GRADUATES 2012

Graduates are all smiles posing with Lobo Louie after receiving their diplomas during the commencement ceremonies held May 16 in Red Rock Park. A total of 192 students received certificates or diplomas from GED programs, for Middle College High School, for certificate or associate’s degree programs, as well as from baccalaureate and graduate programs.

New Pell Regulations Have Impact on Summer Numbers

Summer enrollment was down from 2011, with a recorded head count of 690 students this year, as opposed to 790 last year. Credit hours are likewise down from 3712 in Summer 2011 to 3215.

“The availability of financial aid and the changes in Title IV have affected our summer enrollment,” said Zeke Garcia, director of Student Services. “Students have run out of Pell due to the length of time it took them to complete their programs. Some ran out because they changed their educational goals. The new regulations on the number of allowable semesters to be eligible for Pell had an impact, as did the fact some courses students may have needed were not offered this summer.”

Major IT Upgrade Under Way

The University of New Mexico has given the go-ahead to the Gallup branch to proceed with a $3 million upgrade to its Information Technology infrastructure, starting this summer.

The upgrade will raise UNMG’s IT capabilities to UNM’s standards, and will include replacing and removing cables, grounding all equipment and providing fire stops. The need for this upgrade has been termed “critical,” according to Sylvia Andrew, executive director of the Gallup branch, in a report to the UNMG Local Board on April 18. Andrew added that “the current system is woefully inadequate to support instruction, administration and student support services.”

Capital infrastructure expense is estimated at $1,811,400, with recurring refresh and service support at $1,339,000. The funds for the upgrade will come from UNMG’s reserve account.

The Gallup campus has a total of eight buildings, with Gurley Hall need-
Focusing on Student Success on Many Fronts

Student Success. You hear that expression over and over in higher ed circles these days. But what does it mean?

As I have emphasized in previous communications, community colleges nationwide are becoming increasingly focused on helping students complete their course work in a manner that either prepares them for transfer to a four-year institution or to get a job. It’s no longer enough to enroll ever higher numbers; we have to do the very best we can to ensure the students who come to us are successfully educated and prepared for their next step.

A summer pilot program, Lobo Academy, designed for recent high school graduates from at-risk populations who are in need of remedial education, reflects a fresh new approach at UNM-G in regards to helping students clear the hurdles on their way to a degree or certificate.

These students certainly got a lot of help improving their English and reading. However, they also received a very valuable introduction to what it means to be a college student. The instructors took them through a rigorous but fun program that introduced them to the campus and their responsibilities as students, as well as to the opportunities available to them. They were closely mentored as instructors and others participating in the program focused on shoring up their self esteem.

Over this past year, we have made other efforts to improve our students’ outcomes. A new redesign of some Gurley Hall offices includes a vastly expanded Student Senate area and student lounge. A redesign and expansion of the upstairs College Learning Center – the center for our tutoring initiative -- is also under way. Other initiatives included a transition fair in April, designed to help students make the transition from high school to college, as well as the establishment of a chapter of the national honor society Phi Theta Kappa on campus, to raise the bar for and encourage earnest students to greater attainment. All these efforts are of course also supplemented by our always successful TRiO program. Federally funded, TRiO continues to help students over the bridge from remedial to non-remedial courses through a multi-faceted approach combining mentorship, tutoring, peer cohort, social activities and more.

And while our Information Technology upgrade might not seem at first glance to have direct impact on student success, we know it will. By improving our technology, we will be able to deliver better service to our students – including expanded distance education offerings to our South Campus in Zuni.

We realize that the challenges we face in regards to Student Success are not small. But the stakes are high, and we are dedicated to seeing solid improvement in our students’ abilities to move into non-remedial course work quickly so that they can use their Pell grants and other financial aid to better advantage.

I, personally, am encouraged by the steps we’ve taken over the past year, and the advances we’ve made – many of which are recorded elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope you in the Gallup-McKinley community will join me in celebrating these developments. I invite you to call, come by or email either my office or the Public Relations office (directories available at www.gallup.unm.edu) for more information on our Student Success initiatives as we move toward the new academic year.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S DESK
BY SYLVIA RODRIGUEZ ANDREW

CALENDAR

July 28    Last day of Summer semester
August 20  First day of Fall semester
           Welcome back, Gurley Hall
September 3 Labor Day. Campus closed.
October 11-12 Fall break
October 13  Mid-semester
October 15  Second 8-week term starts.
November 11 Veterans’ Day
November 22-25 Thanksgiving holiday

Cool Things on Campus
• Call 505.863.7505 for the College Store
  (Boots and more!!)
• Hungry? Have lunch at the
  Chili Factory Express, Gurley Hall
• Art on view at
  Ingham Chapman Gallery
• Go to www.gallup.unm.edu to
  Friend us on Facebook and
  keep up with our news.

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TRiO Students Walk a Difficult Path to Graduation

Some of the more touching stories of the Class of 2012 could be told by the 12 students who, as they walked across the stage, to receive their diplomas, had draped around their necks red and white stoles awarded by the TRiO program. It’s the first time that participants in this federally funded outreach program for disadvantaged students have been distinguished thus for successfully completing their course work. Prior to the graduation ceremony with their classmates, they had their own ceremony in Gurley Hall where TRiO Program Manager Jayme McMahon and her staff handed out the stoles to students who were ready to graduate.

Although each TRiO student’s story is unique, there are marked similarities.

“Many students enter college with self-doubt; they doubt their intelligence, their confidence, and their ability to be successful,” McMahon said. “They doubt their choices, their path, their future plans. But once they complete their intake session and realize that this doubt is common – and normal – and that there is a support system in place to help them succeed with people who truly care about them and their success, we see a dramatic shift.”

TRiO provides a number of services for these students, including advisement regarding financial aid, academics, careers and transfer. Staff tutor students in English and math, and help improve computer skills. Further, TRiO provides loans of scientific calculators and laptops, and offers workshops and supplemental instruction.

“When I first enrolled, I didn’t know where I was going, what classes to take,” said Valerie Lee. “My cousins, Wilma Lee and Gary Lee [also TRiO students and recent graduates], showed me the TRiO program. They signed me up, helped me schedule classes, and showed me the ropes on how college is,” Lee said. She found help with math and English as well as computers.

“I didn’t finish high school. I got a GED. Computers were foreign to me, and it had been 15 years since I got my GED,” she says.

But from the moment she walked into the door, help was waiting. Lenette Sheyka, the administrative assistant, greeted her and made her feel welcome. Other staff engaged her not just as advisors and tutors but in a way that made her feel part of the TRiO family by talking to her, calling her, emailing and making sure her needs were met.

TRiO, which was started in the 1960’s, has been a UNMG fixture for more than a decade. Currently, it serves 160 students each year, and there is always a waiting list.

Data consistently prove that TRiO helps UNMG students stay in school and to transfer into baccalaureate programs.

“In addition to the many services we provide students, we also strive to help build confidence and empower students so they know it is possible to overcome barriers,” McMahon said, adding “It is possible to change the course of one’s life and one’s future.”

Lobo Academy Grads Get a Jump on College Success

Seventeen students completed a four-week course of study with the first-ever UNMG Lobo Academy designed to help them come well prepared for college. The students had been identified as being from “at risk” populations and likely to benefit from the special attention that Lobo Academy gave them.

This intensive summer bridge program is designed to move freshman students quickly from remedial courses to non-remedial. This program is designed to teach self-confidence through a series of stimulating workshops and speakers, fun activities, help from mentors, as well as instruction on learning styles, goal setting and critical thinking.
Laura Jijon has been named the new program manager of Adult Basic Education. Jijon, whose educational background includes applied linguistics and multicultural curriculum development, holds a lifetime teaching credential in ABE. She has almost 40 years of teaching experience, ranging from classes in English as a Second Language and literacy to educational philosophy. Additionally, Jijon has coordinated a multilingual learning center, an exchange program with a Japanese college, a Hispanic writers’ series, a bilingual student theatre troupe, and a variety of multicultural student organizations and celebrations. “I am privileged to work with the dedicated staff and courageous students in ABE at UNM-Gallup,” she says, adding that she looks forward to collaborating with her colleagues and students “to develop a creative, relevant, engaging program which will educate graduates who will be a source of service and pride to our university, community and state.” ... Deb Dorn has joined the Student Services staff as Accessibilities Resource Center Student Advisor. Dorn, who worked as a special education teacher in public schools in Newberg, Ore., has a Master’s In Special Education and Administrative Leadership. “I will specialize in assisting people with special needs to navigate the educational system,” Dorn said.

INTERNET UPDATE

Continued from p. 1

Enroll today for the Fall Semester.

Gil Gonzales, UNM's chief information officer, said the upgrades are due to start in June, while the faculty are away for the summer. The project is due to be concluded in June of 2013.