



HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

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April 20, 2020

President Garnett Stokes
University of New Mexico
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear President Stokes:

The interim report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. The staff analysis of the report is attached.

On behalf of the Higher Learning Commission staff received the report on institutional response to student complaints, publication of student outcomes, and development of a comprehensive credit hour policy. No further reports are required on these topics.

A Focused Visit is due by 1/3/2022 on the implementation of corrective action regarding fiscal mismanagement issues with Athletics and the Board of Regents shared governance issues.

The Standard Pathway Year Four Comprehensive Evaluation is scheduled for 2022-2023 and will include an embedded report on integrated planning with a focus on enrollment and finances.

The institution's next reaffirmation of accreditation is scheduled for 2028– 2029.

Please note: Revisions to HLC's Criteria for Accreditation will go into effect on September 1, 2020. Institutions will be evaluated against the revised Criteria for all reviews conducted after that date, including reviews related to previously assigned monitoring. Institutional reports submitted after September 1, 2020, that reference the Criteria should be written to the revised version. More information about the revised Criteria, including a crosswalk between the current and revised versions, is available on HLC's website at <https://www.hlcommission.org/criteria>.

For more information on the interim report process contact Lil Nakutis, Accreditation Processes Manager, at lnakutis@hlcommission.org. Your HLC staff liaison is Jeffrey Rosen (jrosen@hlcommission.org); (800) 621-7440 x 139.

Thank you.

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: April 20, 2020

STAFF LIAISON: Jeffrey Rosen

REVIEWED BY: Steven Kapelke

INSTITUTION: University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dr. Garnett Stokes, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION AND SOURCES: An interim report is required by 3/4/2020 on institutional response to student complaints, publication of student outcomes, and development of a comprehensive credit hour policy.

This interim report derives from the Team Report of the institution's 2019 Comprehensive Evaluation and should address the following areas:

Institutional Records of Student Complaints

The team recommends a report of student complaints received, tracking and resolution and how the information has been used to improve programs and services for the last 5 years. The institutional report is expected to include all academic, student conduct, and other student complaints reaching the major unit or division level in the complaint process (i.e., Provost, Deans, Dean of Students, etc.).

Publication of Student Outcomes

The team recommends a report of action taken and supporting documentation that UNM has addressed the issues of lack of accessibility from the home page to consumer information including clear information on student outcomes easily understood by the public.

Credit Hour Policy

The team and federal compliance reviewer recommend a report delineating a more comprehensive credit hour policy statement that addresses expectations for out of class preparation time, laboratory and studio work, internships, practica, experiential learning online and hybrid courses, or other non-classroom learning activities.

REPORT PRESENTATION AND QUALITY: The University of New Mexico interim report is presented in a clearly written narrative--with extensive supporting documentation situated in the appendices. These supplementary materials include the institution's newly revised student complaint policy/procedures; its updated credit hour

policy; and evidence that student outcomes are published and easily accessed on the University's website. Evidence provided in the report indicates that the document is thorough and candid.

REPORT SUMMARY: Following a brief section of introductory information that provides context for the body of the report's narrative, the document is presented in three parts, corresponding to the three items identified in the Federal Compliance section of the 2019 HLC Team Report.

1. Institutional Record of Student Complaints: This section of the report describes the institution's efforts at crafting a student complaint process that was consistent with HLC guidelines and federal requirements, while also providing the institution with information it could use for the purposes of improvement.

To that end, the University formed a Student Concerns Committee, which meets four times annually. The Committee reviews "*trends in complaints and conduct across the reporting units and confirms implementation of institutional and unit remedies consistent with trend analysis.*" Although collection and review of complaints had been the responsibility of individual units, the Student Concerns Committee (SCC) has assumed responsibility for the integration of reporting, analysis and oversight of the complaint process.

Ultimately, the institution collects complaint reports "*relative to two streams of student complaints.*"

1) academic student grievances that have been elevated (per University Faculty Handbook Policies D175 and D176 and per the UNM Student Pathfinder) beyond informal resolution with an individual faculty member and/or departmental chair to formal resolution by a college, school, or branch.

2) complaints, concerns, and reports of discrimination or other harm relative to membership in a protected class, which are referred (per federal law and university policy) to UNM's Office of Equal Opportunity for review, possible investigation, and action.

The report goes on to provide additional detail with respect to each of these areas, noting the different offices and individuals holding responsibility for specific aspects of the complaint process. For example, within the Academic Student Grievances section, the report indicates that the Associate Provost for Student Success "*maintains a student academic grievance database ('Student Feedback App') that tracks reporting and resolution of all student grievances elevated to a college/school/branch level or to Office of the President or Office of the Provost.*"

Similarly, within the second category of complaints, the report cites several units/individuals whose areas of responsibility include complaints/grievances. These include the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and ADA Coordinator, the Clery Act Compliance Officer, and the Dean of Students. The report provides details about the

nature of the complaint activity falling within the auspices of each. Again, the report makes reference to the combined report of the SCC, which is released in the Spring semester of each academic year.

2. Publication of Student Outcomes: The report states that the University has created a consumer information link to its home page that “*refers users to a Student Outcomes and Consumer Information webpage,*” which provides access to pertinent, required student outcome data developed by various institutional units, including, but not limited to, Enrollment Management and the Office of the Bursar. The report notes the relative ease of access, readability and interpretive capability of IPEDS data contained on the page, along with other information.

3. Credit Hour Policy: Here the report indicates that, to address HLC concerns pertaining to its credit hour policy, the University’s Office of the Registrar developed “*a more detailed credit hour policy statement providing expectations for class time, including homework, and covering online delivery and other UNM course formats.*” According to the report this official institutional policy will be published in the 2020-21 UNM Catalog and those for the UNM branch campuses.

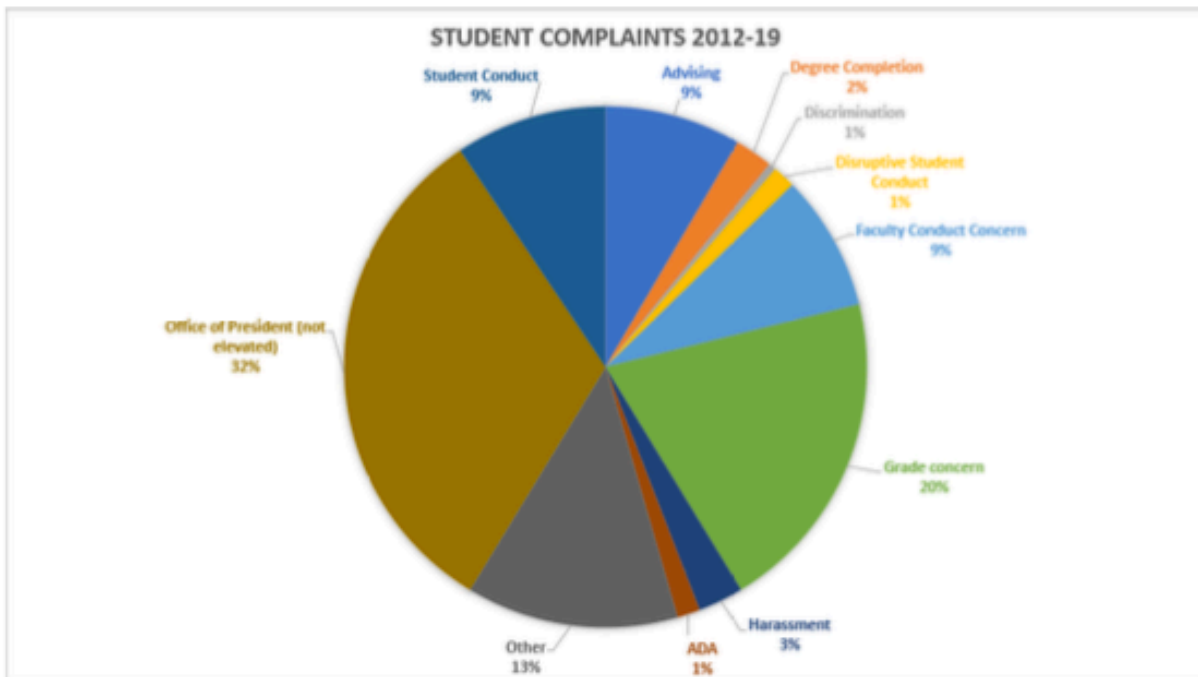
At this point, the report presents the policy, then goes on to note that, although the institution’s former policy and practices were not consistent with federal requirements, the University’s courses “*have not been deficient in alignment of work to academic credit,*” as pointed out by the HLC Federal Compliance Reviewer. According to the report, this consistency results from rigorous review process for new courses and degree programs, as well as the work of the Offices of the Registrar and Enrollment Management, among other factors in the effective maintenance of standards.

REPORT ANALYSIS: Materials presented in the University of New Mexico interim report provides evidence that the institution has made discernable progress with regard to the three Federal Compliance items identified in the Team Report of the University’s 2019 Comprehensive Evaluation. The report provides a timeline that shows key points for resolution of each of the three issues.

More specifically, the institution has created a means by which to consolidate student complaint information through the work of the Student Concerns Committee (SCC), which has representation from the units on campus largely responsible for tracking formal complaints/grievances. Formation of the SCC has given the institution a “managerial” infrastructure for the process that it lacked previously.

The complaint policy is clearly written, with areas of responsibility clearly distinguishable and the means by which students can file complaints and “*designated coordinators*” are able to record “*elevated*” academic complaints within a protected portal. The following chart shows a summary of complaints between 2012 and 2019.

Complaints by Type



Distribution of all complaints in the Student Feedback application database by type.

- Advising Concern	24
- Degree Completion	7
- Discrimination	1
- Disruptive Student Conduct	5
- Faculty Conduct Concern	21
- Grade Concern	48
- Harassment	6

Review of the institution's website confirms that the University has established a page, "Student Outcomes and Consumer Information," where it publishes a range of outcome data, in accordance with federal requirements and HLC guidelines. In addition to the "Overall Student Outcomes" category, the page includes sections on "Student Enrollment Information," and "Specific College/Program Outcomes."

The institution's revised credit hour policy, similarly, meets federal requirements with respect to "work time" mandates, noting that the University's policy *"conforms to commonly accepted practice in higher education in accordance with federal regulations 34 CFR 602.24(f)."* The policy offers definitions of "classroom or direct faculty instruction," "Equivalent amount of work," and "Out-of-class student work." Each of these categories presents a range of examples, such as that in the "Equivalent amount of work" category, which cites, among other activities, clinical/laboratory work, field assignments and internships.

Analysis Concluding Statement: The University of New Mexico has complied in all respects with the interim report requirements set forth in the institution's 2019 HLC Comprehensive Evaluation Team Report. The Higher Learning Commission will not require additional reporting on these matters, as indicated in the Staff Action section below.

However, given the recent nature of these improvements, it will be incumbent on the University to continue monitoring activity in these areas to assure that of its ongoing compliance. (Please see the Staff Finding section below.)

STAFF FINDING:

Note the relevant Criterion, Core Component(s) or Assumed Practice(s): Federal Compliance pertaining to student complaint policy, student outcomes publication, and credit hour policy.

Statements of Analysis (check one below)

☐ Evidence demonstrates adequate progress in the area of focus.

☒ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention is required in the area of focus.

☐ Evidence demonstrates that further organizational attention and HLC follow-up are required.

☐ Evidence is insufficient and a HLC focused visit is warranted.

STAFF ACTION: Receive the report on institutional response to student complaints, publication of student outcomes, and development of a comprehensive credit hour policy. No further reports are required on these topics.

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