

College of Education Strategic Plan

I. Introduction

Mission and Core Values of the College of Education

The 2004 strategic plan for the University of New Mexico College of Education, like our earlier action plans, flows from our mission and values. Our mission is the study and practice of education through teaching, research, and service. We address critical educational issues; test new ideas and approaches to teaching and learning; educate professionals who can facilitate human growth and development in schools, homes, communities, and workplaces; and prepare students for participation in a complex and challenging society and for lifelong learning.

In carrying out our mission we value:

- Excellence in all that we do
- Diversity of people and perspectives;
- Relationships of service, accountability, collaboration, and advocacy
- Discovery, discussion, and dissemination of ideas
- Innovation in teaching, technology, and leadership

Educational Context

The formulation of a strategic plan comes at a crucial time for colleges of education, both nationally and within New Mexico. Passage and implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act has created a number of issues of concern to educators, parents, and students. For example, the Act includes a narrow definition of research that ignores many of the most important methodologies for studying educational issues. It emphasizes frequent standardized testing of individual children, with serious consequences for individuals, schools, and school districts that do not perform up to designated standards. The requirement that every classroom contain a “highly qualified teacher” implies both that a large number of new teachers will need to be educated and that continuing educational opportunities should be routinely provided to current teachers. Unfortunately, funding to support these and other mandates is inadequate, and there is a shortage of spaces in teacher education programs and of qualified university faculty to educate as many teachers as are needed. As many teachers are considering retirement and teachers’ salaries continue to lag far behind those of other professionals, the number of future teachers is likely to decrease, rather than increase. Colleges of education throughout the nation are trying to meet these societal needs with a limited supply of resources.

Educators in New Mexico share many of the problems that face our colleagues throughout the United States, particularly those reflecting a shortage of teachers and money. Yet we also have a number of advantages that reflect the uniqueness of our state and its history. In New Mexico we have a great number of long-standing communities that cherish their history, their languages, and their traditions. Although there have always been tensions, the different communities in this state have struggled to maintain their own identities as they have learned to live with, and next to, those who are different from them. The history of resistance as exemplified by the Pueblo Revolt, the Gorras Blancas, and the protection of the environment is also a part of our history. This has given New Mexicans a heightened consciousness about the need to respect and promote different cultural traditions, and languages and to maintain that support despite the xenophobic movements that have affected other states.

Other experiences and institutions also contribute to the uniqueness of our state. New Mexico has experienced a long history of international exchanges. Long before we became a state of the Union in

1912, and before the arrival of the Spaniards, there were exchanges between the people here and those to the south. Who we are as a people and where we are as a place is largely the result of those encounters. New Mexico is also a center for the arts, attracting artists from around the country and the world. Santa Fe is now the second largest art market in the United States, and Albuquerque is full of galleries and artists as well. High technology is yet another important strength of the state. National laboratories and high tech industry are especially prominent in Albuquerque, Los Alamos, and Rio Rancho. Collaborations with Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos National Laboratories and Intel Corporation have begun in a number of areas, but their potential remains to be fully realized.

The strengths and opportunities within our state are balanced by a number of serious challenges. New Mexico ranks last or near to last on a number of crucial social and educational indices that bear directly on the well being of children. We have high percentages of children with limited proficiency in English, who live in poverty, who come from single-parent families, and who reside in rural areas without easy access to postsecondary education or to medical and dental care. Rates of teenage pregnancy, accidents, drinking, suicides, and school dropouts are also high. One critical mission of the University of New Mexico College of Education is to prepare teachers who are truly qualified to teach all children, including the most vulnerable. We strive to provide future teachers with the skills to teach in ways that are both effective and culturally responsive. Continuous assessment of the effectiveness of our teacher education programs is a necessary component of this mission.

Our college is also affected by trends that are less directly related to traditional teacher education. The aging of the population and the tendency for people to change jobs and occupations throughout their lifespan makes education a lifelong activity, both in and out of the workplace. A national epidemic of obesity reinforces the importance of nutrition and physical activity. Recognition of the need for all individuals to continue learning in many domains throughout their lives makes research on the learning process and on human development and family interactions particularly important.

The urgent need to respond to national, state, and local pressures to prepare teachers to educate children for the rest of the 21st century and to educate individuals who can provide opportunities for others to continue learning throughout their lives makes the development of a strategic plan for the College of Education particularly timely.

Formulation of the Plan

In the fall of 2002, the COE held a series of three faculty meetings dedicated solely to the development of a strategic plan. One meeting focused on Vital Academic Climate, one on Public Responsibility, and one on Diversity. At each meeting faculty presented specific ideas for appropriate goals, objectives, and actions in the relevant areas. Following these meetings, three task forces were formed to coordinate these ideas into a matrix identifying goals, objectives, actions, responsible persons, and benchmarks. The task forces each met numerous times and presented a report and corresponding matrix to the dean in the spring of 2003.

In the fall of 2003, a coordinator was appointed to help facilitate the development of the strategic plan. The three task force reports were distributed to the faculty. Meetings were held with the task force chairs and the dean and with the combined members of all three task forces. These were followed by faculty meetings focusing on the topics of Public Responsibility, Vital Academic Climate and Diversity; a second combined task force meeting; and a meeting between task force representatives and the dean.

In the spring of 2004, the task forces continued to meet, both individually and in combination. Drafts of the strategic plan were written and rewritten. Two faculty meetings were also held. At the last faculty meeting the current version of the plan was adopted.

Assumptions Underlying the Plan

Certain values and assumptions form the basis of the plan.

First, the COE intends to build on and continue to improve some of its strengths, both resources and specific areas in which particular distinction has been shown. Among these are:

- A large number of outstanding Native American faculty members, perhaps the largest concentration at any major university in the United States, with a corresponding focus on Native American education
- Creation of a new Institute for American Indian Education
- Faculty and programs which emphasize issues related to languages, literacy, and the social-cultural aspects of schooling, including Spanish-English bilingualism
- Faculty and programs involved in international education, especially in Latin America, including Latin American Programs in Education (LAPE).
- A Ph.D. program in educational linguistics, reflecting a collaboration between the COE and the Linguistics Department in the College of Arts and Sciences
- A discipline-specific secondary education program which provides teachers opportunities to work in groups focusing on math and science, communication arts, modern languages, or social studies
- A Technology and Education Center, providing resources used by all faculty and students, not only those concentrating on educational technology
- A program in educational leadership which has educated many of New Mexico's educational administrators and leaders, including the state Secretary of Education
- Partnership programs with the Albuquerque and Santa Fe school districts that have won numerous awards and educated a large number of teachers
- Programs in Gallup and Farmington which permit undergraduate and graduate students to take classes without having to travel to Albuquerque
- Creation of the Chester C. Travelstead Endowed Faculty Fellowship for Teacher Education, the first endowed faculty position in the COE
- A number of centers and institutes, including the Center for Family and Community Partnerships, the New Mexico Research and Study Council, the Institute for Professional Development, and the Multicultural Education Center
- Large numbers of research grants on topics ranging from learning styles to teaching strategies to exercise physiology to special education to technology integration to social and cultural aspects of education.
- A student body that represents a far more diverse range of backgrounds and expertise than a typical state university. It includes a large number of Hispanic and Native American students, as well as those from other ethnic backgrounds; a majority who are of nontraditional ages; many students from rural backgrounds; a number of first generation college attendees; bilingual and bicultural individuals from around the world as well as the state; and people with experience in a wide variety of occupations and activities

Second, we decided to focus on college-wide issues in the COE plan. Individual programs and departments have already formulated strategic plans that deal with the specific issues and programs facing their faculty, staff, and students. Although these plans are, and will continue to be, consistent with the COE Strategic Plan, the COE plan is not a synthesis of the departmental plans but rather one which focuses on topics important to the COE as a whole. Similarly, the COE Plan is consistent with the UNM

Strategic Plan but is formulated to be of maximum value to the college, rather than a translation of the UNM plan to apply to the COE.

Third, we decided that in formulating the plan for the entire COE, we would focus our energies on the specific areas of Vital Academic Climate, Public Responsibility, and Diversity. Our understanding, from the Provost's memo of November 15, 2002, is that the Areas of Marked Distinction to be supported by the central administration would be ones that cut across colleges rather than operate within them. The COE is looking forward to working with other units of the university in developing such areas and hopes to utilize our particular strengths in the fields of multiculturalism, international education, diversity, health and fitness, research methodology, and education as we contribute to these Areas of Marked Distinction.

Fourth, we look on this plan as a living document. We intend and expect that it will be revisited and revised annually, with the action part of the plan (Part II) updated to incorporate new goals, objectives, and actions as current ones are accomplished. The detailed matrices developed by the Diversity, Public Responsibility, and Vital Academic Climate task forces (Part III) will serve as a resource for the selection of new goals and objectives. An Implementation Committee will assure that the plan is periodically assessed and modified to meet changing circumstances, opportunities and constraints.

II. 2004 Action Plan

The 2004 Action Plan reflects both issues specific to Vital Academic Climate, Public Responsibility and Diversity and a number of common themes that appeared in the three matrices created to describe the ideas and opinions expressed by the faculty. These themes include:

- Attracting and retaining a high quality and diverse faculty
- Providing a supportive educational climate and community for all members of the College of Education
- Providing for social, academic, and cultural growth of faculty, students and staff
- Increasing democratic governance within the COE and the university
- Providing access to and support for quality research
- Collaboration between the COE and other entities both within and outside the university
- Collaboration among individual faculty members, with both others in the COE and individuals outside the college
- Using and communicating our expertise, working with the outside community on important educational issues
- Responsiveness to the needs of the state and of the diverse communities within the state

And, most critical to achieving all the themes expressed above,

- The crucial importance of administrative support and resources to support the strategic plan and the needs of the college

To provide such support and resources, it will be necessary to

- Examine faculty load issues with regard to teaching, research, service, grant acquisition, and grant management. Reduced teaching loads or other forms of compensation are necessary to provide incentives for faculty to be involved with some of the initiatives described below.
- Consider the multiple duties of faculty, ensuring that issues of salary compaction and equity in salary and workload are adequately addressed.
- Provide rewards and acknowledgement toward promotion and tenure for work with the public, including New Mexico schools and agencies.

The Action Plan is organized into the three areas identified by the UNM regents: Vital Academic Climate, Public Responsibility and Diversity. Each area begins with an introduction, followed by a list of the related goals for the college. These goals are slight modifications of the goals in the UNM plan restated to meet the specific needs of the COE. The specific objectives and actions to achieve these goals reflect a blend of practicality and idealism. Some are relatively easy to achieve in the short run, while others begin to deal with more complex and difficult issues.

II.A: Vital Academic Climate

Introduction to Vital Academic Climate

A vital academic climate refers to those resources, conditions, and interactions in the College of Education that facilitate the building, sharing, and dissemination of knowledge, thereby enlivening the professional lives of faculty, students, and staff. In short, a vitally academic College of Education is continually learning. The faculty, students, and staff who constitute the COE seek out opportunities to learn from each other, and they just as assiduously strive to learn from the many outside constituencies that they serve. Because learning is the focus, the College of Education allocates adequate resources to support innovative teaching and enlightening scholarship, ensures agreeable and safe working conditions to attract and retain outstanding teachers and researchers, and models professional interactions to make healthy and fruitful collaborations possible.

There are probably three characteristics that distinguish a vitally academic College of Education from other colleges and schools. First, the knowledge and understanding that the College of Education holds about promoting and sustaining learning set it apart. It is likely that no other college or school knows as much as about how people learn at all ages as the faculty in the College of Education.

Second, the commitment that the College makes to partnering with schools and other educational institutions to share what it knows about learning and to create new knowledge about learning remains one of its most important and socially significant purposes.

Third, because the College of Education is preparing the educators of tomorrow, it has a special responsibility to develop a truly life-giving academic climate, one that models the sort of vitality in teaching and inquiry that stimulates future educators and encourages them to emulate this climate later on in their own educational institutions. Accordingly, it is essential that faculty model a courteous and supportive environment with emphasis on free and safe communication among peers. The College of Education has a special, even unique, mission to do all that it can to build a climate for learning and inquiry that motivates and energizes people to become educators and to graduate more eager than ever to provide similarly enlivening climates for the learners that they will encounter.

The College of Education Strategic Goals for Vital Academic Climate

Adapted from the University's Strategic Goals

COE Goal 1: Provide high quality education for undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students.

COE Goal 2: Provide high quality education for graduate students.

COE Goal 3: Encourage, support and lead focused, sustained, and cooperative research efforts across departments and colleges, addressing issues of educational importance and relevance to the larger community of educators, and creating opportunities for shared learning and problem solving that address these issues in meaningful ways.

COE Goal 4: Develop and sustain the College as a community of learners.

COE Goal 5: Ensure open communication and democratic decision-making processes in college planning, administration, and governance.

COE Goal 6: Provide a secure campus environment for faculty, staff, and students that supports the development of the whole person—the social, cultural and academic life of students, faculty, and staff.

COE Objectives and Actions for Vital Academic Climate

The following objectives and actions emerged from a COE faculty focus group process in which faculty first identified the issues that mattered most to them regarding vital academic climate. The Vital Academic Task Force then took these raw materials and placed them in an extensive planning matrix, aligning prioritized objectives with each of the COE's strategic goals (see section 3). Finally, the VAC Task Force attempted to eliminate redundancies, culling from the matrix the objectives and actions that appeared to be the most important to faculty. What follows is not in priority order.

1. Recruit, support, and retain outstanding students, faculty, and staff at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Recommended Actions:

- Sustain mentoring programs for faculty and graduate students.
- Put resources into faculty salaries and essential supplies.

2. Promote and disseminate outstanding and collaborative scholarship that meaningfully involves students and helps to foster an intellectually stimulating academic community.

Recommended Actions:

- Create a research center to support collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship focused on the needs of the region.
- Offer incentives for team teaching and team scholarship.
- Prepare students to think critically about educational practice and policy and to reform educational systems at the local, state, and national levels.
- Institute and provide adequate support for a Visiting Scholars' Series.
- Put resources into faculty salaries and essential supplies.

3. Support excellent and innovative teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels that draws on faculty research, makes use of the latest instructional technologies, and employs effective and well grounded teaching strategies.

Recommended Actions:

- Sustain mentoring programs for faculty and graduate students.
- Put resources into faculty salaries and essential supplies.
- Offer incentives for team teaching and team scholarship.
- Prepare students to think critically about educational practice and policy and to reform educational systems at the local, state, and national levels.

4. Collaborate closely and effectively with schools and other community agencies to improve scholarship and teaching and strengthen academic vitality.

Recommended Actions:

- Maintain and develop college/school partnerships framed to address issues and problems in P-16 education.
- Create a research center to support collaborative and interdisciplinary scholarship focused on the needs of the region.
- Put resources into faculty salaries and essential supplies.

5. Be responsive and answerable to the diverse interests, backgrounds, and needs of both undergraduate and graduate students.

Recommended Actions:

- Use a variety of interactive technologies to conduct systematic and regular needs assessments of students.
- Develop and embed in departments regularly scheduled internal and external assessments of program effectiveness by students and faculty.
- Provide students with current and accurate information about all programs and departments.
- Maintain and develop college/school partnerships framed to address issues and problems in P-16 education.

6. Emphasize the value of shared governance, which includes open communication and free expression of ideas, as well as giving voice to faculty, staff, and student thoughts and concerns.

Recommended Actions:

- Provide spaces for faculty and students to gather, dialogue, and mutually explore controversial issues.
- Maintain and introduce processes for increasing communication between faculty and COE administration and for involving faculty in College budget and administrator evaluations.
- Provide professional development opportunities for College administrators and faculty to learn processes for facilitating open communication and trust building through programs such as mediation training and conflict resolution.

7. Ensure that the COE maintains a physically safe and stable environment to enhance individual and collective well-being.

Recommended Action:

- Assess COE physical environment for health and safety -- including air quality, noise levels, sanitation, building security, etc. -- and put a plan in place to increase health and safety levels.

8. Identify, build on, and enhance the COE's existing strengths.

Recommended Action:

- Conduct a sustained and systematic analysis of current COE strengths and how those strengths can be enhanced.

9. Recognize and understand how the policy environment in which the COE operates influences and even limits the COE's capacity to make changes.

Recommended Actions:

- Form faculty and student study groups to analyze the educational policy environment and how the COE might better position itself to influence that environment.
- Hold frequent panel discussions to explore with a wide variety of speakers the implications of the educational policy environment for the preparation of educators.
- Prepare students to think critically about educational practice and policy and to reform educational systems at the local, state, and national levels.

II.B: Public Responsibility

Introduction to Public Responsibility

The College of Education understands its charge in the area of Public Responsibility to be multi-layered and multifaceted. By “multi-layered” we mean that there is not just one “public” whom we serve and to whom we feel responsible, but several. These multiple “publics” require that we direct our teaching and research toward distinct levels or layers of activity and focus, addressing the concerns of:

- the University community, that is, students, faculty and staff of UNM;
- the broader educational community, that is, educators, educational researchers, and educational decision-makers in NM, the nation, and the world;
- the external community, that is, persons and organizations across disciplines that work to construct and sustain educational quality in NM communities, as well as nationally and internationally.

By “multifaceted” we mean that, as the College of Education in New Mexico’s major institution of higher education, we understand our public responsibility to include two major tasks:

- providing access to quality educational opportunities, and also,
- assuring high quality in all educational opportunities we provide.

College of Education Strategic Goals for Public Responsibility

Adapted from the University Goals

COE Goal 1: Provide New Mexico citizens access to quality higher education, research, and service programs to train professionals, educate good citizens, and promote economic development and a high quality of life.

COE Goal 2: Increase access to lifelong learning statewide

COE Goal 3: Prepare students for success in higher education and the workplace

COE Goal 4: Increase public responsiveness and local and national stature of COE programs

COE Objectives and Actions for Public Responsibility

1. Provide leadership, establish presence, and enhance public relations by communicating and collaborating regularly with external communities (e.g. schools, businesses, the general public), legislators, and the Public Education Department.

Recommended Actions:

- Assign a specific office to coordinate and assess outreach.
- Establish an advisory counsel composed of state and community representatives to ensure that curricula are congruent with state and community needs.
- Inform and educate external communities about resources, current programs, and expertise available from the College of Education. Examples may include:
- Create a weekly column for news media syndication throughout the state that would focus on various COE projects, research, teaching, students, and/or faculty.
- Develop within the COE T.V. or radio programs for communicating directly with the general public.
- Publish a list of research projects conducted by COE faculty and host periodic open forums where faculty present current research to public audience.
- Add a section to the current COE website describing and informing external publics about COE faculty, projects, research, publications, and other activities.

2. Enhance visibility and improve public relations with internal communities both within the College of Education and across the university.

Recommended Actions:

- Enable interdisciplinary teaching and research by creating incentive and support structures for programs to partner within the COE and across the University.
 - Integrate professional development needs with programs and the Institute of Professional Development.
 - Add a section to the current COE website describing and informing internal publics about COE faculty, projects, research, publications, and activities.
3. Increase access to traditional and non-traditional education.
- Recommended Actions:*
- Ensure course offerings are scheduled in ways that adequately serve various student populations.
 - Create infrastructure and incentives for offering distance education.
 - Publicize access to classes for lifelong learners (65+)
 - Create, staff, and fund education centers in communities so that teacher education, professional development, and other learning experiences can take place within communities.

4. Identify existing information and/or collect data needed to cultivate a deep understanding of the strengths, needs, and interests of various constituents so that the College can develop strategies designed to meet those needs.

Recommended Actions:

- Analyze other College strategic plans for possible areas of collaboration.
- Determine if there is data or research currently in progress by COE faculty that may provide insight into the needs of various constituents.
- Conduct research on the business and educational communities' perceptions of the COE's strengths and areas for growth.

II.C: Diversity

Introduction to Diversity

Colleges of Education, as social institutions, do not function in isolation from society. They are an integral part of macro society since their daily operations both reflect and constitute trends that we see in society-at-large. As educators we must acknowledge how power -- social, economic, political and cultural -- shapes curriculum, instruction, policy and research in education. Similarly, people construct their understanding of diversity based on their own situation within unequal power relations. It is important to understand and recognize this fact since the term "diversity" has been utilized by many groups along the political spectrum for their own purposes. Far too often, the word "diversity" has often been employed to avoid conflict and to oversimplify and gloss over the difficult work of addressing present-day manifestations of oppression.

Our responsibility as educators and intellectuals is to acknowledge and address these issues through pedagogical projects that not only promote a critical awareness of the complexities of diversity, but also recognize its potential for pursuing justice. It is with this understanding that we offer the following definition.

Definition of Diversity: Diversity is the multiplicity of people, cultures, and ideas that contribute to the richness and quality of life. Diversity includes: race, ethnicity, social class, national origin, language,

exceptionality, religion, spirituality, age, sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity. Values, philosophies, ideas, and world views that individuals and groups possess are integral parts of this conceptualization. Diversity embodies inclusiveness, mutual respect, and multiple perspectives. This view of diversity encourages the free exchange of ideas, while honoring the maintenance of individual identity and the integrity of culturally centered knowledge.

The College of Education Strategic Goals for Diversity

Adapted from the University's Strategic Goals

COE Goal 1: Increase diversity of faculty, staff and students to better reflect the demographics of New Mexico.

COE Goal 2: Create an interpersonal, intellectual, and physical environment within the COE which embraces understanding of fundamental human diversity.

COE Goal 3: Recognize, honor and establish mutually beneficial relationships with the diverse constituencies of UNM (e.g. academic community, academic disciplines, Indigenous Nations, communities, business community, citizens, students).

COE Goal 4: Promote communication and interaction across disciplines, departments and campus units in ways that enhance diversity.

COE Goal 5: Develop a comprehensive approach to international affairs.

COE Objectives and Actions for Diversity

The Diversity Task Force members were unanimous in their belief that the goals, objectives and actions listed below could best be achieved through the development and establishment of a College Diversity Council. Therefore, it is listed as the first objective.

1. Develop a representative College Diversity Council to oversee, coordinate and implement all efforts and activities related to Diversity in the College of Education.

- A Standing Committee of the College, made up of faculty and representatives of the departments and entities of the College, composed of individuals who are committed to the aforementioned definition and have a proven track record of working in this area.
- An Advisory Committee made up of community, educational and Indigenous Nations representatives.

2. Institutionalize structures, processes, and procedures to actively recruit, hire, retain, and recognize students, staff, and faculty that reflect the demographic profile and needs of New Mexico, including ethnic diversity, language diversity, and learning diversity.

Recommended Action

- Conduct an initial assessment of data relating to diversity among faculty, staff and students in the COE and keep it current.

3. Conduct a needs assessment of staff and faculty to determine types of diversity education needed in the COE and meet those needs.

Recommended Actions:

- Help faculty to infuse course work and research projects with different perspectives; include at least one course in each program which addresses issues of diversity in that area.
- Require professional development for all students, staff, faculty, and administrators that help familiarize them with individuals/groups whose backgrounds vary greatly from their own.

- Address issues of diversity in the physical environment: Scheduling of classes, room assignments and Centers and Institutes.

4. Form true partnerships with varied constituencies to provide a “reality check” – Is the COE meeting the needs of communities and Indigenous Nations?

Recommended Action:

- Through the Diversity Council develop a mutually agreed upon agenda for the COE (programs, research and other activities) that help to meet the unique needs of Indigenous Nations, communities and other constituencies in the state.

5. Develop a policy that honors and allows for use of languages other than English, in line with the state Constitution, and that reflects the diversity of COE constituents.

Recommended Actions:

- Hire bilingual staff and appoint administrators who will support multilingualism in faculty, staff and students.

6. Encourage more interdisciplinary activity and find better ways to foster cross-department collaborations to break down isolation.

Recommended Actions:

- Develop grants/funding for interdisciplinary work both within the COE and outside.
- Offer incentives for co-teaching.

7. Encourage and increase opportunities for multi-disciplinary studies.

Recommended Actions:

- Develop grants/funding for interdisciplinary work both within the COE and outside.
- Offer incentives for co-teaching.

8. Develop policies that value and promote Latin American and other international programs, scholarships and educational exchanges.

Recommended Actions:

- Develop long-term goals for international education, with special emphasis on Latin America
- Secure funding that will support these efforts
- Allocate resources for faculty and administrators that support international efforts
- Include international education as a part of teacher education.

9. Promote the internationalization of COE curricula.

Recommended Actions:

- Allocate resources for faculty and administrators that support international efforts
- Include international education as a part of teacher education.