

6-20-2011

Higher Learning Commission Staff Analysis of Institutional Report

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Higher Learning Commission
A commission of the North Central Association

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June 23, 2011

Dr. David J. Schmidly
President
University of New Mexico
MSC05 3300
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear President Schmidly:

The monitoring report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, I accept the report on governance and administrative structures. No further reports are required. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2018 - 2019.

I am also enclosing a copy of the institution's Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions I have taken on behalf of the Commission. If you have any questions about this analysis or any other evaluation matters, please let me know. I can be reached via email at rappleson@hlcommission.org or by voice at (800) 621-7440 x 122.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Appleson,
Vice President for Accreditation Relations

Enclosures



STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: June 20, 2011

STAFF: Robert R. Appleson

REVIEWED BY: Katherine C. Delaney

INSTITUTION: University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: David J. Schmidly, President

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A monitoring report due on 6/13/11 focused on governance and administrative structures.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The office of the Commission received University of New Mexico's report on the above topic on 6/10/11.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The University of New Mexico hosted a comprehensive visit in April 2009. At the time of the visit, the team report noted, "*The institution is the midst of a near complete break down in trust between the faculty and staff and the President. The faculty voted no confidence in the Board Chair, President and Executive Vice President for Administration.*" In the ten years prior to the comprehensive visit, UNM had had six presidents and seven provosts in leadership roles, which challenged the institution to provide consistent leadership. The team indicated in its report,

There are two fundamental issues germane to the sustained effectiveness of the university and its administration. The first is that the Board of Regents should operate within the constitutional and statutory authority without intruding upon—or appearing to intrude upon—university operations. ... *The second is that academic interests, represented by the office of the provost, should guide financial decisions—as opposed to allowing financial decisions to drive academic decisions.*

The team, therefore, recommended this monitoring report with the following expectations:

...that the monitoring report will present strategies explicitly directed to the amelioration of those concerns. The strategies considered in this regard should focus (a) on seeking a clearer understanding of appropriate board roles through consultation with a recognized advisory authority, (b) on the collaborative clarification of protocols with regard to board member activity and visibility, and (c) on reconsideration of the current organization chart and executive position descriptions so as to clarify the authority of the provost and deans, as delegated by the president, to guide the pursuit of institutional authorities.

In order to address these governance concerns, the University addressed six strategies it has undertaken since the comprehensive visit:

1. Deployment of inclusive budget development processes over two budget cycles - FY11 and FY12.
2. Development of campus-wide surveys and focus groups on shared governance and Communications.
3. Enhanced communications and campus engagement activities from the Offices of the President and Provost.

4. Review of organizational structure resulting in reduction in the number of Vice Presidents over the past two years.
5. Reinstatement of annual orientation sessions for members of the UNM Board of Regents.
6. Strengthen implementation of inclusive search processes for key high-level administrative positions.

Deployment of inclusive budget development processes

In order to make the budget development process more inclusive, the president commissioned a diverse group of faculty, staff, administrators, and students - the "President's Strategic Advisory Team" (PSAT) - to identify opportunities for cost containment that would help to address the necessary budget reductions. Half of the members selected for this team were recommended by the faculty. The team was initially charged with exploring efficiencies that would reduce spending and/or enhance revenues in eight key areas. In the end, PSAT identified short, mid, and long term opportunities for cost containment.

To further engage faculty, staff and students in soliciting and testing ideas on how to approach the budget, the President scheduled a series of meetings with leaders of the various campus constituency groups, including Faculty Senate, the Deans, Staff Council, the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA), and the Associated Students of UNM (ASUNM). Two rounds of meetings were scheduled and held with each group throughout the budget development process. Several of the recommendations made by these groups were formally adopted into the budget.

In the case of the FY2012 budget, all of the FY12 budget work culminated on March 28, 2011 with the UNM Budget Summit, during which the budget recommendations were presented to the Board of Regents for their consideration. During the Summit, each of the campus constituency groups had the opportunity to speak.

This first strategy was well documented by appendices to the monitoring report, including

- Exhibit 1- President's Strategic Advisory Team FY11
- Exhibit 2 - President's FY11 Budget Preparation Meetings with Campus Groups
- Exhibit 3 - Adopted Constituency Budget Recommendations FY11
- Exhibit 4 - FY12 Budget Development Flowchart
- Exhibit 5 - PSAT FY12 Recommendations
- Exhibit 6 - IT Cost Containment
- Exhibit 7 - Cost Containment Task Force Final Report
- Exhibit 8 - FY12 Budget Summit

Development of campus-wide surveys and focus groups on shared governance and communications

UNM launched an initiative to survey campus constituents to assess perceptions of the campus climate regarding shared governance and communication. Research and Polling Inc. conducted a baseline survey in March of 2010. The survey results would establish a benchmark and provide insight on how to move the institution forward. The University also contracted with Research and Polling Inc. for a series of focus groups that included the deans, senior faculty, junior faculty, staff leadership and university vice presidents. These were conducted during May and June of 2010. As a

result of the data derived from the survey and focus groups, Research and Polling submitted several recommendations for future action. The firm presented its final report to the University on September 1, 2010.

The 2010 survey provided a baseline of information from which to accomplish three objectives:

1. Better understand current campus climate.
2. Identify and design strategies for improving the climate.
3. Provide a starting point from which to monitor and assess improvements over time.

While the time frame for conducting a follow-up survey was rather short, UNM wanted to see if, even in a period of a few months, strategies to improve inclusivity of budget processes and enhance communications could result in some improvement in campus climate.

Research and Polling Inc. conducted three additional focus groups during late February and early March of this year, one each with senior faculty/Faculty Senate, department chairs and program directors, and members of the Staff Council. The results indicate that faculty and staff leadership feel there has been a "thawing" of the cold and tense relations between themselves and Central Administration compared to one year ago, and that improvements have been made in communication between faculty/staff leadership and Central Administration.

In addition to the focus groups, Research and Polling Inc. conducted follow-up online surveys of faculty and staff between March 24 and April 13, 2011. A total of 670 faculty members (36%) and 1,486 staff members (46%) completed their respective surveys, with the following results:

- On the faculty survey, 33 of the 39 questions showed an improvement in results from the previous year. Of those showing improvement, 14 were statistically significant.
- On the staff survey, 19 of the 22 questions showed improvement. Thirteen of the questions showing improvement were statistically significant.

One of the key findings was the observation that 23% of faculty and 20% of staff responding felt that positive changes in communication between their respective group and Central Administration have occurred in the past six months.

The monitoring report acknowledged that the improvements over the previous year were fairly small. However, incremental improvement was nonetheless demonstrated in less than one year's time.

Exhibits appended to the monitoring report relating to this strategy included:

Exhibit 10 - 2010 Campus Climate Survey

Exhibit 11 - 2011 Campus Climate Focus Groups and Survey - Executive Summaries

Enhanced communications and campus engagement activities from the Offices of the President and Provost

After the HIC visit and team report, it was determined that concerted efforts would be made to improve and increase communications and opportunities for faculty and staff to interact with the Provost and also with the President. Toward that end, the Provost developed a comprehensive

communications plan for academic affairs, beginning in the fall of 2009. Regular and proactive communications were outlined as a major goal for the Provost's office. Specific methods that were used to distribute information to UNM's diverse academic community were detailed in the monitoring report.

Additionally, the President decided in the summer of 2009 to expand his annual summer Executive Cabinet strategic planning "Advance" to include Deans and leadership from the Health Sciences Center who do not regularly attend Executive Cabinet. The 2010 "Advance" was further expanded to include members of the President's Strategic Advisory Team, as well as leaders of the Faculty Senate, *Staff Council*, GSPA, and ASUNM.

In January 2011, the President delivered a live web address to update the campus on the financial situation, to outline the process for developing the FY12 budget, and to invite everyone to participate by sending in their comments, questions, and budget ideas.

Exhibits supporting this strategy included:

- Exhibit 12 - Communication Efforts in Academic Affairs - Fall 2009 through Spring 2011
- Exhibit 13 - President's Adelante Advance 2009
- Exhibit 14 - President's Adelante Advance 2010
- Exhibit 15 - President Schmidly's Web Address 1/19/11

Review of organizational structure resulting in reduction in the number of Vice Presidents

To address a criticism by both faculty and staff that UNM had become "top heavy" with administration over the past few years (Exhibit 16 - 2008-09 organizational chart), the determination was made that any Vice President position that might become vacant moving forward would be evaluated to determine if filling the position was actually necessary, or if a reorganization might instead meet the need. Since the HLC accreditation visit in April 2009, three such vacancies have occurred and, as a result of careful evaluation, have not been filled.

As UNM moves into FY12, further examination of the organizational structure will occur, this time to further refine reporting structures and titles.

Exhibits supporting this strategy included:

- Exhibit 16 - 2008-09 Organizational Chart
- Exhibit 17 - 2010-11 Organizational Chart

Reinstatement of annual orientation sessions for members of the UNM Board of Regents

The comprehensive visit team report suggested that orientation sessions for UNM's Board of Regents should resume, and that these should include protocols of policy management and best practices for board membership. These sessions were reinstated, to be held on a yearly basis, beginning with a retreat in 2010, when a consultant was retained to lead the Regents through dialogue and discussion about principles and standards of good practice, as identified by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. The consultant's presentation included the following topics:

- Forces of change and conflicting perceptions
- Institutional governance and decision-making
- Board responsibilities

- Trustee responsibilities
- UNM structure and responsibilities
- Institutional accreditation (Exhibit 18 - Regents' Retreat)

During the first quarter of 2011, two new Regents were appointed by newly-elected New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez. The annual Regents' orientation retreat was then held in May, following the confirmation of both by the New Mexico legislature. The session was once again facilitated by the same consultant.

Strengthen implementation of inclusive search processes for key high-level administrative positions

In spring 2011, the Provost announced that she would be leaving UNM to assume a new position elsewhere. The internal search for an Interim Provost provided a high profile opportunity to apply principles of shared governance to this important selection.

The search committee was led by the President of the Faculty Senate, who, in consultation with the President, populated the team with two Deans, three Department Chairs, eight faculty members, two administrators, and the incoming Presidents of the Staff Council, GPSA, and ASUNM. After careful consideration, three finalist candidates were identified and thoroughly vetted with the campus community through a series of interviews with the general public and specific campus groups. The Search Committee recommended only a single candidate for consideration to the President and the President offered that candidate the position.

Conclusion of Monitoring Report

The conclusion of the monitoring report concludes:

In a relatively short period of time, UNM implemented six strategies to address these concerns. While there is still work to be done, survey results, formal statements from campus leaders, and anecdotal feedback all indicate that incremental progress is being made to improve campus climate in the areas of communications, administration, and shared governance.

UNM commits to building on the sincere and diligent efforts of countless faculty, staff, students, and administrators over the past two years, as we continue to improve how we work together for the sake of our mission, our campus community, and the students we serve.

Faculty comments re: the UNM Monitoring Report to the Higher Learning Commission

In an action particularly well-suited to the subject of this monitoring report, the appendices included an extensive report from the Faculty Senate responding to the monitoring report itself. With respect to the monitoring report, the faculty report states:

We have ... some first taste of what a broad culture of shared governance could be: the Strategic Budget Process; the interim Provost search process; the role of the presidents of the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and student bodies as Regents' Advisors; and the collaborative work of the Deans' Council/Faculty Senate Budget Committee and the Office of Governmental Relations/Faculty Senate Governmental Relations Committee - all these reflect inchoate structures and initial practices that can be built upon and expanded. But the faculty and staff survey data discussed above demonstrate that these structures and practices have only begun to penetrate into the everyday culture of the institution, where most faculty and staff live their lives.

In sum, the fundamental issues we face involve institutionalizing the initial structures and practices of shared governance in which the faculty, administration, staff, and regents have begun to engage.

The faculty report then identified the kinds of measures that can be taken in the new few years to address those fundamental issues, including nine measures that address the strategic budget process, a decision-making and administrative structure, the office of the Provost, strategic hiring initiatives, the hiring of a new Director of Internal Audit, continuing training for the Board of Regents, restructuring processes in the upper administration and faculty governance, leadership training for faculty and addressing morale issues among University staff and faculty.

Staff comment: The University of New Mexico submitted an excellent report that was complete, straightforward, substantiated by strong evidence and forward thinking. The University community is commended for its strong work in addressing the governance and administrative issues that had challenged the institution and for recognizing the importance of continuing those strong efforts so that collegial relations at the University are indeed part of the culture and the ongoing operation of the University.

STAFF ACTION: Accept the report on governance and administrative structures. No further reports are required. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2018 - 2019.

STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
1 University of New Mexico MSC05 3300
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Affiliation Status: Candidate: Not Applicable
Accreditation: (1922- .)

PEAQ PARTICIPANT

Nature of Organization

Legal Status: Public
Degrees Awarded: A, B, M, S, D

Conditions of Affiliation:

Stipulations on Affiliation Status: None.

Approval of New Additional Locations: Prior Commission approval required.

Approval of Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs: New Commission policy on institutional change became effective July 1, 2010. Some aspects of the change processes affecting distance delivered courses and programs are still being finalized. This entry will be updated in early 2011 to reflect current policy. In the meantime, see the Commission's Web site for information on seeking approval of distance education courses and programs.

Reports Required: None.

Other Visits Scheduled: None.

Summary of Commission Review

Year of Last Comprehensive Evaluation: 2008 - 2009
Year for Next Comprehensive Evaluation: 2018 - 2019
Date of Last Action: 08/18/2010