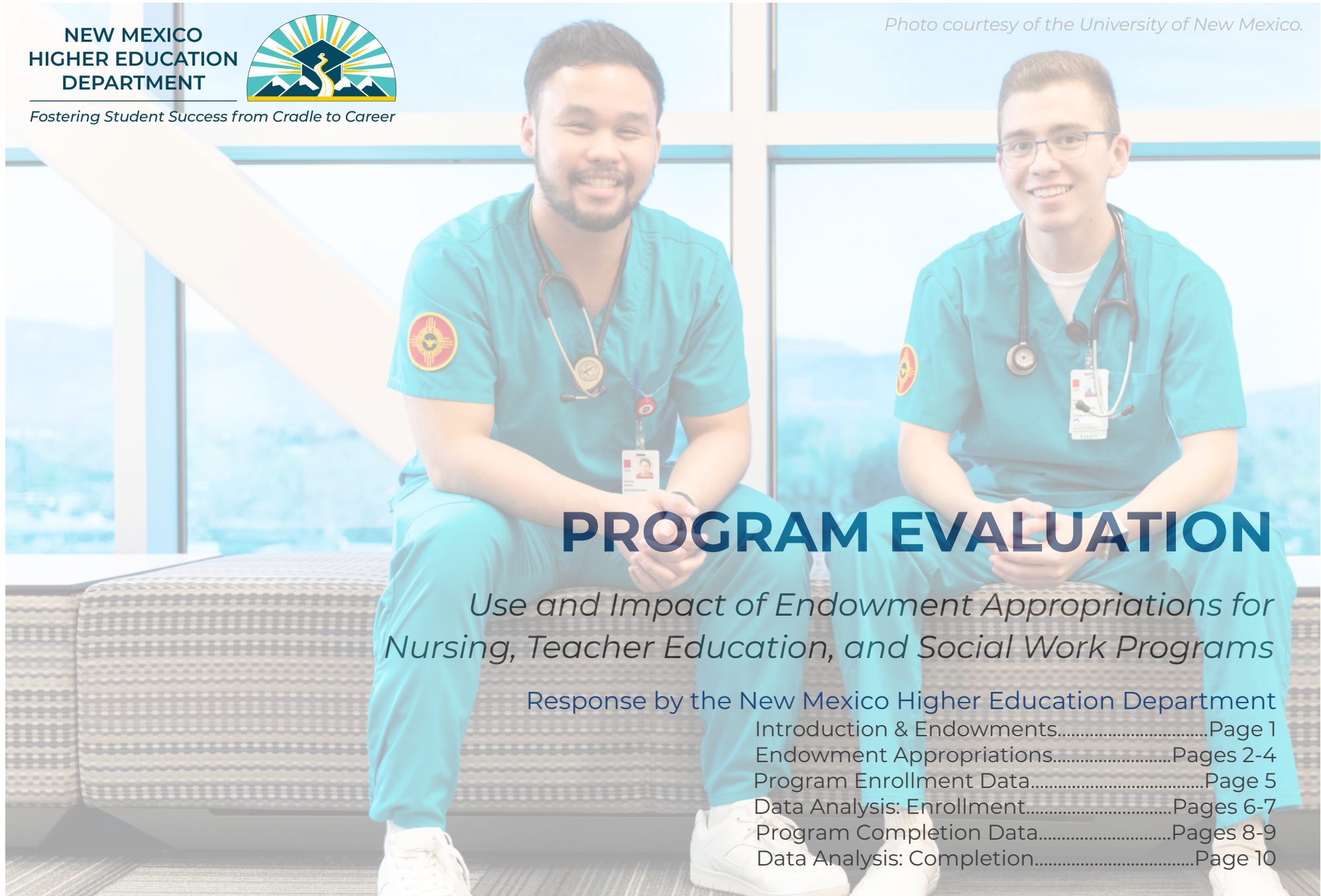




Photo courtesy of the University of New Mexico.



PROGRAM EVALUATION

*Use and Impact of Endowment Appropriations for
Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs*

Response by the New Mexico Higher Education Department

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Program Evaluation: Endowment Appropriations

Supporting New Mexico's Higher Education Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs

New Mexico is actively working to strengthen its workforce in critical fields such as nursing, teaching, and social work – professions dedicated to serving and supporting the well-being of New Mexicans and their families. The endowment funding provided by the Legislature, approved by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, and dispersed by the New Mexico Higher Education Department is crucial to these efforts and our local communities in urban, frontier, and rural New Mexico. Furthermore, the agency, public higher education institutions, and the State of New Mexico as a whole are working diligently to ensure that students receive the best education, especially in our most in-demand fields.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department's response to the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee's performance evaluation titled "Use and Impact of Endowment Appropriations for Higher Education Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs" focuses on baseline data surrounding student enrollment and completion within the three identified fields at public higher education institution across the state: nursing, teaching, and social work.

What is an endowment?

Traditional Higher Education Endowments

Endowments within higher education are typically symbolic and prestigious in nature amongst faculty members at colleges and universities across the nation. Endowed professorships often require several million dollars in funding to establish, and the salary alone does not reflect the broader investment needed to support these faculty members. In many cases, these professors may have limited teaching responsibilities and focus more on research or public engagement to advance studies within their fields.

State Appropriations for Endowments in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work

The Legislature's intent of endowments in nursing, teacher education, and social work – high-demand workforce fields with high vacancy rates and high community need – was to hire faculty members who are actively teaching and engaging directly with students, such as assistant, associate, or full professors, rather than those in primarily ceremonial positions, such as those with professor emeritus status or research-focused endowed roles.

Endowment Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2023 Appropriations

Endowed Faculty Positions in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work		
<i>Fiscal Year 2023 – Applications due August 1, 2022 and awards announed in September 2022</i>		
Endowment Type	Awarded Institution	Total Award
Nursing <i>Appropriation: \$30,000,000</i>	Central New Mexico Community College	\$3,000,000
	Mesalands Community College	\$2,000,000
	New Mexico Highlands University	\$2,500,000
	New Mexico State University	\$2,500,000
	NMSU–Doña Ana Community College	\$2,500,000
	Northern New Mexico College	\$2,500,000
	San Juan College	\$2,000,000
	Santa Fe Community College	\$2,000,000
	UNM–Gallup	\$2,000,000
	University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center	\$6,500,000
	Western New Mexico University	\$2,000,000
	Teacher Education <i>Appropriation: \$50,000,000</i>	Central New Mexico Community College
New Mexico Highlands Univerisity		\$10,000,000
New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology		\$5,000,000
New Mexico State University		\$6,000,000
Northern New Mexico College		\$2,500,000
UNM–Gallup		\$2,500,000
University of New Mexico		\$17,000,000
Western New Mexico University		\$5,000,000
Social Work <i>Appropriation: \$50,000,000</i>	Eastern New Mexico University	\$9,000,000
	New Mexico Highlands University	\$8,000,000
	New Mexico State University	\$16,500,000
	University of New Mexico	\$10,500,000
	Western New Mexico University	\$6,000,000

House Bill 2 – General Appropriations Act of the 54th Legislature

Endowment Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2024

Endowed Faculty Positions in Nursing		
<i>Fiscal Year 2024 – Applications due July 5, 2023 and awards announced in August 2023</i>		
Endowment Type	Awarded Institution	Total Award
Nursing	Eastern New Mexico University	\$1,000,000
<i>Appropriation: \$10,000,000</i>	ENMU–Roswell	\$500,000
	New Mexico Highlands University	\$1,000,000
	New Mexico Junior College	\$300,000
	New Mexico State University	\$1,250,000
	NMSU–Alamogordo	\$500,000
	NMSU–Doña Ana Community College	\$500,000
	Northern New Mexico College	\$500,000
	San Juan College	\$950,000
	UNM–Gallup	\$500,000
	University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center	\$2,000,000
	Western New Mexico University	\$1,000,000

House Bill 2 – General Appropriations Act of the 55th Legislature

Endowments for Student Financial Aid in Social Work	
<i>Scholarships and Paid Practicums in Master's Level Social Work Programs</i>	
<i>Fiscal Year 2024 – Memo with awards issued in July 2023</i>	
Awarded Institution or Organization	Total Award
Eastern New Mexico University	\$2,038,462
New Mexico Highlands University	\$5,076,923
New Mexico State University	\$1,807,692
Western New Mexico University	\$6,076,923
Falling Colors	\$5,000,000
Total	\$20,000,000

House Bill 2 – General Appropriations Act of the 55th Legislature

Endowment Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2025

Endowed Faculty and Student Financial Aid in Social Work				
<i>Bachelor's and Master's Degrees</i>				
<i>Fiscal Year 2025 – Memo with awards issued in October 2024</i>				
Awarded Institution or Organization	Endowments	Scholarships	Paid Practica	Total Award
Eastern New Mexico University	\$1,178,046	-	-	\$1,178,046
New Mexico Highlands University	\$3,000,000	\$598,796	\$256,626	\$3,855,422
New Mexico State University	\$2,000,000	\$59,639	\$350,000	\$2,409,639
Western New Mexico University	\$2,275,000	\$181,894	\$100,000	\$2,556,894
Total	\$8,453,046	\$840,329	\$706,626	\$10,000,000

House Bill 2 – General Appropriations Act of the 56th Legislature

Program Enrollment Data

Student Headcount in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs

Nursing Enrollment from 2021 to 2025				
Academic Year	Undergraduate (UG) Headcount	Total UG Student Credit Hours	Graduate (Grad) Headcount	Total Grad Student Credit Hours
2021-22	7,861	134,088	898	6,172
2022-23	8,218	137,159	964	6,392
2023-24	9,072	148,303	938	6,247
2024-25	9,611	157,521	825	5,455
2021 to 2025 Change	22.3%	17.5%	-8.1%	-11.6%

Data from eDEAR System Files

Teacher Education Enrollment from 2021 to 2025				
Academic Year	Undergraduate (UG) Headcount	Total UG Student Credit Hours	Graduate (Grad) Headcount	Total Grad Student Credit Hours
2021-22	8,286	137,660	2,302	25,174
2022-23	7,705	125,578	2,274	24,985
2023-24	8,243	138,645	2,327	27,168
2024-25	8,361	135,708	2,359	26,695
2021 to 2025 Change	0.9%	-1.4%	2.5%	6.0%

Data from eDEAR System Files

Social Work Enrollment from 2021 to 2025				
Academic Year	Undergraduate (UG) Headcount	Total UG Student Credit Hours	Graduate (Grad) Headcount	Total Grad Student Credit Hours
2021-22	1,052	20,425	1,198	22,490
2022-23	1,211	22,760	1,289	23,237
2023-24	1,366	25,670	1,154	22,154
2024-25	1,403	26,916	1,124	20,786
2021 to 2025 Change	33.4%	33.5%	-6.2%	-7.6%

Data from eDEAR System Files

Data Analysis: Program Enrollment

Enrollment in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs

Undergraduate student headcount across all three subject areas increased by 12.6% from the 2021-22 academic year to the 2024-25 academic year

Nursing

While New Mexico has experienced a shortage of nurses like many other states in the country, it is not at the top of the list for most severe shortages like California, Texas, and New Jersey. However, New Mexico – via the Executive and the Legislature – recognizes the need for nurses at all educational levels to fill the state’s current workforce needs. In addition, it is important to note that doctoral degrees in nursing are critical to filling gaps in rural and frontier communities statewide. Six of seven public four-year universities – with the exception of New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology – and all 17 community colleges, including branch campuses, have nursing programs.

The two largest nursing programs in the state are the University of New Mexico and Central New Mexico Community College, both in Albuquerque. Overall, **undergraduate enrollment in nursing programs has increased by 22.3%** over the past four years, but the graduate level has experienced a small decline of 8.1%, down from 898 to 825 the past academic year. However, both Eastern New Mexico University and New Mexico State University have increased enrollment in their graduate programs for nursing. Additionally, public colleges and universities experiencing the most significant increases in undergraduate nursing programs include the University of New Mexico, Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, Northern New Mexico College, Eastern New Mexico–Roswell, the University of New Mexico–Valencia, the University of New Mexico–Gallup, and San Juan College.

Teacher Education

In contrast to programs like social work, where the greatest need is for master-level trained licensed social workers, teacher education programs focus primarily on undergraduate degrees. In the 2023-24 academic year, 92% of students enrolled in teacher education programs were at the undergraduate level. To become a licensed teacher, a student must complete either a bachelor’s degree in an appropriate teaching field or a certificate for alternative licensure and then pass a licensure exam administered by the New Mexico Public Education Department. Pursuing a master’s degree in a teaching field allows a teacher to be eligible for higher pay; therefore, graduate programs are important because they increase teacher quality and contribute to New Mexico’s economic growth.

Although undergraduate enrollment has increased minimally by almost 1% since the 2021-22 academic year, **there have been increases over the past two years – up from a low of 7,705 in the 2022-23 academic year to 8,361 in the most recent academic year.** Meanwhile, **graduate enrollment grew by 2.5%** and 6.0% in total student credit hours. The Teacher Affordability Scholarship Act was amended in 2023 to include teachers pursuing graduate degrees in teacher education programs and other advanced degrees.

The University of New Mexico has the largest teacher education program in the state, with enrollment increasing each year since the 2021-22 academic year. Additionally, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology only has a graduate program, but has more than doubled its enrollment to 158 in the 2024-25 academic year. Western New Mexico University has seen a substantial increase in both undergraduate (from 679 to 1,313) and graduate (from 431 to 535) teacher education programs over the past four (4) years. For alternative licensure programs, the largest programs are at Central New Mexico Community College, NMSU–Doña Ana Community College, Santa Fe Community College, and San Juan College.

Social Work

The primary workforce gap in New Mexico for social work is at the graduate level, with a 6.2% decline in enrollment amongst graduate programs since the 2021-22 academic year. This has been a growing concern for employers, professionals, and policymakers since a licensed social worker must complete a master's degree and then pass a statewide licensing exam. New Mexico State University, Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, and Western New Mexico University have graduate programs leading to a master's degree in social work. Eastern New Mexico University recently received approval for a master's degree in social work, with the first class starting in the 2024-25 academic year. In addition, the University of New Mexico is making progress in developing and establishing an accredited program.

Although there is a growing need for individuals graduating with a master's degree in social work, there are programs at certificate, associate's degree, and bachelor's degree levels. These programs are critical in preparing students for enrollment at a higher-level program or they can lead to jobs at social welfare agencies, such as the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department and New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, that do not require a license. Since the 2021-22 academic year, **undergraduate enrollment in social work programs has increased by 33.4% and total student credit hours by 33.5%.** This indicates a high level of interest in the field is growing and can lead to an increase in graduate programs within the coming academic years.

Program Completion Data

Students Graduating with Credentials in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work

Nursing Completion from 2019 to 2024						
Type of Credential	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019 to 2024 Change
Less than 1 Year Certificate	333	203	278	288	368	10.5%
1 to 2 Year Certificate	108	88	53	58	63	-41.7%
Associate's Degree	589	478	474	511	540	-8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	636	639	674	685	634	-0.3%
Master's Degree	69	66	81	88	70	1.4%
Post-Master's Certificate	9	7	7	7	19	111.1%
Doctorate	15	20	15	25	19	26.7%
Doctor of Nurse Practitioner	5	13	19	9	10	100.0%
Total	1,764	1,514	1,601	1,671	1,723	-2.3%

Data from eDEAR System Degree Files

Teacher Education Completion from 2019 to 2024						
Type of Credential	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019 to 2024 Change
Less than 1 Year Certificate	72	39	44	34	31	-59.9%
1 to 2 Year Certificate	297	394	351	265	318	7.1%
Associate's Degree	331	352	386	387	370	11.8%
Bachelor's Degree	502	570	589	589	637	26.9%
Master's Degree	486	444	495	432	484	-0.4%
Graduate Certificate	58	106	168	200	267	360.3%
Doctorate	55	31	40	46	41	-25.5%
Total	1,801	1,936	2,073	1,953	2,148	19.3%

Data from eDEAR System Degree Files

Social Work Completion from 2019 to 2024						
Type of Credential	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2019 to 2024 Change
Less than 1 Year Certificate	6	9	4	2	-	-100.0%
1 to 2 Year Certificate	7	3	15	3	4	-42.9%
Associate's Degree	58	72	55	44	42	-27.6%
Bachelor's Degree	204	186	203	187	187	-8.3%
Master's Degree	347	335	295	403	400	15.3%
Graduate Certificate	74	67	42	56	60	-18.9%
Total	696	672	614	695	693	-0.4%

Data from eDEAR System Degree Files

Data Analysis: Program Completion

Completion in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work Programs

Graduation among students in teacher education and alternative licensure programs has increased by approximately 19% over the past four years

Summary of Overall Completion in Nursing, Teacher Education, and Social Work

Although there have been strides in enrollment across all higher education programs, the ultimate goal is increased completion. There have been increases in students graduating from teacher education programs, but completions have remained relatively flat in nursing and social work. Completion is defined as the successful attainment of an academic credential, ranging from a certificate to a degree, at a college or university. It is commonly referred to as graduation in the realm of education.

Completions in teacher education programs can point to increases in teacher salaries and scholarships, such as the Teacher Affordability Scholarship and Grow Your Own Teachers Scholarship, in recent years. To progress through each level – Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 – higher-level degrees and additional certificates are encouraged and reap salary increases. Regarding nursing and social work, the New Mexico Higher Education Department recommends a crosswalk approach to reviewing enrollment, completion, and licensure requirements in these fields. The state's boards set professional requirements, but working in collaboration with the higher education institutions is crucial for alignment.

It is important to note that increased enrollment is a sign that interest in these fields is growing and can lead to an increase in graduates in future academic years. However, it takes time for students to progress through a program to completion, so increases in completion from increased enrollment may not yet show up in the agency's data. The data for the 2024-25 academic year will be available in September, and it may show increases.