

Proposition 05-11/12

Sponsors: Herrera, Hubbell, A & S; Miller, Library; Oretskin, Bus

Title: A Memorial to Endorse the Proposed Mission, Goals, Objectives and
Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience at NMSU-Las Cruces

Proposed Committee: Scholastic Affairs

Assigned Committee:

RATIONALE

The Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning across the Baccalaureate Experience (CASL-BE), is requesting that the Faculty Senate pass a memorial to endorse the Baccalaureate mission, goals, objectives and the Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience, as follows:

Whereas the mission, goals and objectives for the baccalaureate experience were created through a process that engaged the campus community through 39 faculty meetings, 5 student meetings and 3 staff meetings;

Whereas identified learning objectives cross all disciplines and reflect common values across the academic community;

Whereas identified learning objectives are achieved through a combination of academic and co-curricular experiences;

Whereas the entire campus community is responsible for developing students who strive to attain the identified objectives;

Whereas the identified learning objectives support the land-grant mission of the institution;

Whereas the Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience can guide students in understanding the value and expectations of higher education;

Whereas this is not dependent upon an increase in faculty workload;

And whereas the Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience communicates shared responsibility for learning;

Therefore let it be resolved that the Faculty Senate of New Mexico State University endorses the Baccalaureate Mission, Goals, Objectives and Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience.

Background Information

In anticipation for the reaccreditation site-visit by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association in April of 2008, a team of faculty, administrators and staff developed a plan to revitalize assessment on our campus. The HLC site-visit team responded positively to the plan, indicating that if NMSU followed through on the plan, it could be a national model for effective assessment and institutional quality assurance. One component of that plan was the development of institutional-wide learning outcomes at the baccalaureate level.

In the year following the site-visit (2008-09), Shelly Stovall was given release time to engage the campus community in discussions to identify shared goals for student learning. In 39 departmental faculty meetings, 5 student meetings, and 3 staff meetings, the campus community was asked to identify what graduates of the institution, regardless of their major, should be able to do, know, and/or value. The results of this process are the proposed Baccalaureate mission, goals, and objectives.

In Fall 2009, NMSU sent a team to the HLC Assessment Academy in an effort to ensure progress on commitments made to the HLC during the site-visit. This team consisted of faculty, staff, and administrators (Tim Hand, Ricardo Jacquez, Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza, Shelly Stovall, and Theresa Westbrook). At the Academy roundtable, the discussion of this team turned to "What does a degree from NMSU represent? What does it stand for? How can we communicate that to students?" Ultimately, the team determined that it would be beneficial to find a way to communicate to students what a higher education was all about, and specifically, what an education from NMSU is all about. As a result, this team developed the Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience from the Baccalaureate goals and objectives. (This same team is now the CASL-BE, with the exception of Ricardo Jacquez who is no longer available to serve on the committee.)

The Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience is at the center of this effort, and serves as a 'roadmap' for students. It was designed for a student audience, but is intended to serve both students and faculty – to communicate expectations and opportunities for the undergraduate experience. It is intended to communicate shared responsibility for learning as well as convey an intentionality for learning to students. It conceivably helps students not only to identify what they have gained from their education, but to communicate that to potential employers or for continuing education opportunities. This document also confirms that knowledge and skills transfer across experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

There is no expectation that all faculty, courses, and/or even programs necessarily focus on all of the learning objectives identified. Clearly some experiences will be more focused on particular outcomes. However, it is anticipated that throughout their tenure at NMSU, students will experience gains in and across these outcomes.

Finally, the Baccalaureate Experience documents demonstrate NMSU's commitment to and ownership of our unique institutional focus through both structured and unstructured learning opportunities for students. The focus and driving force is , not external. The expectations for student learning and growth were created through a 'grass-roots' process, and are owned by those who most impact students and their learning. Over the last several months, the rubric has been shared with a variety of groups and individuals, and has been met with unequivocal approval.

Endorsement of the Baccalaureate mission, goals, objectives and the Vision for the Baccalaureate Experience does not require any additional time or efforts on the part of faculty. The assessment of these outcomes will happen at the institutional level. Graduating students will be interviewed and/or asked to participate in focus groups. The CASL-BE will be responsible for overseeing the assessment, and will strive to include student assistance in the implementation of the assessment when possible.

The CASL-BE anticipates reporting the findings of the assessment to the Faculty Senate annually.

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