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## El Centro Strategic Plan 2012-17

El Centro de la Raza

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# El Centro de la Raza

**Division of Student Affairs**

Strategic Plan 2012-2017

Spring 2013

Program Director: Veronica Mendez-Cruz

## Table of Contents

<b>I. RATIONALE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. VISION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III. MISSION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IV. STRATEGIC GOALS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Main Goals.....	4
<i>Goal 1 .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Goal 2 .....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Goal 3 .....</i>	<i>4</i>
Strategic Goals and Objectives.....	5
<b>V. VALUES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>VI. SWOT ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<i>A. Strengths .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>B. Weakness .....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>C. Opportunities .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>D. Threats .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<b>V. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>A. Means for implementation .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>B. Areas of Execution .....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>C. Evaluation.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<b>VI. HUMAN RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>A. Roles and Responsibilities .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>B. Current Staff.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>C. Professional Interns.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>D. Organizational Chart.....</i>	<i>14</i>

## **I. RATIONALE**

The rationale for the El Centro's strategic plan is to be able to meet the challenges set forth by the President under the UNM2020 vision, as well as to set an strategic direction that will incorporate the challenges that the population of students we serve is undergoing. El Centro's Strategic Plan provides for greater involvement in retention, graduation and outreach. It also incorporates the connection that El Centro has with the communities from where UNM Raza and Latino students come from. El Centro is, and has been, essential for the overall goal of retaining UNM Raza/Latino students through the strengthening of academics, student support, and strategic relationships for community involvement and student success.

## **II. VISION**

El Centro de la Raza serves as an agent of change to provide state of the art student services, programs, research and educational opportunities to support social, cultural, economic and political sustainability in New Mexican communities.

## **III. MISSION**

El Centro de la Raza provides tools for self-determination, personal responsibility and resiliency of Raza students at the University of New Mexico. We support the transformation of students through knowledge and skills, while challenging systems to achieve social justice. In engaging the community, El Centro continues the legacy of advocacy, holistic support and partnerships.

## IV. STRATEGIC GOALS

### Main Goals

#### Goal 1

El Centro will positively impact retention and graduation of undergraduate and graduate/professional students through academic, cultural/personal and professional activities designed to build a sense of community and a supportive environment.

#### Goal 2

El Centro will recruit Latino students and provide information to Latino students and their families about UNM and El Centro programs/activities.

#### Goal 3

El Centro will use program evaluation and assessment data for continuous improvement and to ensure its relevance in academic, cultural and professional aspirations of Raza/Latino students.

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

### Strategic Goal 1

Redefining educational culture and essential services to meet the needs of Raza students attending UNM

#### Objectives

- a. Develop and present State of UNM Raza Student data to Executive Cabinet, Faculty Senate, UNM Staff Council annually, local communities, and other entities
- b. Gather and present student data and demographics to support policy and measures that respond to the current needs of Raza students
- c. Hold the University accountable to be an HSI status in reference to funding opportunities
- d. Develop criteria and guiding principles for Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in Latino communities

### Strategic Goal 2

Improve upon the relationship with K-12 and UNM on behalf of Raza student access and recruitment

#### Objectives

- a. Establish best practices for student academic standards and other educational policy that impacts UNM Raza students.
- b. Collaborate with campus and community programs currently involved with K-12 to enhance the educational experience of UNM students and improve educational/professional opportunities for Raza students
- c. Identify, support and develop mentor programs for high school and college students.
- d. Increase awareness of available resources to UNM and prospective students; scholarships, financial, internships, professional opportunities.
- e. Develop strategies and alliances to increase access, success, excellence and scholarship of Raza students in STEHM academic fields of study

### Strategic Goal 3

#### Objectives

Redefine University community relationships related to El Centro

- a. Improve access for Raza students to activities and collaborative efforts aimed to encourage positive engagement and retention for Raza community.
- b. Explore and provide information on various programs and services and community partnerships to better document resources and support to students and their families.
- c. Develop strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations actively supporting Raza educational initiatives in order to create bridges between academia and our local communities
- d. Develop an Executive Advisory Council for El Centro
- e. Develop a strategic action plan to expand El Centro's core operations and services we provide to Raza students
- f. Identify funding opportunities and resource development for infrastructure and capacity

## V. VALUES

**Creativity/Innovation** - El Centro values originality, inspires a “*si se pudo*” attitude, encourages vision for unique pathways to success and achieving dreams, and serves as a conduit between people and resources to set goals, and understanding of student needs

**Family** – Cohesiveness, respect, caring, collective, inclusiveness, tradition, heritage, relationships, acceptance, and balance

**Trust** - Loyalty, commitment, transparency, communication, integrity, reliability, assuming the best, dependability, respect, and listening

**Courage** - Individuality, identity preservation, development, risk taking, resiliency, having people realize their own power, and meeting ones full potential

**Passion** - Determination, drive, vision, excitement, energy, sincerity, love, sacredness, advocacy, justice, personal, responsibility, obligation, encourage others, coaching, modeling, sharing, and communication



## VI. SWOT ANALYSIS

### A. Strengths

- Access to students and faculty
- Historical record is positive
- Important areas for the center remains outreach, retention, and graduation of Raza students
- Inclusive, open, and committed
- Connected to the community
- Provides essential student services
- Strong presence in the UNM Community
- Help students become strong leaders in our community
- Diverse funding and excellent record with students

### B. Weakness

- Lack of involvement of students in decision making
- Need a grant writer
- El Centro is considered a “Chicano-Mexicano” center, therefore “Latinos” feel excluded
- Create greater connection with faculty
- Campus outreach is needed to build bridges with academic programs
- Lack of a development framework
- Lack of systems to monitor student development
- More organization is required to ensure that the energy and potential of El Centro is used to its maximum capacity to create and innovate in our area of student related centers
- Streamline our programming areas and develop each area (i.e. marketing, student services, etc.) and define roles and responsibilities under actual or perceived responsibilities (program specialist vs. community representative)
- Definition of processes for internal areas such finances or program development
- Need an academic advisor that help with academic issues
- Become stakeholders with our community partners
- Lack of defined processes that although might be enforced by individual programs, these are isolated and defined would greatly contribute to reinforcing El Centro’s information about its services

### C. Opportunities

- Communication word of mouth and better use of social media
- Creating satellite centers
- Virtual expansion
- Access external grants
- Create projects that would truly give back to the communities from where our students are coming from
- Switch from student staff from how they are consider now to “Professional Interns” with their staff mentors (need to include in the action plan for FY13-14 specific plans for each individual area and tie that to key performance indicators to achieve our goals)
- Opportunities to conduct internal and external outreach
- Create bridge program(s)
- Connect with community leaders
- More student related events (fundraisers, dances, movie nights, special educational talks with invited guests)
- Involve students in the process of mentoring
- Seek academic programming from within El Centro, specially from those who hold master degrees

### D. Threats

- Loose network, only a by-product of the university
- Lack of clarity on the programmatic areas
- Historical planning rather than strategic planning
- Lack of roles and responsibilities
- Lack of academic direction beyond student advising
- Lack of internal cohesion
- Better communication among staff
- Lack of appropriately use of personnel
- Consistent and strategic programming tied to key performance indicators and a solid annual/operational plan

## V. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

### A. Means for implementation

The Strategic Plan will be implemented primarily through the defined goals, objectives, and activities from all Individual Action Plans. All Individual Action Plans will incorporate the El Centro's Operational Plan, which will be conducted from July through June of the Fiscal Year. The means of implementation for this Strategic Plan will include provision of financial resources in accordance with respective obligations under the Convention, taking into account Article 20 of the Convention.

### B. Areas of Execution

The thematic areas of work for El Centro's Strategic Plan and Operational Plan will include: Advising, mentorship, academics, fundraising, public relations, marketing, outreach (internally and externally), fiscal management, assessment, special programs, community relations, cross departmental collaboration, and publishing.

### C. Evaluation

The implementation and execution of this Strategic Plan will be evaluated through the assessment process. Periodic meetings will be coordinated to make sure that individually and collectively staff meet expected targets. The evaluation of this plan will be conducted through the assessment process and report will be prepared to make sure that everyone is informed about progress in meeting goals and objectives.

**VI. HUMAN RESOURCES**

**A. Roles and Responsibilities**

Programmatic			Operations		Management	
Student Program Specialist	Student Program Specialist	Community Program Specialist	Program Coordinator	Admin I	Director	Senior Program Manager
Program Coordination and Planning	Program Coordination	Program Coordination	Budget/fiscal management	Office Management	Student support	Assessment
Outreach, recruitment, and advocacy	Service Learning	Fundraising	HR development and training	Student Support	Staff support	Research and Development
Scholarships	Event Planner	El Puente Coordinator	Scholarship and programmatic support	Student training	Special assistant to the President	Visioning
Community Partnerships	Community outreach and Recruitment	Program Development	Program funding	Outreach and Recruitment	Supervision	Program Management
Mentoring	Mentoring	Advisement	Scholarships	Student services	Mentoring	Organizational Development
Academic Advisement	Academic Advising	Strategic Development	Accounting	Event planning	Voice for El Centro	Reporting
Special Programs	Student support	Network building and community outreach	Supervision	Mentoring	Leader	Strategic Development
Program development		Mentoring	Process development	Front office	Student staff advocate	Strategic planning
Program planning and management		Internship	Department support	Outreach	Strategic planning	Capacity building
		Partnership building	All duties as assigned	Informal Advising	UNM and Community Politics	Staff support
				Liaison	Oversight of staff and programs	Graduate Fellowship Program
				Customer support	Provide vision	
				Student support	Direct management	
				Triage		

## **B. Current Staff**

### **Veronica Mendez-Cruz, Director**

Bachelors in Social Work, NMSU

Master of Arts in Education with Counseling and Guidance, University of New Mexico

My role is to provide access and promote success in higher education for Latino students, celebrate successes, and address challenges. I have been at UNM for over 20 years and have been the Director for El Centro de la Raza for over 15 years.

### **Jorge A. Garcia, Senior Program Manager**

Bachelors in Sociology, University of New Mexico

Master of Arts in Education, University of New Mexico

AA in Mathematics, Harold Washington College, Chicago

My role in El Centro de la Raza is to conduct strategic planning, research and development, and to strengthen management systems for the programmatic areas. I am also responsible for special programs, such as the graduate fellowship, the Speaker series, and the international student exchange program. I have been at UNM since 1997, and I came on board to El Centro's community of people in 2012.

### **Theresa Williams, Community Program Specialist**

AA Pre Management, Central New Mexico Community College

BBA Business Administration, University of New Mexico

MS Community Health Education, University of New Mexico

My role at El Centro is to promote student success and capacity building through the El Puente Internship program. I also help coordinate the CREAR program, which is part of El Centro's Community Based Research and Learning Initiative. I have been a part of the UNM *familia* since 2004. My experience includes over a decade of working with various nonprofit and community organizations in the areas of education, prevention, community health, youth development, leadership and advocacy.

**Elizabeth Christina Silva, Program Coordinator**

B.A. in Sociology and Spanish with a minor in Psychology  
M.A. in Language Literacy Sociocultural Studies from UNM

I am a new staff member to El Centro, as well as an El Centro alumnus. As an undergraduate I was a student mentor for our *Amistades* mentoring program, as well as an El Centro Intern both at UNM and in the community. El Centro is a vital component to my success academically and I am extremely proud and excited to now be a staff member for this incredible team.

**Armando A. Bustamante, Student Programs Specialist**

BS in Secondary Education, Social Sciences

I was raised in North Central Nebraska, but my family is from Ciudad Cuauhtémoc, Chihuahua, after high school graduation I moved to Lincoln Nebraska where I got my degree for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I have been working with students since 1995 with TRIO Programs at UNL and Title V at UNM. I truly enjoy working with others especially with students. I will be the contact person with El Centro de *Igualdad y Derechos and Somos Un Pueblo Unido* amongst other community and campus organizations.

**Katrina Herrera, Administrative Assistant**

AA Liberal Arts, Central New Mexico Community College  
BA Psychology, University of New Mexico, anticipated graduation 2011

I am administrative assistant for El Centro de la Raza. I enjoy every minute of serving everyone who crosses the front window at El Centro and try my best to provide the information that is needed by everyone. I like to build relationships with staff and especially the relationships I have built with the students. I enjoy coordinating events and working on special projects. My long-term goal is to continue working in higher education and to encourage students to believe that they can make it through every obstacle.

**C. Professional Interns**

**Nicholas Zarasua - BS Athletic Training**

Program Coordination Support

**Laura Ordoñez - BA Psychology**

Student Services

D. Organizational Chart

