

**ANNUAL**  
**ACCOUNTABILITY**  
**REPORT**  
**New Mexico Universities**



Council of University Presidents | Nov. 2021

**Council of University Presidents (CUP)**  
**2021 Annual Accountability Report to the State of New Mexico**  
**New Mexico Universities**

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## Higher Education in New Mexico

The Land of Enchantment is a state with stunning landscapes, fascinating history, rich culture, and several significant challenges:

- In 2021, the Annie E. Casey Foundation ranked New Mexico **49<sup>th</sup>** overall in their KIDS COUNT child well-being rankings. Our state was ranked **50<sup>th</sup> in Education, 37<sup>th</sup> in Health, and 48<sup>th</sup> in Economic Well-Being** for children. (Source: <https://assets.aecf.org/m/databook/2021KCDB-profile-NM.pdf>)
- The median household income in New Mexico in 2019 was **\$51,945**, which is **21% below** the national median household income. The overall poverty rate in the state was **18.2%** (U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NM>).
- Only **27.1%** of New Mexico adults over the age of 24 have earned a baccalaureate degree or higher, compared to the national average of **36%**. Eighteen of the 33 counties in New Mexico have adult higher education attainment rates below **20%**, with some as low as **10%** (U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2019).

These adverse conditions impact our ability to thrive and attract interest from the commercial sector to bring well-paying jobs to the state.

Higher education can play a role in the fight against these struggles by leveraging its incredible knowledge and human capital to alleviate New Mexico's societal, physical, and economic ills. The mission of the member institutions of the Council of University Presidents is to produce knowledge that benefits our state, our country, and our planet through teaching, research, and service. The Council of University Presidents supports seven of New Mexico's public universities through information sharing, collaboration, strategic planning, policy development, and community outreach. The Council represents university efforts based on shared goals and a shared vision that fully recognizes and supports the unique strengths of each university. To these ends, the Council focuses on:

- Student success
- Economic development
- Research
- Public service
- Promoting the outstanding efforts of university faculty and staff.

The Council recognizes that the well-being of the institutions; their faculty, staff, and students; and the broader public of New Mexico are one and the same.

Among the seven CUP institutions, three are research institutions (New Mexico State University, New Mexico Tech, and University of New Mexico), and four are comprehensive institutions (Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, Northern New Mexico College, and Western New Mexico University). Programs at the seven CUP institutions include vocational-focused programs like plumbing and electrical technology; scientific programs of study in astrophysics, biotechnology, and minerals engineering; programs in the arts and humanities such as film, dance, and dramatic writing; and professional programs in law, medicine, and pharmacy.

# Locations of CUP Institutions

Sector  
■ Comprehensive  
■ Research



Over the past five years, many events have shaped the higher education landscape at the local and national levels. Policies pertaining to immigration and DACA implemented at the federal level had a direct and significant impact on international and undocumented student enrollment. Drastic budget cuts at the state level resulted in immeasurable damage to New Mexico’s college students through disruptive hiring freezes, curtailed student services, and a 33% decrease in the New Mexico Higher Education Lottery Scholarship. **In the period between 2008 and 2015, New Mexico had the seventh largest decrease in inflation-adjusted higher education funding in the U.S., with a 32.2% drop. This decline far outpaced any declines in higher education enrollment within the state.** The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an adverse impact on everything we have done in higher education since the middle of March 2020, and it will continue to challenge us for many years to come.

Despite these obstacles, the seven CUP institutions have collectively enrolled an average of **52,000 students a year** in each of the past five years and have conferred a total of over **62,500 post-secondary credentials (certificates, bachelor’s degrees, and graduate degrees)** in the same time period. This is truly a testament to the commitment our institutions have to educating and serving our fellow New Mexicans. In the most recent academic year, CUP institutions awarded a total of **11,509** degrees and certificates, of which **1,655** were in the high-need fields of nursing, social work, and education. We are educating the next generation of public servants who will dedicate their careers to making the lives of New Mexicans healthier and more fulfilling.

## Achievements and Economic Development

The NM CUP institutions are committed to teaching, public service and student success. Our Comprehensive Institutions offer Certificates through Master’s degrees, serve mostly local students and support economic development. The things that distinguish the research institutions are research, graduate programs, and economic development.

<p><b>NMT</b> is a recognized international leader in hydrology, astrophysics, atmospheric physics, geophysics, homeland security, information technology, geosciences, energetic materials engineering, and petroleum recovery, supplying trained personnel and research.</p>	<p><b>NMSU</b> is part of a consortium, a public-private partnership designed to help New Mexico in continuing to lead the country in advancing scientific and technological solutions related to the treatment and reuse of produced water generated by the oil and gas industry.</p>	<p><b>UNM</b> supports Innovate ABQ, an economic development partnership with the City of Albuquerque and other government and private investors. This initiative strengthens the economic base of the mid Rio Grande region and NM by creating opportunities for knowledge workers such as students graduating from our educational institutions and spin-off jobs for experienced workers in the community as well as providing entrepreneurial training and support.</p>
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<p><b>ENMU</b> students engage in research that significantly impacts wildlife/fisheries and farm/ranch/agricultural production including studies of local mosquito populations, egg and larval fish surveys in eastern NM, biochar’s enhancements to crop production and soil properties, biofuels research, and cultivation of native algae using whey wastewater with a pilot-scale algal turf scrubber. All impacting local economy.</p>	<p><b>NMHU</b> consistently ranks among the largest employers in Northern NM. The Alternative Teacher Licensure Program, which aims to recruit and train individuals with college degrees who have an interest in becoming teachers. This program will help to address the critical teacher shortage in New Mexico and thereby contribute significantly to economic growth and social capital.</p>	<p><b>NNMC</b> was successfully approved to receive a Mill to establish and sustain programs in key trades, including plumbing/ pipefitting and electrical at its El Rito and Española campuses. The College is working to create a skilled local workforce to meet employer needs and to support economic development for Northern NM through strong community partnerships.</p>	<p><b>WNMU’s</b> Economic Development Course provides intensive training event in a setting that is nationally recognized for its beauty and southwestern charm. The Course teaches strategies to cost-effectively create jobs in the community. Certified by the International Economic Development Council, faculty present from professional experience, as well as academic theory.</p>
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University of New Mexico is ranked #99 in Top Public Schools, National Universities from *U.S. News and World Report*. UNM also ranks

- #43 out of 700 best Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs in the U.S. (*U.S. News*)
- Top 100 Engineering schools in the U.S. (*U.S. News*)
- Gold Rating from Military Friendly Schools
- Recognized as a Community Engaged Institution by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education
- Only R1 Institution in the state of New Mexico
- Ranked as 5th most diverse medical school in the U.S.
- Ranked Best Law School for Native American Students by *Pre-Law Magazine*



**New Mexico State University** leads many national rankings as one of America’s top colleges, both for traditional and non-traditional students. In early 2021, several New Mexico State University programs were ranked on the *U.S. News & World Report’s* Best Online Education Programs list offered by U.S. National Universities. Some of NMSU programs recognized were their Business online bachelor’s program which tied for 27th place and the criminal justice online master’s program which tied for 50th place. Several online graduate programs also improved their place in the rankings; these included business administration, nursing, and engineering. For the eighth time in the last nine years, NMSU was honored as a top-tier university on the *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges for 2021 National Universities rankings.



The same year, *U.S. News & World Report's* Best Graduate Schools 2022 rankings were released, and several New Mexico State University graduate programs were recognized. A total of 17 NMSU graduate programs ranked in the top 200. These included graduate programs in the College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Business, College of Health and Social Services and College of Arts and Sciences.

NMSU was also recognized as one of *Abound's* 2021 Top Grad School Programs. NMSU qualified based on factors that focus on the needs of non-traditional students including flexible classes and services, affordable courses, a range of quality programs, and degrees that help students advance in their field. As a public land-grant university, NMSU is committed to offering graduate programs that meet the needs of all its student, including those outside of traditional tracks.

For the ninth time in the last 10 years, New Mexico State University was recognized as a top tier university on the *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges for 2022 National Universities rankings. NMSU improved in several ranking categories this year. NMSU improved as a top performer on social mobility ranking (tied for 100) and top public schools ranking (tied for 112). In a new category this year, NMSU was tied for 120 in undergraduate nursing programs. Both the undergraduate engineering programs (tied for 131) and undergraduate computer science programs (tied for 154) improved their rankings.



*Forbes* recognized New Mexico State University as one of America's Top Colleges in 2021. NMSU is the highest-ranking institution in New Mexico at 313. Only 600 four-year schools made the rankings out of the nearly 2,700 degree-granting institutions in the country that were ranked.

Lastly, New Mexico State University was recognized on the Top 100 Colleges and Universities for Hispanics list published in the October issue of the *Hispanic Outlook on Education*. NMSU ranked 43rd in total enrollment for bachelor's degrees, improving slightly over previous years. NMSU was listed as 62nd in total master's degrees granted, and 66th for total enrollment for four-year schools. *Hispanic Outlook* compiles the annual list "to chart the national progress of Hispanics in higher education and to recognize the institutions that are committed to serving Hispanics' educational needs."

**New Mexico Tech** is New Mexico's premiere STEM University and among the best in the nation. New Mexico Tech was once again acknowledged by Niche.com's 2022 College Rankings as New Mexico's Best College, College with the Best Academics, Best Value College, and New Mexico's Top Public University. NMT is ranked as one of the best Hispanic Serving Universities in the nation, ranking No. 12 out of 356 universities nationally by Niche.com.



The CollegeFactual.com website states: "The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology ranks among the nation's elite universities in academic value and quality of education."

NMT also performs the kind of research critical to our state's economic future and prides itself on developing New Mexico's future leaders in STEM fields and economic development. In just the past few

weeks alone, NMT has been awarded a \$2.7 million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to study the fundamental behavior of rare earth elements (REE) in geologic systems signed a \$30 million cost-reimbursement cooperative agreement with the U.S. Air Force that provides for additional telescope production, demonstration of fringe tracking, and imagery production of objects in geosynchronous Earth orbit at the university's Magdalena Ridge Observatory.

New Mexico Tech and Navajo Technological University signed an historic Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on a water purification system for the Navajo Nation. The memorandum establishes a collaborative project to help Navajo communities procure clean water for human consumption, livestock usage, and agricultural usage by implementing water purification technology developed at the Petroleum Recovery Research Center at New Mexico Tech. The N.M. Bureau of Geology at NMT will also be involved in working with NTU.

New Mexico Bureau of Geology Senior Field Geologist Dr. Geoffrey Rawling and New Mexico Tech Assistant Professor Dr. Alex Rinehart will receive the John C. Frye Environmental Geology Award at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Portland, OR for their paper "Lifetime projections for the High Plains Aquifer in east-central New Mexico." This award is presented annually to the best paper on environmental geology published either by one of the state geological surveys or by the Geological Society of America within the last 3 years.



Finally, carbon storage research at NMT impacts New Mexico and the entire Western US, with a portfolio of nearly \$140 million in funded research since 2003 and 21 storage projects completed or in progress representing millions of tons of CO2 diverted from the atmosphere.

**Eastern New Mexico University** recent systemwide student loan default rate is at ten-year low of 7.9%, with ENMU-Portales at 6.9%. This is a tribute to the work of financial aid officers and advisors on all three campuses of the System who work to assure that our students will not be burdened with debt when they complete their degrees.



This fall, ENMU's programs in communicative disorders (M.S. in speech-language pathology), nursing (BSN, MSN) and social work (BSW) all received full re-accreditation of their programs and strong recommendations from their accrediting bodies.



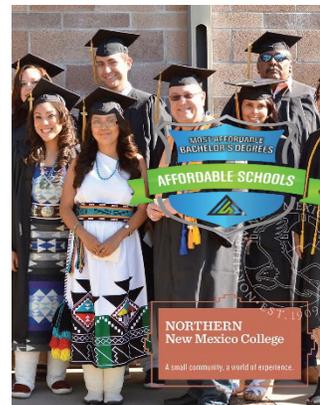
Niche.com ranked ENMU the "Safest College Campus in New Mexico" and among the top ten colleges with the most affordable online bachelor's degrees in 2021.

*U.S. News and World Report* ranked ENMU as one of the Top Performers on Social Mobility 2020 in Regional Universities, West category.

ENMU currently holds [Silver Military Friendly® Status](#) and is a [Military Times Best for Vets College](#), assisting military personnel, active-duty personnel, spouses and dependents, National Guard and Reserve members, and survivors of disabled or deceased veterans, whether on campus, online, or stationed abroad.

[Northern New Mexico College](#) continues to be the most affordable four-year institution in the southwest United States, and our graduates have the third lowest student debt upon graduation of any four-year college in the country (according to Schools.com).

NNMC's student graduation rate has more than doubled in the last five years and its enrollment trends are among the strongest in New Mexico over the last five years. The College is the recent recipient of the 2020 Quality New Mexico Adobe Award for advances in strategic planning.



[Western New Mexico University](#) fall enrollment is up by 5.77% over last fall's enrollment. Since the Spring registration period started on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, we have registered 861 students for Spring 2022 classes.



Ranked the #1 Best Value Online Bachelor's in Marketing in 2021 by Best Value Schools



Ranked the #1 Best Affordable Marketing Major in the US

MSW Program Ranked #1 by Best College Reviews.



[New Mexico Highlands University](#) is nestled in the beautiful mountains in Las Vegas amidst the breathtaking natural landscape of Northern New Mexico. Our university is a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, with Hispanic students comprising more than fifty percent of enrollment, and strives to be a Native American-Serving Institution, with Native American students comprising nearly nine percent of enrollment.



NMHU was named one of the most diverse regional universities in the west and #107 as best regional university in the west by U.S. News & World Report. NMHU was recognized on the top #100 College and University for Hispanics list published in the Hispanic Outlook for Higher Education's October 2021. NMHU is listed as 100 for master's degrees awarded. NMHU is recognized as #1 in career outcomes; top in social mobility; and #1 in student accessibility.

We continue to demonstrate our institutional value of diversity through a partnership with New Mexico State University, Eastern New Mexico University, and New Mexico's Developmental Disabilities Council in designing an adult guardianship court visitor program to support the New Mexico court system and to enhance the training and professional development of students in social work.

NMHU is home to the Native American Institute in Social Work including a variety of programs and initiatives serving Native American people. We continue success in the Alternative Teaching Program. We expanded the Professional Development School model in teacher education. We launched a new partnership with Wiley designed to increase student enrollment. We continue success employing a Success Coach model to better serve students.

NMHU recently developed three new degree programs; Master's in Arts (MA) Criminology; MA Cultural Resource Management; and Bachelor's in Science in Wildlife Biology and Conservation. We added new programs in biology, entrepreneurship, cultural resource management, and criminal justice. We acquired a \$3.8 million in a 5-year grant from the National Science Foundation to support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) students in a partnership with the University of California Santa Barbara; received \$700 thousand for two United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) projects to support technology and connectivity to NMHU in the Mora community and support High School and Community College students with STEM summer programming at the Rio Mora Wildlife Refuge.

NMHU has an unprecedented grant year with over \$13 million awarded; continued to navigate the uncharted waters of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic providing over \$50,000 in emergency financial assistance to students through the Foundation and University, over and above federally funded COVID assistance; and NMHU acquired a New Mexico Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund grant to support students and fund purchases resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic only allowing 3 out of 12 athletic teams to compete, 132 New Mexico Highlands University athletes earned a cumulative 3.0 GPA or higher; 81 athletes earned a cumulative 3.5 GPA or higher; 21 athletes earned a 4.0; 9 were recognized as ALL-RMAC performers; 21 athletes were recognized as RMAC academic performers; 1 athlete was a Gold Glove recipient; 3 RMAC champions were recognized in women's track; and student athletes contributed over 2000 hours of community service.

NMHU established the General Store to address the basic needs and food insecurities of students; implemented the Engage@HU co-curricular transcript system and created multiple guided pathways. NMHU partnered with El Centro Family Health to continue access to medical and behavioral health care through telehealth services for all students; renovated Connor Hall and the Natatorium; and increased access to Covid-19 testing for the community by establishing a testing site on campus.

## **Higher Education COVID-19 Re-entry Plans**

The CUP Accountability Work Group surveyed all of its member institutions regarding their re-entry plans following last year's COVID-19 restrictions and state regulations. Institutions were asked to list the procedures, policies, and actions taken to ensure students' safe return to on-campus operations this academic year.

University of New Mexico reinstated a mask mandate over two weeks before the state mandate took effect in August 2021. Masks are required in all indoor spaces (except when alone in an office) regardless of vaccination status. UNM introduced a telecommuting and remote work policy for staff to allow for greater flexibility and safety for employees.



UNM also approved a vaccination requirement on August 5 to mandate vaccines for all students, faculty, and staff (except for those with documented religious or medical exemptions). Students received a \$100 incentive with proof of vaccination, and faculty and staff were entered into a drawing for a few \$1,000 incentive prizes for proof of vaccination. Vaccination rates as of 11/2/2021 are over 98% for faculty, 95% for staff, and 92% for students. Those not vaccinated are required to undergo weekly testing and provide evidence of a negative PCR test to continue their presence on campus.

UNM IT created a publicly available dashboard that updates every two hours to display case numbers, vaccination statistics, and cumulative positive cases. UNM Facilities Management engages in daily sanitizing of public areas, such as hallways, conference rooms, and restrooms.

New Mexico State University has taken an active role in ensuring all of its campuses remain a safe environment for both employees and students as they return to campus this fall. NMSU created a COVID rapid response team to quickly respond to the changing needs created by the pandemic. It quickly instituted a COVID-19 dashboard to provide the NMSU community with up-to-date information. It also offered COVID-19 testing and contact tracing for those who may have come in contact with a COVID positive person. NMSU provided counseling service and mental health programs to help individuals who may be experiencing stress or anxiety due to the pandemic. NMSU recently developed and implemented its VaxTrax system to track student and employees COVID-19 status. Currently, about 97 percent of employees have been vaccinated and 83 percent of student have done the same. NMSU continues to support both employees and students with testing, vaccinations, and tracking.



New Mexico Tech has taken an aggressive and proactive approach to ensure a safe return to on-



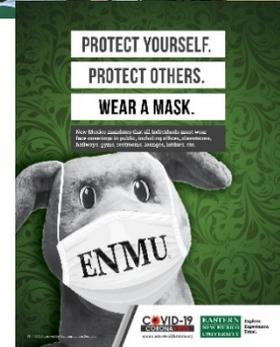
campus operations. All of New Mexico Tech's students, faculty, and staff are required to either provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination or submit to weekly testing for the virus. The results of this policy have been amazing. To date, over 84 percent of NMT's employees and over 87 percent of registered students on campus are fully vaccinated. New Mexico Tech provides weekly on-campus testing to its

community, strictly adheres to a mask-wearing policy for all indoor activity, and provides hybrid and online course offerings to minimize risk to students, staff, and faculty.

**Eastern New Mexico University** instituted a vaccine incentive (\$100 payment to on-campus staff and students on all three campuses) for those documenting that they are fully vaccinated. ENMU has partnered with our campus health provider and our local hospital to provide testing and vaccine clinics for the campus and local community. ENMU continues to comply with all NCAA requirements for student-athletes and athletics staff testing.



The Office of Student Affairs serves as a clearinghouse for students experiencing special financial needs related to COVID, whether these arise from transportation, technology, food, or housing needs. Student Affairs handles these requests promptly and confidentially and continues to make all student services available online as well as in-person.



In accordance with the CDC and state guidelines, masking is required in classrooms, labs, and in any enclosed campus spaces (except while eating or drinking). ENMU is hosting group activities, meetings, and academic events that support student learning and student success. Employee meetings are available online for those unable to attend in person.

The campus apartment complex and two residence halls are open, and cleaning and sanitizing protocols are carefully observed, just as they are across campus. Employees, students, and our students complete a daily health assessment online when physically coming to campus. If they have symptoms, they receive information about where to get assistance. All reports of illness are reported, and contact tracing is performed on all COVID-19 positive cases, as required by New Mexico Environment Department and the Higher Education Department. Human Resources perform contact tracing for employees and student employees; contact tracing for students is handled by Student Affairs.

**Northern New Mexico College** continues to be one of the most aggressive and proactive institutions in response to the pandemic. NNMC has instituted a vaccine mandate for all students, faculty, staff, and board members. This applies to physical presence on either campus as well as in-person activities off-campus required for academic courses or service to the college (such as student teaching or nursing clinicals). Since the start of the pandemic, the college has hosted daily COVID testing, open to all community members, on its Española campus. We are also hosting biweekly vaccine clinics, again open to all community members.



Since the start of the pandemic, the College is proud to have maintained a record of ZERO positive COVID cases originating from either campus. We also have shifted many student services activities (food pantry, advisement, financial aid, student tutoring, etc.) to virtual options to minimize risk to students. We continue to make health and safety our highest priorities, while committing to student service and success.

Western New Mexico University requires that masks be worn in all indoor venues on the WNMU campus. Masks do not have to be worn outside of buildings and in parking lots. Several smaller classes have moved to outdoor settings while maintaining social distancing with masks required. Staff members who refuse vaccinations are required to provide proof of testing every two weeks. If staff members want to be tested for Covid-19, they can request a test administered by our athletic staff. Until proof of a negative test, the employee is sent home and allowed to work from home.



We have dorm rooms dedicated to those who test positive. Meals are delivered by student services. Instructors are notified of the student's condition by a student.



New Mexico Highlands University now offering free testing for COVID-19 for the campus and community. NMHU requires that all individuals on campus or at one of the NMHU centers, including vaccinated individuals, wear a mask indoors unless eating, working alone in an office, or otherwise alone in a private space. Student athletes shall follow all NCAA and RMAC requirements. Vaccination is required for all students who will be using campus facilities, including residence halls, or an NMHU center unless a medical or religious exemption is approved.

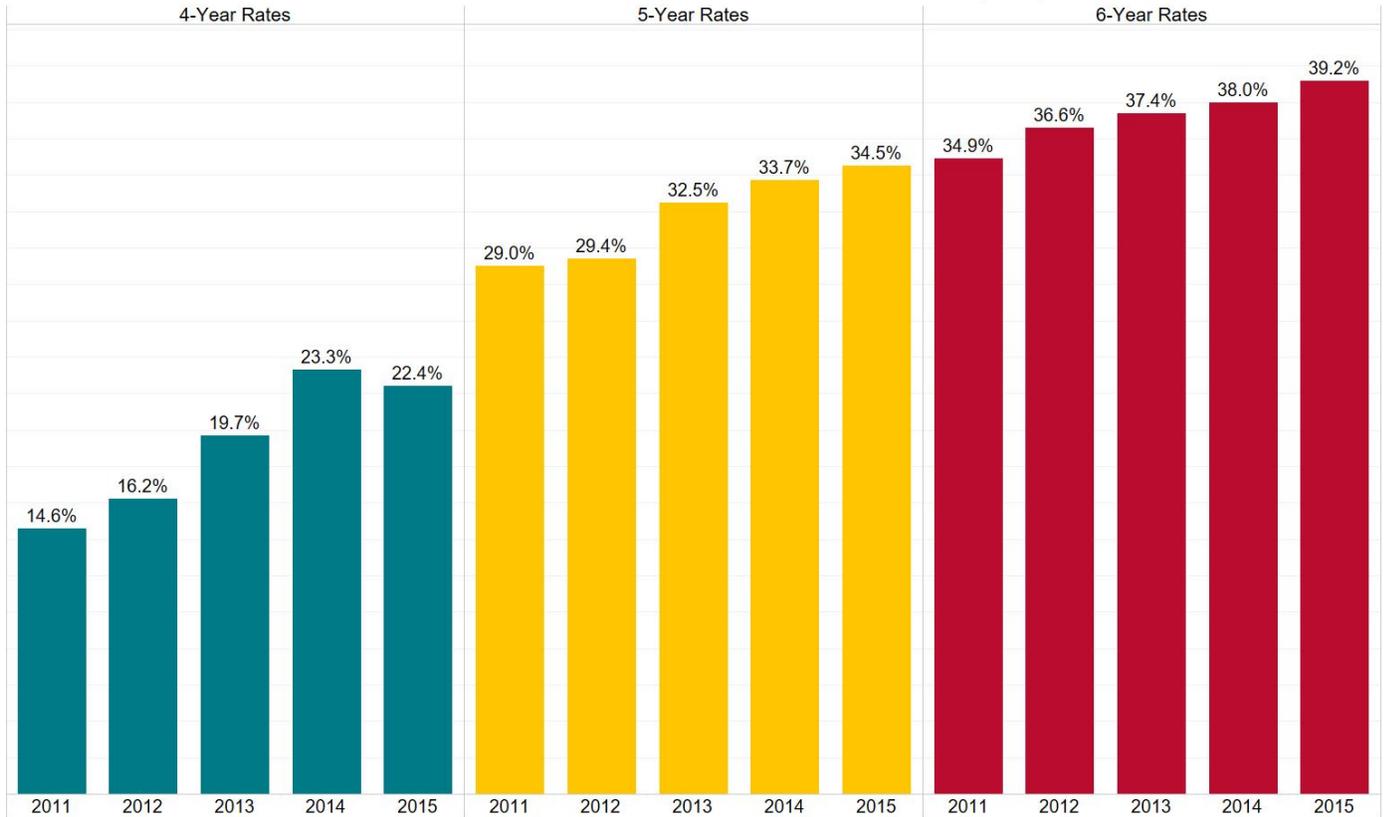


Students who are completely online and not attending any classes in person are not required to test or vaccinate. If online students wish to use campus facilities or face-to-face campus services, they will need to present proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test within the past two weeks. On-campus students who choose to not be vaccinated or who have an approved exemption will have to show proof of a negative COVID test every two weeks.

## Student Success: Completion Rates Continue to Improve

The seven CUP institutions have made great strides in recent years in the area of student success. More students are graduating in significantly less time than they were a decade ago. This increase in graduation rates is a direct effect of the resources and efforts invested in our students. Graduation rates are generally reported on a four, five, or six-year basis, consistent with many national and federal reporting standards. Four-year rates reflect the percentage of students who graduate with a baccalaureate degree in four years or less; five-year rates reflect the percentage of students who graduate in five years or less and includes those students who graduated within four years; and six-year rates reflect the percentage of students who graduate in six years or less and includes students who graduated in less than five years. Standard graduation rate reporting reflects only those students who began at their institutions as first-time, full-time freshmen. In the chart below, four-year graduation rates are represented in turquoise bars, five-year rates are in yellow, and six-year rates are in red.

Graduation Rates of First-time, Full-time Freshmen at CUP Institutions by Entry Year



### Degrees in High-Demand Fields

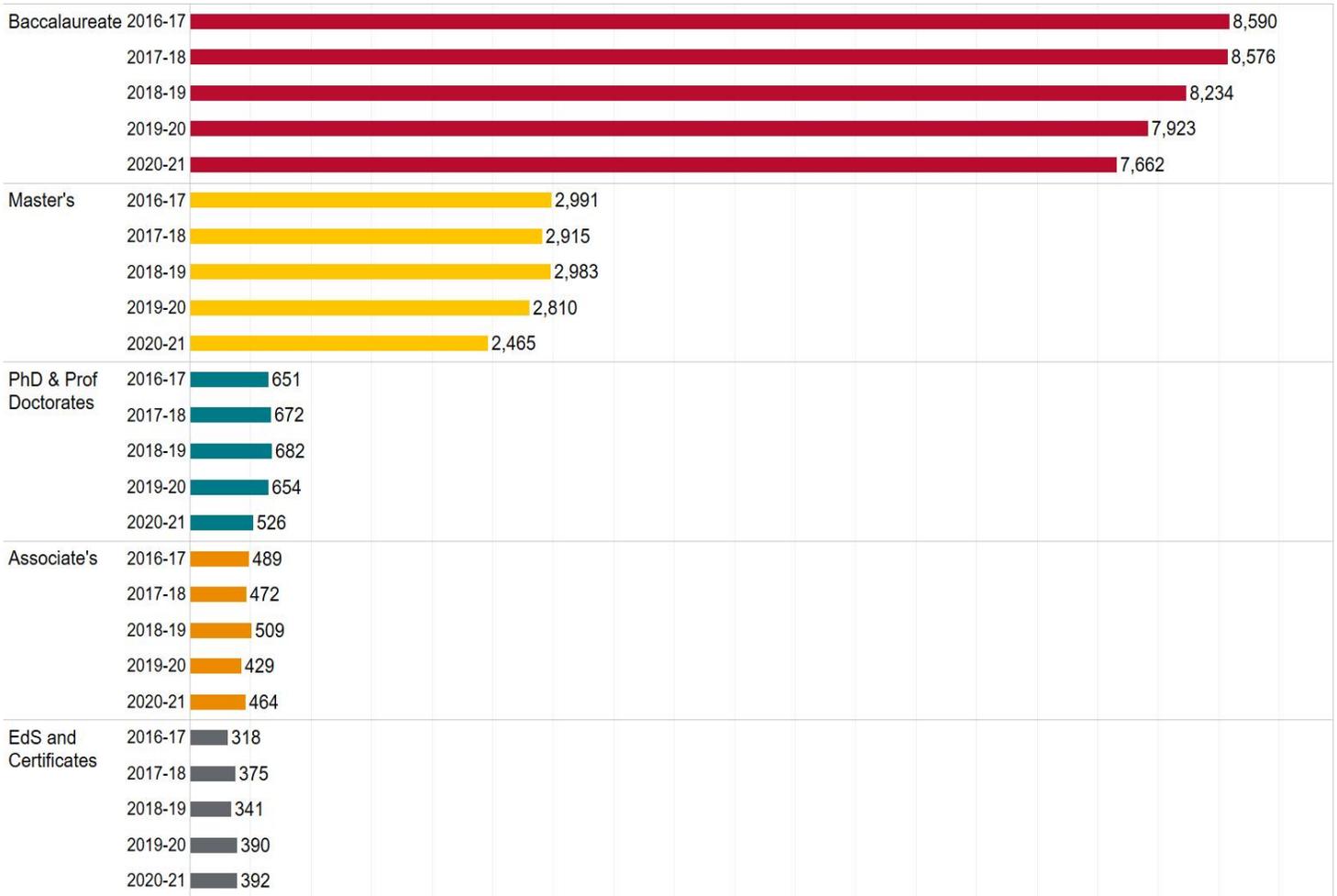
When Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham began her term in January 2019, her administration prioritized nine areas of focus for improvement across the state. Among these were the fields of education (particularly early childhood education) and healthcare. New Mexico has endured chronic shortages of K-12 teachers in public schools, and our aging population puts strain on our already short-staffed healthcare infrastructure. The multiple waves of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations has emphasized the need for growing a well-trained healthcare workforce. Issues such as poverty, substance abuse, and violence have adversely impacted the well-being of many New Mexicans, especially our children. The CUP institutions recognize that higher education has a critical role in training students to work in these fields to help move our state forward.

In the past two years, higher education in New Mexico has responded to the need for high-demand degrees while navigating complicated safety regulations and state requirements. Each institution has responded to the needs of New Mexicans while prioritizing the safety and health of our students.

### Degrees Awarded in High-Demand Fields

High-demand Degree	Degrees awarded in 2019-20	Degrees awarded in 2020-21
Associate's Degree-Preschool Educators	20	22
Baccalaureate Degree/Alternative Licensure- Elementary/Secondary Education	259	318
Master's Degree-Education Administration	167	75
Baccalaureate Degree-Social Work	204	186
Master's Degree-Social Work	348	335
Associate's Degree-Nursing	16	14
Baccalaureate Degree-Nursing	668	639
Master's Degree-Nursing	65	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,747</b>	<b>1,655</b>

## Degrees Awarded at CUP Institutions, 2016-2021



## Student Retention

### Third Semester Retention Rates at CUP Institutions\*

2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	5-year change
64.4	64.8	65.5	66.6	61.3	-3.1%

*\*Represents the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen who returned for the fall semester of their second year.*

Retention is considered a leading indicator of student success. Poor retention rates can indicate that students are struggling and not likely to graduate in a timely fashion. Retention depends on many factors, such as economic conditions, academic preparedness, support of family, access to sufficient financial aid, and availability of student support services. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly had a significant effect on students' plans for higher education. Many students lost jobs due to shutdowns of businesses, and many students had job losses in their families that made college less affordable. Some students paused their collegiate careers until operations can return to normal, in-person classes with more assurance of safety. CUP institutions have implemented many strategies to support student success during these difficult times, such as offering laptops to needy students, providing emergency loans and grants, conducting student needs assessments, and increasing flexibility with grading and scheduling.

Because we serve a significant number of low-income, first generation, and academically underprepared students, CUP institutions recognize the need for individualized student support and its contribution to higher retention rates of our students. Institutions have committed to the support and implementation of numerous, integrated student retention initiatives, including:

1. Campus wide student advisement that involves professional staff and faculty in supporting students through their first year
2. New Student Orientation programs based on best practices in campus engagement and student development
3. Strategic enrollment management committees and plans
4. Advising assistance from the Financial Aid and Scholarship offices
5. Various forms of academic, financial, and mentoring support
6. Development and use of Student Coaching Models.

Further, institutions have engaged in programs and strategies to ensure continuity throughout the student experience, from inquiry of a prospective student to admission to retention to graduation. Freshman experience courses are offered both as stand-alone courses and in integrated learning communities. Many of these courses include modules on financial literacy, health and wellness, and college acclimation. Faculty use early alert notifications that quickly connect students to support services. At-risk students are actively engaged by advisors to identify options and solutions for success. Supplemental instruction and peer mentoring are available for many freshmen gateway courses, and many students take advantage of free tutoring on campus. Campuses also provide freshman on-campus residency requirements and living-learning communities to further support retention.

## Enrollment

### Total Headcount at CUP Institutions

Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	5-year change	1-year change
56,266	54,118	51,544	49,917	49,049	-15.6%	-1.7%

The state of New Mexico has seen a net population loss over the last decade, driven in part by economic factors. The decline in higher education enrollments follows a 7% decline in residents ages 1-14 and a 5% decline in residents ages 15-24 since 2012. This represents an overall loss of 40,000 potential new students at New Mexico higher education institutions between 2012 and 2030. (U.S. Census Bureau)

A somewhat paradoxical factor in higher education's enrollment decline is our success in graduating a larger percentage of our students in a shorter period of time. The substantial improvements in the four-year graduation rate indicate that institutions are facilitating students' progress toward earning their degrees. Graduating in four years or less means that they are not going to be enrolled in classes five or six years after they matriculate, as was the case a decade ago. These students are finishing in eight semesters, and then entering the workforce or pursuing graduate degrees.

Another impediment to student recruitment is that we offer substantially fewer degree programs than our neighboring states of Arizona, Texas, and Colorado. This also has the unfortunate effect of drawing many New Mexico students to universities in these nearby states to avail themselves of more degree and career options. Job availability, especially in STEM fields and higher-paying industries, frequently draws students out of state after graduation. Although we host two federal research laboratories within our state, our lack of industry and commercial development means that there are not enough well-paying jobs to keep more of our graduates in the state. It also detracts from our ability to recruit students from out of state. We must continue to serve the citizens of New Mexico while also becoming more competitive on a regional and national level in higher education by engaging in strategic growth in programs and offerings.

## Student Diversity

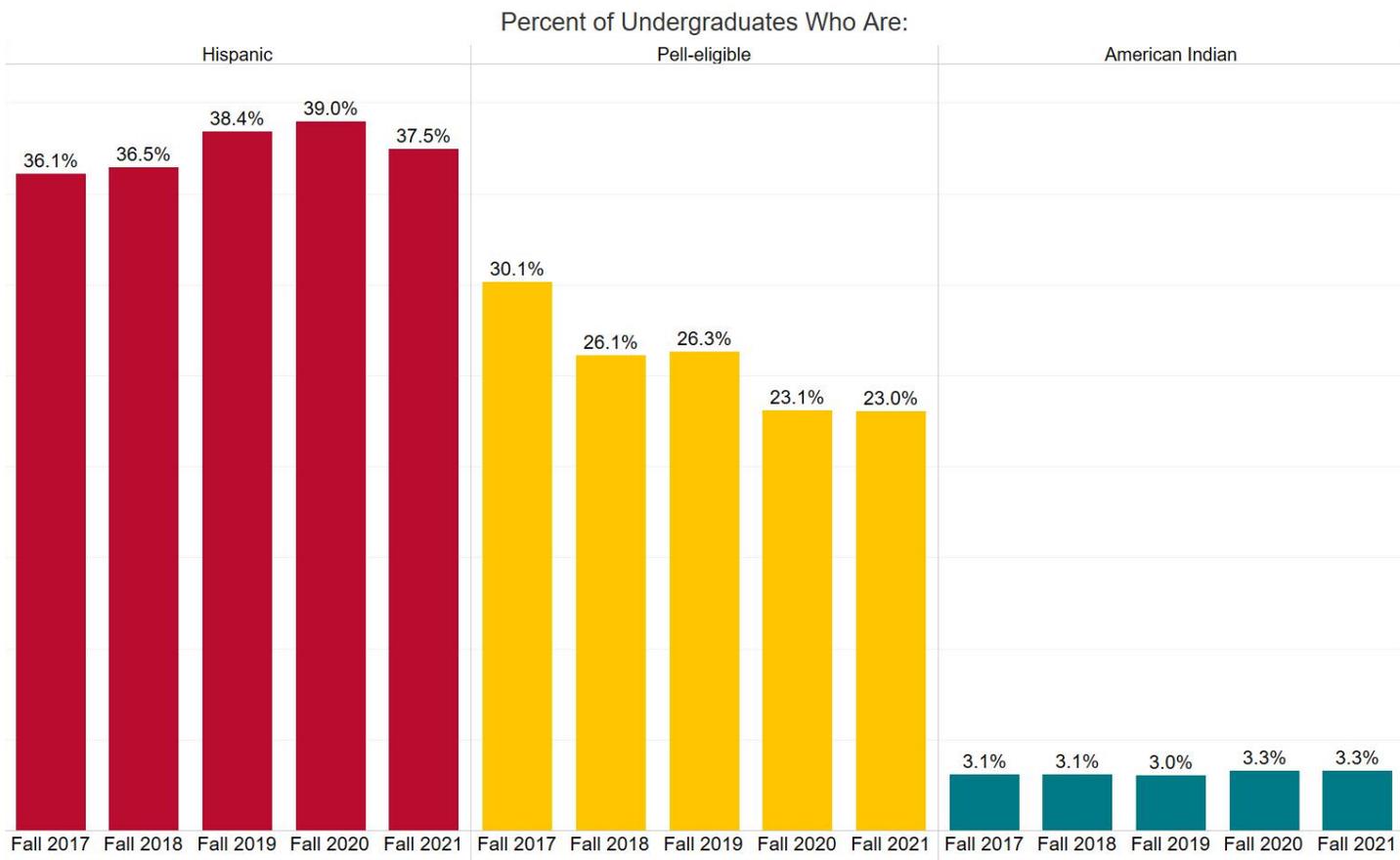
In the 2020 U.S. Census, 47.7% of New Mexico residents identified as Hispanic, and 12.4% as American Indian. The seven CUP institutions strive to recruit and serve a student body that resembles the state we serve. Some of our institutions, owing to their proximity to Pueblos or to specialized academic programs, are renowned for serving an extraordinarily diverse student population. One example of this is the School of Law at the University of New Mexico. It enrolls the greatest percentage of American Indian Juris Doctor students of any law school in the U.S., and is 8th in the country for percentage of Hispanic Juris Doctor students enrolled. The law school also houses one of the few Indian Law clinical training programs in the country. Higher education in New Mexico will lead the way in showing how diversity can promote excellence in academics, innovation, and public service.

While diversity is often considered through the lens of race and ethnicity, higher education institutions also recognize the importance of socioeconomic diversity in its student body. We are working

hard to increase social mobility and broaden opportunities for all New Mexicans, regardless of family income and resources.

One measure of how accessible an institution is to low-income students is the percentage of their students who receive federal Pell Grants. The Pell Grant program awards \$6,495 annually to low-income students who are pursuing their first associate’s or bachelor’s degree and whose family income is below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. Over the past ten years, there has been a nationwide decline in both Pell Grant allocations and the number of students receiving Pell Grants. This is explained in part by changes in federal regulations, as well as a rebounding economy post-Great Recession. Sadly, many students who are Pell-eligible are electing not to attend college because of wage stagnation and cost increases in higher education that make college seem financially out of reach.

### Diversity of Undergraduate Students at CUP Institutions

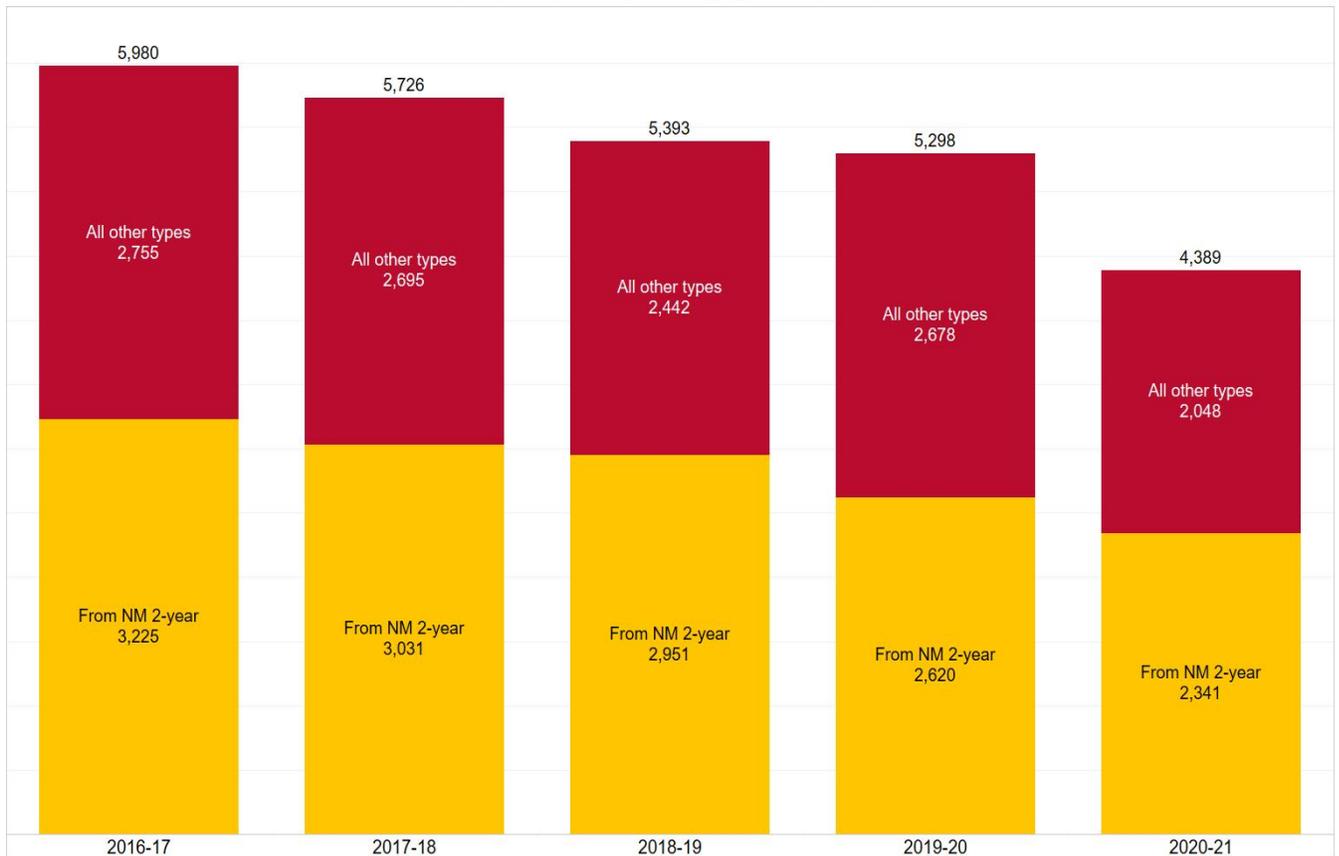


## Transfer Student Success

In today’s higher education landscape, 38% of all college students are transfer students, meaning that they initially enrolled at one institution, but decided to leave and subsequently enroll at another higher education institution. Students transfer for a variety of reasons, which may include geographic, time, and financial constraints that keep them from continued attendance at their initial school. New Mexico higher education provides opportunities and support to all students, regardless of background. Access to a college education is life-long, and multiple institutions can advance a student’s coursework across time and geographic location.

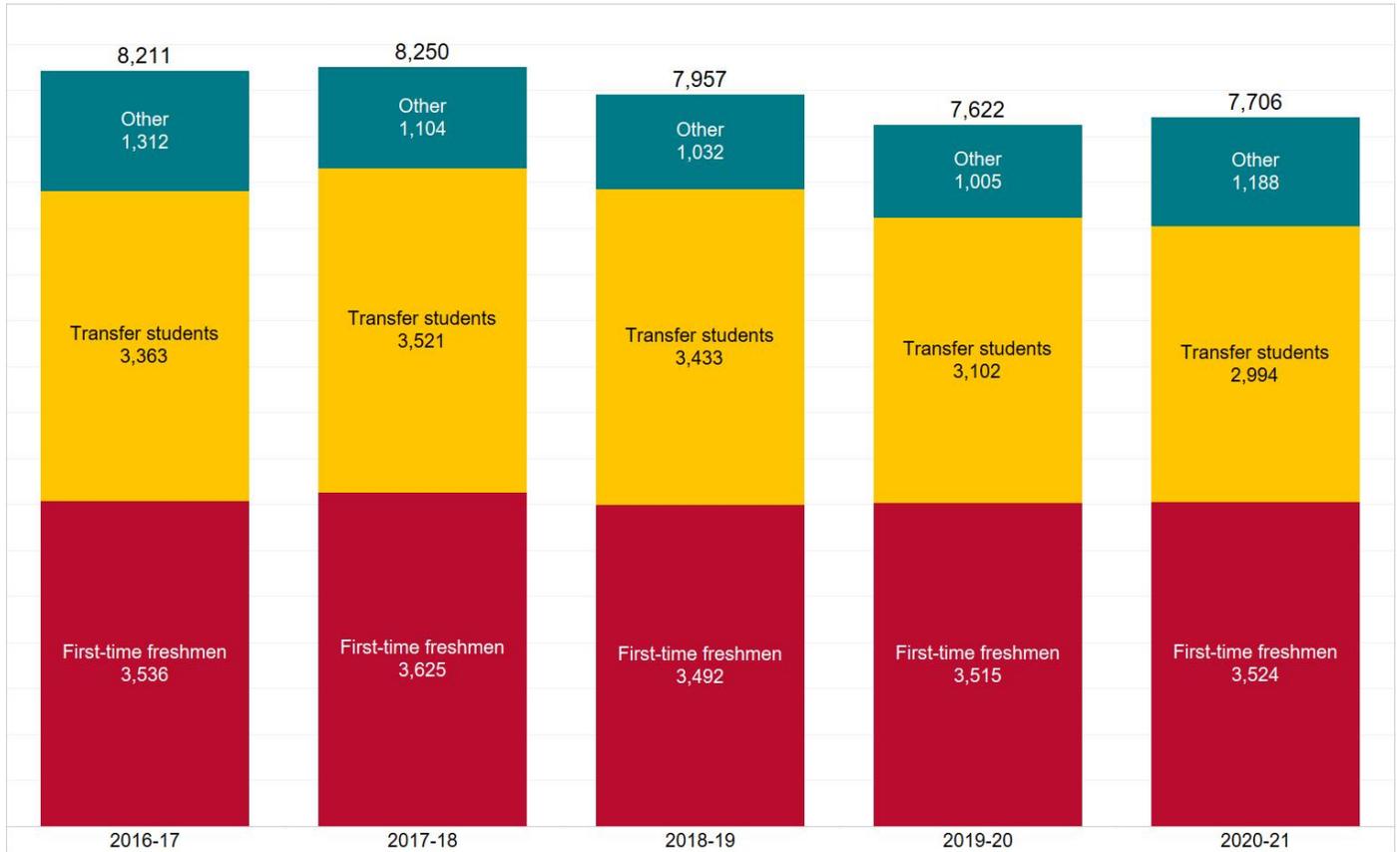
The number of transfer students from New Mexico’s two-year colleges who enroll at CUP institutions has declined by over 25% in the past five years (from 3,225 students in the 2016-17 academic year to 2,341 students in the 2020-21 academic year). This pattern echoes the enrollment declines observed at two-year colleges in the state over the past twelve years. Since 2009, enrollment at New Mexico’s two-year colleges has fallen nearly 38%. With significantly fewer students enrolling in the two-year system in our state, it follows that there will be fewer students who ultimately transfer to four-year institutions. We remain committed to recruiting and serving **all** students who transfer to our institutions so that they can be successful in their quest for a bachelor’s degree. We have worked hard to ease the transition into baccalaureate-level study and to ensure transfer students are successfully able to earn bachelor’s degrees at our institutions. In the most recent academic year, transfer students constituted **39%** of all bachelor’s degree recipients at CUP institutions.

Transfer Students to CUP Institutions by Type of Previous Institution



## Profile of Baccalaureate Degree Recipients at CUP Institutions

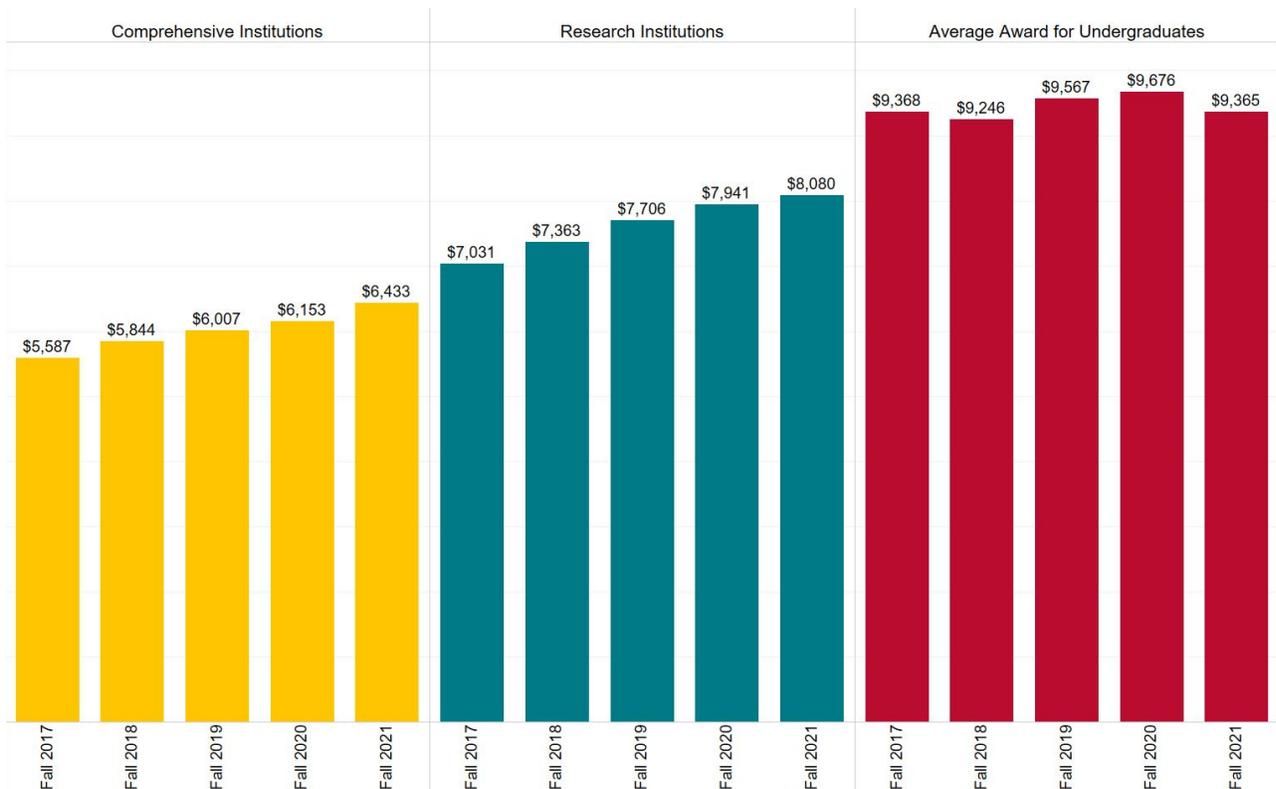
Entry Status of Bachelor's Degree Recipients



## College Affordability

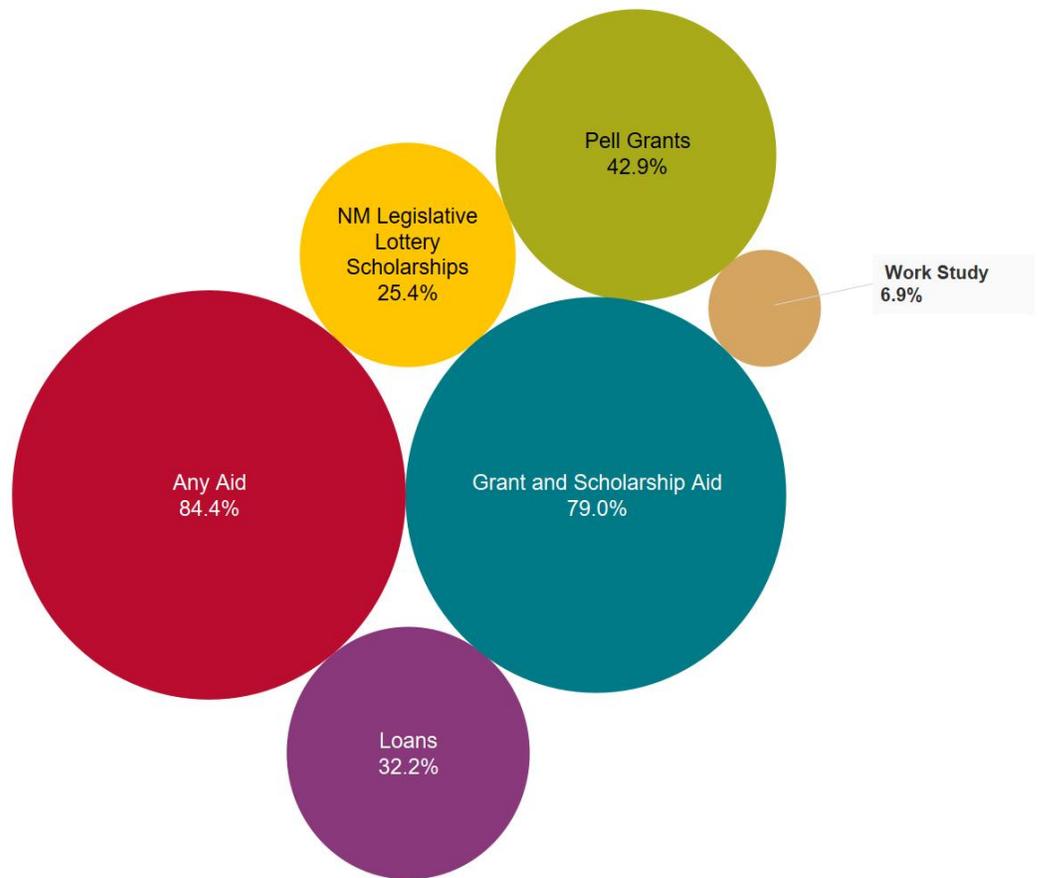
According to College Board data, New Mexico is one of the **top five** states with the lowest average in-state tuition. This represents a long-standing commitment of higher education institutions in the state to remain accessible to all New Mexicans. Low tuition combined with generous financial aid packages has benefited hundreds of thousands of New Mexico students, as well as their families and communities.

### Tuition & Fees and Average Financial Aid Award for Undergraduates



In the most recent aid year, 43% of all undergraduates who were awarded financial aid at CUP institutions received Pell Grants. Nationwide, students with Pell Grants have lower graduation rates than students who are not eligible for Pell Grants because they have often struggled with inadequate academic preparation, food insecurity, housing insecurity, and financial stress. College affordability remains an issue for many Pell Grant recipients. Even if tuition expenses are low, students still must pay for books, supplies, food, housing, and other necessary expenses.

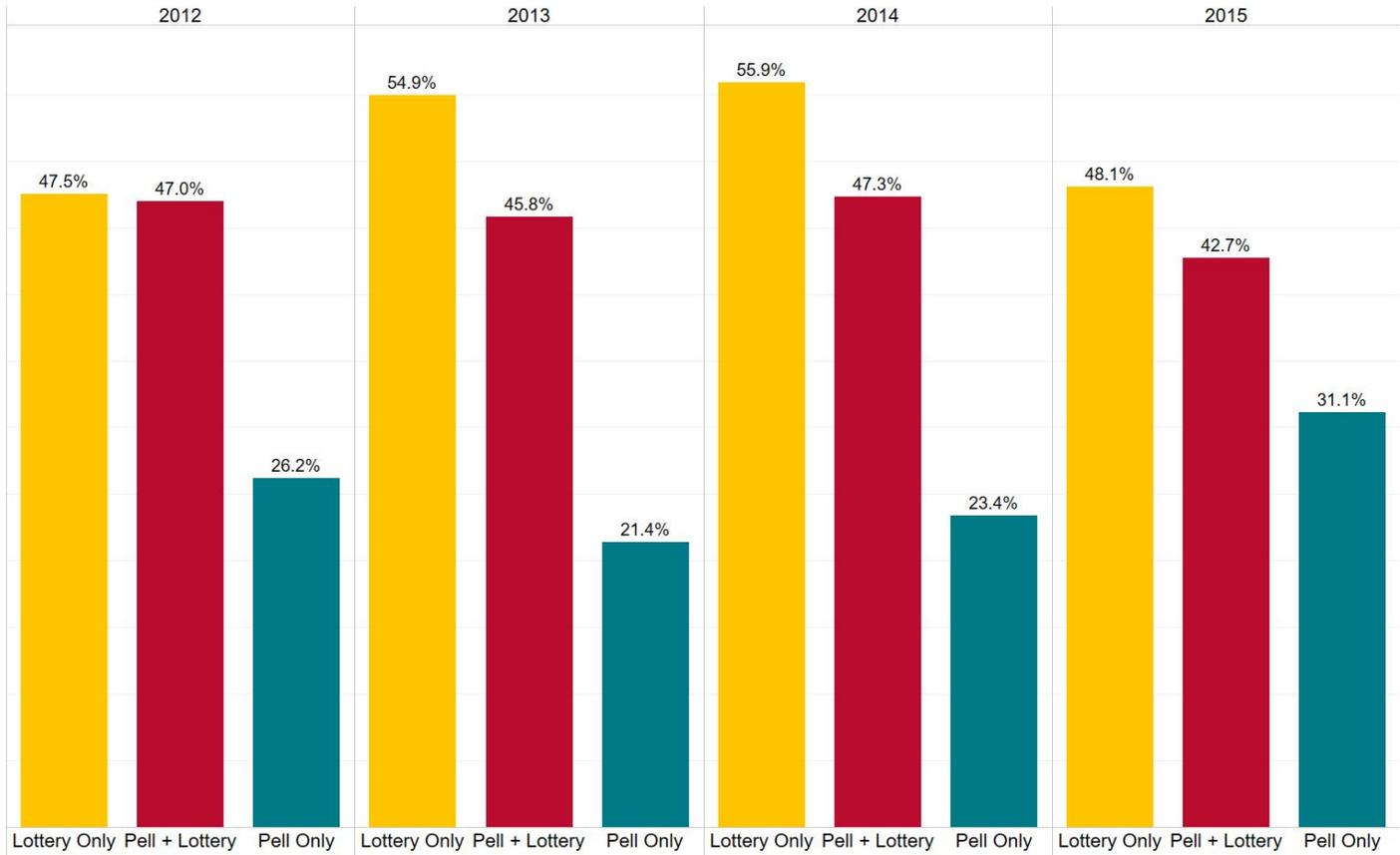
### Percent of Undergraduates Receiving Financial Aid by Type of Aid, 2020-2021



Financial aid is used to help meet these needs, and there are several different kinds of financial aid available at CUP institutions. Grants and scholarships from the institution or the state (such as the NM Legislative Lottery Scholarship) are crucial to many students, as is “Self-Help” aid such as Work-Study and student loans, both federal and private. Crucially, grants, scholarships, and work-study do not need to be paid back, while student loans do. Just over 84% of all undergraduates at CUP institutions receive some type of financial aid. Seventy-nine percent of these undergraduates receive grants and scholarships, while loans and work-study go to 39.1% of undergraduates.

The NM Legislative Lottery Scholarship helps nearly 25% of New Mexico undergraduates at CUP institutions. Because the Lottery Scholarship is not need-based, it can be used to supplement the other types of financial aid that students may receive, and the data in the chart below suggests that students who receive both Pell Grants and the Lottery Scholarship have far better Six Year Graduation Rates than students who receive only Pell Grants. This shows how meeting students’ financial needs can substantially improve their outcomes. The Lottery Scholarship has become an important part of the financial aid landscape in New Mexico, and it should continue to be available to all who qualify.

### Six-Year Graduation Rates by Lottery and Pell Recipient Status



## Faculty

When serving a diverse student body, it is especially important that students have sufficient access to faculty members for teaching, mentorship, and undergraduate research opportunities. These kinds of high-impact practices are known to be crucial for student success in college, particularly for students who are first-generation, from under-represented minority groups, or from low-income families. Lower student-faculty ratios provide more individualized attention to students and facilitate greater in-class student participation. CUP institutions have lowered their student-faculty ratio over the past five years, and this has resulted in better student outcomes for students at public universities in New Mexico.

### Total Full-Time Instructional Faculty at CUP Institutions

Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	5-year change
3,283	3,282	3,201	3,197	3,216	-2.0%

The continued decline in numbers of full-time faculty has serious implications for the future success of New Mexico's college students. A decrease in full-time faculty means that students have fewer opportunities to be mentored by top-tier scholars and teachers and have fewer avenues for engaging in research and service-learning activities. Many successful people can point to a particular college professor who invested countless hours to develop them as scholars and professionals, and who saw the extent of their great potential when they were an undergraduate. All New Mexico students deserve access to these meaningful and enriching opportunities.

Thankfully, the faculty at our public universities in New Mexico are a committed and diverse group of teachers and researchers who believe in the power of higher education to improve lives. Among our regional peers, the average university has a faculty that is 39.7% female and 6.8% Hispanic. In Fall 2020, the faculty at CUP institutions was **47.9% female** and **23.6% Hispanic**. Research shows that students at all levels are more successful when they have teachers and mentors who more closely resemble them and understand their backgrounds.

### Average Salaries of Full-time Faculty at CUP Institutions by Sector

Sector	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5-year % change
Comprehensives	\$56,992	\$61,400	\$60,356	\$62,175	\$64,257	12.7%
Research	\$78,501	\$78,744	\$80,287	\$81,331	\$82,091	4.6%
All	\$66,210	\$68,833	\$68,898	\$70,385	\$71,900	8.6%

The average increase in faculty salaries across all sectors within the seven CUP institutions from 2016-2020 was 8.6%. This is substantially below the nationwide rate of inflation over the same timeframe, which was 14.3%. When presented with the opportunity to earn a higher salary and receive more support for research, scholarship, and creative activities, many faculty opt to leave for greener pastures. The added pressures of hiring freezes and resource constraints have made New Mexico universities a less enticing prospect for these teachers and researchers, and we increase our disadvantage in the higher education market with each faculty departure. Recent across-the-board salary increases given by the

New Mexico Legislature have put us in a more competitive position, but there is still more that we can do to enhance our profile. Many of our institutions are also actively competing with industry and national labs for highly educated talent, which makes it even more important that we enhance our ability to attract and retain excellent teachers and researchers.

## Finance

In the wake of numerous budget constraints over the years, higher education in New Mexico has found many ways to innovate and be resourceful. This is exemplified best by the improvements in student success outcomes seen across all CUP institutions over the past five years. We find ways to serve our students with excellence while also being mindful of our resource constraints and obligations to the taxpaying public. According to data from the most recently available IPEDS Finance survey, **CUP institutions spend about \$1,500 less per full-time student** compared to other universities in the Southwest and Rocky Mountain regions. (IPEDS, National Center for Educational Statistics, FY19)

It is important to acknowledge that colleges and universities engage in many research and development projects that do attract external funding from private foundations, federal agencies, and industry. In Fiscal Year 2019, the seven CUP institutions received a total of **\$572,664,085 in federal contracts and grants**. This infusion of funding helps to support programs that drive innovation and enhances the lives of many in New Mexico and beyond. These funds are used to hire new employees, support graduate students with assistantships, purchase supplies from local vendors, and to develop new products and services for the benefit of the state. However, it should be noted that research funding does not completely support the academic side of our universities, nor does it completely compensate for the reductions that New Mexico universities have continued to experience in their state appropriations since 2008.

## Conclusion

All CUP institutions have unique missions, student populations, and histories. Our campuses range from urban to rural, very small to very large, research-focused to teaching-focused. What unites us is our belief in New Mexico's great potential and our desire to help unlock that potential. With each passing year, we have graduated more students who seek to use what they have learned to give back to their communities. We are committed to supporting them every step of the way, and we are grateful for the Legislature's support of these efforts.

## **New Mexico Universities**

### **Research Universities**

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology	Socorro
New Mexico State University	Las Cruces
University of New Mexico	Albuquerque

### **Comprehensive Universities**

Eastern New Mexico University	Portales
New Mexico Highlands University	Las Vegas
Northern New Mexico College	Española
Western New Mexico University	Silver City

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Stephen G. Wells	New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
Dan Arvizu	New Mexico State University
Garnett S. Stokes	University of New Mexico
Patrice Caldwell	Eastern New Mexico University
Samuel Minner	New Mexico Highlands University
Richard J. Bailey, Jr.	Northern New Mexico College
Joseph Shepard (Chair)	Western New Mexico University

Marc H. Saavedra, Executive Director

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### **Eastern New Mexico University**

*Brendan Hennessey*

### **New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology**

*Steph Moore*

### **New Mexico Highlands University**

*Heather Tilson*

*Ivy Romero*

### **New Mexico State University**

*Candace Gilfillan*

*Calixto Melero*

### **Northern New Mexico College**

*Carmella Sanchez (co-chair)*

### **University of New Mexico**

*Heather Mechler (co-chair)*

*Desiree Gathings*

### **Western New Mexico University**

*Adele Springer*

### **Liaison Members**

*Stephanie Rodriguez, Higher Education Department*

*Nicole Macias, Department of Finance and Administration*

*Mark Valenzuela, Legislative Finance Committee*



Council of  
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