



Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost

Vice Provost for Outreach and Engagement

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 13, 2010

TO: President Barbara Couture and Provost Jay Jordan

FROM: Paul Gutierrez, Chair of NMSU Service Learning and Civic Engagement Workgroup

RE: Briefing Regarding Service Learning at NMSU

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Gutierrez', written over the 'FROM' line of the memorandum.

The NMSU Service Learning and Civic Engagement Workgroup (the SL Group) extends a warm welcome to you and your family to the Land of Enchantment. The SL Group is comprised of faculty and staff from various NMSU departments, along with community members from non-profits, K-12, local government and businesses. We need your support to establish an Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement at NMSU.

The SL Group was formally organized in April of 2009 with the primary goal of institutionalizing service learning and civic engagement into the core mission of NMSU. To achieve this goal, SL Group has prepared a draft of the strategic role and functions for the NMSU Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement, which we would like to review with you. This office will enable NMSU to be among the nation's premier universities in terms of outreach, engagement, and service to students and the people of New Mexico. The services this office will provide are consistent with NMSU's mission as a land-grant university and Hispanic-Serving Institution. The Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement will centralize all present resources so that faculty, students, staff, and the public are aware of the many services provided.

It is imperative that NMSU position itself to be competitive, on both a state and national level, for the projected new infusion of dollars to support all forms of public service. At NMSU, there are already several ongoing service learning programs. For example, AmeriCorps students are embedded in NMSU-Alamogordo, NMSU-Grants, and several local agencies. The renewed focus on civic engagement and public service at the federal level and our Promotion and Tenure Policy provide an unprecedented opportunity to establish an NMSU Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement. We recognize the current budget challenges facing NMSU. However, this window of opportunity to better serve our students and communities will be paid back several times over in increased enrollment and retention. In the short term, members of the SL Group are committed to developing the necessary resources to support the NMSU Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement.

Members of the SL Group would like to meet with both of you to provide an overview of current and future efforts for service learning and civic engagement at NMSU. We need your support as we move forward to achieve our goals. We sincerely hope that you will consider establishing the Office of Service Learning and Civic Engagement a priority of your Administration. I will contact your office to schedule an appointment with the SL Group. Thank you.