The VPAA and the Division Heads, with input from faculty, assistance from the Curriculum Services Coordinator, and support from the DIE, are responsible for developing this 2-year schedule
Additional items to be included in the development of this schedule include determining class caps based on enrollment history, course restrictions, and so on.
 - Assessment of the effectiveness of this initiative will be provided by qualitative feedback from faculty on the course rotations, relationship to increase/decrease in completion/graduation rates, number of students enrolled/retained in specific degree programs, etc.
 - Collect data through the use of the Class Convenience Survey to help show if the schedule meets the needs of the students
3. Review all degree and certificate programs for benefit to enrolled students (e.g. transfer, employability, etc.)
 - Collect data to provide numbers of current programs with student enrollment, retention, and completion for purpose of determining continuation or possible elimination of programs
 - Analyze data to reveal needed changes in program requirements and structure
 - The President, VPAA and DHs will have overall responsibility for decisions to continue, expand, discontinue or change any certificate and/or degree programs currently available to students
 - Input from faculty, channeled through the Curriculum Committee, will provide additional assessment
4. Investigate the feasibility of continuing lowest level(s) of Developmental courses, re: meeting state grade level requirements. Discern the benefit(s) of moving these courses to Adult Education.
 - Collect data to document overall numbers of students enrolled in lowest level Developmental Education courses, measures of success/failure, retention levels, alignment with NM state requirements, etc.
 - Include qualitative feedback from faculty
 - Analyze data to address the effect(s) of these courses on student financial aid usage, persistence to completion, etc.

Action	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Design and implement needed data/assessment tools to determine usefulness of core schedule	VPAA, VPSS, Lead Advisor, DHs, ADHs, DCA, Faculty, DIE	Initial assessment completed at end of Spring semester 2017; successive analysis at end of each following semester
Development of “2-year” schedule	VPAA, DHs, ADHs, CSC, Faculty, DIE	Ready to implement start of Fall semester 2017
Implementation of “2-year” schedule	VPAA, DHs, ADHs, Faculty, VPSS, Advisors	Fall semester 2017
Review data collection: schedule adjustments, changes made and implemented, trends identified, etc.	VPSS, Lead advisor, Academic advisors, CSC	Initial Review end of Spring semester 2017; Follow-up reviews before registration of following semesters
Qualitative feedback from faculty on viability of “2-year” schedule	VPAA, DHs, ADHs, DCA, Faculty	Review included in development of Fall semester 2017 and each semester afterward.
Determine the continuance of developmental courses; develop plan going forward	Pres, VPAA, DHs, ADHs, Faculty, IR, DIE, VPSS, DAE, Accessibility Services Coordinator	Plan implementation Spring 2017

Improve Internal/External Customer Service

1. Provide required customer service (CS) training by area, across the Institution. Previous input from campus focus groups and institutional retreat indicated a need for this in all areas.
 - Investigate availability of onsite, interactive resources within the NMSU system
 - Document individual training sessions by area and topic for future reference and/or follow-up
 - Hold regular training sessions for new employees
 - Collect both quantitative (number, topic of sessions, record of attendance etc. per area) and qualitative (usefulness of information, techniques, appropriateness of interaction included etc.) data from attendees
 - Use data to document the impact (positive/negative) of the training sessions across the institution
 - Use data collected in SSI surveys, anecdotal stakeholder feedback, etc. to analyze effectiveness of training
 - Responsibility for this action will be shared by the VPSS (resource for customer service training opportunities), the Division Heads and Administrators for designated areas (scheduling sessions and ensuring participation), and the NMSU-A President (establishing **protocol for “required” status**)
2. Examine student satisfaction.
 - Use data from the Student Satisfaction Inventory, SENSE survey, CSSE survey, etc. to document institutional areas of strength/weakness in engaging students in a positive manner
 - Develop and implement actions to turn weaknesses into strengths
3. Develop a Customer Service (CS) Recognition program to recognize exemplary customer service throughout the institution.
 - Establish a rewards structure to provide official recognition of quality customer service
 - Include public recognition as part of convocations and publicize within the community
 - Collect data including names and numbers of recipients per semester, areas of recognition, rewards given, and feedback from campus stakeholders (faculty, administration, staff, students)
 - Analyze data collected to show the effectiveness of this type of recognition
 - The NMSU-A President will be responsible for developing recognition parameters and implementing the CS recognition event, the NMSU-A Marketing Rep. with support from the DIE will handle publicity of the program, and area Administrators, faculty, staff will assist in selecting recipients based on the parameters established
4. Encourage voluntary, informal staff/faculty mentoring of students in order to further develop a **“culture of completion”**.
 - Collect data on mentor/mentee relationships going back three years (numbers, longevity, feedback, anecdotal evidence)
 - Survey faculty/staff on viability of **a structured mentoring process (“college guides”)**
 - Assessment will be partly qualitative in nature as much of the evidence will be anecdotal. However, data collection (increase/decrease in usage) will validate the need to continue
 - The VPSS, with support from the DIE, will be responsible for maintaining the program. Initiation of this piece will come from the NMSU-A President

Action	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Customer service training for faculty	Pres, VPAA, DHs, ADHs, DIE	initial session – January 2017; thereafter the week prior to Fall semester start
Customer service training for staff	Pres, VPSS, DIE	Initial session – January 2017; thereafter prior to registration start each Fall semester
Review of quantitative and qualitative student satisfaction data	VPAA, DHs, ADHs, Faculty, VPSS, Advisors, DIE, IR	Initial review at completion of Spring semester 2017
Development of Customer Service Recognition Program	Pres, Marketing Rep, DIE, Faculty, Staff	Implement recognition program, each convocation starting Fall 2017
Qualitative feedback from faculty on viability of “2-year” schedule	VPAA, DHs, ADHs, DCA, Faculty	Review included in development of Fall semester 2017 and each semester afterward
Gather and review data (formal and anecdotal) on success of informal mentoring program	VPSS, Advisors, Faculty, DIE, IR	Data review held one week prior to start of each fall semester
Develop and implement “college guides” process	Pres, VPSS, Dir. ASC, Advisors, Faculty, DIE, IR	Initial implementation beginning Fall semester 2017

Improve Engagement of Diverse Student Populations

1. Research methods to better engage diverse student populations in their academic pursuits.
 - Collect information from multiple sources (journal articles, faculty/staff input, community members, etc.) - identify methods for use within the institution
 - Develop a best practices approach for engaging these student populations
 - Document progress, completion and success of a best practices approach
 - Measure the effectiveness of each approach as it pertains to improving engagement
 - Determine the next steps to take in further improving engagement of these students
2. Begin research and take preliminary steps to procuring the part of the TRIO grant pertaining to Student Services.
 - Investigate internal (NMSU) and external (grant-writing consultants) resources for help in applying for this segment of the TRIO grant
 - Use preliminary data to document logistical needs, costs, timeframe, etc. for applying for this grant
 - Specify viable areas for use of grant funds (divisional, course specific, subject specific, ASC, STEM outreach, workforce connections, etc.)
 - Use data to determine benefits of using TRIO money for diverse student population engagement
3. Investigate the use of the HSI grant to develop ways to engage diverse student populations in STEM fields of study.
 - Collect data providing information about currently used STEM outreach opportunities by NMSU-A
 - Provide group-specific information to diverse student populations regarding opportunities for engagement. The academic STEM advisor will provide additional information on STEM opportunities/careers to students during individual advising sessions
 - Review current data to document involvement of diverse student populations (numbers and types of ethnicities currently involved, current opportunities provided, workforce connections, etc.)
 - Use data to assess the success of programs currently in use, missed opportunities and level of student interest
4. Investigate NMSU resources for additional system opportunities for engaging diverse student populations.
 - Investigate programs/methods used on Las Cruces campus (student organizations, activities, workforce opportunities, academic assistance, etc.)
 - Collect data to document the viability of establishing and implementing same or similar engagement venues for NMSU-A students
 - The VPSS, with support from the DIE, will do the research in these areas and provide pertinent information for review and application to NMSU-A. Faculty organization advisors, administrators, and volunteers will lead the development of engagement opportunities

Action	Responsible Parties	Timeline
Research/investigation of best practice engagement methods for Diverse populations	DIE, VPSS, DCA, Faculty, Staff	Initial announcements at start of Spring semester 2017; Updates at mid-semester; Complete by end of Spring semester 2017
Determine the next steps to take in further improving engagement of these students	DIE, VPSS, DCA, Faculty, Staff	Initial session – January 2017; thereafter review and update prior to registration start each Fall semester
Investigate internal and external resources for help in applying for this segment of the TRIO grant	AVPEP, VPSS, DIE	Initial review beginning of Spring semester 2017
Analysis of data gathered as to viability and use of this part of TRIO	Pres, VPAA, VPSS, DIE	Begin analysis middle of Spring semester 2017; decision y/n to pursue by end of Spring 2017
If approved, preliminary action for application for TRIO will be started	Pres, VPAA, VPSS, DIE	End of Spring 2017
Collect and analyze data providing information about currently used STEM outreach opportunities by NMSU-A	HSI Grant administrator, Outreach coordinator, VPSS, STEM advisor, DHs, DIE	Data collection – complete phase one by end of Fall 2016; analysis up-to-date by end of Spring 2017
Implementation of additional HSI initiatives in STEM areas – prior to end of funding	HSI Grant administrator, Outreach coordinator, VPSS, STEM advisor, DHs, DIE	Implementation already in progress; continue going forward
Investigate programs/methods used on Las Cruces campus to engage diverse populations	VPSS, DIE	Initial investigation begins start of Spring 2017
Implementation of programs to increase engagement of diverse populations	VPSS, STEM Outreach coordinator, DHs, Faculty, Staff	Implementation begins start of Fall 2017