

The Role of Transfers to Other New Mexico Colleges and Universities among First-time Freshmen at NMHU

The New Mexico Higher Education Department provides information on students who transfer between colleges and universities in New Mexico. This report analyzes the transfer history of first-time freshmen from the fall 2000 and fall 2001 cohorts at NMHU. Almost half of the students who begin as full-time, first-time freshmen at Highlands transfer to another state institution at some time within six years of starting at NMHU (47% of the fall 2000 cohort and 45% of the fall 2001 cohort). The majority of the students transfer, at least at first, to a two-year school.

Table 1
Fall 2000 and 2001 First-time, Full-time Freshmen and Transfer History

Fall Cohort	#	Two-year transfer	Four-year transfer	Both	Total # of transfers	%
Fall 2000	268	98	18	10	126	47.0%
Fall 2001	235	80	18	8	106	45.1%
Total	503	178	36	18	232	46.1%

Just because a student transfers to another institution after starting at NMHU does not mean he or she does not return to NMHU. Of the students in the table above, 26 of the two-year transfers and 2 of the four-year transfers eventually returned to Highlands for at least one semester. And, as will be seen Table 3 below, a significant number (16 in this sample) of first-time freshmen start at NMHU, transfer somewhere else, and then return to NMHU to earn their degree.

As can be seen in the table below, a significant number of students who begin at Highlands end up earning a degree at another institution within six years. The numbers for the fall 2001 cohort will increase somewhat since the current HED report only includes graduates through the spring of 2006.

Table 2
Fall 2000 and 2001 First-time, Full-time Freshmen and Degrees Earned within Six Years

Fall Cohort	#	BA NMHU	% BA NMHU	BA Somewhere Else	% BA Anywhere	AA Somewhere else	% Any Degree
Fall 2000	268	54	20.1%	20	27.6%	14	32.8%
Fall 2001	235	57	24.3%	12	29.4%	9	33.2%

In addition to a better picture of graduation rates, the HED transfer data also gives us an interesting picture of the various paths our first-time freshmen take in their higher education careers. The following table combines the information from the fall 2000 and fall 2001 cohorts, for a total of 503 students. The table breaks the students into four groups; those who returned for their third semester at NMHU and have no transfer history, those who returned for their third semester at NMHU but transferred

subsequently, those who left NMHU before their third semester and have no transfer history, and those who left NMHU before their third semester and subsequently transferred to another institution in the state.

The table shows that of the 257 first-time freshmen who leave NMHU before their third semester (51% of the total), 57.6% of them subsequently transfer to another institution, but only 15.6% earn any type of degree within six years. Of the 246 first-time freshmen who do return for their third semester at NMHU (49% of the total), 84 (34.1%) subsequently transfer to another institution.

Table 3
Fall 2000 and Fall 2001 First-time, Full-time Freshmen by Retention and Transfer History

		#	NMHU BA	BA Somewhere Else	AA Somewhere else	No Degree in Six Years
Retained First Year	Never Transferred	162	95	0	0	67
	Transferred	84	11	12	8	53
Not Retained	Never Transferred	109	0	0	0	109
	Transferred	148	5	20	15	108

These findings suggest some interesting points. First, of the 51% of first-time freshmen at NMHU who leave NMHU before their third semester, the majority attempt to continue their higher education, but only a minority succeed in getting a degree. As can be seen below, having a scholarship the first semester is an extremely important factor in determining whether or not students who are not retained earn a degree at another institution. The scholarships reflected below were all based upon high school academic achievement. Having a scholarship the first semester predicts retention and graduation. It also predicts whether or not students who transfer receive degrees elsewhere. Of the 20 students who earned a BA at another institution, 14 had academic scholarships their first semester at NMHU. Of the students who were not retained and did not have a scholarship their first semester, almost none received any degree anywhere.

Table 4

		NMHU BA	BA Somewhere Else	AA Somewhere else	No Degree in Six Years
Scholarship	Retained 87	62.1% 54	6.9% 6	2.3% 2	28.7% 25
	Not Retained 34	2.9% 1	23.5% 8	14.7% 5	58.8% 20
No Scholarship	Retained 77	46.8% 36	5.2% 4	2.6% 2	45.5% 35
	Not Retained 107	0% 0	1.9% 2	4.7% 5	93.5% 100