

UNM Admission Requirement Proposal

Public Feedback and Response if Necessary

(Last Update November 15, 2009)

From the Daily Lobo Article Published September 24, 2009:

“We definitely need to start weeding out some of the (people) on campus. I can’t believe it took this long for the Office of Enrollment Management to figure this out. This should have been done years ago.”

“I agree completely. Raising our standards will only do good for the college and the people who attend it. There are too many people who come here to goof off, and it’ll be good to weed some of that out.”

“an excellent idea, long overdue.”

“The State’s flagship University should probably not stop the bar at 2.5. What’s wrong with 2.8 GPA? Still do a 3 yr phase in, just progress from 2.4 to 2.6 to 2.8. Sure you may lose a potential hundred kids, but you’ll ultimately gain an increased potential for that many more higher achieving kids, the ones who prefer to enroll in Universities with perceived higher standards. There are still plenty of collegiate choices for the 2.3 GPA kids, who can work and transfer to the flagship University when they’re better prepared.”

Email Comments:

On Thu, 01 Oct 2009 15:41:19 -0600

You fail to address the issue of defining the 3 additional core unit requirements, specifically what disciplines will they be required in and at what level, for example currently we need 3 yrs of math including alg 1, alg 2 and geom. Adding a fourth unit could be satisfied if stu took pre algebra in the freshman yr and then completed the existing 3 core req. thru the sr. yr. It would be very interesting to see exactly what disciplines are being considered and the course levels that would be accepted.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. On page 5 and page 8 of the proposal this is addressed. Ideally, the 3 additional units would include another social science, an additional lab science, and a fourth higher level math as described in the matrix on page 5. The first year of the phase-in will be an additional social science as described on page 8 in the mark-up of current requirements. The second year will be an additional lab science and in the third year of the phase-in it would be most effective to add a requirement of a fourth year of college preparatory math which would NOT include pre-algebra but would need to be advanced beyond algebra II such as calculus or trigonometry. However, the state rural schools are often unable to provide this extra

high level math class so unless there is drastic change or on-line availability of higher math state wide then the 16th unit will likely be acceptable from any of the core categories. The fourth year of math is the "tipping point" for math success in college. We hope to get there but will not limit access if all of the state high schools cannot offer the required courses. Thanks again for your comments.

On Fri, 2 Oct 2009 09:44:26 -0600

Three problematic areas within APS:

1. Students thinking that it is ok to have a 'D' in core requirements and that D's in core requirements are ok for university admissions. I have fought with high school counselors who simply do not care in terms of college prep requirements. Dual core is not the solution, correcting the culture at APS and raising the standards in core requirement expectations will solve this problematic area. 2. APS currently does not require two years of foreign language or one year of fine arts in order to graduate.

3. Students can walk in and change their schedule at will without parental permission, ok, or knowledge. Often students will change their class schedule out of ease and the counselors are not educating students who want to attend post secondary institutions of the importance of an educational plan to meet college requirement goals.

Until the board of education remedies the above issue to be online with other high schools across the nation, we will continue to graduate students who are not ready for university and require remedial work.

I am happy to share my experience with you. As a former girls basketball coach in the APS system for nine years challenges faced included: fighting with parents over educational plans, counseling college bound student athletes due to lack of knowledge of APS counselors and mis-information, and disagreements with counseling staff over students placed in their care and the unwillingness to properly guide and counsel students.

I applaud the path you are on, but the problem is the culture at APS, this needs addressing as well.

On Fri, 02 Oct 2009 10:19:30 -0600

It is very important for UNM to rise above UNM's current reputation as one of the easiest school to get into in the West, where college prep does not count. Branch Campus and CNM are much better trained and prepared to handle pre-college and professional/technical skill preparation. UNM is better trained and prepared to facilitate scholarship. Encourage academic merit and you will get academic excellence.

On Fri, 2 Oct 2009 20:29:44 -0600

From my own personal experience, I can assure you that as a 4.0+ non-traditional student I would personally minimize test scores and require that every applicant be required to attend a personal interview with pre-selected faculty members who would be able to evaluate the student's potential for academic success and not hesitate to tell the applicant that he possesses all of the qualifications to be an excellent carpenter or mechanic but not to succeed in college. Again, having completed the 8th grade and then entered a religious community at the age of 13 where I remained for 20 years, I got into college with a satisfactory GED and the

good fortune to have the backing of a faculty member at the college I wished to attend. Testing, as No Child Left Behind has amply demonstrated, is a highly overrated disaster. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. A holistic review is very productive but would be difficult for all students considering the volume. We plan to use that process for students on the margins of the performance threshold.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 07:27:18 -0600
To Whom It May Concern:

I think that the proposed changes to admission is a great idea. It will most certainly make our University more academically competitive. However, I think it is also important to emphasize standardized test scores because they are one of the primary indicators of academic success in college. Furthermore, if you want to increase your national ratings, then you really should increase minimum standardized scores (this assumes that you would like to increase your ratings).

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Response:

Your points are well taken but we do want to retain access and at this point a focus on tests would jeopardize access.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 08:14:40 -0600 (MDT)

I think it's a great idea to raise the GPA and to slowly "weed" out test scores. I know from personal experience, that my score on the ACT was one point lower than the Presidential Scholarship requirements when I first applied to UNM, but my GPA showed that I was in the top 10% of my graduating class. Not everyone can excel on standardized tests; I don't believe they come close to measuring what students really learn.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 08:34:57 -0600

I believe I have a unique perspective on the proposed changes. I am a graduate of UNM. I am also a graduate of APS and as I read the requirements, I have a couple of things that popped up in my head that concerns me. 1) I was very unprepared for college curriculum as a result of teaching from APS and given the problems with consistency in teaching at APS (see standardized test scores over the past decade and you'll agree), I believe that the majority of the students enrolling at UNM will not start their college career at the university but instead at CNM. 2) Because students will start at CNM, I believe they will find that CNM is a far better and cheaper option for advanced education than the university. This will cause a reduction (not increase) in the number of students at UNM, which is contrary to what the administration has been trying to do during President Schmidly's tenure. 3) The increase in GPA is actually discriminatory against prospective students who work full time during high school trying to help support their family. This is not addressed at all and the de-emphasis on standardized testing, which is a better indicator of skill and knowledge than GPA. 4) GPA can be artificially boosted by taking classes that require less than stellar work during high school. I don't know that this is adequately addressed in this proposal.

Thank you for your time.

Response:

You have good points. A good test score can still get you admitted under Plan B. Thanks for your feedback.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 08:40:36 -0600

This is an excellent idea. Raising our standards will encourage high school students to work a little harder to get in to UNM. It will also increase our success rate - too often we find that there are students taking introductory 100-level courses that are completely unprepared, lacking the most basic math and language skills. Those students will be better served elsewhere. And keeping those students out will allow faculty to spend more time working with the students who do belong here.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 08:47:55 -0600

To increase retention, we clearly need to ensure students are ready for college when they come in. I completely concur with the idea of a gateway, which preserves access for students while still maintaining academic standards for admission to the main campus. However, I believe the GPA of 2.5 is too low. I've plotted the data in your report and it is clear that the inflection point lies around 2.75-3.0, NOT 2.5. A split line regression would certainly put it in that range. The value of 2.5 is unjustified in your report; as an academic institution we ought to be using the data to inform our decisions. Hence, I believe we ought to consider using the gateway unless students have a GPA

2.75 - 3.0. Using a cutoff of 2.75-3.0 would also put us more in line with our peer institutions and make us more competitive for the top students, who often go elsewhere.

My two cents.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. You are correct that the most meaningful impact happens at >2.75 GPA. However, this also eliminates approximately 400 freshmen from an average class. This is not acceptable at this time but moving in the right direction is important.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 16:50:56 +0200

I fully support the proposal to raise the admission requirements for GPA from a 2.25 to a 2.5. I think that this will improve the academics of the university by filling the class rooms on UNM campus with more students who will be more likely to graduate and will contribute more to an academic environment. I think this change will also save the state money because those students who are less likely to graduate college will begin by attending classes at CNM or other, which are less expensive, and the state will not lose as much money if a large portion of those students drop out. UNM has one of the worst retention rates in the country, and this embarrassing statistic makes it more difficult for the university to secure federal funding for improvements and new programs, that would bring more revenue to both UNM and the state of New Mexico. The University should pass this change in GPA requirements for admission.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 08:57:48 -0600

I wholly support raising the GPA requirement to a 2.5 and placing additional emphasis on the courses taken and the grades earned. Some students, although capable as shown by their grades and courses taken, do not do well with standardized testing and they shouldn't be penalized for this. Quite honestly, I don't think any student with less than a 2.5 GPA should be admitted to UNM. If they truly want to attend college, they should take the remedial courses at CNM and then transfer to UNM once they've achieved a 2.5 or better.

I write this as a parent more than as a staff person. Thank you.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 09:00:39 -0600

First, I heartily endorse increasing the minimum GPA, having taken classes at UNM and been dismayed by the unpreparedness of many students. Although I somewhat question the sincerity of the proposal -- I was quite taken aback by the statement that "Implementing the proposed changes allow for a positioning statement that we are intent on improving quality while retaining access." (bolding mine for emphasis; that is the phrase I found particularly disturbing) -- I believe this is a step in the right direction. I do, however, find that the underlying structure supposedly supporting this initiative is sadly undefined. My immediate reaction is a series of questions after reading the document UNM Admission Proposal.pdf: What will be the basis for a student's migration from the "Gateway Program" -- passage of time only, testing, college-course GPA, combination, other?

What will the criteria be? (i.e. depending on the basis, how much time, what kind of test, what grade, etc.)

Will this program comprise certain remedial courses, and will those be targeted to an individual student's needs? (addressing weakness in maths or English, for example)

If there are remedial courses, will they be extra-curricular study sessions (for credit or not?) or will these be regarded as college-level courses?

If the latter, what effect will this have on the students' overall acquisition of knowledge? So students spend the first year playing catch-up, but get equivalent credit hours; the graduation rates may look better, but I believe you have done them a disservice since they effectively get three years of college courses -- assuming, of course, that remediation takes only one year. If, on the other hand, they don't get college credit, I think you need to clarify that this changes the time line for graduation.

How do you propose to address the concomitant issues such as expecting faculty to hold students to higher standards? From my own experience and discussions with other students, there are some instructors who "make allowances" for the fact that UNM is not academically rigorous.

I'm sure there are other issues, but these are my initial thoughts.

Response:

You have several substantial points. First, the positioning statement is a matter of remaining competitive for the top students. UNM is often eliminated as a choice for top students due to the low academic quality perception that comes with low admission requirements. Perhaps there is a better choice of words. We are simply trying to remain competitive for top students and also provide access for the majority of students who wish to attend.

You reference many questions regarding the Gateway program and students transitioning back to UNM. This proposal does not address the transfer policy which requires a student to have a 2.0 GPA in transfer work after completing 26 credit hours. There are no requirements associated with remediation. There is ongoing discussion about Gateway requirements and what a student must complete to transition to UNM. We certainly highly recommend that they complete all remedial classes before they transition. We will be happy to continue this dialog.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 09:16:21 -0600

Having read the proposed changes to the admissions policies at UNM, and your arguments in favor of the change, I applaud your enthusiasm for student success. I am dismayed, however, that your enthusiasm is so far reaching as to dilute the rigor inherent in college preparation and the ACT and SAT tests and their predictive qualities. To accept admission from any New Mexican student regardless of well prepared he or she may be is insulting and misguided. For those of us who persevered in high school, earned good grades, took AP courses, volunteered, worked, and prepared for college (some of us against all odds), this two-tier admission approach seems to nullify this dedication. Basically, it rewards students who didn't succeed in high school, whether my circumstance or poor choice. Rather than 'expanding the tent' for these lower-performing students, perhaps more effort should be made to attract those dedicated students to attend and remain at UNM. If implemented, this new policy may inspire higher-performing high school students to consider other universities who offer work this is challenging and inspiring, not easy and coddling. Our state will in turn suffer a brain drain as our best and brightest head off to DC, California, New York. Your goal of a higher educated citizenry is to be commended. Your method of reaching that goal is what I question.

Response:

Thanks for your feedback. We are enhancing the work required to gain admission to UNM. We are just not emphasizing test scores but if you have a good test score, it will help you get admitted. We definitely DO want students to do more in high school.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 10:44:36 -0600

I object to the de-emphasis on standardized test scores. I have seen students who received very high GPA scores while scoring dismally on the ACT, and think this is an important piece in understanding the basic progress a student has made compared to other students. I notice you did not publish the retention rates relative to ACT or SAT scores and would be interested in seeing those results. I do like the upgrading of the required high school credits, especially regarding increasing the requirements for math and lab sciences. Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Response:

Thank you for the feedback. De-emphasizing test scores preserves access to UNM and utilizes the most reliable single predictor of college graduation which is high school grade point average. Test scores are very useful in unison with other measures and we include them in our index to determine admissibility in Plan B.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 11:13:24 -0600

I have read the proposed changes to the admission requirements for UNM. I agree that standards should be increased for admission. I also think too much emphasis is placed on class rank for college admission to any university. I have two boys that have chosen to go out of state for college and a daughter that is a senior in high school now. She plans to go out of state as well. All three of my kids had AP and Honors classes in their high school and had GPA's of 3.6, 3.9, and 3.5 senior year. They were not in the top 10% of their school's class rank. So much emphasis is given to class rank. I don't think that aspect for college admission is representative of a student's abilities. I also do not feel

it is a fair measuring point for scholarship qualifications at UNM. Good luck in implementing these changes.

On Mon, 5 Oct 2009 11:58:00 -0600 (MDT)

Raising the grade point requirement is a start. I think UNM needs to totally revamp their policies for accepting credits from other institutions. I transferred here this year after a long absence and I've had nothing but argument about accepting my classes. UNM's policy seems to be to make the students repeat courses and then count the retake as a "repeated" course when they would not count it in the first place. Take a survey and see how many of UNM's students are advising others NOT to transfer to UNM because UNM doesn't accept the credits. How can UNM claim to want students to finish in a timely manner and then cause them to repeat so many classes that it adds a couple of extra semesters?

Response:

Your point is very valid. We are continuing to work on articulation with our partner institutions around the state. Thanks for the feedback.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 11:58:45 -0600

To Whom it may Concern,

The proposal holds elements that I believe are helpful to the university, such as more preparatory units for students entering college, and a higher grade point average. I commend those in charge for realizing that UNM is behind the curve in accepting those most prepared for college.

However, I do see some significant problems with the proposal as it is. The main concern is that "No New Mexico beginning freshman will be denied admission to UNM." Even with the proposed two tiered system, I believe that there are some students that should not be accepted to UNM or it's constituency if they do not demonstrate adequate grades, activities or necessary skills that college demands of its students.

Such mandatory acceptance has led to widespread grade inflation and degree seeking, where it is now necessary to seek a Master's or other graduate degree to remain competitive within the job field. Some students that graduate high school are unequipped with the skills needed to be successful in college courses. As a Teaching Assistant, I often grade papers and tests that are so poorly written that it is not possible to understand the student's argument, even basic words are misspelled.

While I agree that college should be accessible to all, that is a different argument than that put forth in the proposal, which implies that a student from a New Mexico high school should get accepted to college simply because of where they reside. If UNM truly aims to be competitive with other universities, then it needs to demand more of it's students, faculty and staff, not less. It is this lack of willingness to ask for greatness in our students and in our classes that has led me to believe that another university may be better suited for me to pursue a Ph.D.

I urge the committee in charge of the proposal to reconsider the two tiered, automatic acceptance model. I believe UNM is a good school and should be accepting those students who further it's mission and the overall academic performance of the University.

Response:

Thanks for the feedback. Students are not refused admission but are invited to participate in a Gateway program. They are not taking classes at UNM and are not counted in graduation rates or other academic profile measures. It is a softer approach compared to outright refusals.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 13:30:48 -0600

I was concerned at first, however, as I read through this document I believe it will be good for UNM to adopt these proposed changes.

I am concerned with Albuquerque High School's rate of graduation, however I do not believe that the 48% is entirely accurate. Is APS accounting for transfers out of the district? I think by increasing admissions requirements we will be in a better position to help our incoming students. By encouraging them to attend CNM or other state community colleges we are helping them become successful students, and preparing them for UNM.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

(Note: the following seven comments are from one individual)

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 13:37:29 -0600

The emphatic and repeated assertion in the proposal that "This approach de-emphasizes test scores" is puzzling at best, and at worst mis-states the status quo. In fall 2009 92.5% of new freshmen (3155/3409) were admitted under "Plan A" . (This is the second highest percentage in the 26 years since the adoption of the current UNM Admissions policy.) "Plan A" is based solely on HS GPA in HS Curricular Units, and depends not at all on test scores for determining eligibility. Very few people in the general public "get it" that test scores, while required for the application, carry no weight for admission under 'Plan A". Students who do not meet the "Plan A" criteria may be admitted under "Plan B", which gives weight to test scores. In fall 2009 only 6.7% of new freshmen were admitted under "Plan B". (These tend to be students who score above the median on the ACT or SAT. At the upper levels, ACT and SAT test scores are more reliable predictors of academic success than GPA. "Plan B" is a safety valve for students who sacrifice Grade Point Averages in order to take more challenging courses.) It is not clear how the proposal "de-emphasizes test scores". Will the proposal result in more than 92.5% of freshmen admitted under "Plan A"?

This is not to argue for or against the proposal, but to point out that when the stated premises are incorrect, the conclusions are suspect.

Response:

New admission requirement proposals at UNM HAVE included an emphasis on test scores in the past. It is a common approach. This proposal is not being compared to the current policy which also de-emphasizes test scores. It is simply stating that we are continuing in that direction. The history of including a test score component would indicate it is wise and appropriate to emphasize that this proposal also does not emphasize test scores.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 13:59:39 -0600

In the proposal the "Proposed Pre-college curriculum to be recommended to NM schools" for Math recommends ("...and highly recommended capstone or higher math such as Trig, Calc, etc. in Yr.4)".

This statement is not clear. Does it mean:

"...we highly recommend that the NM schools offer a capstone math class in Yr. 4. As an alternative the schools should offer higher math such as Trig, Calc, etc. in Yr. 4"

OR

"...we highly recommend that in Yr. 4 the NM schools offer either a capstone math class or higher math such as Trig, Calc, etc."

Response:

It is a good point of clarification. It really means both but needs some clarity. We cannot require the 4th year of math if schools cannot offer it so we are encouraging them to be able to offer this curriculum. We will have a hard time requiring it if the schools do not offer it. We will clarify this statement that originated with the Graduation Task Force document.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 14:21:49 -0600

The proposal to re-direct ineligible students to the "Gateway" program is premature. That program has yet to demonstrate that the students re-directed have a greater chance of completing a degree at UNM than if they were to attend UNM directly. If that is not the hypothesis justifying the "Gateway" program, then what is the hypothesis? If it is the hypothesis then what is the evidence that it is a valid hypothesis?

We may have demonstrated that "under-prepared" freshmen are statistically at greater risk of attrition at UNM than their better-prepared classmates, but it has not been demonstrated that the risk is reduced by re-directing them elsewhere. Where is the evidence? Students who enter community colleges intending to transfer to 4-year schools do not (see the work of Jerome Karabel). Do we have evidence to show otherwise in New Mexico? Is not "Gateway" just a shell game? Where is the evidence that it is not? Until we have evidence (not just hypotheses) we should not put our faith in the "Gateway" program.

Response:

We are improving the Gateway program each year. We increased from 20 students the first year to over 60 this year. Does it need more improvement and a close accounting of outcomes? Yes, we agree with that. Encouraging students to attend a community college, integrating them within the university, and assisting them in transitioning back to the university is hardly a shell game. I think we can all agree there are disparate results on research involving community colleges, transfer rates, and success.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 14:28:13 -0600

One area of analysis that is not present in the proposal is the experience of Peer Group Institutions who have similarly changed their admission requirements. The current comparisons are based on static admission requirements. What is the experience of those who have changed their requirements? Did they experience a rise in retention and completion rates? Or, is this merely "conventional wisdom" that fails the test of critical thinking and empiricism?

Response:

Most people realize that many things contribute to student persistence and completion. The same people know that academic preparation is a significant factor. There are many references available but the University of Georgia system example in the "2001 Admissions Policy Directive" is an example of recognizing preparation and many other factors as vital to student success.

On Wed, 07 Oct 2009 14:55:00 -0600

The proposal is vague about the incremental changes that will be activated over a three year period. The year one adjustments are presented, but there is no presentation which college preparatory units will be added in years two and three.

It "recommends" that NM schools offer a 4th year of math, but nowhere does it indicate if and when that requirement will be added to the UNM admission requirements. In citing Clifford Adelman, they neglect his conclusions that, of all the college preparatory units that predict success, math classes carry the greatest weight. When will UNM require that 12th grade English be a composition class?

There is no analysis of the ability of NM schools to offer the required college preparatory curriculum. Are there sufficient teachers prepared to teach additional courses in math? Sciences? English composition? Are there sufficient laboratory facilities and equipment for NM Schools to offer additional lab sections?

Response:

Thanks again for pointing out where we can be more clear. The table will now clarify the implementation plan: year 1 will be the extra social science, year 2 will be the extra lab science, and year 3 would ideally be the 4th math since, as you point out, Adelman indicates that as the "tipping point" but it is not likely all NM schools will be able to provide higher math so the alternative will be an additional unit from one of the other categories. High schools have indicated the ability to offer the extra lab science. The composition is currently required.

On Wed, 21 Oct 2009 17:11:00 -0600

What is "Competitive Positioning" and how is it important? What is the importance of the "negative aspect of not increasing standards [that] is reflected by many students who earn high test scores [which, according to the proposal, will be "de-emphasized"] and grade point averages, and more often their parents, when they indicate UNM's low entrance criteria give the perception of lackluster academic quality..." Are these students who will not receive a college education if they don't come to UNM? What is the relationship between "academic quality" and admissions requirements? Our "Quality" should be judged on the value we add to our students, not the characteristics they bring to the campus. The increase in GPA proposed is much too small to alter anyone's perceptions of academic quality. And should we not give equal weight to the perceptions of parents who are proud of their struggling students and thankful that UNM offers them the opportunity to advance themselves?

We should be asking: Why is our 3rd semester Retention Rate so low for students with HS GPA ≥ 3.95 ? (90%). Is it a disgrace, or a point of institutional pride, that 56% of students with HS GPA < 2.50 are retained to the 3rd semester, and that 34% of them attain the Legislative Lottery Scholarship. Is that not a remarkable achievement for us and for them?

The Proposal is a distraction because it does not address what we as an institution should be doing, once the student has started, to increase their chances of success. While it cites 3rd semester retention rates, it neglects the fact that those rates are higher than at any time on record. What made that happen? Shouldn't we find out? And what of completion rates; are they following the rise in 3rd semester retention rates? Why or why not?

Response:

We consistently lose high ability students due to the perception that our low admission standards equate to low academic quality. Ask any parent of a top student what are their concerns about UNM and they will mention it. Does this step absolve that perception? Of course not but it is a step in the right direction. We are very proud of the access and the subsequent success many of our students achieve at all levels of preparation. That is why we emphasize access. It has been mentioned in a previous response to one of your emails that there are many variables that influence retention and graduation and now we will add that most of them reside when the student is on campus. This is not about "distracting" attention from other programs that are successful. Trumpet the success of beneficial programs and we all should

provide resounding support but don't criticize something promoting basic high school preparation because of resentment about unequal exposure. It should all work together. This proposal is not intended to be the ultimate answer for all that ails us but is simply encouraging students to better prepare in high school.

On Thu, 08 Oct 2009 17:26:19 -0600

Reflecting on the previous administration RESPONSES (10/6/2009) to parent comments that relate to math and test scores:

"...We are considering [requiring a 4th year of math in high school]... because students do struggle with Math 120 and 121 at UNM and it is very much a deterrent to on-time degree completion. As it stands now the University believes College Algebra is a critical component of obtaining a degree and we hope your daughter will seek assistance from CAPS and any resource available to overcome that challenge and graduate."

"Unfortunately, there is no plan at the current time to replace ACT and SAT scores in the use of placement until a better mechanism is identified."

In a previous submission I asked: "Does this [admission requirements proposal] divert attention from other strategies that could improve our performance as a university?" These two responses (above) illustrate exactly that issue. Math is a MAJOR barrier to persistence and progress to graduation at UNM, but UNM has no strategy in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning in those classes.

In fall 2007 the pass rates (C grade or higher) for lower division math were:

51.5% Math 120 Intermediate Algebra (Typical Class Size=60)
48.9% Math 121 College Algebra (Typical Class Size=55)
39.1% Math 123 Trigonometry (Typical Class Size=55)
49.9% Math 150 Pre-Calculus Mathematics (Typical class Size=55)
57.9% Math 162 Calculus I (Typical Class Size=28)
36.9% Math 163 Calculus II (Typical Class size=28)
40.4% Math 180 Elements of Calculus I (Typical class size=60)

There are several routes a student has to taking Math 121:

Take and pass (C grade or better) Math 120.
Score between 22-24 of the ACT Math test
Score between 510-560 on the SAT math test

According to ACT "College Readiness Benchmarks", a score of 22 on the Math ACT predicts a student has "...approximately a 50 percent chance of earning a B or better and approximately a 75 percent chance of earning a C or better..." in College Algebra (Math 121). Why, then, does Math 121 at UNM have a success rate of only 48.9%? Could it be:

- We are using a placement exam that is not valid or reliable for our students?
- The exam properly measures readiness, but we need to improve teaching and learning in our Math 121 classes?
- Completion of Math 120 does not prepare our students for Math 121?
- Some combination of the above?

Look closely at the success rates in Math 163 Calculus II (36.9%). Almost 2/3 of these ADVANCED math students do not pass Math 163. Most of them are in Math 163 because they passed the pre-requisite course, Math 162. Does this indicate that

success in our own Math 162 does not prepare a student for success in our own Math 163?

In response to a few parents who tell us they think our academic quality is low we tweak our admission standards a little in a futile effort to satisfy them.

In response to parents of students who ARE PREPARED for MATH 121 (by our own criteria) we suggest they seek assistance from CAPS, and tell them we have "...no plan at the current time to replace ACT and SAT scores in the use of placement until a better mechanism is identified." WHY ARE WE NOT LISTENING TO THOSE PARENTS?

The 48.9% success rate in Math 121 is the LOWEST in ten years. In fall 2007 619 students took Math 121 and did not pass the class with a C or better (required). Neither CAPS nor the implementation of Math 107 have helped UNM to improve its Math 121 (nor other Math class) success rates.

Do we have plans to seek a better placement mechanism, or for improving teaching in our math classes?????

"College Algebra is a critical component of obtaining a degree." What would be the impact on student retention, progress, and completion of a degree if just 10% of those 619 (62 students) were to pass Math 121?

If we are going to talk about "academic quality" we need to talk about improving teaching and learning in Math 121 (and ALL the other lower division math classes), and stop attributing low success rates solely to poor academic preparation of the students.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 15:23:18 -0600

As a result of the number of Transfer Students that come to UNM West from CNM and various out of state institutions, how would this affect my Transfer Students (especially the older students). This proposal is somewhat confusing due to the requirements. I typically follow the UNM Common Core Curriculum to advise students on the courses they should take at UNM West and CNM. If the student is an Education Degree student, I advise them of the number of Humanities courses they are required to take (12 Credit Hours: three History courses and 1 History of New Mexico course).

I do not understand how a student from High School could obtain the Social and Behavioral courses in High School. This is somewhat confusing because the following courses: NM Hist, US Hist & Geog, World Hist are Humanities Courses. The following courses: Geog, Gov, Econ are Humanities Courses not Social and Behavioral Science Courses. Moreover, many students would prefer to obtain a different Foreign Language Skill (Sign Language, German, Latin, Greek, Italian, Chinese, etc.) rather than Spanish or French. Typically, most New Mexico High Schools only provide these two Foreign Languages.

In addition, what is the "lieu of class rank"? I had a GPA of 3.87 in High School and was never told where I ranked in my High School (maybe the top "84 th" in my class). It is somewhat difficult to obtain your class ranking until grades are posted for the last Spring Semester in High School which is after the deadline for application for the Fall Semester: May 15, 2009.

Thank you for reviewing my comments. If you have any questions, please contact me via email or telephone. I hope you have a wonderful day!

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The college preparatory requirements are high school categorizations and not related to university core requirements.

The index admissions opportunity known as Plan B would be changed to incorporate ACT or SAT test score and GPA "in lieu of" class rank that is now used in the Plan B formula. This is due to the fact that many schools no longer rank students and as in your case, GPA is clear but class rank is much less clear.

On Mon, 05 Oct 2009 17:54:25 -0600

I think the changes are a great idea. I myself am a former UNM grad and current UNM employee. I wasn't accepted at first because of my low ACT score. I'm not a good test taker. So I took a few computer tests, and was finally let in. I got my degree in C&J in just the four years, and with all A's and B's. I like to think I'm a great example of a past good college student that just wasn't a good standardized test taker. I agree with the proposed changes.

Thank you.

On Tue, 6 Oct 2009 08:43:15 -0600

This is all well and good, but basically my daughter who is a Theater major would not be able to get in to UNM if she were not already there. She gets great grades in English, etc. but cannot do math to save her life, would never be able to pass anything past Algebra II in high school, and has already failed Math 120 once at UNM. Since UNM's math program is such a mess, she may never graduate, and this is not for lack of trying! What do you do about kids who got a good (private school) education, but simply cannot do some things, despite the fact that they are great in other areas?

Response:

Thanks for your feedback. It is a quandary when a talented student may lack the needed skills in one subject area such as math to graduate. This is one reason why we may not be able to require the 4th year of math in high school. That is still undetermined. We are considering it because students do struggle with Math 120 and 121 at UNM and it is very much a deterrent to on-time degree completion. As it stands now the University believes College Algebra is a critical component of obtaining a degree and we hope your daughter will seek assistance from CAPS and any resource available to overcome that challenge and graduate.

On Tue, 6 Oct 2009 10:20:11 -0600

To Whom it May Concern:

While it is important to look at many factors in admissions, de-emphasis of standardized tests does not provide value. Actually, it devalues my degree. UNM is continually sinking in National Ratings, so rather than continuing to make it easier to gain admission, why not raise the standards and guarantee a quality education where a graduate would be better positioned to gain meaningful employment? UNM seems to be headed toward U. of Phoenix standards where everyone is admitted and no one is failed. The other aspect to consider is that while GPA may be a solid indicator of a students' commitment, it is only as good as the school that it comes from. Many New Mexico high schools are substandard and that is why standardized test should still be a high factor in admission.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The de-emphasis of test scores has been in place at UNM for over 20 years. We are simply continuing that policy by not requiring a minimum test score. We are proposing that students do more work in high school to be better prepared so it is a step forward.

On Tue, 06 Oct 2009 11:37:49 -0600

I support the move away from standardized test scores and the gradual implementation of the increased high school course requirements and GPA. My daughter was an entering freshman in 2008. Her grade point and high school coursework met the new standards, but her ACT scores required her to take remedial classes she did not need. Her UNM gradepoint mirrors her high school gradepoint, and definitely exceeds what would be predicted based on her ACT scores. I know one individual is not necessarily representative. But her experience is in line with the research you present.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. De-emphasizing test scores is a continuation of UNM policy that has been in existence for many years. We make the point because we refuse to put a minimum test score requirement in any admissions proposal. Unfortunately, there is no plan at the current time to replace ACT and SAT scores in the use of placement until a better mechanism is identified.

On Wed, 07 Oct 2009 15:05:49 -0600

As a faculty member at UNM since 1991 I must say this is overdue. I teach in an upper division program and some students still have difficulty writing. My own daughter is a senior dual major in biology and Spanish here at UNM. I asked her this past week: In retrospect if you could have taken one more course as a senior in high school what course would it be? Without hesitation she said an honors English course or an English composition course. PROPOSED Pre-college curriculum to be recommended to NM schools

4 English, (one is Composition)

4 English

4 English, w/composition in Yr 4 - this part is crucial in my opinion.

Adjustment to University life is a big hurdle for almost all 1st year students. Taking students with a 2.25 high school average (and the key here is average-i.e. some of their course grades were lower than a C+) starts them out behind their more prepared peers. Providing a bridge from community college or branch campus should make the adjustment easier and it should reduce the number of students who must take non-credit courses in their first semester in order to make up for academic deficiencies in math or writing.

Response:

Thanks for your feedback. Your point about composition is well taken. There have been some successes in addressing the gap from high school English classes to freshman composition but the writing gap is still a huge issue. Alignment of class content and outcomes is still a challenge but is key in addressing adequate preparation.

On Thu, 8 Oct 2009 20:39:15 -0600

Have had a chance to review the document in regards to changes to admission. I believe it is worthwhile to pursue what is noted. I believe requiring a higher gpa as well as more credit hours will encourage a student that is greater prepared for

college. At the same time, I appreciate that all students are being given the opportunity to attain a degree from UNM. By allowing students who are lacking adequate preparation the chance to work towards admission either through branch campuses or through CNM, UNM is giving all high school graduates in New Mexico the opportunity to be successful in college and get a degree. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I hope that UNM remains committed to raising standards and giving those who choose to attend UNM a quality education.

(Note: the following two comments are from one individual)

On Thu, 08 Oct 2009 21:49:23 -0600

UNM needs to make radical changes in its admission requirements to lower its high attrition rate (\$ who did not complete their BA degree within 6 years of enrollment). One way would be to raise high school GPA to 2.5 and to keep achievement test scores as they are now.

Response:

Thanks for your feedback. Really, the influence of test scores will not change from what they are currently. There is an admission opportunity for someone who does not meet the Plan A requirements (involving GPA and units taken) under Plan B that involves an index of test scores and GPA.

On Sun, 18 Oct 2009 12:41:42 -0600

More research needs to be done on this depressing statistic of the UNM attrition rate. For example, is the problem attributable to the freshman and sophomore instructors? Are they not teaching students what they need to know for academic success? Academic success=getting a degree, not just taking classes. Another theory is maybe UNM administration sees enrolling more/a quantity of students as a good thing, kind of like economic development, especially since the lottery scholarship. Actually, it hasn't been a good thing for UNM to enroll so many students. Just take the attrition rate, subtract some percentage points for fate and unforeseeable circumstances, and strive to admit that amount fewer students next year. Those who are not accepted can go to a community college and apply as transfer students if they want a bachelor's degree. It's better for them to get an AA degree, at least it's a form of completion and achievement, rather than take 2 years at UNM and drop out. That research would include analyzing the courses taken and grades achieved for those students who did not graduate within 6 years (attrition rate students).

Response:

Thanks again for your response. As you indicate, there are many variables that contribute to attrition at all levels of a student's higher education experience. We must take this action and improve or enhance many other aspects of the programmatic and academic learning environments to increase our completion rates.

The UNM administration wants to enhance student success and on-time graduation by encouraging better preparation in high school and retain access as our core value.

On Sun, 11 Oct 2009 12:26:57 -0600

Please do not de-emphasize test scores. They are an equalizer. That is, an "A" at Rio Grande is not the same as an "A" at St. Pius. The SAT or ACT is the same test for everyone.

Response:

Thank you for the feedback. We will still have test scores as an option to be admitted at UNM in Plan B so they are important. The de-emphasis is really a continuation of our current philosophy. Also, test scores continue to be important in merit scholarship consideration for the exact reason you mention.

On Sun, 11 Oct 2009 13:33:24 -0500

I teach at Clovis High School. I don't have a problem with a push to increase the minimum high school GPA requirements, but only if this is also tied to an analysis of the classes that the student took in high school. A student who takes "regular" English, band, choir, and football during their senior year might well have a 4.0 GPA. However, this does not compare with the student who took AP English, chemistry, French III, AP Calculus, and anatomy during the same year.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The classes a student takes are critical and we are acknowledging that in this proposal in two ways: we are asking to require 16 college preparatory units instead of just 13 and we want to apply a weight to the more rigorous classes you mention to benefit the students who enroll in them and perform well.

On Tue, 13 Oct 2009 18:07:17 -0600

After reading the proposal, I feel that I need to comment. When I graduated high school, I had a very low GPA and high SAT scores, which allowed me to get into SOU for my undergraduate studies. I did not have the required 2.50 GPA, however my SAT scores were far above average, and this gave me another chance to apply myself, a chance that I didn't take in high school. With the constantly lowered standards of today's high schools, I feel that standardized test scores have more bearing than what busy work was completed to get an "A", which is entirely relative in most cases. If emphasis is taken away from standardized tests, then UNM will eventually turn out lower-intellect students who have less creativity and are more apt to regurgitating simple tasks. I think that the best way to mold this proposal to allow for improvement in the quality of admitted students would be to raise the GPA requirement without de-emphasizing test scores. I hope that someone takes this comment seriously, and I hope that this committee does not make the mistake of de-emphasizing test scores.

Response:

Thanks for your comments. We would like to assure you that "de-emphasizing" means that we are not going to place a new emphasis on them as in past admission requirement proposals. Test scores actually play the exact same role in this proposal as they have in current policy. In your case, you would likely have been admitted under Plan B where we utilize an index where a high test score will likely get you admitted with a lower GPA. Plan B is strengthened in this proposal by replacing class rank with GPA because many high schools do not rank.

On Fri, 16 Oct 2009 09:35:13 -0600

Please toughen the requirements for incoming UNM students. Requirements are low and UNM's image is one of a school to go to when you have no other options. In my professional and social life, I frequently hear parents talk of their children applying to other schools nationwide, but "if that doesn't work there is always UNM."

In twenty-nine years as a resident, I have never heard a parent or prospective student say they desired enrollment because of UNM's fantastic academics. Reasons for enrollment most often are the low cost, easy entrance requirements, or a need to near the family. I would like to see this university become a flagship school for the nation, not just the state. I believe tuition and academic requirements should be raised and I believe this University needs a great deal more money to build its facilities and programs to be world class. New Mexico's "back yard" mentality keeps this school from moving forward as the public cries fowl for such necessary things as higher standards and better facilities. If New Mexico wants to compete then they have to draw the best and the brightest. That can not be done with lower standards.

On Fri, 16 Oct 2009 10:05:35 -0600

As a life long resident and UNM graduate, I firmly support raising the requirements. The higher they are the greater chance we are able to recruit and keep our best and brightest.

Thank you

On Fri, 16 Oct 2009 10:39:45 -0600 (MDT)

As long as people are willing to pay tuition, let any NM high school graduate enroll at UNM (regardless of test scores or GPA). Just don't lower the UNM degree requirements.

On Fri, 16 Oct 2009 10:42:56 -0600

This is one of the better ideas I have heard of coming out of UNM in a long time. As a graduate of this school it really disturbs me to see the type of students entering mostly due to the lottery scholarship. I have no problems with the scholarship it self, but when a student has nothing to risk in the form of payback, this institution becomes one more year of "fun and games". I say stay home unless you are serious about a real education and stop wasting the tax payers money. By raising the bar and sending marginal students to CNM, you are now sending a strong message to dead beat students that they have not earned their place in a college yet. I fully support these ideas 100%.

On Fri, 16 Oct 2009 16:09:22 -0600

UNM admission committee requirements --Proposed changes.

Yes--change to make admission more important for those New Mexican's who want to study. Going to college is not a right. Diluting the student population with people who are not students detracts from the opportunities of the rest. It is not fair to sit qualified students next to others who can't read, write, or do basic mathematics.

The student body seems too large. There is no longer an abundance of money to spend baby sitting non-students.

The 2.5 grade level is too low. 3.0 in high school should be a snap for anyone. If a student does not have 3.0, then testing could be done. This would permit for inclusion of students that received tutoring to correct deficiencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

On Sat, 17 Oct 2009 11:17:11 -0600

This is long overdue. The 2.5 should be increased to a 3.0 over the next 10 years.

On Sat, 17 Oct 2009 14:48:41 -0600

I applaud your effort to raise your admission standards. This will only reinforce and enhance UNM's reputation for providing excellence in its higher education. My only question is why wait until 2013 to raise the bar?

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate the response.

The feeling from many rural school districts we visited was that it would be easier on their students and staff to phase in the approach rather than implementing the entire increment in one year. We valued their input and want to ensure everyone, from student to staff member, has time to adjust.

On Sat, 17 Oct 2009 14:08:34 -0700 (PDT)

PLEASE raise the admissions standards. I am a non-traditional student, and I am appalled at the lack of basic, core skills of many students on campus. The biggest benefit to UNM will occur as you move entrance requirements to 2.75 and UP. I would suggest 2.8. Students functioning at the 2.25 level belong in community colleges. Frankly speaking, I have sat in community college classes with students who knew less about basic math, science and english at the college level than I did in a public high school at the 8th grade level. Why? Learning wasn't optional in my high school.

The current low admissions standards condone mediocrity. Community colleges are well-equipped to address the generally poor education students seem to receive in New Mexico. Save college for those that work hard and are worth the effort. Otherwise, a degree from UNM is meaningless.

On Mon, 19 Oct 2009 12:54:13 -0600

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I am not a native of New Mexico. While I am currently a student at UNM, I transferred from CNM. People often looked down on me for attending CNM because it was a community college. As I work full-time and am paying for my own education, I preferred CNM's flexible schedule and lower tuition rates. I also enjoyed the smaller classes and time for more one-on-one discussion with professors. Many students at CNM seemed to take their course work seriously as most of them were paying their own way through college or trying to complete their degree program as quickly as possible. I completed as much of my course work as possible at CNM and then transferred to UNM.

The Fall 2009 semester is my first semester at UNM and I have to say I am disgusted with some of the behavior I have encountered at UNM. Many of the freshman students I encounter have little to no respect for their peers or authority. They make fun of fellow students presenting in class, argue semantics with teachers and attribute their low grades to "mean (a nicer version of the word they used) teacher's

assistants" and teachers who are "full of themselves". These are not my words, they are the comments I listen to before and during class. They brag about sneaking alcohol into the dorms and think it's cool to blow off preparing for class. They make comments that "money is no object" for their family, implying that their parents can afford for them to fail classes. Mind you, this is not the freshman class as a whole and I do not mean to offend any freshman. But this goes to show that UNM is letting in some bad apples and the admission's process could use an overhaul. I feel that raising the GPA will help weed out some of those students who are not taking their college education seriously. As a student who has always maintained a 3.89 GPA or higher, I still feel a 2.5 GPA is quite a low standard.

Since I have been at CNM and UNM, I have also observed the poor writing ability of many students. When I commented to a co-worker about this, he informed me that when he was teaching at UNM he could always tell who went to school in New Mexico because their writing abilities were extremely low compared to many of the students from out of state. I certainly feel that more English composition requirements are warranted. This being said, I am curious to know how you are working with high schools across the state in order to ensure that the students will be able to take the classes they need. However, maybe it is best to implement these new standards and let high schools figure it out for themselves. They don't seem to be overly concerned with preparing students for the minimal standards in place now. If parents want to comment that these new requirements are unwarranted and setting their child up for failure or a slower track to college, perhaps they should take up their concerns with the high school their child attends. I believe the changes you propose will better prepare students for the world they face after college.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We have reached out to high schools in the state and they are able to provide classes that meet the requirements with the exception of the third year of college preparatory math which means calculus, trigonometry or higher. We have work to do there. The issue of curriculum alignment between high schools and colleges and universities is coordinated at the state level and the efforts must continue.

On Mon, 19 Oct 2009 17:11:06 -0400 (EDT)

from url <http://www.fairtest.org/test-scores-do-not-equal-merit-executive-summary>

Institutions that still require ACT or SAT scores should review the experiences of schools that have deemphasized the tests or explicitly made them optional in the admissions process. Colleges and universities should examine their own experiences with tests and ask these questions:

- *Do the tests really have predictive validity at this institution?*
- *Does that validity hold for all ethnic, age, and income groups as well as for both men and women?*
- *Do the tests add anything significant to what admissions officers already know about applicants?*
- *Are test score requirements deterring potential applicants who would make suitable students? Did UNM answer questions like the one noted in the text above or is UNM in the process of answering the questions? I concur with many of the other commentators in that UNM must have high standards to ensure a university atmosphere of academic excellence.*

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. We have considered and do consistently evaluate the questions long posed by the National Center for Fair & Open Testing (otherwise known

as FairTest). We feel testing remains important for many reasons including course level placement, scholarship consideration, opportunity and formula admissions, prospective student data, and a balance to keep an emphasized component of the admissions process from being "gamed." We will continue to require an official ACT or SAT for these reasons but are continuously examining the issue. We do not feel that this requirement has deterred any applicants.

On Wed, 21 Oct 2009 10:01:38 -0600

When I graduated HS in 1959 it was understood that to successfully negotiate college an IQ of 120 was required, and for graduate work an IQ of 135 was needed. There was no expectation that all kids would attend college, and since the "bell-shaped curve" of IQ hasn't shifted to have the norm at 120, what is different now is an attitude of egalitarianism and political correctness that belies the limited capabilities of many HS grads who just shouldn't be led to believe that they can do college work. The result has been the dumbing down of college content to accommodate these limited capabilities and consequent poor motivation of these students. This is not an elitist position, but a realistic one. I've taught in many university settings, including open admission programs. Certainly there are some students who, for instance, come out of the military, but had low HS grades, who can apply themselves well to college work. But, in my experience, most of these students would be better served by a vocational training program from the beginning, and not after they've flunked out of college. So, while the proposal at hand may have some merit, it doesn't address the underlying issue of student intellectual curiosity, an aptitude which may be the best predictor of college success.

On Wed, 21 Oct 2009 12:28:31 -0700 (PDT)

I have reviewed the proposed admissions standards. As I understand the goal, it is to achieve "student success and on-time degree completion." (p.1) I see a great deal in this document outlining the student's responsibility to take appropriate college prep courses and work hard (i.e., earn good grades). On the other hand, I see NOTHING in this document about how the university will meet its responsibility to make sure that the students it accepts perform well in college and graduate (on time or otherwise).

While I think a 2.5 GPA is not an unreasonable admission criterion, a 2.5 GPS hardly ensures that a UNM student will graduate. I note that those who have GPAs of 2.5 (or slightly above) at entrance currently return for the third semester (i.e., the second year) at a rate of 62 percent (p. 2). That is hardly a record of which UNM should be proud.

Where is the university's plan to improve what IT does? There is a large body of literature on effective college practices for achieving increased retention and graduation. If the university seeks to improve its performance, and not just its image (see p. 6), it needs to show how it will pay more attention to undergraduate instruction, provide increased academic support (especially for difficult but necessary lower- division courses), encourage effective study practices, and build communities of students.

Response:

Thank you very much for your input. Certainly, we must emphasize institutional interventions to encourage student success. We acknowledge over and over again that we do not believe admission requirements and the high school preparation we are emphasizing is the consummate solution to the very complex problem of attrition. The University has invested in the learning environment, emphasized teaching, supported programs and facilities designed to support students, and embraced a position of transparency in accountability for graduation rates and other measures. Of course

there is more to do and the institution takes full responsibility for graduating our students on time. This proposal is one component that will give students an advantage when they do enter UNM.

On Thu, 22 Oct 2009 10:19:31 -0600 (MDT)
www.unm.edu/admissions/arp

It is wrong to change admission standards. The majority of students matriculate at higher GPA levels. There is more to education than just GPA.

Why stop at 2.5? Make it 3.8 so that UNM can be the Harvard on the Río. And only accept honors students. Better yet, only accept students who have graduated from Academy.

Many of us know that some students with lower than a 2.25 GPA have go on to do productive things and be productive workers. Some are even very successful.

The role of the state University is to serve the students of the state, as many as possible. Education is a human right. Stick your driver's license checks and jim crow laws up someone else's hat.

On Tue, 27 Oct 2009 23:06:46 +0000

(edited)I disagree that high school grades are a better indicator of achievement than SAT's or ACT's. In small communities like _____, it is difficult to take any class in any grade that a student doesn't have a relative as a teacher or THE teacher

I feel that the SAT's and the ACT's are better indicators than the high school grades. In _____, we have a very large dropout rate. One of the reasons the GED students cite for dropping out is that they are bored, that their classes aren't challenging.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate your perspective on test scores and it is a valid viewpoint. That is why test scores have a substantial place in course placement and scholarship consideration. We think many other factors critical to college success such as motivation, perseverance, and coping skills are better predicted by high school grades for our population.

On Thu, 29 Oct 2009 10:39:46 -0600

In response to the UNM Admission Requirement Proposal, its conception began with an intent to be more holistic and increase the academic rigor of the University. Quoted from the UNM Mission Statement, "Faculty, staff, and students create, apply, and disseminate new knowledge and creative works; they provide services that enhance New Mexican's quality of life and promote economic development; and they advance our understanding of the world, its peoples, and culture," speaks to the true purpose of our institution and what our short and long term goals should be focused upon. How will the University uphold its mission of improving New Mexican's quality of life if the new standards will make students who do not meet the G.P.A. requirements to take a couple of steps backward in their educational journey from their peers to attend CNM, when the research shows that students who begin post secondary education at a two-year college are less likely to pursue their degrees at a research university and more likely to drop out. The five year average of first time freshmen that come from

New Mexico is about 3,000 students. This is a majority of the student population that UNM is serving. By granting these Nuevo Mexicanos an education, they will return to their communities, collaborate in projects to uplift their quality of life, but how will that happen if these students will not even be given a chance or opportunity at success. All of us have had help whether it be generational wealth or learned values and beliefs and we have all been given an opportunity. Yes I agree UNM must increase its standards of the "Ivory Towers of the Academy," but it must not do this without a statewide effort with community members, legislators and school boards to insure that students are given equal access to education from pre-school through college. As our individualistic ideologies cloud our thinking we penalize individuals for lack of effort (i.e. low performing students), but forget that we need to look at this issue on a macro level and penalize the school districts for poorly educating our children. As a young, Latina, single-mother with a four-year old that was raised in the barrios of Albuquerque and worked extremely hard to get an education with many sacrifices of no money, I completely understand that unless you are given opportunities you will not have success. I have witnessed many friends, families and communities perish to drugs, alcohol, violence, etc. because of limited thinking and politics. I am the first in my family to climb the walls of the "Ivory Tower" to now currently pursue my doctorate at UNM. This would never have been possible if I would not have had the opportunity I was given throughout my life. Therefore, I will not succumb to the ideologies of this university and forget my community and those children and students that are the victims of this system. I will continue to assure that they can have a chance as I did and would love to talk to any officials because I can relate to the true "Nuevo Mexicano heritage and lifestyle." We need to really look at the negative impact on the quality of life that these standards would do to our New Mexicans.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are working with schools and communities and this proposal is not about excluding students or denying access. It simply is a method of encouraging students to do more preparation in high school to improve their chances of success in college. If the University was interested in simply eliminating a group of students that may or may not be successful, then it would have chosen the route of test score minimums. Instead, we chose what we believe to be the more valid and attainable approach which is requiring more and better work in high school.

(Note: The following three comments are from one individual and edited.)

On Sat, 31 Oct 2009 10:48:44 -0600

The proposed changes are (not sufficient but politically correct).

I do agree however with the general approach of funneling weak students into the community college system, where they can hopefully get up to the level required for successful University study and completion. You will have to prevent CNM and similar institutions from inflating grades to the point of no utility for the scheme to be useful.

I am unclear why weighted GPA is part of a proposal to filter out the weakest UNM student body though, since the groups likely have no overlap. That said, if you must tinker with it, I'd like to see the extra weighting for a dual-credit course take on these characteristics:

A semester Uni course equals a year HS course;

4 points for a 100 level course

6 points for a 200 level course

8 points for a 300 level course

10 points for a 400 level course or above

On Sun, 1 Nov 2009 14:52:59 -0700

*I read the revision, and the comments/responses so far. Thanks for the farce. If the University (apparently) has already decided it will avoid any change that decreases weak student enrollment, and is only interested in window dressings to make itself *appear* to be a University that the talented pool whom currently go elsewhere should now consider, there is no room for discussion. I also will hazard a guess that the students currently avoiding UNM are not so stupid as to buy into this marketing BS.*

I am embarrassed as a New Mexico resident by the author of this proposal, and offended that the UNM administration has anything to do with it. Don't misunderstand me though: I am not bothered by open admissions, or an average freshmen profile that is less than US median, or a 60+% failure to graduate in four years rate. If the state is willing with open eyes to subsidize high failure rates in return for granting opportunity, I have no problem with the proposition. I do however quail at UNM's policy position that in my opinion has more to do with keeping the coffers full than really caring about students, and thinking that a little whitewashing of the minimum GPA, and a spiffy slogan is all that is needed to quell the criticism.

That is simply pathetic.

Let's avoid the marketing PC gibberish, and instead clearly ask: is it possible to admit everybody, and still be a place where the talented want to come to ? I think so, by having a college within a college. The UNM honors college is the right idea, but it is too flaky in it's current form to fool anybody. Require 4.0 weighted GPA or 1400 SAT for freshmen admission. Expect enrollees to have completed all Math, Social Science and English 100 level courses in HS, and for practical purposes be starting sophomores or later. Offer Honors students only 200 level classes taught with rigor one would expect of a leading private liberal arts college. Encourage these students to rapidly progress to 300 level and above class work, and for heaven's sake do not dumb down or grade inflate upper level undergraduate classes and beyond.

On Sun, 1 Nov 2009 17:42:00 -0600

*This proposal is a shining example of illogic. I wonder if the author is a UNM graduate. The underlying premise *seems* to be that UNM wants to recruit more of the state's top talent for one; and second, to rank higher on the college report card to deflect state criticism that the university looks horrible.*

How can anyone of sane mind think that a talented student is going to be swayed into seriously considering UNM by knowing that his fellow students are measly 2.5 GPA achievers, and not measly 2.25 ? Or that the majority of UNM freshmen cannot finish a degree (regardless of difficulty) in four years, but that may be a point or two better than before ?

The administration had best wake up, and first admit that UNM's report card is terrible, and will remain terrible with the changes envisioned. "Incremental Change" in this proposal is trying to keep things the same, but different.

Argue that the report card is irrelevant or wrong, but PLEASE stop insulting our intelligence.

Response:

Thank you for all three comment submissions. We will certainly post your views. We appreciate the ideas to consider. It is unfortunate you deliver them with such disdain and animosity.

On Wed, 4 Nov 2009 10:54:12 -0700

The proposed new admissions standards should definitely be accepted. There is no reason why the present admissions requirements should be so low when there are

perfectly satisfactory options for students with low grade averages. Having the standards so low, as they presently are, diminishes the value of a degree from U.N.M. and diminishes the chance of being hired when competing for a job with other students who attended universities that have higher admissions standards.

On Mon, 09 Nov 2009 14:40:27 -0500

I am responding to the Albuquerque Journal article from October 16, 2009 regarding making the UNM admission standards higher. I agree emphatically YES. My son is currently a freshman at UNM. He didn't expend much effort as a high school senior at APS because he could be admitted to UNM without any more effort. I understand that having lower admission standards allow more students the opportunity to attend college but it appears that they lack the necessary academics to be successful. The proposal to have students who fail to make the higher admission standards attend CNM first, to prepare for college level work is a great idea. High standards are a better service to the students, the community, taxpayers, and the UNM/CNM programs.

On Fri, 13 Nov 2009 08:49:08 -0500

Dear sir, to clear the ambiguity that attaches the performance of a good university with low GPA, i think this upgrade of the admission requirement fits in very well the gap created. i believe if this requirements are implemented it will go a long way to clear the misconceptions that students and on the greater majority parents have about this university.thank you

On Sat, 14 Nov 2009 20:58:35 -0700

As long as every NM high school graduate is automatically admitted to UNM there will always be a perception that it is a school for academic losers. Other states have tiered university systems: every Californian can go to a state university, but they don't all get into Berkeley, and not all Colorado graduates end up in Boulder. The cachet of selective admissions is meaningful to students who have worked hard in high school and demonstrated real ability. I understand wanting to provide opportunities to students (like me) who will not discover their academic aptitude until the college level, but be careful not to let those people be a drag on the more prepared students among them.

I agree with an earlier comment that UNM needs a real honors college. You should examine the model of the Barrett Honors program at ASU. That program has a separate admissions standard from the rest of the university and enforces rigorous admissions and graduation requirements. Barrett is an aspirational option for students from Arizona and elsewhere. I went to UNM and needed developmental math to succeed in regular courses. I found that the UNM versions were too large and confusing and ended up taking math 100, 120 and 121 successfully at CNM (at that time T-VI.) It would be helpful to either offer smaller sections of entry level math and science courses or to make CNM a strong option even for those students not officially placed in the Gateway program. When I was struggling in freshman chemistry (because of my deficit in math) other students told me "Freshman science classes are designed to flunk out everyone who is not planning to major in science." I understand where that perception comes from even if it is not true.

Maybe it would be better for UNM not to offer the entry level classes at all, but to leave them to the community college where they seem to manage them better and get better outcomes.

Anyway, I wish you well and commend you for trying to address all these issues.

On Sun, 15 Nov 2009 10:29:04 -0700

I am strongly in favor of raising the admission requirements at UNM. With children in high school and middle school in Albuquerque I would very much like for them to consider UNM a viable option. It should be a university we can look forward to their attending with the knowledge that they will receive an excellent education in a strong, challenging academic setting. However, every time I review UNM's college ranking compared to other state universities, look at UNM's graduation rate or see the admission requirements I wonder if this is realistic. Please consider raising the standards.

END OF NOVEMBER 15, 2009 COMMENTARY WINDOW