




## BACKGROUND/HISTORY

New Mexico has low educational attainment. It has the fourth highest rate of adults with less than an eighth-grade education and one of the highest high school dropout rates. Of its students persisting to college, most go to a two-year college: New Mexico has one of the lowest percentages of college students attending bachelor degree-granting institutions. And of those who do attend four-year institutions, less than 40 percent graduate in six years or less, the third-lowest rate among states. This is despite the fact that higher education in New Mexico is relatively affordable—tuition at public universities, private nonprofit institutions, and community colleges are lower than national averages by roughly one-third. State appropriations increased 11.2 percent from 2005–06 to 2006–07.<sup>1</sup> The state’s flagship university, the University of New Mexico, educates 25,000 students at its main campus in Albuquerque.

New Mexico colleges and universities have the highest rates of minority enrollment of any state, and more than a third of its residents speak a language other than English at home. While neighboring states are expected to have very high growth rates in high school graduates over the next 10 years (Texas at 18 percent, Colorado at 24 percent, Utah at 27 percent, and Arizona at 26 percent), New Mexico is expected to have an 8 percent decrease in high school graduates from 2007–08 to 2017–18.

In 2005 the state Legislature replaced the Commission on Higher Education with a cabinet-level agency housed with the governor called the New Mexico Higher Education Department. It oversees New Mexico’s 25 public colleges and universities, makes budget recommendations, and sets state policy.




## GATHERING INFORMATION

 Measurement isn’t sufficient for accountability, but it is necessary. Any legitimate effort to hold institutions accountable for success must begin with a fair, accurate process for gauging success. Higher education is multifaceted in design and mission—there are many different kinds of institutions serving diverse student groups while working to accomplish a large variety of goals. Accountability systems that don’t examine all facets of an institution risk presenting a narrow, distorted view of success and creating unbalanced or even

NEW MEXICO SCORE CARD	
<b>GATHERING INFORMATION</b>	✓
<b>Student Outcomes</b>	–
Learning	–
Progression and Attainment	✓
Further Employment, Education, and Life	✓
<b>Institutional Practices</b>	✓
Teaching and Engagement	✓
Efficiency and Financial Stewardship	✓
Equity, Access, and Affordability	✓
Alignment With Pre K–12 Education	+
Scholarship and Research	–
<b>Economic and Community Development</b>	✓
Degree Production and Economic Impact	✓
Arts, Culture, and Service	–
Adult Education and Extension Services	✓
<b>Overall Quality of Information</b>	✓
<b>State- and Systemwide Information</b>	–
<b>USING INFORMATION</b>	✓
Governance and Strategic Planning	+
Funding	✓
Transparency and Markets	–
— = Needs Improvement    ✓ = In Progress    + = Best Practice	


perverse incentives that are misaligned with institutional missions and larger policy goals.


## Student Outcomes


-  **Learning:** New Mexico does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.
-  **Progression and Attainment:** New Mexico tracks graduation and retention rates by institution over time. Graduation rates are presented by race/ethnicity as well.
-  **Further Employment, Education, and Life:** Every three to four years New Mexico public institutions survey

graduating seniors and alumni three years out of college on their overall satisfaction. The alumni are also asked whether they are employed, employed in New Mexico, or continuing their education. If employed, they're asked whether they're self-employed or whether they work in education, government, or some other field. The New Mexico Independent Community Colleges, in their Annual Accountability Report, gives the job placement rate for each independent two-year institution in the state.


## Institutional Practices

 **Teaching and Engagement:** New Mexico reports faculty diversity figures by institution, gender, and race/ethnicity. Each institution reports student/faculty ratios, average class sizes, the percentage holding terminal degrees, and faculty productivity, measured by the percentage of classroom instruction for lower level undergraduates, upper level undergraduates, and graduates delivered by tenured/tenure-track faculty. These measures are all presented as changes over time.


 **Efficiency and Financial Stewardship:** New Mexico reports the amount of money spent on instruction per full-time equivalent student and the amount spent on instruction, research, and public service as a percentage of the total budget. Those are compared to peer averages, as well as reported by institution, sector, and state totals. The state also computes an administrative cost ratio by dividing total education and general expenditures (which include instruction, research, public service, academic support, student services, institutional support, operation and maintenance, and scholarships and fellowships) by administrative costs.

 **Equity, Access, and Affordability:** New Mexico tracks student enrollment figures by race/ethnicity, gender, transfer status, and age for each public institution, for each sector, and as state totals.


The state calculates gross tuition and fees as a percentage of the state's average per capita income by sector and compared to national averages. New Mexico reports the percentage of institutional student bodies with financial aid that must be re-paid. It reports the number of students receiving state financial need-based aid by income level (by units of \$10,000 from \$0–100,000).


 **Alignment With Pre K–12 Education:** New Mexico issues annual reports looking at high school student preparation for postsecondary education. It tracks the


number of students needing remedial coursework, over time, by race/ethnicity and gender, and separated for each high school in the state. The percentage of high school graduates requiring remediation ranged from 23 percent to 100 percent, meaning all of that high school's graduates who entered a postsecondary institution in 2007 were unprepared for college-level coursework.

 **Scholarship and Research:** New Mexico does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.


## Economic and Community Development

 **Degree Production and Economic Impact:** New Mexico tracks degree production by field, gender, and award level as state totals. Institutions report total degrees awarded by level of degree (certificate, associate, bachelor's, master's, etc.) only.


 **Arts, Culture, and Service:** New Mexico does not publicly or systematically release accountability information on this measure.

 **Adult Education and Extension Services:** New Mexico measures enrollment in adult basic education, a stated priority for state policymakers, over time and by race/ethnicity and age.


## Overall Quality of Information

 New Mexico publishes regular, readable reports that are comprehensive and include many sources of context. Almost all measures are presented longitudinally, and most are presented alongside national or peer averages.

## State- and Systemwide Information


 Although many measures are presented as state totals, New Mexico focuses most of its accountability attention on performance of individual institutions.

## USING INFORMATION

 Simply making information available does not, in and of itself, constitute a well-functioning accountability system. Measurement is only step one; step two is making the information that comes from measurement meaningful. There are different ways to do this, but they're all variations on a theme: injecting information about quality into existing processes that college decision-makers care about. These processes can


be grouped into three areas: governance and strategic planning, funding, and transparency and markets.

## Governance and Strategic Planning


 The New Mexico Higher Education Department's Performance Effectiveness Report does an excellent job of linking state priorities with institutional performance. The Executive Summary shows state, sector, and institutional data on several important metrics, and then gives relatively standardized, more detailed reports for individual institutions. The last page of each institution's section has common and institution-specific data paired with numeric targets and benchmarks. New Mexico State University, for example, has common metrics for transfers, retention, completion, and Native American enrollment, and institution-specific measures in distance education and programs using student learning outcomes assessments. Each has a numeric target for the following year.

In August of 2008, the New Mexico Council of University Presidents signed on to the Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA), becoming the first state with participation from all independent four-year institutions. The VSA is a national collaboration by two prominent college and university organizations aimed at providing more accountability information to the public. Participating institutions must provide data on success of transfer students, student learning outcomes, and student involvement in campus life. The actual data at participating New Mexico institutions is not yet available.

## Funding

 New Mexico awards a small amount of performance funding each year. Institutions can earn up to an additional 1 percent of their base instructional and general operating revenue for meeting targets in the state's common metrics or institution-specific goals. Each target must be grounded against national, peer, or state benchmarks. The common metrics also vary by institution type—research universities are graded on retention, graduation, transfers, and research, while comprehensive universities are only graded on the first three, and community colleges are graded on success, placement, and retention. The explicit intent of the program is to create differentials in funding based on performance each year.

## Transparency and Markets

 Although the New Mexico Higher Education Department presents a high volume of information in

comprehensive reports, it could also be provided in more accessible formats.

New Mexico's student page is incomplete, featuring little information and links to the SAT, ACT, and more pages of links. The links include no descriptions, and there is no information about individual state colleges or universities, not even a link to them.

## ACCOUNTABILITY DOCUMENTS

### New Mexico Higher Education Department

#### The Condition of Higher Education in New Mexico 2005–06

[http://www.cpec.ca.gov/CompleteReports/External Documents/New\\_Mexico\\_Condition\\_HE\\_2005-2006.pdf](http://www.cpec.ca.gov/CompleteReports/External Documents/New_Mexico_Condition_HE_2005-2006.pdf)

#### Financial Aid and Need in New Mexico

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/345421554-07-10-2008-16-41-12.pdf>

#### Ready for College 2008: An Annual Report on New Mexico High School Graduates Who Take Remedial Classes in New Mexico Colleges and Universities

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/749882587-08-25-2008-15-55-21.pdf>

#### Baseline and Trend Data for High Schools Included in the Ready for College 2008 Report

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/749882587-08-25-2008-15-54-54.pdf>

#### It's Not Graduation Rates That Matter

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/411014279-05-08-2008-13-56-33.pdf>

#### Helping Students Succeed

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/428521192-02-13-2008-16-05-02.pdf>

#### Governor's Task Force on Higher Education November 2004

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/688636692-07-20-2006-17-01-50.pdf>

#### New Mexico's Higher Education Funding Formula—History and Facts

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/345505886-07-14-2008-16-14-12.pdf>

### New Mexico Council of University Presidents

#### Performance Effectiveness Report

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/376544493-06-26-2008-14-55-02.pdf>

### New Mexico Independent Community Colleges

#### Annual Accountability Report December 2007

<http://hed.state.nm.us/cms/kunde/rts/hedstatenmus/docs/189840589-12-10-2007-13-44-32.pdf>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "Almanac Issue 2008–9." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Volume 55, Issue 1.

