

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO AND THE HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION
ON A SPECIAL EMPHASIS SELF-STUDY OPTION
FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION SCHEDULED FOR 2008-09**

SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON:
Educating Tomorrow's Demographic Today:
The First Majority-Minority Research/Flagship University

Purpose

The special emphasis Self-Study is an option made available to accredited, mature institutions that have a recent history of decennial review cycles in conjunction with their comprehensive evaluation visits and with no major interim monitoring. Through this arrangement, an institution seeks Commission authorization to focus study on one or more issues that are critical to significant advancement and improvement in the achievement and realization of its mission and vision. Collaboration between the institution and the Commission staff is essential when a special emphasis focus is contemplated.

Eligibility and Background

The University of New Mexico (website: www.unm.edu) is one of 27 institutions of higher learning in the State of New Mexico. UNM was founded in 1889 by an act of the Territorial Legislature 23 years before New Mexico became the 47th state. The university is publicly funded by the State of New Mexico and is the state's largest university, serving more than 31,000 students. UNM offers both undergraduate and graduate programs in arts and sciences, architecture and planning, biomedical sciences, business and management, diagnostic and therapeutic services, education, engineering, fine arts, nursing, pharmacy, and university studies. UNM also offers graduate programs in public administration and water resource management. UNM has a full array of health sciences and professional programs and is the only university in the state to have a law school, medical school, and doctor of pharmacy program. UNM is also the only institution in the state classified as a "very high research activity" research university in the new Carnegie classification system. It is the only university in the nation with very high research activity that is also a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution.

UNM has been continuously accredited since 1922 and has demonstrated a history of positive decennial review cycles. The last comprehensive NCA evaluation took place in 1998-99. During that visit, the next comprehensive review was set for 2008-09 with no recommendations for follow up or focused visits.

Beginning in 2000, the university underwent an intensive process to develop a strategic plan for the university. The plan, along with the statement of the university's vision, mission, values, and strategic advantages was approved by the Board of Regents in 2001. A copy of that statement is included as Appendix A.

The special emphasis that UNM wishes to pursue is a focus on minority student achievement. Our goal is to achieve equitable access to undergraduate, graduate, and professional education at UNM across all population groups in the state and to achieve equitable results, in terms of retention and degree completion, for all student population groups. The state's rich ethnic

heritage and diverse population are noted as a strategic advantage for the institution. In fact, the first element of the UNM vision statement says, “UNM will build on its strategic resources to offer New Mexicans access to a comprehensive array of high quality educational, research, and service programs.” Our goal supports not only the vision and mission of the university, but the expectations of the citizens of New Mexico. The majority of New Mexico’s population already consists of ethnic minorities (43.3% Hispanic, 9.2% Native American, 3.0% other) and demographic trends indicate a continuing increase in minority population, particularly in Hispanics, for both the state and the nation. The results of UNM’s efforts to improve success for our diverse population will thus be of great interest to institutions of higher education nationwide.

UNM is currently engaged in a number of efforts aimed at improving access and student success. Some examples include our College Enrichment programs, Summer Bridge programs, Freshman Academic Choices programs, and services offered by various Ethnic Centers. Other efforts, commissioned by the Provost’s Office, involve examining issues that impact students of color, attracting and retaining a diverse faculty population, and improving graduation rates for all students. UNM is also fortunate to be a recent recipient of a Title V grant which is being used to support campus-wide initiatives to encourage development and engagement for both our faculty/staff and student populations.

Collaboration and Preliminary Submission

An institutional delegation met with its Commission staff liaison to discuss the possibility of pursuing a special emphasis option during the 2006 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The concept of the topic for the special emphasis was discussed with key administrators, faculty groups, and Board of Regents and received endorsement from all.

The institution submitted a preliminary document that:

- provided historical data addressing its founding (i.e., Carnegie classification, accreditation history, source of controlling support, etc.);
- showed the relationship between the identified special emphasis and the institution's mission;
- documented institutional consensus and support for the special emphasis areas chosen;
- provided evidence that the institution has made progress with challenges identified by the team that conducted the last comprehensive evaluation visit;
- provided evidence that the institution has adequate financial resources and a comprehensive planning and budgeting process.

After reviewing that document, the staff liaison signaled his readiness to review a formal submission on which to base an agreement between the institution and the Commission.

Definition of Special Emphasis

The special emphasis will focus on the question “Transforming access into equity: How do we deliver on the promise of equal rewards?” Overall, we want to improve in our efforts for providing access and ensuring success to our undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. As the university moves to make improvement in these areas, there are several key issues and questions that UNM will need to explore, including the following:

Preparation/Recruitment: How can we work with the public school systems in the state, and particularly, with the Albuquerque Public Schools, to better prepare our students? How do we address curriculum alignment with the public schools in New Mexico? For those students coming from out-of-state, how do we ensure that they have received adequate preparation? Do we need to examine admission requirements? Do we need to examine the timing of placement exams?

Enrollment and Curricula Management: How can we better manage our curricula using the tools and technology that the university has? Should we revise our scheduling of classes to a different scheduling pattern? What methods can we use to encourage continuous enrollment for our students to help them graduate in a timelier manner? How can we infuse cultural awareness into UNM offerings? Should the Freshman Academic Choice offerings provide more required courses? Should we require passing of key math and English classes before progressing to courses in the student's major? Are there other university procedures and policies that should be added or revised to help our students graduate? How can we enhance or improve our academic advising efforts for our students?

Student Support and Success Efforts: UNM offers a number of programs to help students. Which programs have been successful and which have not? How can we capitalize on our successes and where do we need to focus our resources? How can we better integrate student affairs and academic affairs goals to promote success for students (e.g., aligning student program advisement with academic advisement initiatives)? How can we provide more opportunities for students to engage in the campus community through ways such as working on campus or getting involved in research activities? How can we encourage and provide information to students about financial aid offerings and scholarship opportunities? Do our "intervention" strategies work? How can we improve on what we are currently doing and what other efforts should we engage in to ensure success for our students?

Faculty: How can we recruit and retain a more diverse faculty? How does the university support faculty and professional development opportunities to teach to a culturally and ethnically diverse student population? How can we capitalize on our strengths in this area and where do we need to focus our resources? What opportunities exist or need to be developed to promote engagement between faculty and students (e.g., research mentorship)?

Support for Community/State Initiatives: How can we better promote our educational offerings to encourage applications to undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs that reflect the population distribution of the state (undergraduate) and the nation (graduate)? What other types of support or activities can we provide to the citizens of New Mexico to advance quality education? What metrics are appropriate for measuring progress in equitable access and outcomes for our students?

UNM desires to devote a portion of its Self-Study to these and related questions. It also desires consultation and advice from the Higher Learning Commission Consultant Evaluators on these questions through the special emphasis portion of its accreditation review.

Outline Format for Self-Study

An outline of our institutional Self-Study is attached (see Appendix B). Briefly, the Self-Study document will consist of the following:

- an introductory section, which provide an overview and information about the University of New Mexico, the responses to prior concerns and major developments and progress since UNM's last accreditation visit, and an overview and description of the Self-Study;
- a section that addresses the criteria for accreditation, discussing the criterion and an evaluative assessment of UNM's fulfillment of each criterion as well as the relationship to the special emphasis;
- a section addressing the special emphasis topic and exploring the key questions and issues;
- a conclusion section which will reflect on what we learned from the Self-Study;
- a section for Institutional Change Requests (if needed); and
- relevant appendices

Institutional Capacity and Commitment to Special Emphasis

The idea to pursue a special emphasis for the self-study was originally formed as a result of several initiatives at UNM to explore the impact of the emerging majority population, including several task forces commissioned by the Provost. Given the State of New Mexico's rich cultural heritage and diverse population, the University of New Mexico is in a key position to provide leadership in promoting quality education initiatives for students of every background. In addition, UNM is faced with the challenge of balancing the competing demands of being a research institution with serving the needs of the state's population, many of whom are first generation students from underrepresented populations. Based upon information and recommendations gathered from these various task forces, the Provost decided to explore the possibility of pursuing a special emphasis to help the university focus and develop specific measures to improve upon the access to quality education and increasing the success of all of our students. He developed a proposal which was endorsed by the President, Executive Cabinet, Deans, Provost's Staff, and Faculty Senate.

UNM has the capacity to support the special emphasis initiative. The Provost has appointed an Accreditation Director to manage the process and to organize the activities and committee for the self-study. A small working committee was formed to explore and identify key questions and issues for the Self-Study. After formal approval, the working group will disband and a formal committee structure to support the self-study process will be created, with appointments to those committees made by the Provost and supported by the President. Sufficient funds have been allocated to support the self-study efforts.

UNM also has a commitment to this process. The special emphasis working group, the faculty leadership, and the administrative leadership including the President and Provost all support a thorough examination of the topic. The findings will form a section of the self-study report, which will be available to the campus community, to alumni, and to selected external stakeholders (e.g., feeder institutions). It is understood that the evaluation will be based on this portion of the Self-Study as well as the sections of the criteria for accreditation. Furthermore, UNM is committed to publicly reporting the findings and recommendations of the HLC and to work with the HLC in the follow-up to the report (including a later consultative visit) and recommendations.

Summary of Agreement

The University of New Mexico agrees to completion of the special emphasis Self-Study under the terms set forth above, which are listed in summary form below:

- defined need for and nature of the special emphasis Self-Study focus;
- use of outline format for the Self-Study that indicates how continued fulfillment of the *Criteria of Accreditation* will be addressed;
- statement of institution’s capacity to support the special emphasis initiative;
- statement of institution’s commitment to report the comprehensive results of the special emphasis as a part of the Self-Study and to being evaluated, in part, on the conduct of the outcomes achieved through the special emphasis;
- commitment to provide the Commission with follow-up, generally through a later consultative visit, on the recommendations (internal and external) and utilization of the findings resulting from the self-study and evaluation processes.

Upon execution of this agreement, Commission staff works with institutional representatives in organizing the special emphasis self-study, selecting team members, arranging the on-site visit, following the review process to completion, and monitoring institution/Commission follow-up.

The Consultant-Evaluators Team conducts the comprehensive evaluation visit to (a) determine the institution's fulfillment of the *Criteria for Accreditation*, and evaluate the special emphasis initiative under the agreed upon format and (b) provide consultative advice regarding the outcomes achieved and, under special conditions, participate in follow-up activities as may have been proposed as a part of the special emphasis focus.

David Harris, Acting President

Date

Special Emphasis request accepted by the Higher Learning Commission.

Steven D. Crow, Executive Director

Date

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

STATEMENT OF VISION, MISSION, VALUES, AND STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES (Excerpted from *The University of New Mexico Strategic Plan*, approved by the UNM Board of Regents, December 11, 2001)

Vision Statement

UNM will build on its strategic advantages:

- to offer New Mexicans access to a comprehensive array of high quality educational, research, and service programs;
- to serve as a significant knowledge resource for New Mexico, the nation, and the world; and
- to foster programs of international prominence that will place UNM among America's most distinguished public research universities.

Mission Statement

The University will engage students, faculty, and staff in its comprehensive educational, research, and service programs. UNM will provide students the values, habits of mind, knowledge, and skills that they need to be enlightened citizens, to contribute to the state and national economies, and to lead satisfying lives. Faculty, staff, and students create, apply, and disseminate new knowledge and creative works; they provide services that enhance New Mexicans' quality of life and promote economic development; and they advance our understanding of the world, its peoples, and cultures. Building on its educational, research, and creative resources, the University provides services directly to the City and State, including health care, social services, policy studies, commercialization of inventions, and cultural events.

Value Statement

The values of the individuals who teach, learn and work at UNM have shaped over time the values of the University. Our values provide a frame of reference for making decisions. They contribute to the general atmosphere of the University and then guide us in our teaching, our pursuit of knowledge, and our public service.

Academic Freedom: As a center of knowledge, the University adheres to the doctrines of academic freedom and free speech. The University will continue to protect the exploration of ideas and will encourage inquiry and creative activity by students, faculty and staff. At the same time, the University opposes statements and activities that reflect bigotry and prejudice, and that consequently tend to diminish active participation by all elements of the academic community and to inhibit the free expression of ideas.

Diversity Within the Academic Community: The University values the diversity of its students, faculty, staff and the other people with whom it interacts. Our differences assure that the

University is a forum for the expression, consideration and evaluation of ideas. The educational process on our campus is clearly enriched and strengthened by the fact that these ideas arise and are evaluated from such diverse perspectives.

Creativity and Initiative: The University moves forward in its academic programs, student support services, and other operations by encouraging and rewarding creativity and initiative among faculty, staff, and students.

Excellence: At the University, we value excellence in our people, in our programs, and in our facilities. We have a responsibility to encourage and develop excellence among our faculty, staff and students. We are committed to be leaders.

Integrity and Professionalism: Integrity and ethical, professional behavior by all individuals associated with UNM are essential in order for students, faculty, staff and the public to have trust in the University.

Access and Student Success: We have a clear obligation to provide a quality higher education to all New Mexico students who have the capability to succeed. This obligation is combined with the responsibility to provide an environment and appropriate support that will give every individual his or her best chance of success.

Strategic Advantages

The University of New Mexico's location provides strategic advantages that define opportunities to realize the University's vision and mission.

- New Mexico's diverse demographic profile provides UNM the opportunity to create an exceptionally rich learning environment characterized by a wealth of different ideas considered from a multitude of perspectives.
- UNM is near an international border; the associated cultural, political, historical, economic, and social relations provide a foundation for a natural international orientation.
- The University's proximity to the internationally prominent scientific communities of the federal laboratories provides manifold opportunities for collaboration and synergy in scientific and engineering education and research.
- UNM's location in the midst of a world-class arts center, along with museums and other support facilities, provides unique opportunities for research and creative activity, as well as for educational programs in the arts and humanities.
- New Mexico's high-desert location, accompanied by the surrounding mountains, the Rio Grande Valley, and other natural features provides a laboratory for environmental, water, health, and other research and educational opportunities.
- New Mexico's rich cultural heritage, spectacular landscape, and climate provide a high quality of life that is appealing to many scholars, students, artists, business firms, and others for whom the state is a highly desirable place to locate.

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO 2008-09 ACCREDITATION SELF-STUDY DRAFT OUTLINE

I. Introduction

A. Overview and Background Information

1. Overview of the University of New Mexico
2. Historical Information
3. Organizational Structure and Governance
4. Description of UNM's students, faculty, staff, and community
5. UNM's role in the state
6. Accreditation Information

B. Response to Prior Concerns, Major Developments, and Areas of Progress since UNM's last Accreditation (1999)

1. Overview of most significant changes
2. Responses to Concerns of the 1999 Report of a Visit

C. Self-Study Process

1. Overview of the Self-Study Process
2. Description of the Special Emphasis
3. Description of format and organization of Self-Study report
4. Goals of the Self-Study

II. Section A – UNM's Fulfillment of the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria

A. Chapter 1 – Criterion 1: Mission and Integrity

1. Overview of Criterion
2. Core Component 1a – The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
3. Core Component 1b – In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
4. Core Component 1c – Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component

5. Core Component 1d – The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
6. Core Component 1e – The organization upholds and protects its integrity.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
7. Relationship of Criterion and Core Components to Special Emphasis
8. Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement for Criterion

B. Chapter 2 – Criterion 2: Preparing for the Future

1. Overview of Criterion
2. Core Component 2a – The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
3. Core Component 2b – The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
4. Core Component 2c – The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
5. Core Component 2d – All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
6. Relationship of Criterion and Core Components to Special Emphasis
7. Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement for Criterion

C. Chapter 3 – Criterion 3: Student Learning and Effective Teaching

1. Overview of Criterion
2. Core Component 3a – The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
3. Core Component 3b – The organization values and supports effective teaching.
 - a. Overview

- b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 4. Core Component 3c –The organization creates effective learning environments.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 5. Core Component 3d – The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 6. Relationship of Criterion and Core Components to Special Emphasis
- 7. Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement for Criterion

C. Chapter 4 – Criterion 4: Acquisition, Discovery and Application of Knowledge

- 1. Overview of Criterion
- 2. Core Component 4a – The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 3. Core Component 4b – The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 4. Core Component 4c – The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 5. Core Component 4d – The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
- 6. Relationship of Criterion and Core Components to Special Emphasis
- 7. Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement for Criterion

D. Chapter 5 – Chapter 5: Engagement and Service

- 1. Overview of Criterion
- 2. Core Component 5a – The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component

3. Core Component 5b – The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
4. Core Component 5c -- The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
5. Core Component 5d -- Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.
 - a. Overview
 - b. Supporting Evidence
 - c. Fulfillment/Evaluation of Core Component
6. Relationship of Criterion and Core Components to Special Emphasis
7. Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement for Criterion

III. Section B – Special Emphasis: Educating Tomorrow’s Demographic Today: The First Majority-Minority Research/Flagship University

A. Chapter 1 – Introduction

1. Overview of special emphasis
2. Definition of special emphasis
3. Organization for special emphasis
4. Key Questions/Issues

B. Chapter 2 – Preparation

1. Overview
2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

C. Chapter 3 – Enrollment and Curricula Management

1. Overview
2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

D. Chapter 4 – Student Support and Success Efforts

1. Overview
2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

E. Chapter 5 –Faculty

1. Overview

2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

F. Chapter 6 – Support for Community/State Initiatives

1. Overview
2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

G. Chapter 7 –Other Questions/Issues

1. Overview
2. Investigation
3. Analysis
4. Future Directions/Timelines

H. Chapter 8 – Summary

IV. Conclusion – What We Learned from Our Self-Study Process

V. Institutional Change Requests

VI. Appendices

A. Federal Compliance Information

B. 3rd Party Comment

C. Other Appendices as determined