

# Enrollment Management & Student Retention

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**WESTERN**  
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

Providing Meaningful Opportunities | Strengthening Communities



## **Trends & Challenges**

As with universities throughout the nation, Western New Mexico University experienced enrollment and retention challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. With a national average enrollment decrease of 4%, New Mexico was affected particularly hard with a statewide drop of 9.5% in higher education enrollment, and not unlike other institutions, WNMU is working to get past the challenges created by the pandemic to move forward in providing expanded opportunities for students just starting their college career or working adults looking to restart their post-pandemic lives.

Currently, WNMU is experiencing growth in key areas with both in-state and out-of-state students that correlate with increased and consistent engagement. Current enrollment trends reflect continued growth in the following areas:

- Dual Enrollment
- Non-traditional undergraduate
- First time freshmen
- Part-time graduate
- Out-of-state transfer students
- In-state students

## **Addressing Enrollment & Retention at Western New Mexico University**

The Enrollment/Retention Management Committee is responsible for monitoring the university's enrollment, including practices and procedures necessary to ensure student diversity, persistence to graduation, and forecasting future student enrollment trends. Members of this committee include the Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, faculty and student representatives, as well as director level representation from the Offices of Financial Aid, Admissions, Housing and Residence Life and Institutional Research.



## **Current Active Operations, Initiatives & Audiences**

Western New Mexico University serves a wide and diverse population with specific needs, goals and motivations that require individualized attention, and unique strategic approaches. The university has invested in a re-vamp of the entire academic advising process to provide a one-stop for students looking for guidance and support.

### **Dual Enrollment**

- Providing 'Dual Enrollment Night' events at partner high schools that allow for students and parents the opportunity to meet with WNMU academic advisors and faculty.
- Providing a transition pathway from high school to college.

### **Traditional Undergraduate | On-Campus & Online**

- Increased visibility within middle schools, public and private high schools and charter schools within New Mexico, Arizona and west Texas.
- The continued building and maintaining of relationships with school district personal, including principals and counselors.
- Constant improvements and upgrades to WNMUOnline delivery as well as providing greater options for degree completion 100% online.
- By meaningfully and consistently engaging students before they enter the decision-making phase (i.e., early in their middle school and high school career), WNMU becomes a trusted and top-of-mind option when it matters.

### **Community College Transfer**

- Increased and sustained collaborative efforts with community college partners to create more seamless transfer mechanisms as well as innovative concurrent enrollment models aimed at the success of WNMU students.
- An in-house WNMU academic advisor working within partner community colleges to ensure clear communication and personalized academic planning.

### **Non-Traditional | Working Adults 25+|Undergraduate & Graduate**

- A reduced tuition agreement with Freeport-McMoRan that allows employees from anywhere around the world to receive education at a discount, including their dependents, providing greater mobility and opportunities for working adults.



- The WNMU Hero Program provides for reduced tuition to any first responder in the nation, including law enforcement, firefighters, EMS and 911 operators.
- A robust Adult Education Services department provides additional support and training for adults looking to get a degree who require refresher courses.

### **Graduate Students**

- A focus on degree programs reflective of market needs and economic trends.
- A greater emphasis on raising awareness and working with undergraduate students on the transition to graduate school.

### **Workforce Development Training**

- Working alongside community partners to ensure training programs are consistent with the local and statewide job market to provide job training that matters.

### **Performance and Data**

- Measures of success are continuously established, modified and monitored throughout each semester to ensure the university's key performance indicators are reflective of WNMU goals and desired outcomes.

### **Recruiting & Admissions Performance Measures**

- Year-over-year growth in admissions applications for both undergraduate and graduate admissions.
- Application capture rate.
- Increased community college transfer applications.

### **Student Retention Performance Measures**

Student retention at Western New Mexico University begins the first day students step foot on campus, log into an online class or even the moment they receive their WNMU acceptance letter. Providing the tools for success to WNMU students is a top priority for the staff and faculty, whether through tutoring services, counseling and/or academic advising, support is a critical component to get students moving toward their ultimate goals.