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DATE: September 16, 2013

TO: All Faculty, Students and Staff

FROM: Garrey Carruthers, President 

SUBJECT: National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week

New Mexico State University is proud to be a federally recognized Hispanic-Serving Institution and joins other universities across the nation in celebrating National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week, Sept. 15-21.

NMSU has been a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities since 1989. More than 20 years ago, that organization led the effort to convince the U.S. Congress to formally designate campuses with high Hispanic enrollment as Hispanic-Serving Institutions. National Hispanic-Serving Institutions Week recognizes the important role these colleges and universities play in our country.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions are accredited, nonprofit universities, which offer degrees and have a full-time undergraduate student population that is at least 25 percent Hispanic. At NMSU's Las Cruces campus, approximately 47 percent of our students are Hispanic, and that population has grown by nearly 24 percent in the past decade.

Fueled by a growth in the numbers of Hispanic, African-American and American Indian students, a majority of NMSU's undergraduate student population has represented minority groups since 2001. Today, NMSU is routinely recognized as one of the top universities for Hispanics, Native Americans and other minority populations and ranked as one of the top degree-producing institutions for many of those same groups.

As we celebrate NMSU's 125th anniversary this year, it's also worthy to note the university's first Hispanic graduate, Fabian Garcia, was part of NMSU's inaugural graduating class of 1894. He also went on to earn a master's degree from NMSU and became the director of the college's Agricultural Experiment Station in 1913 – the first Hispanic in the nation to lead such a post. He is also widely credited for laying the groundwork for New Mexico's chile, onion and pecan industries.

New Mexico State University is where our students from all backgrounds and all ethnicities are able to find themselves, who they are and what they want to be. NMSU transforms lives through discovery, and diversity has always played a key role in that. In short, NMSU is all about discovery.