Enrollment Surges for Fall Semester

Following a nationwide trend for community colleges, head count at UNM-Gallup leaped upward 2 percent over last year’s fall figures, while credit hours surged 10 percent over Fall 2008. The latter figure indicates that the 2875 students registered are taking 27,964 credit hours -- a record at UNMG.

Community colleges typically experience growth in enrollment in hard economic times as employment opportunities diminish. Lower gas prices may also be helping to fuel the rise in enrollment. But another factor is that parents are reconsidering sending their children off to four-year colleges when they can get their core classes for less tuition while living at home.

“The pressure is on as far as having enough courses and classrooms available,” said Paul Kraft, director of Student Services, of the college’s efforts to accommodate more students. “The management team has been discussing how to deal with capacity enrollment if we continue to grow. We’re talking about how to meet the needs of our students by increasing online courses and class capacity, as well as adding faculty.”

As to why the college is experiencing the enrollment surge, Kraft said that although the economy is indeed a factor, with students opting to live at home.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESK

It’s a new day at UNM-Gallup and I am thrilled to have come on board at such an exciting time in the institution’s history. I feel a sense of optimism from the faculty and staff as we embark on a new semester. We are still getting to know each other, but I believe the first steps are a promise of good things to come.

My first initiative as Executive Director will be to launch a campus climate survey to establish a baseline of information and data that we can share with the campus and the community. We will look at all aspects of the college and develop strategies to address important issues and concerns, and seek ways to measure our success.

On another front, we are celebrating a huge surge in enrollment for the fall semester, with the latest figures registering a 4.5 percent rise in head count and a 13.5 percent increase in credit hours. That means there are more students enrolled for more classes than this time last year. While an enrollment increase is always good news for a college, it also presents challenges in terms of space, class size and ability to serve the student population. Fortunately, community colleges like UNM-Gallup can be more flexible in responding to these issues than many four-year institutions.

In the coming months, we at UNMG will focus on how we can be more nimble and more strategic in our planning. One strategy is already taking shape: the creation of a marketing task force. The task force will not only take a look at improving communication between our potential students and the college, but will also take into account trends in the work force and the economy as well as projections regarding population growth and decline. Being “nimble” will entail assessing how these forces impact the college and its programs, as well as our students’ choices.

Other issues we will be focusing on are the Talking Circles and campus conversation, as well as a new Sustainability Task Force. I will discuss these topics more in depth in the next issue of UNMGviews.

Finally, I want to say that although I arrive in New Mexico and at the University of New Mexico-Gallup during unsettling economic times, I am encouraged by the willingness of the administration, the faculty and the staff to join me in seeking creative solutions to our challenges. My focus in leadership will be to help foster an institutional vision of looking ahead rather than behind, and being ready to meet challenges rather than merely reacting as they arise. I believe we are off to a good start in that direction, and that by following this road, we will improve our ability to help our students realize their dreams.

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while going to college, Student Services has been focusing on more intense recruiting.

“We’re doing a better job of recruiting and getting the word out,” he said.

Kraft acknowledged that the boost in enrollment will cause some financial strains.

“We’re getting fewer dollars from the state, and that will continue over the next couple of years,” he said. “We’re being asked to educate more students with less government support. And, although growing enrollment offsets some of the loss of revenue, our tuition is so low it doesn’t cover the costs of educating our students.”
**On the Drawing Board: Construction Updates**

Groundbreaking for UNM-Gallup’s proposed Student Services and Technology Center is due to occur at the end of October, according to Ron Petranovich, manager of the Physical Plant. Bidding for the $13.4 million project is due to occur about mid-October. The 36,000-square-foot building will house all of Students Services, including the Registrar’s office, Financial Aid, Counseling and Advisement, as well as the cashiers, on the upper level. The Arts and Letters and Social Sciences departments will be located in the lower level.

The building will also have several so-called smart classrooms, which will feature the latest in technological advances. It will be the first LEED- (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building in Gallup and McKinley County.

Once the groundbreaking starts, parking will be temporarily affected, as some of the current space will be used as a staging area. No new parking is planned for the building, as it is designed just to accommodate current programs rather than any expansion.

Construction work at Calvin Hall continues through October. Petranovich said that the renovations are about two weeks behind schedule, but according to Murphy Builders, the company in charge of the renovations, they will be able to make up time and finish the $1.3 million project on schedule.

The repairs include updating the mechanical/HVAC system, installing new fire sprinklers, finishing floors and painting the walls of the 30-year-old building.

Another project recently completed was the replacement of the exercise stations along the track at a cost of $70,000. The durable steel stations replace the wooden ones that had deteriorated.

The rehabilitation of Vo-Tech Drive, located on the north side of the campus, and which leads to the Career Technology classrooms and on to the Nursing and Health Careers buildings, is due to start in March. The reconstruction, which will include new gutters to handle run-off from the new building, and thereby improve drainage, will also include curbs and street lights.

**Around the Campus**

Loren Leekela, Construction Technology instructor at the Zuni campus, was one of only 17 instructors to receive an invitation to the USG/Skills Constructive Solutions program, held in July. This workshop took place at the USG Research & Technology Center in Libertyville, Ill. The workshop consisted of 24 hours of classroom and hands-on training focused on current USG and industry recommendations for the proper installation and finishing of gypsum wallboard systems for residential construction. “Loren’s high school and college students will very much benefit from this training,” said his supervisor, Laura Moore, manager of the Zuni campus. Leekela is also an advisor for the Construction and Technology Club, which is part of Skills USA. Last spring this Zuni Campus club received Kobalt hand tools donated by Lowe’s for participating at the state conference in Albuquerque. Only 10 schools were chosen to attend this conference, and the UNM-Zuni Construction and Technology Club was one of them. ... Chris Chavez, Construction Technology instructor, achieved a Certified Green Professional designation through the National Association of Home Builders. ... New work by art faculty Ken Roberts and John Zimmerman was on view at the Crash-Gallery Thunder Gallery, 228 W. Coal Ave., through Oct. 3. An opening reception was held Sept. 12. ... “Crossroads” and “Best Served Cold,” two short film scripts by Pamela Stovall, associate professor of Communication and Journalism, won second and third place respectively in the Poppy Jasper Film Festival’s national short script competition. Contest organizer Donna Brodsky said, “All entries go to our readers anonymously and it is very unusual to find someone who places twice.” Also, Stovall’s script “Crossroads” has been honored by being selected as one of the scripts in the top ten percent for The International Short Script Contest. ... Arts and Letters Chair Gloria Dye published non-fiction in a national literary journal Gargoyle; the piece is titled “Living in the Shadow.” Also, Dye, who has served for the past five years on the board of the Zuni Mountain Stupa Foundation, an offshoot of the Vairotsana Foundation, participated in the consecration on Sept. 5 of a stupa and center to serve the spiritual needs of exiled Tibetans as well as all those in the region who practice Buddhism. ... The Dental Assistant program has received “Accreditation, without reporting errors” until 2015 from the Council on Dental Accreditation by the American Dental Association Council on Dental Education, according to Dental Assistant Program instructor Jean Martinez Monoghan. The council, which grants accreditation for programs for seven years, requires that participating programs complete a self-study of six standards. A site team then comes on campus and certifies the information provided in the self-study. These programs must meet specific qualifications for curriculum and faculty. For example, instructors must be Certified Dental Assistants with a bachelor’s degree or else working on one, along with coursework in teaching methodology. “In the State of New Mexico, we at this time only have three accredited Dental Assistant programs,” said Martinez Monaghan. “This accreditation is important for seating for the National Dental Assisting Examination for Certification, and working for the federal government.” ... During the summer, Florentin Smarandache, professor of mathematics, worked for the Department of Defense as a Visiting Research Professor at Air Force Research Laboratory in Rome, N.Y. He made six presentations during the summer at the following venues: University of Craiova (Romania); ARFL (USA), Griffiss Institute (USA), and Fusion 2009 International Conference in Seattle (USA).
Welding Program Is Back on Track

The University of New Mexico-Gallup’s welding program, on hiatus for the last year, is getting back on track with a new instructor and plans for a more rigorous course of study.

Joe Sanchez, a Gallup native with 35 years of experience in welding, has been hired as visiting lecturer for the coming year and is looking forward to beefing up the program, with a focus on certification.

“I want to turn out certified welders,” Sanchez said. “If you’re going to school to be a lawyer or a doctor, you should be able to perform when you complete your coursework. It’s the same for welding. You should be ready to get any job when you get your certificate.”

The curriculum and certification will be according to the standards of the American Welding Society. Students will learn all the basic functions such as setting up a machine, layout and fabrication and reading blueprints. They will also study metallurgy, and learn four types of welding: oxyacetylene, M.I.G., T.I.G. and stick welding. At the end of the one-year course of instruction, students will be tested by the American Welding Society.

Sanchez says his goal is to have the best welding program in the Four Corners Region, and the premier program in the state. His intention is that students obtaining their certificates from UNMG will be qualified for many of the well-paid jobs in welding.

“Welding used to be looked at as a dirty job, but today, things are changing,” he said. “There are opportunities in the green industry, including wind generators, with an emphasis on using lighter stronger metals.”

Other opportunities for employment exist in aerospace, nuclear power plants, submarines, food processing plants, shipyards, the oil industry and aviation.

Salaries for starting welders, depending on the type of industry, can run from $40k to as high as mid $50k.

UNMG’s welding shop is well equipped with some state-of-the-art machines. Many of the welders are digitized and multi-task machines. The program also offers use of a brake machine, a notcher and portable welders.

About 20 students can be accommodated in the program. Sanchez invites students of any age, male or female, to apply. Students must be able to see well or else must wear glasses to correct poor vision.

For more questions about the UNM-Gallup welding certificate program, contact Joe Sanchez at 505.863.7510.

New Faculty on Board at UNMG

Following are the new faculty for 2009-2010: Kelly Schukar, clinical coordinator, Nursing; Yi Wen Huang, lecturer, Arts and Letters; Robert Galin, assistant professor, Arts and Letters; John Unger, assistant professor, Transitional Studies; Jennifer Wheeler, visiting lecturer, Transitional Studies; Anneke Lundberg, assistant professor, Education; Chris Platero, assistant professor, Math and Science; Al Henderson, lecturer, Business Tech; Coleen Arviso, lecturer, Business Tech; Erica Mcfadden, assistant professor, Transitional Studies; Robin Lasiloo, visiting lecturer, Arts and Letters; Dave Kelley, visiting lecturer, Arts and Letters; and Joe Sanchez, visiting lecturer, Welding.