



Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

MSC 3445
New Mexico State University
P.O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
575-646-2127, fax: 575-646-6334
provost@nmsu.edu

October 15, 2015

Dr. Barbara Damron
2044 Galisteo St., Suite 4
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Secretary Damron,

I am writing on behalf of the Provosts of the universities in the State of New Mexico to request that you host a General Education Common Core Summit in February or March of 2016, at which we discuss changes in the General Education Common Core.

The major reason for this request is that the current General Education Common Core reflects an approach to general education that has been abandoned by many forward thinking institutions of higher education. The approach can be described as the “smorgasbord” approach; that is, take one or two courses from several groups of allied disciplines and the wide breadth of courses will produce a well-educated student. Many universities now recognize the importance of a more purposeful approach to general education, one that emphasizes desired learning outcomes and designs a general education curriculum that will achieve these outcomes.

Our perspective is that the general education curriculum should be purposefully designed to teach students to think critically, communicate effectively, evaluate quantitative data, see connections among different areas of knowledge, solve complex problems, appreciate and understand diversity, and ethically reason. Combined with other courses that lead to a four year degree, it should produce a mind that can learn throughout a lifetime, appreciate the natural world and technological innovations, think through the issues that confront democracies, and provide leadership in the community and the workplace.

We envision the summit as an all day affair that will include every institution of higher education in the state. The critical invitees will be the chief academic officers of each institution, each of whom will be encouraged to bring three to five additional individuals (e.g., chairs of faculty senate, deans of Arts and Sciences, chairs of undergraduate curriculum committees, student body presidents).

The agenda of the summit could begin with a charge from the Higher Education Department regarding the state’s interest in, and goals regarding, an educated populace. University teams could then make presentations on topics selected to inform additional discussion such as the desired outcomes of a 21st century higher education, a survey from other states regarding general education requirements, models of general education, and implementing reform initiatives. The day would conclude by developing next steps regarding state-level initiatives. A likely next step would be the formation of a smaller taskforce from this group, charged with identifying essential learning outcomes and formulating a curriculum that will achieve those outcomes. That taskforce might be given a relatively limited amount of time to attain its goals (perhaps six months), at the end of which it will report back to the larger group with its recommendations.

I am willing to offer the services of my office in helping to coordinate a General Education Summit and we look forward to discussing this request with you, either in a phone conversation or in a meeting at your office in Santa Fe.

With all best wishes,



Daniel J. Howard, PhD
Executive Vice President and Provost
New Mexico State University



William Crocker, PhD
Vice President for Academic Affairs and
Provost
Western New Mexico University



Chaouki Abdallah, PhD
Provost and Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs
University of New Mexico



Jamie C. Laurenz, PhD
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Eastern New Mexico University



Teresita E. Aguilar, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic
Affairs
New Mexico Highlands University



Pedro L. Martinez, PhD
Provost and Vice President for Academic
Affairs
Northern New Mexico College



Warren Ostergren, PhD
Vice President of Academic Affairs
New Mexico Tech