



In Santa Fe County, only 11 percent of Hispanics aged 25 to 44 hold a Bachelor's Degree



THE HEC IS WORKING TO CHANGE THIS STATISTIC

The **SANTA FE HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER** brings convenient, affordable bachelor's and master's degree options to Santa Fe under a partnership between New Mexico Highlands University, University of New Mexico, Institute of American Indian Arts and Santa Fe Community College.

Programs are currently being delivered on the SFCC campus under a pilot program. Construction of a permanent facility in Santa Fe is awaiting final approval from the New Mexico Higher Education Department.



HEC FACTS AND FIGURES

Voters approved \$12 million in bond funding in 2010 to construct a permanent home for the HEC on the campus of the former College of Santa Fe.

Land for the building was acquired by Santa Fe Community College in September, 2011.

Construction is ready to begin, but is stalled until the New Mexico Higher Education Department allows SFCC to formally present its plans.



THE NEED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

By 2018, 58% of all jobs in New Mexico will require some post-secondary education. In order to meet the workforce requirements, our state will need:

- 241,000 associate-level degrees
- 152,000 bachelor-level degrees
- 93,000 graduate degrees

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Data sources: Santa Fe County Hispanic attainment of bachelor's degree: the 2010 census; Jobs in New Mexico: Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce



HISTORY OF THE HEC

- The HEC was created under state statute 21-16A-1, NMSA 1978, the Learning Center Act.
- The HEC was approved by the New Mexico Higher Education Department in December 2009.
- In 2010, Santa Fe Community College received approval from the Higher Education Department to place the question of funding for the HEC on a bond issue ballot.
- On August 3, 2010, Santa Fe voters approved a \$35 million bond issue, of which \$12 million was earmarked for the Higher Education Center.
- The 2011 Legislature passed House Joint Resolution 9 authorizing SFCC to buy land on the former College of Santa Fe to construct the HEC building.
- On August 8, 2011, SFCC received notification from the Higher Education Department that the Higher Education Center is exempt from the voluntary moratorium on new campus construction in New Mexico.
- In September, 2011, SFCC closed on the land sale for the HEC Building.



4 Y E A R S **4** S C H O O L S **1** L O C A T I O N



Facts & Talking Points

- SFCC has followed the state's process to the letter in attaining approvals for the Higher Education Center. The state Department of Higher Education approved SFCC's plan for the HEC in December, 2009. The college then received HED approval of its 2010 bond issue, which contained funding for construction of a Higher Education Center. The voters approved the bond on August 3, 2010.
- HJR 9, authorizing the College to buy land on the former College of Santa Fe campus specifically for the HEC building, was approved during the 2011 Legislative Session. The sale closed in September 2011 and the College has contracted for architect services.
- SFCC received notification from HED that the Higher Education Center is exempt from the voluntary moratorium on new campus construction in August 2011.
- The final step in the process to establish the HEC is to gain HED's approval of the plans for the building. HED has stated its opinion that the building plan must go through the Legislature and the Board of Finance in order to gain final approval. SFCC disputes this opinion. We can find no basis in the law nor can we find precedent for this type of process.
- The HEC was created under state statute 21-16A-1, NMSA 1978, the Learning Center Act. The criteria for establishing learning centers are set forth in Part 5.2.2 NMAC. Those regulations provide a detailed process for approval by the HED, including the submission and acceptance by the Department of a preliminary plan for the center [5.2.2.8(H) NMAC], followed by the development and approval by the Department of a detailed plan. It is SFCC's opinion that neither the law nor the regulations require Legislative or Board of Finance approval to establish a learning center.
- The HEC is also not a new campus of SFCC. Under Section 5.3.12.9 NMAC, community college campuses are defined by the Higher Education Department to be their own "taxing district." In other words, the entire SFCC taxing district is considered the college's "campus."
- SFCC should not be penalized for ambiguities in the existing laws that caused HED to block construction of the HEC facility; SFCC believes the Learning Center Act clearly provides for a comprehensive process for approval, which the College followed, that does not include Legislative or Board of Finance approval.

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4 Y E A R S **4** S C H O O L S **1** L O C A T I O N



Facts & Talking Points continued from front

- The Learning Center Act addresses the need to reduce the proliferation of higher education facilities. The HEC was approved by HED with the awareness that without the centralization of services provided by the Center, Santa Fe would be vulnerable to the type of building proliferation that other communities have experienced.
- The state's expenditures will be further reduced because the previous model involved each university operating in Santa Fe independently, renting space and hiring staff for their operations. The HEC model draws these disparate centers together to operate in a shared space with shared staffing. In addition, the state will experience savings on lottery funds, since the tuition for the first two years of college at SFCC is significantly lower than that of the state universities.
- The HEC pilot program, begun on campus this fall with founding partners NMHU, UNM and IAIA, serves students who are seeking bachelor's and master's degrees in a variety of fields. Two of the partner institutions (NMHU and UNM) have experienced enrollment increases of 60% or more since Fall 2010.
- Santa Fe County data taken from the 2010 Census indicate that only 11% of Hispanics 25 years of age and over hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 56% of White-non-Hispanics who hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Overall, there are more than 20,000 people age 25-44 in Santa Fe County who have a high school diploma but do not have a bachelor's degree or higher. Local students must have an affordable, convenient option for higher education in order to better support regional and state economic development and the success of local businesses and public agencies.
- In NM in 2008, the difference in median earnings between a high school diploma and a bachelor's degree was \$17,313. In 2018, 58% of all jobs in NM will require some post-secondary education. In order to meet the workforce requirements, NM will need:
 - 241,000 AA's
 - 152,000 BA's
 - 93,000 graduate degrees

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce
- The HEC addresses key priorities for the state: economic and workforce development. The model is designed to provide education and training customized for the region's existing and emerging workforce needs, as identified by periodic review and assessment. Currently identified needs are in the areas of business and accounting, education, criminal justice, and social work/human services.

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S.F. Higher Education Center expansion may face hurdles

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Open house highlights benefits of project

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By Robert Nott | The New Mexican

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Photo by:

Location, cost, and convenience are three reasons New Mexicans should take advantage of the Santa Fe Higher Education Center, supporters of the center said Thursday during an open house on the campus of the Santa Fe Community College.

The center — financed with \$12 million from a summer 2010 bond election — opened this semester in the west wing of the community college with three educational partners working with the community college to offer students the chance to earn a bachelor's or master's degree.

The other three founding partners are New Mexico Highlands University, The University of New Mexico's Extended University [online courses], and the Institute of

American Indian Arts.

The open house gave prospective students the chance to learn more about the center, slated to expand once a new campus is built on property adjacent to the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. It is scheduled to open in the autumn of 2013.

While the roughly 50 staff members, teachers, and students present at the open house displayed a collective sense of enthusiasm for the project, organizers confirmed that the building of the permanent center may be delayed.

Sheila Ortego, president of the community college, said the state's Higher Education Department — which approves capital construction or remodeling projects — has voiced concerns regarding the building of the new campus.

"They feel there are questions we need to answer, but they haven't been specific other than to say (they relate to) legal and policy issues," Ortego said.

Larry Behrens, public information officer for the state's Department of Education, could not offer details on the situation, but wrote in an email that the PED will work with the center "to make sure it is what's best for the students while still satisfying the requirements of the law."

Ortego said she hopes to request a hearing in December to gain clarification regarding these issues. If the matter is not cleared up soon, the center may not open in 2013, she said.

Asked if it's possible that the snafu could stop the center from opening at all on a new site, Ortego said, "We're not

giving up."

The center plans to hold a ceremonial ground breaking in December, she said.

The planned Higher Education Center will provide enrollment services, financial aid offices, academic advisers, computer labs, and classroom and tutorial space in a roughly 35,000-square-foot facility near the Siringo Road entrance to the Santa Fe University of Art and Design. Each participating university provides and pays for its own teachers and staff.

For now, 540 students have already enrolled in the interim center at the community college — 330 with UNM and 210 with Highlands. IAIA did not offer any classes this semester.

Among the offerings are classes in business administration, criminal justice, engineering, nursing, and education.

James Fries, Highlands president, said Thursday that the center provides an opportunity for locals to get an education near home.

"The majority of college students are no longer the 18- to 22-year-olds we traditionally think of," he said. "The majority are working adults who are place-bound because of their family ties, their jobs, or other factors that root them to one spot. The Higher Education Center presents an opportunity for working adults to complete a bachelor's or master's degree while meeting their family or work-related responsibilities."

William Rohrbach, 49, said that is why he was attending the open house. He's been taking art classes at the community college and expects to earn his associate's degree there soon. He has family obligations in Santa Fe, and while acknowledging he could take the Rail Runner to Albuquerque and then bike to The University of New Mexico campus, he prefers the convenience of pursuing a bachelor's degree in Santa Fe.

Victoria Rivera, 20, and Lydia Berlin, 22, are both community college grads who transitioned into the social work program offered by Highlands at the interim center. Both said they are satisfied with the way things are working there. Rivera, who has a child, said she didn't see how she could otherwise pursue a bachelor's degree.

Jerónimo Dominguez, vice provost of UNM's Extended University, told the assembly of visitors that the planned permanent center will provide financial and logistic convenience for New Mexicans and therefore "build a better educated work force for the state."

But, he emphasized, "We need help ... if we don't rally and get behind this project, it may not be coming as soon as we'd like."

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