



School of Nursing Update
*Educating New Mexico's
Nursing Workforce –
NMSU's BSN Program, Partnerships
and Statewide Impact*

Legislative Health and Human Services Committee
September 28, 2025

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Director, School of Nursing

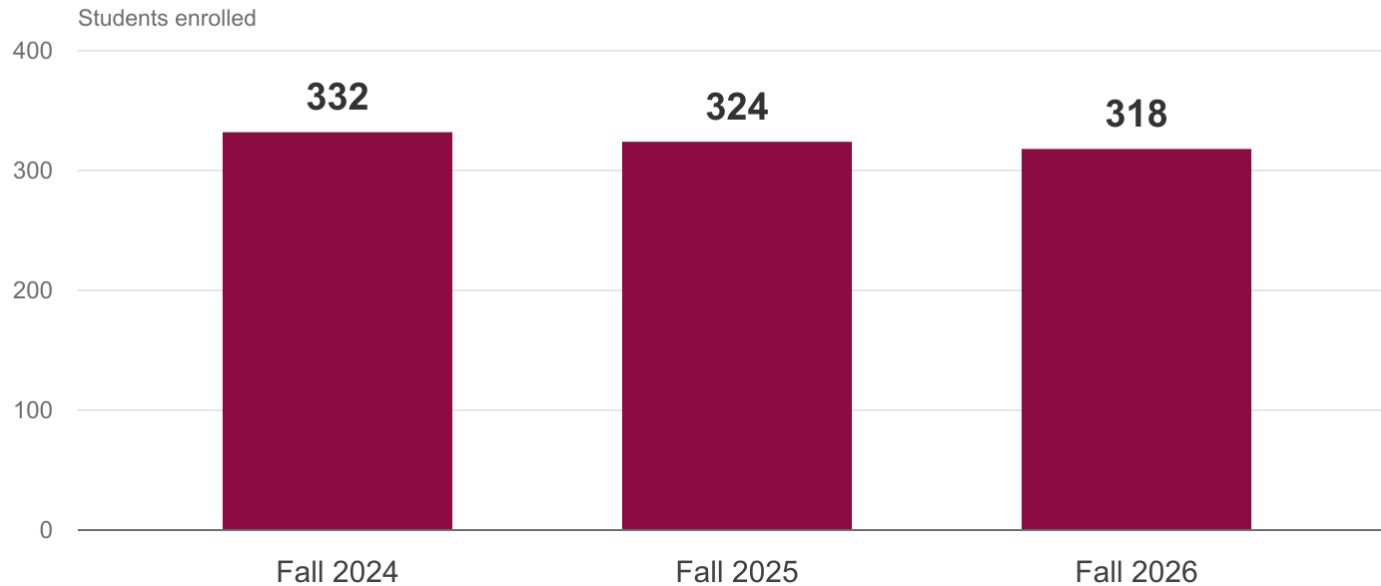
Undergraduate Nursing Education



Enrollment & Graduation

NMSU BSN Enrollment

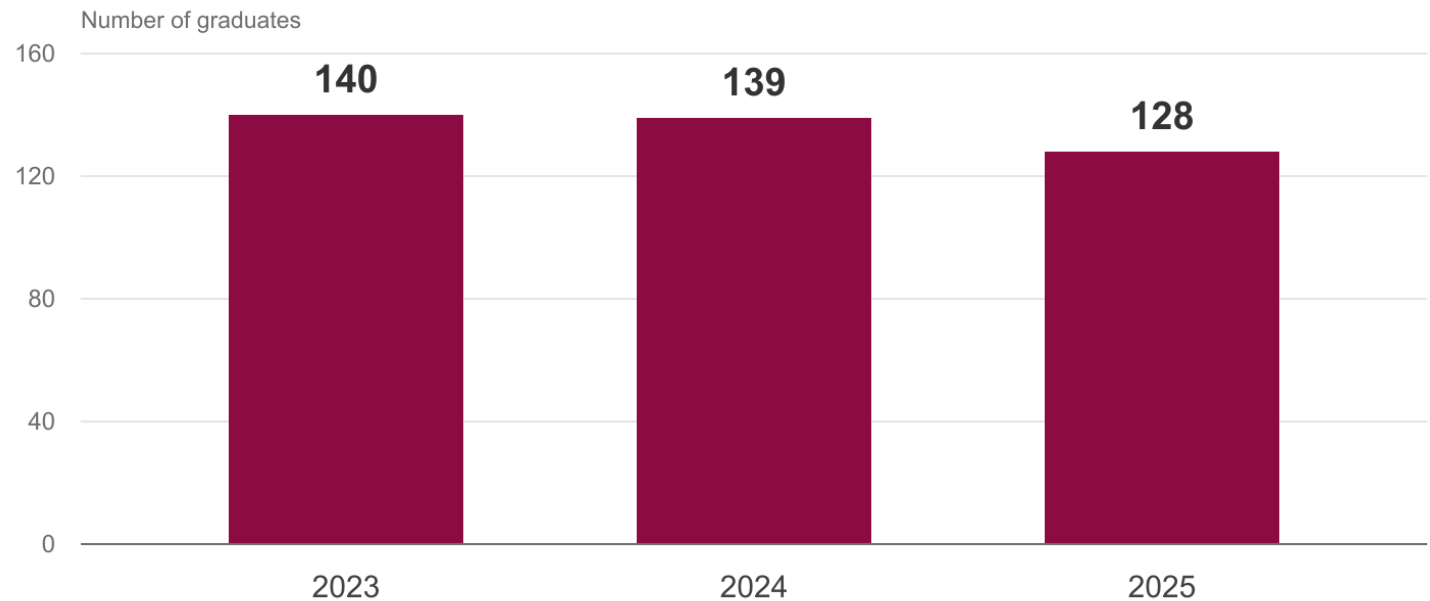
Fall 2024–2026



Enrollment & Graduation

NMSU BSN Graduates

2023–2025



NMSU BSN First-Time NCLEX-RN Pass Rates	
Year	Pass Rate
2023	82.51%
2024	93.48%
2025	87.60%



Enrollment & Graduation

Factors Contributing to Lower Enrollment and Graduation

Smaller applicant pools: Applications declined from approximately 80–100 per cycle before COVID to 56–70 during and after the pandemic.

Smaller entering cohorts: For two semesters, we enrolled 56 students rather than 64, a combined reduction of 16 students in 2023.

Lower Second Degree Program enrollment: Annual enrollment declined from 24 students to no more than 16 despite continued marketing.

Increased early attrition: More students have left the program during the first and second semesters, when they encounter demanding science-based courses, including pathophysiology and pharmacology.

Decreased enrollment at rural campuses: A new ADN option at NMSU-Alamogordo and academic progression challenges among pre-nursing students at NMSU-Grants.



Focused Response - @ NMSU

Initiatives	Purpose
Pre-nursing freshman seminar	Help students understand expectations and plan their academic pathway
Nursing students as science and math tutors	Support learning in foundational courses
Peer mentoring	Build belonging and help students navigate nursing school
BSN student tutors in all nursing didactic courses	Provide support throughout the curriculum
Strengthened strategic partnership with rural hospital partners	Support recruitment and retention of nursing graduates in rural communities.
Student success program	Coordinate support when students encounter difficulties

Focused Response - @ NMSU

BSN Student Success Program

Coordinated support from foundational coursework through entry into practice

Dedicated leadership: Two 0.5 FTE Assistant Directors coordinate student success across all five levels of the BSN program.

Early intervention and progression: Early identification and individualized support, study strategies, and coaching.

NCLEX readiness and career preparation: Targeted exam preparation and support the transition to professional nursing practice.

Coordinated student support: Connect students with faculty, academic resources, counseling, wellness, and financial support.



Nursing Career Pathway Initiatives



BCBSNM Professor of Practice

Building nursing career pathways in New Mexico

NMSU School of Nursing partners with BCBSNM to develop career pathways in nursing

Release Date: 22 Apr 2025



BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico

The School of Nursing at NMSU has appointed Nikki May, DNP, to a newly established faculty position aimed at preparing registered nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists and nurse leaders to meet the evolving health care needs of New Mexico.



BCBSNM Professor of Practice

BCBSNM Professor of Practice Initiative

Building nursing career pathways in New Mexico

Community partnership: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico supports a nursing faculty role dedicated to workforce development.

Early career exploration: Dr. Nikki May is working with schools to expand HOSA—Future Health Professionals opportunities in Las Cruces and rural communities.



\$51,000
2026 Nursing
Excellence Grant



BCBSNM Professor of Practice

BCBSNM Professor of Practice Initiative

Building nursing career pathways in New Mexico

Preparation for nursing education: Outreach connects students with nursing careers, academic expectations, and pathways into college.

Rural and tribal engagement: The initiative emphasizes partnerships that encourage students to pursue nursing and serve their communities.

Long-term goal: Help more New Mexicans enter nursing education, complete their degrees, and join the state's nursing workforce.



VA Academic Practice Partnership

The NMSU School of Nursing is proud to partner with the New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care System through an innovative **Academic-Practice Partnership**.

This collaboration strengthens the preparation of our nursing graduates while supporting the VA's mission to deliver exceptional care to our nation's Veterans.

Collaborative Work

- Provided advising and support for a VA Office of Academic Affairs Nurse Residency grants
- Assisted with the accreditation of the VA's RN Transition to Practice, PMHNP and FNP residency programs
- Recruitment of NMSU graduates for the VA residency programs



Rural Health Transformation Program

Funding Opportunities for Nursing Workforce Development

Pursue competitive funding: NMSU will seek grant and partnership opportunities aligned with regional Healthy Horizons priorities.

Develop proposals with community partners: Collaborate with regional hubs, rural providers, and Tribal health organizations to identify nursing workforce needs.

Expand rural clinical training: Propose additional clinical placements, preceptor development, and student travel and housing support.

Strengthen local nursing pathways: Seek support for career outreach, academic preparation, mentoring, and student retention.





House Memorial 36

Leading Collaborative Solutions to
New Mexico's Nursing Shortage

Barriers to BSN Enrollment & Completion

Academic preparation: Gaps in math, science, and study skills limit entry into nursing and success in demanding foundational courses.

Costs beyond tuition: Living expenses, clinical requirements, and unpaid clinical hours create financial strain and competing work demands.

Second-degree affordability: Limited financial aid and lost employment income can discourage applicants to the Roadrunner pathway.

Student persistence: Caregiving, transportation, housing insecurity, and mental health challenges can interrupt progression.

Educational capacity and rural access: Faculty availability, clinical placements, and travel distances can constrain access and future growth.



Strengthening NMSU's BSN Pathway

Strengthen early preparation: Expand HOSA and other school partnerships, dual credit opportunities, and summer math and science preparation.

Make nursing financially accessible: Support second-degree loans/scholarships and assistance with living and clinical expenses.

Sustain student success services: Invest in tutoring, peer mentoring, and student success programs.

Support persistence: Improve access to emergency aid, childcare, transportation, and counseling.

Build teaching and clinical capacity: Invest in faculty recruitment and retention, clinical partnerships, preceptor support, and simulation, especially in rural counties.





Questions