Enrollment Dips Slightly For Fall 2011 Semester

Enrollment figures for fall revealed a slight decrease from last year.

Headcount is 2,981, for a decline of 1.82 percent or 55 persons from fall of 2010, when 3,026 persons were enrolled. Student credit hours are likewise down with a total of 28,372. The total for fall 2010 was 29,472, for a change of 1,100, or 3.73 percent less than last year at this time.

The third Fridays of the fall and spring semesters are the official census dates for reporting enrollment.

The college reported 472 classes in session for fall 2010.

Institutions of higher learning in New Mexico have had to cope with significant budget cuts over the last two years, with UNM-Gallup experiencing cuts totaling $2 million. As Executive Director Sylvia Andrew explained, one way the college has had to deal with the decline in revenues is to cancel some elective classes.

College Dedicates Student Services/Tech Center

A crowd of more than 200 onlookers gathered in the bright October sunshine on the 21st to watch as a large red ribbon strung across the entrance was cut with enormous ceremonial scissors, signifying the official dedication of the UNM-Gallup Student Services and Technology Center.

The building, which was designed by Rohde May Keller McNamara Architects of Albuquerque and built by Flintco Construction of Oklahoma, has been awarded a silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) award for its advanced environmental technology and features.

The Student Services and the Business Operations departments have moved into the building; the Arts and Letters and Social Sciences faculty and some classes are due to relocate there in January.

The building features smart classrooms, an outdoor amphitheater nestled in a microclimate between stairs and the front face of the building and environmentally controlled systems.

Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Due on Campus

A chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, a prestigious national honor society for community college students, is being formed at the University of New Mexico-Gallup. The chapter will be known as Beta Tau Psi. Students who have a 3.5 grade average will soon be receiving a letter of invitation to join.

“We will be actively recruiting,” said Zeke Garcia, Student Services director, adding that he also will be recruiting a faculty member to be a sponsor.

Students who become members in the honor society serve as role models for high achievement among their peers. They also have an opportunity to train for leadership roles, and to meet other club members at conferences. Students who join typically help with fund raisers for the chapter.
To all of you who attended our recent dedication of the Student Services and Technology Center, my grateful thanks. And to those of you who were not able to attend, here’s hoping you can find time soon to come to the campus for a tour of this impressive new facility. We are so thrilled not only with the pleasing aesthetics of this LEED-certified structure, but also with the opportunities it affords us to enhance our teaching mission for students with the latest classroom technology, as well as a one-stop shop for Student Services functions such as financial aid, registration, advisement and admissions. We are looking forward to seeing how this new arrangement will work when the registration process begins anew in 2012. Many thanks to the local voters for supporting the funding that enabled us to build this exceptional community resource.

I would also like to bring to your attention an exciting new initiative launched by our new director of Student Services, Zeke Garcia. New Mexico’s Secretary of Higher Education, Jose Z. Garcia, has charged those of us who work at state community colleges and universities to change the way we define success. That means moving away from reporting ever-higher head count to retaining the students that we enroll and ensuring their success either as transfer students or in getting their certificates and degrees. Zeke Garcia, who started at UNMG in March as our Interim Student Services Director, was recently hired as our permanent Student Services Director and has already launched a new retention project. Students whose grade point averages are below 2.0 are being contacted by advisors to develop an educational plan. Next, we will be having workshops for all financial aid students to simultaneously review academic progress and educational goals. We will be reporting the outcomes of this initiative as information becomes available.

Johnson Foundation Offers Scholarships

The Johnson Scholarship Foundation has announced the award of $20,000 in scholarships for the University of New Mexico-Gallup’s Entrepreneurship program for the 2010/2011 academic year. The awards will be divided in half, with $10,000 to be awarded this fall and $10,000 in the spring.

The maximum amount to be awarded to each student will be limited to $2500 for the academic year. Scholarships are only for students pursuing certificates or degrees in Entrepreneurship, Business Administration or Management-related fields of study.

The scholarship funds provided under this program are available only to qualified Native American students with a grade point average of at least 2.0. No UNM-Gallup employees or employees of affiliated institutions will be entitled to receive awards.

Students wishing to inquire as to whether they are eligible for financial aid may contact the Financial Aid office at 863-7663. For information about how to apply for the Johnson Foundation scholarship, contact Al Henderson at 863-7634.
New Mexican screenwriter and University of New Mexico-Gallup faculty Pamela Stovall recently won the 2011 Moondance Spirit Award in the Feature Screenplays category for her script “The Perfect Cut.” Stovall said she’s honored that her feature-length script did so well. “I’m thrilled. It’s incredible to win this prestigious award. I’m very happy with the script. I’m glad the Moodance Film Festival thought so too.” Stovall said “The Perfect Cut” is about a street-smart teenage girl who inserts herself into the path of a lifelong jewel thief who is on the run after her diamond heist goes mysteriously wrong. The two find themselves on a journey that is a race against their shared past, the law, and a ruthless bounty hunter closing in for the kill. “The script started as a short script. And as a short it won awards in every contest I entered it in. Then a friend read the short and said, ‘Pamela, this could make an incredible feature-length script.’ I realized he was right and I spent the next two years doing just that.” She is currently looking for a director or producer who can appreciate the script and “become as excited as I am about the project.” Stovall has won other awards for both scripts and short stories. She is also the author of three published books and is currently working on several new projects. The Moondance International Film Festival was held in Boulder, in September, where Stovall collected her award. Stovall lives in Jamestown, N.M., and is a professor of Communication and Journalism at UNMG, and the sponsor of the student newspaper, The Campus Voice. ...

Cindy Ogden has joined UNMG as a librarian. She comes from Goucher College in Baltimore, Md., where as systems administrator she was responsible for cataloging and database maintenance. Ogden has a master’s degree from Clarion University in Pennsylvania and a Bachelor’s degree from Purdue University. “I really enjoy being here,” said Ogden of her recent move to Gallup. “The people are friendly, and there is a lot of potential for the library – services that we could offer, and ways to improve access to what we have. I am also looking for ways to build the collection.”

AROUND THE CAMPUS

First day to register for Spring Classes: Nov. 28, 2011
CDL/Heavy Construction Classes Give Grads New Hope

In a time of great uncertainty about the job market, the Navajo Nation and the University of New Mexico-Gallup have found a means of giving hope to jobseekers through a unique regional partnership. Thirty students recently completed their course of study for Heavy Equipment and Commercial Driver License, or CDL, and 29 of those have received their certificates and now have skills that may give them an edge in the current job market.

Most of those 29 were on hand for a graduation ceremony at Lions Hall on the UNMG campus in September, where touching testimonials and hearty congratulations were the order of the morning. Guest speakers from the Navajo Nation and UNMG gave words of encouragement, while instructors praised the graduates for their perseverance over the 20 weeks of instruction.

The classes are the result of a memo of understanding negotiated between the Navajo Nation and UNMG. Sonny Moore, training specialist, is the principal investigator for the Navajo Nation grant that sustains this program. The funds underwrite the students’ living expenses and overnight travel, as well as the instructors’ pay and the cost of renting equipment for the classes.

The CDL program has been in progress for two years, while the Heavy Equipment course was launched this year, with the first class starting this past spring.

“It took a couple of years of negotiating,” Moore said. “The CDL/Heavy Equipment training course is the first of its kind in this area.”

Moore said that conducting the courses as a cohort – that is, with the same students working through the training with the two instructors, while students get to know and support one another – appears to have enormous impact on the students’ success.

“They’ve created an environment beneficial to learning,” Moore said. “When you know your instructor cares about you, and that he wants you to learn and succeed without creating undue pressure, it contributes to the students doing as well as they did. This is especially important since many of these students hadn’t been in a classroom in years.”

The next step for the graduates is, the organizers hope, employment. For the graduates of the CDL class, close to 100 percent already have jobs, Moore said, while six students out of the 14 in the Heavy Equipment course also have jobs.

To help improve their odds of getting a job, Moore has a placement officer written into the MOU. This individual assists with résumés and cover letters, and connects graduates with potential employers.

“We have it in our contract that we’re supposed to reach 50 percent placement, but we’re going to try for 100 percent,” Moore said.

Students who received certificates were as follows:

Heavy Equipment: Dean Anderson and Judith Woods.


Classes in both CDL and Heavy Equipment were scheduled to start on October 31.