

**Higher Learning Commission**  
**AQIP Systems Appraisal Feedback Response**

**Submitted**

**By**

**The AQIP Committee**

**New Mexico State University at Carlsbad**

**March 18, 2013**

New Mexico State University at Carlsbad (NMSU Carlsbad) has received the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report from the assigned AQIP readers. The College greatly appreciates the time and effort spent in evaluating our AQIP portfolio and in indicating the strengths and the opportunities for improvement that were ascertained for each of the nine categories.

In assessing the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report, the NMSU Carlsbad AQIP Committee has been provided copies of the entire feedback report with highlighted materials that pertained to each individual category. The process followed by the institution was to address in general terms what strategies are necessary to address the opportunities for improvement as presented in the Systems Appraisal Feedback Report. Additionally, comments regarding strategies that will be employed immediately for each category were discussed and are included in this response.

### **General Comments**

NMSU Carlsbad recognizes the need to enhance its systemic and comprehensive processes for continuous quality improvement that incorporates trend analysis, benchmarking, performance analysis, and target setting. In order to address the above cited needs for enhancement, NMSU Carlsbad proposes the following action projects:

1. Continuation of the development of a comprehensive retention plan that collects and analyzes data to determine retention initiatives of greatest impact to NMSU Carlsbad. The data would be collected and analyzed throughout the duration of the program in order to best measure effectiveness.
2. Initiation of a *Foundation of Excellence* partnership for best practices in the development of a comprehensive, systemic approach for first year experiences aimed at improvement of retention, progression, and completion.
3. Development of assessment cycles comprised of scheduled campus activities/meetings with formal reviews that would allow for a systemic and comprehensive process for continuous quality improvement across the campus that would interlock all assessment, improvement, and strategic planning efforts.
4. Completion of three action projects proposed by NMSU Carlsbad which address strategic planning, institutional assessment, and developmental education. These three action plans were proposed by NMSU Carlsbad in May of 2012.

### **AQIP Category 1: Helping Students Learn**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 1:

1. **1P16:** The assessment committee of NMSU Carlsbad is currently assisting three active student organizations: the Nursing Club, Phi Theta Kappa, and the Criminal Justice Club in developing learning outcomes and co-curricular assessment instruments. As other student organizations are created, the assessment committee will assist in developing learning outcomes and co-

curricular assessments. Additionally, the College will address Student Services efforts and the biannual use of indirect assessment of the student orientation program in order to meet best practices in this campus initiative.

2. **1R1:** NMSU Carlsbad did not include in the AQIP portfolio its schedule of when assessments were performed, but the schedule does exist informally. NMSU Carlsbad will formalize and publish a schedule of its assessment activities.
3. **1R4:** Workforce placement data is a core indicator of effectiveness for community colleges that demonstrates that students have obtained desired knowledge and skills upon completing their degree. This data was presented along with nursing licensure results. NMSU Carlsbad will investigate what other indicators are available that will allow us to identify gaps and needs.

### **AQIP Category 2: Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 2:

1. **2P2:** The NMSU Carlsbad Stakeholders and Collaborative Relations Committee involves the input of external stakeholders from business and industry as well as public education. The input provided by these external stakeholders is crucial to the institution's processes of aligning its objectives to performance targets. Evidence of this involvement and the value of the input will be provided at the next reporting opportunity.
2. **2R2:** NMSU Carlsbad conducts a yearly analysis of performance trends and its accomplishment of institutional objectives. The analysis includes a determination as to if the performance trends are viable or if modifications are needed in order to meet institutional objectives. Evidence of these analyses and the resulting determinations of meeting performance targets will be provided at the next reporting opportunity.
3. **2R3:** NMSU Carlsbad did not include in the system appraisal any comparative data across institutions addressing feedback. However, data is received from our sister institutions in the NMSU system and our IPEDS reports contain comparative data from our peer group institutions. The data will be made available at the next reporting opportunity.

### **AQIP Category 3: Understanding Students' and Other Stakeholders' Needs**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 3:

1. **3P6b:** NMSU Carlsbad abides by an open door policy practiced by all members of the executive team and any complaints by students or stakeholder groups are heard by the executive team whenever said complaint arises. The College also abides by a three-level grievance process which provides each party a fair and balanced hearing. Upon completion of the complaint and/or hearing process, a course of action is determined immediately and the course of action is put into place. The above cited information is cited in the student handbook and also will be included in the NMSU Carlsbad Operations Manual which is in the final stages of completion.
2. **3R4a:** NMSU Carlsbad recognizes that employee morale has needed improvement and the executive team has embarked on a series of strategies aimed at raising the level of morale. The Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey will be administered to all employees this spring so

that comparative data can be compiled from the previous administration. Also, NMSU Carlsbad is giving strong consideration to making employee morale improvements one of next year's AQIP Action Projects.

3. **3R5:** NMSU Carlsbad gathers and analyzes significant data from business and industry, area high schools, and community organizations including the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Carlsbad Community Development Corporation, and the Carlsbad Hospital Board. Evidence of this data and the impact it provides for NMSU Carlsbad in meeting the needs of stakeholder groups will be more clearly depicted.
4. **3R6a:** The NMSU Carlsbad Executive Team had taken note of the lower indications of being valued and limited opportunity for advancement that were exhibited by the college's employees. As previously noted, strategies to address these issues have been put into action and it is anticipated that the results displayed by the NMSU Carlsbad employees will improve.

#### **AQIP Category 4: Valuing People**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 4:

1. **4P8:** NMSU Carlsbad depends heavily on both the informal and the formal input from appropriate committees such as the Assessment Committee, the Faculty Affairs Committee, and the Steering Committee in determining employees' training needs. The depth of the committees' input and the resulting impact on the College's instructional and non-instructional programs will be made more visible in future reporting opportunities.
2. **4R2a:** NMSU Carlsbad has experienced a "significant turnover in [our] administrative team". Such upheaval and inconsistency in leadership played a part in the low scores in our last Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey, administered in the fall of 2011. Since that time, we have hired three (out of four) new college administrators (president, vice president for academic affairs, and vice president for business and finance) and a few new program directors, who have worked through our committee structure to address some of the issues revealed in the last survey. Given these changes, the College will administer the Noel-Levitz Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS) and a student survey this spring 2013 semester. When we receive the results with benchmarks, appropriate committees such as the Faculty Affairs Committee, the Diversity Committee, and the Steering Committee will review the results of both surveys and compose action plans in response that coordinate with our new Strategic Plan, and our mission and values.
3. **4I1:** Upon the arrival of three new members of the executive team, an immediate analysis was conducted of valuing people issues that had become apparent through the administration of the employee satisfaction survey, which was administered before the three new executives arrived. Based on the responses, the executive team developed action plans to address issues which included open communication, shared governance, and a sense of mutual respect and collegiality on a campus-wide basis. The employee satisfaction survey will be administered again in the spring 2013 semester to determine what progress has been accomplished in addressing valuing people issues.

### **AQIP Category 5: Leading and Communicating**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 5:

1. **5P1:** Using 1990 as a baseline, NMSU Carlsbad has reviewed and revised its mission twice to address changes in community college education trends and the needs of the local service area. A review and rewrite was done in 1995 with an emphasis on access, social responsibility, cultural diversity and citizenship added. This mission statement was reviewed again in 2004 and an emphasis on quality education was added. At that time the mission statement was simplified and a companion vision statement was developed. The current mission and vision statement has served as our foundation in expanding access and quality for our service area and students. In each revision there was faculty, staff and student input into the development. It is an excellent suggestion to establish a systematic review of the mission and vision statements if for no other reason than to reaffirm our commitment.
2. **5P6:** NMSU Carlsbad has strived to use data driven processes for all planning and decision making. NMSU Carlsbad created an institutional research position to develop such processes and to provide the needed data to make effective decisions. Unfortunately the campus has had difficulty recruiting and retaining an experienced researcher in that position. As a result, there have been breaks in the continuity of the data collection and the interpretation of the provided data. The campus has redrafted the position so that a seasoned researcher can be found and hired. During the breaks in continuity, the senior leaders reviewed all available data for planning purposes and decision making. The campus has initiated program reviews to develop data and drive decisions in the academic arena.
3. **5R1:** NMSU Carlsbad will continue to measure employee satisfaction of the leadership and communication style of the senior leaders utilizing a normed standardized instrument. The continuance of these measurements will provide longitudinal data for evaluation and comparison.
4. **5R2:** The table mentioned in the comments for item 5R2 was data extracted from the Employee Satisfaction Survey, a normed instrument from the Noel Levitz company. The table showed importance and satisfaction of 32 items from the survey that directly related to planning, leading, communicating, and various indicators of the campus culture. Unfortunately, normative comparison data was not included in the chart and that mistake will be corrected. An explanation of the importance of the results will be developed.

### **AQIP Category 6: Supporting Institutional Operations**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 6:

1. **6R2b:** NMSU Carlsbad addresses the needs and concerns of adult learners based upon the results of the ACT Adult Learner Needs Assessment Survey. The survey Instrument specifically addresses the reasons adult learners return to school and how they finance their return. NMSU Carlsbad will revisit the collected data and update the tables to more accurately portray the

needs of adult learners, indicating how those needs are linked to adult learner performance results.

2. **6R5:** Based upon employee satisfaction survey results, the NMSU Carlsbad administration has an ongoing policy of addressing employee concerns through open forum discussions and the formation of focus groups and task forces. The campus as a whole meets monthly in open forum Town Hall meetings to discuss relevant and current concerns. The Steering Committee, the Stakeholder and Collaborative Relations Committee, and the Diversity Committee meet in regular monthly meetings to address employee concerns and to formulate appropriate responses. Through the continual interaction of these committees, the NMSU Carlsbad administration facilitates the opportunity for employee input and the transparent dissemination of information regarding institutional operations.
3. **6I2:** New Mexico State University Carlsbad has a vibrant and ongoing strategic plan for addressing specific action plans. The Steering Committee meets once a month to discuss continued action regarding assessment and developmental education. The Assessment Committee meets bi-monthly and reports directly to the Steering Committee during the monthly meeting. The Developmental Education Department meets monthly and reports directly to the Steering Committee during the monthly meeting. The Steering Committee is charged with the development of and the continued monitoring of consistent improvement, leadership, and communication for the college. As needs are made known through, for example, student opinion surveys and faculty generated year-end course assessment reports, the Steering Committee uses these reports to systematically guide strategic planning. Particular emphasis is placed on continued institutional, program, and course assessment as well as student learning and retention with a particular focus placed upon developmental education.

#### **AQIP Category 7: Measuring Effectiveness**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 7:

1. **7P3:** NMSU Carlsbad will finalize a systematic approach that ascertains and ensures the identification, integration, and incorporation of the needs and priorities of key institutional stakeholders so that their input is integrated into the decision-making process. Evidence of the depth of input and resulting strategies will be presented in the next reporting opportunity.
2. **7P4:** NMSU Carlsbad collects a variety of performance data in our performance indicator reports. However, the College will formalize the processes of collecting the key performance data and will implement a more sophisticated procedure which will be employed to collect, to analyze, and to share performance results throughout the institution and with stakeholders.
3. **7R3:** In order to have information and data readily available for Measuring Effectiveness, NMSU Carlsbad is committed to delineate more clearly how its processes compare with other higher education institutions. A table demonstrating our comparative results will be constructed and presented at the next reporting opportunity.

#### **AQIP Category 8: Planning Continuous Improvement**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 8:

1. **8P2b:** NMSU Carlsbad, with the advent of a new executive team, has started working towards a formal overhaul of its short and long term planning processes. Details of the improved processes and the results of the changes will be provided at the next reporting opportunity.
2. **8R1:** NMSU Carlsbad has been working towards a formal identification of direct measures of its planning processes and institutional systems. The results of the additional direct measures will be provided at the next reporting opportunity.
3. **8R2:** NMSU Carlsbad does engage in the determination of organizational strategies and the development of action plans. The data in Table 8R4 did not contain the stipulated benchmarks, the data was inconsistent in terms of the years compared, and no targets or explanations were provided. A more accurate portrayal of the data will be provided in an updated table at the next reporting opportunity.
4. **8R3:** NMSU Carlsbad has a process in place to identify targets which are used in determining the degree of success realized in each category. Table 8R3 will be updated to more clearly depict the targets identified by the college and our degree of success in meeting each target.

#### **AQIP Category 9: Building Collaborative Relationships**

NMSU Carlsbad commits to the following action plans pertinent to Category 9:

1. **9P1b:** NMSU Carlsbad maintains active partnerships with all of the local school districts in our service area and also maintains an active partnership with the Pecos River Consortium, an entity that includes seven school districts from two different counties and two community colleges. However, the College is developing a more sophisticated reporting of the general processes and structures that were involved in creating, developing, and building relationships with educational institutions from which students are received.
2. **9P6b:** Direct communication is the primary method of ensuring the needs of our partners are being met. However, NMSU Carlsbad will develop additional instruments and measures to best assess the College's ability to meet partner needs.
3. **9R2:** NMSU Carlsbad does measure a large number of inputs related to its collaborative relationships. A more detailed analysis of the various inputs and of the effectiveness of these measures will be provided at the next reporting opportunity.