

Climate Study Action Team Report Executive Summary

Prepared for the NMSU Executive Team
November 18, 2020



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CSAT Executive Summary

Background

In fall 2019, NMSU employees were invited to participate in a climate study – a survey through which they could share their perceptions of the strengths and challenges of the NMSU system as a workplace. When results were compiled, identified strengths included workgroup, strategic, supervision, and employee engagement elements; generally, respondents understood NMSU’s vision, mission, and strategic plan and their place in it. They also indicated that they felt supported by their supervisors and able to cooperate effectively with their coworkers.

Identified challenges included trust, internal communication, and pay and benefits. In an effort to better understand these issues, and to determine means to address them, a Climate Study Action Team (CSAT) was formed in early 2020. Composed of representatives from across the university, including executive leadership, faculty, and staff, the CSAT has worked together since March 2020 to prepare the information included in this report.

Three sub-teams were formed, each dedicated to one of the primary challenges noted above: [trust](#), [internal communication](#), and [pay and benefits](#). Each sub-team collaborated to explore their assigned issue, meet with individuals and groups who could provide more information, and draft a set of concerns and recommendations salient to their topic. Each team created a stand-alone report, with detailed considerations and recommendations of their topic; these reports are available as appendices to this document.

Beyond the initial survey, CSAT and the sub-teams utilized listening sessions, internal communication analyses and conversations with campus leaders to build nuanced understandings of the campus climate. Through regular meetings, CSAT and the sub-teams assessed trust, communication and pay and benefits, built connections with a wide range of campus constituencies, recommended short-term actions and identified opportunities for subsequent action.

The actionable opportunities below are the culmination of CSAT and CSAT sub-team activities – these recommendations cross boundaries between the trust, communication, and compensation and benefits components. While this is not an exhaustive list of all that can be done to address NMSU’s workplace challenges, CSAT members feel it is a good place to begin this work.

Actionable Opportunities

Grow workspaces that promote trust, communication, equity and excellence through:

1. Comprehensive, ongoing training for managers and aspiring leaders, including:
 - Equity-centering, prioritizing NMSU’s history, HSI- and MSI- status.
 - Trust-building best practices in management and communication.
 - Eliminating retaliation and connecting employees with ELR.
 - Empathic, supportive leadership.
 - Building intramural collaborations and partnership.

2. Building and augmenting foundations for accessible, transparent communication by prioritizing:
 - Communication channels that are bilingual/multilingual and accessible in a variety of formats (i.e. online, audio, visual, asynchronous.)
 - Up-to-date, consistent and transparent, to include breaking news and grounded in usage data.
 - Responsive channels that allow multidirectional communication (I.e. Town Halls, skip-level communication opportunities.)
3. Clearly planning and articulating pay structures, advancement pathways and benefits through:
 - Publishing plans for strategic, incremental improvements in employee salaries to include:
 - Equity and market analyses;
 - Merit pay criteria opportunities for pay adjustments based on new tasks or roles;
 - Cost of living adjustments.
 - Analyzing, articulating and enhancing existing benefits to maximize health, participation and efficiency.

Action Items Completed

- Request for employee access to Aggie Health & Wellness. **Approved.**
- Request for employee access to Cupboard Mobile Food Bank. **Approved.**
- Partnership with Marketing & Communication on development of the CSAT website.
- Eleven focus group sessions were held in June, 2020.
- Follow-up surveys (pay/benefits and climate) drafted.
- Recommendation made by the Pay and Benefits sub-team to allow employees to seek medical services from the Aggie Health Center without having to use their sick leave. **Approved.**
- Team recommended to the COVID-19 Rapid Response team that a dashboard be developed to track campus activity related to COVID. **Recommendation accepted.**

Moving Forward

The following next steps are recommended to keep the momentum toward university excellence in the areas identified.

1. Effectively and enthusiastically announce the outcomes of the Climate Action Team
2. Establish and maintain an ongoing Climate *Action* Team.
3. Develop an Action plan to ensure improvements are recognized and can be sustained.
4. Implement the recommended actions presented in the reports and others such as:
 - a. Walk in my Aggie Boots.
 - b. Continued enhancement of the United/*Unidos* website.
5. Conduct follow-up engagement/climate survey for faculty and staff.
6. Partner with the Vice President of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity to develop a Social Justice statement.
7. Participate in the 2021 Great Colleges to Work For and/or The Best Colleges and Universities to work for program.

CSAT Membership

Name	Department	Position Title
Ryan Armendariz	Security-DACC	Senior Security Officer
Julia Barello	Department of Art	Academic Head
Julie Benard Cadena	ICT Technology Support Center	Manager, Enterprise PC
Becky Corran	Humanities and Social Sciences-DACC	Department Chair
Rosa De La Torre Burmeister	TRIO Upward Bound GISD/LCPS Program	Program Director
Maura Gonsior	Employee and Labor Relations	Director
Becki Graham	Arrowhead Center	Senior Program Manager; adjunct faculty
Manal Hamzeh	Gender and Sexuality Studies	Professor
Gena Jones	Human Resources Services	Assistant Vice-President
Supapid "BB" Khantee	Admissions Advisor	International Student and Scholar Services
Jack Kirby	Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management	Assistant Director
Laura Madson	Psychology	Professor
Keith Mandabach	Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management	Professor
Robert Moreno	Extension Family and Consumer Sciences	Academic Head
Sheri Pettit	College of Arts and Sciences	Executive Assistant
Sonia White	Virtual Learning and Instructional Technology-DACC	Multiple Media Specialist

Resources

CSAT Website

[2019 Employee Engagement Survey](#)

[Focus Group Session Summary](#)

Sub-Team Reports

(Summary reports provided in this document, complete reports are in separate attachments)

Trust
Communication
Pay and Benefits

Trust Sub-Team Report

Membership

Julia Barello, Academic Head, Department of Art

Maura Gonsior, Director of Employee and Labor Relations

Manal Hamzeh, Professor, Gender & Sexuality Studies

Jack Kirby, Assistant Director, Environmental Health Safety & Risk Management

Sheri Pettit, Executive Assistant, College of Arts and Sciences

Objectives

NMSU's Survey of Employees Engagement (2019)¹ showed low scores on the organization's internal communication and highlighted significant concerns of NMSU's employees' perceptions of the workplace climate. Given that trust is an indicator of both internal communication and perception of workplace climate, the Climate Study Action Team (CSAT) charged this Subcommittee to,

1. Explore employee's trust and lack of trust in NMSU's current work environment.
2. Propose low-or no-cost actions to begin improving trust in NMSU's work environment.

Tools and Sources of Data

To approach the above two objectives, the members of this subcommittee drew on:

- 10 conversations (60-120 minutes each or about 15-20 hours of listening) with Employee Council, HR Connect, AFSCME, Faculty Senate, Diversity Council, and other NMSU constituents. They asked the participants to respond to the following prompt, "Please describe what a work environment of trust looks like to you."
- Observations and conversations with colleagues about the impact of the current coronavirus pandemic on trust and internal communication at NMSU.
- Insights gained from public communications, including COVID-related town hall e-meetings, executive leadership mass emails and hotline announcements.
- Related findings of the External Review Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Organizational Structure and Strategy (2020).²

Each subcommittee member took notes during the above encounters to use in the analysis. Notes will be destroyed as soon as this report is finalized.

Data Analysis

Over a period of six months, the members of the subcommittee collaborated on the analysis process in weekly meetings and report drafting and redrafting sessions. They also consulted with a number of key NMSU constituents on several drafts of this report, including the Faculty Senate, Employee Council and the larger CSAT committee, and the Diversity Council.

¹ NMSU's Survey of Employees Engagement (SEE) (2019), the Institute for Organizational Excellence, University of Texas, Austin. <https://president.nmsu.edu/focusing-on-our-workplace-climate-survey-results/>

² External Review Report on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Organizational Structure and Strategy (2020) by Archie Ervin, Paulette Granberry Russell and Jozi De Leon. <https://president.nmsu.edu/files/2020/05/NMSU-Final-Report-External-Review-Full-Report.pdf>

Major Insights

Trust and Mistrust

Based on their own lived experiences, the participants in the focus groups shared several perspectives on issues of trust or the lack of it in their workplace, particularly with immediate supervisors and/or with the new executive leadership (since June 2018).

Here are few of those perspectives:

- Trust is;
 - Built on
 - Consistent communication and clear expectations at all levels in the institutional structure.
 - Confidence that your needs and best interests are being taken into consideration.
 - Earned through service excellence, accountability, productivity and respect which will engender mutual commitment with transparency and reciprocity.
 - Fostered in collaborations, teamwork and genuine shared governance and decision making.
 - Built over years but it might be destroyed in minutes. Trust is like paper; once it is crumpled it will never be the same. You can flatten the paper, but it will never be perfect again.
- Mistrust is;
 - A result of:
 - Micromanaging personnel, slow or lack of response to microaggression, harassment, conflicts and tensions between personnel. Distrust decreases cooperation increases costs, slows work/production, strains relationships, inhibits teamwork, leads to workplace problems.
 - Dictated, inconsistent, contradictory and unclear orders rather than decisions that are based on reciprocity, balanced conversations and transparent procedures.
 - Deceptions that might lead to fear and anxiety.
 - Self-serving actions rather than shared-success actions.
 - Doubt, which leads to suspicion, which leads to testing, which leads to fear, which leads to separation.
 - Created by a lack of capacity to understand the implication of one's decisions/actions towards others, especially those who are in lower positions in the institutional hierarchy or are part of one or several marginalized social groups.

Trust Indicators

- Transparency and maintaining commitments.
- Respectful, caring and productive relationships between employees.
- Speed of progress, financial sustainability, and achievement of organizational objectives. Organizations that are bankrupt of trust are highly likely to fail.
- Employees' perceptions of an organization's internal communication as "reasonable, candid, and helpful" (NMSU's SEE, 2019, p. 7). Trust is an indicator of supervisors walking their talk.

- Work Ethics and Harassment (NMSU SEE, 2019, p. 9).
- Supervisors' feedback and middle- and upper-management communication.

It is important to highlight that the new Town Hall e-meetings, initiated in March of 2020, for some time, cultivated trust in the executive administration. Their co-leadership, expression of empathy and transparency engender trust with the goal to improve our campus climate.

Recommended Actions to Build a Trust-Based Workplace and Improve Campus Climate

Based on the above insights, we recommend that NMSU prioritize building a trust-oriented campus at every level of the organizational hierarchy, between individuals, small groups and NMSU's bigger community by committing to at least the following areas, 1) trust boosting initiatives and programs, 2) system-wide infrastructure of communication, 3) Trustworthy Employee Related Policies & Procedures, 4) Accountable Leadership and 5) Final Thoughts: Trust within LEADS 2025.

Trust Boosting Initiatives & Programs

Committing resources to systemic transformations via targeted initiatives that support clear actions committed to equity, inclusion, and diversity. This should include:

- An urgent examination of NMSU's systemic structures that erase NMSU's history and legacy of inequities and exclusion of Native Americans and people of color.
- An intentional and open conversation about the historic meanings of NMSU as a land-grant and Hispanic/Minority-Serving institution. The aim of such a conversation should be to revise the dominant narrative about NMSU and the reshaping of its identity to be able to serve, not only enroll, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and other marginalized intersecting ways of being and knowing.
- Robust academic programs, faculty teaching and researching NM's history and its peoples and elevating the importance of NMSU as a Borderlands higher education institution.

System-Wide Infrastructure of Multi-Directional Communication

- Build system-wide communication infrastructure based on robust mechanisms of multi-directional communication that are:
 - Transparent, reliable and consistent.
 - Open in all directions of communication, circular, horizontal and top-down but especially bottom-to-top.
 - Clearly name *trust* as a major driving ethical value to the identity of NMSU and ways of acting to all constituents.
 - Bilingual (Spanish and English) and multimodal.
 - Available to employees whose schedules and job duties don't accommodate ready access.
 - Accessible to people with disabilities and those in the rural areas of NM.
- Maintain the town hall format as needed and emphasize transparency, inclusiveness, collaboration and consistency.

Trustworthy Employee Related Policies & Procedures

- Encourage a movement towards partnership and collaboration.

- Build skip-level engagement opportunities; which facilitate interactions between an employee and their supervisor's manager, to open lines of communication and create stronger bonds between employees at all levels.
- Strengthen the capacity of the offices of Institutional Equity and Employee and Labor Relations to play a greater role in facilitating a fair, safe and healthy workplace for all.
- Recognize the nuances of trust in a multitude of interactions within a hierarchical structure and amongst individuals with power differential.
- Establish mandatory professional development programs with an emphasis on leadership skills, building trust, power differentials and social justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity. Such programs will aim to:
 - Facilitate collaborative systems and process improvements to include the interface between units.
 - Prioritize service excellence throughout the institution.
 - Encourage collaboration and teamwork rooted in creativity, excellence and ethical reflexive practices.
- Protect employees from retaliation, fear and uncertainty by providing safe and robust self-advocacy tools/mechanisms for grievances, mediation, and training—utilize NMSU's Center for Learning and Professional Development.

Accountable Leadership

- Maintaining clear public communication taken up during the pandemic transparent while paying attention to consistent and clear messaging at all times and through all venues and modes of communication.
- Providing programs to:
 - Prepare courageous leadership with the integrity and will to create a dignifying and healthy workplace.
 - Advance empathetic, inclusive and employee supportive leadership.
- Building robust mechanisms/tools for employees to hold appointees in the middle and upper administration accountable on their performance to:
 - Give periodic feedback or express a vote of no confidence of any appointee in the middle and upper administration.
 - Share outcomes of collective evaluations of any appointee of the middle and upper administration to any or all NMSU's governing boards and councils, NMSU's Board of Regents, as well as, state representatives and legislators.
 - Provide feedback on immediate supervisors.
- Building a more comprehensive shared governance system by:
 - Opening data repositories and data analysis to all constituents including budgetary information and decision making and equity and diversity status.
 - Engaging the memorials and propositions of the Faculty Senate and recommendations of the Employee Council in a timely and transparent approach.
- Developing an administrative and academic leadership mentoring program for all NMSU employees.
- Mandate a specific upper administration office to conduct an on-going climate study led by NMSU qualitative faculty researchers who are already doing similar or related studies.

While LEADS 2025 discusses excellence and leadership, there is no mention of the role of trust in achieving excellence by all or as an element of effective leadership. It is of utmost importance that, if included in Vision 2025, this statement provides tangible outcomes.

- Infuse the above actions in every goal of LEADS 2025 on all levels of the organizational structure.
- Incorporate a statement of trust in LEADS 2025 (Goal 4.2 or 4.6).

Proposed text:

NMSU is committed to create the conditions and provide resources to build a strong trust culture that is understood, valued and participated in by everyone.

Communication Sub-Team Report

Internal Communication Task Force Members

Supapid “BB” Khantee, Admissions Advisor, International Student and Scholar Services

Becki Graham, Adjunct Faculty/Program Manager, Arrowhead Center

Rosa De La Torre-Burmeister, Director, TRIO Upward Bound GISD/LCPS Program

Robert Moreno, Department Head, Family and Consumer Sciences

Sonia White, Multimedia Specialist, NMSU-Doña Ana Community College

Introduction

Digital news and social media mandates an era of timely and accurate communication. Internal and external communities want and need immediate information. As such, organizations must develop consistent, effective platforms that address this need of “instant news gratification” in a manner that not only reduces duplication, but also is concise and precise.

To respond to the need for exact, on-the-spot data, organizations must reposition themselves by re-evaluating current communication methods. The structure of new channels must deliver accurate information instantaneously, be customizable, and be easily disbursed. Effective employee communication must embrace:

- Clarity (clearly spell out the idea or message; determine what you want to do or get out of your communication; use the proper tone)
- Attention (receiver’s attention should be drawn towards the message; be organized; use visuals and stories)
- Feedback (recipient understands the message in the manner the sender intended; listen to audiences, include open-ended questions as communication is not one-way)
- Formal or informal communication (appropriately use one or the other to achieve desired results)
- Adjust medium to fit audience (customize to employee needs and preferences; follow trends; track usage of new platforms)
- Consistency (consistent with policies, plans, programs, and objectives of the organization)
- Timeliness (news should be shared with employees before they hear it from other sources; proper timing of dissemination will support in implementing plans)
- Adequacy (adequate information is essential to take proper steps and make action plans)

Executive Summary

As a system, NMSU has grown and will continue to grow, and so must the way information is distributed and consumed – particularly during these unprecedented times. Employees, students, and stakeholders respond to and rely on various forms of information delivery, making internal communication (daily emails, newsletters, and hotlines; weekly administrative communiques; biweekly town halls; monthly council meetings; departmental check-ins; and individual one on ones) seem overwhelming and ineffective.

NMSU’s Climate Survey of 2019 revealed that internal communication at NMSU is an area of concern for the institution. Research of NMSU’s current communication practices revealed that

communications inform, but do not effectively communicate with employees. The communication channels are diverse, decentralized, unfeasible, and/or incorrect and all have ineffective approaches.

Page 6 of the Survey of Employment Engage Executive Summary defines internal communication as “the internal communication construct captures employees’ perceptions of whether communication in the organization is reasonable, candid and helpful. Lower scores suggest that employees feel information does not arrive in a timely fashion and is difficult to find... [this] measures the degree to which employees view communication with peers, supervisors and other parts of the organization as functional and effective.”

The three primary statements posed to climate study respondents to determine the internal communication construct score included:

- The communication channels I must go through at work are reasonable.
- My work atmosphere encourages open and honest communication.
- The communications I receive at work are timely and informative.

Results of this area of concern mandate that NMSU’s Leadership Team reexamine the system’s communication platforms and provide a venue that ensures that every employee from each campus, program, and department understand how and when to use them. This report will serve as a framework to start that process.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to define internal communication for the system, identify challenges, evaluate current communication channels and their efficacy, provide recommendations, and pinpoint key university resources and departments that are essential to the success of this initiative.

Goals

Develop and maintain a more robust communications structure to disseminate institutional information quickly and clearly that will:

- Break down organizational silos
- Increase cross-departmental collaboration and teamwork
- Enhance day-to-day operations
- Provide first-rate customer service
- Reconnect with groups across the University system
- Identify, share, and celebrate news
- Create two-way dialogue between employees and administration
- Improve employee productivity, employee experience, employee engagement, and employee retention
- Demonstrate and foster NMSU’s positive environment

Objectives

- Reinforce the purpose for system-wide communication
- Develop trust and transparency from all directions
- Build platforms that respect the needs of each audience

- Become responsive to various opinions and points of view
- Promote internal unity that embraces a culture of change
- Support NMSU’s mission, vision, and values
- Align with NMSU system strategic goals

Key Audiences

NMSU’s internal communication sets the tone for the entire community. High-level communication must be effective and efficient for each stakeholder, including internal (faculty, staff, undergraduate/graduate/professional students, alumni, board members) and external (community, parents, prospective students/faculty/staff, donors, media, public officials, visitors) stakeholders.

Defining Internal Communication at NMSU

Internal communication at NMSU refers to the group of processes and tools used for effective information flow and collaboration among the institution’s employees and administration.

Concerns, Actions, Collaborations

CONCERN 1: INEFFECTIVE AND INEFFICIENT METHODS OF COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.1: PRIORITIZE SELECT CHANNELS, BASED ON USE AND EFFECTIVENESS, WHILE RETIRING OTHER CHANNELS

- **CSAT Action Taken**
CSAT Internal Communication Task Force, Marketing and Communications, and the Center for Learning and Professional Development created and is distributing a communication channel list during New Employee Orientations.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration needs to continue with Executive Leadership, CSAT Internal Communication Task Force, Marketing and Communications, Center for Learning and Professional Development, Department Heads, and Employee Council.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.2: ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN A WEBSITE WITH EMPLOYEES IN MIND

- **CSAT Action Taken**
Creation of the “Unidos. United.” website (united.nmsu.edu) is in process. See Appendix Item E.
- **Collaboration**
The CSAT Internal Communications Task Force is leading this initiative in collaboration with Marketing and Communications and Employee and Labor Relations. This Aggie-centered website highlights pages focused on Crimson Values, Crimson Community, Aggie Heroes, Aggie Forever, and Aggie Voice. Maintenance of the website will be a strong partnership among CSAT, Human Resource Services, and Marketing and Communications.

CONCERN 2: LACK OF TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 2.1: ENSURE CLEAR, CONSISTENT MESSAGING ACROSS COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

- **CSAT Action Taken**

Employee focus group sessions were scheduled and a feedback/input form was developed by Human Resources and CSAT members to obtain feedback on return to campus and campus climate survey areas of concern—trust, internal communication, and compensation and benefits. Six open sessions for faculty and staff were scheduled and five individual focus group sessions for the boards of our employee groups, including Faculty Senate, AFSME Union, Employee Council, the Diversity Council and the University Administrative Council (UAC) to gather input.

- Collaboration
This requires collaboration from Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, Department Heads, Supervisors; Human Resources; Center for Learning and Professional Development; Marketing and Communications; Faculty Council; and Employee Council.

CONCERN 3: OUTDATED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.1: CULL NMSU’S WEBSITE OF OBSOLETE AND REDUNDANT PAGES

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Marketing and Communications, Executive Leadership, and Departments.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.2: UPDATE EXISTING AND CREATE NEW WEB PAGES WITH COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY IN MIND

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Marketing and Communications, Executive Leadership, and Departments.

CONCERN 4: INSUFFICIENT MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 4.1: AVOID ENGLISH-ONLY COMMUNICATION

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Marketing and Communications, Executive Leadership, Departments, and Divisions, and Department of Languages and Linguistics.

CONCERN 5: UNTIMELINESS

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 5.1: BE TRANSPARENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENTS OR THE LACK THEREOF

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration

Collaboration needs to include Marketing and Communications, Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, Department Heads, Deans, Managers, and Human Resources.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 5.2: PREPARE TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

- **CSAT Action Taken**
No action taken.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Marketing and Communications, Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, Department Heads, Deans, Managers, and Human Resources.

CONCERN 6: INCOMPLETE, INACCURATE, OR CONFLICTING INFORMATION

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 6.1: ENCOURAGE INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION

- **CSAT Action Taken**
To assist our employees, the CSAT Internal Communication Sub-Team has created a comprehensive document of NMSU communication channels and their mediums, target audiences, purposes, and language(s). See Page 10 for more details. This document is available to new employees during the New Employee Orientation and will be available on the new NMSU “Unidos. United” website.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Departments, Divisions, and Marketing and Communication.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 6.2: CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF OPEN FEEDBACK

- **CSAT Action Taken**
No action taken.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Departments, Divisions, Marketing and Communication.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 6.3: PROMOTE AND PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOCUSED ON COMMUNICATION

- **CSAT Action Taken**
No action taken.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, Departments, Divisions, Supervisors, Faculty, Staff, Students, Human Resources, Center for Learning and Professional Development, and Marketing and Communications.

CONCERN 7: INSENSITIVE AND/OR DISMISSIVE TONE

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 7: A FUNDAMENTAL LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM FOR UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND INCORPORATED INTO EVERY POSITION HOLDING A SUPERVISORY ROLE

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Center for Learning and Professional Development, Human Resources, Employee Labor Relations, and Supervisors.

CONCERN 8: FAVORITISM IN THE HIRING PROCESS

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 8: AN EMPLOYEE SELECTION PROCESS SHOULD BE UTILIZED IN ORDER TO REVIEW THE IDENTIFIED CANDIDATES BEFORE ADDING TO A COMMITTEE

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, College Deans, Department Heads, and Supervisors.

Alignment to NMSU Leads 2025 Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: BUILD A ROBUST UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Objective 4.1: Be a recognized leader in valuing the inclusion of diverse participants and in recognizing diversity as an asset among minority serving, land grant, and space grant institutions.

Objective 4.2: Cultivate faculty and staff excellence.

Objective 4.3: Establish operational excellence through a metric-driven, service-oriented approach.

Objective 4.4: Identify grand challenges and mobilize the University system to executive effective solutions.

Recommended Communication Channels

NMSU Communication Channels should be clustered by mediums, evaluated annually, provided at New Employee Orientations and made available to employees on the newly created NMSU “Unidos. United.” website.

Resources

LINKS

- Survey of Employment Engagement: New Mexico State University, Executive Summary, 2019. Report ID: 1524; pg. 6.
- Employee Satisfaction Survey; <https://oia.nmsu.edu/surveys-2/>
- Focusing on our workplace – Climate Survey results; <https://president.nmsu.edu/focusing-on-our-workplace-climate-survey-results/>
- Points of Pride; https://nmsu.edu/about_nmsu/index.html
- Peer Institutions, <https://oia.nmsu.edu/data-reports/peer-institutions/>

DEPARTMENTS

- Marketing and Communications
- Center for Learning and Professional Development

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Pay & Benefits Sub-Team Report

Compensation and Benefits Task Force Members

Rosa De La Torre-Burmeister, Director, TRIO Upward Bound GISD/LCPS Program

Laura Madson, Professor, Psychology, College of Arts & Sciences

Ryan Armendariz, Security Officer, DACC Facilities Support

Julie Benard Cadena, Manager, ICT Technology Support Center

Keith Mandabach, Professor, HRTM, College of ACES

Introduction

The Compensation and Benefits sub team explored ways to:

- Improve compensation policy for faculty and staff
- Better communicate benefits, incentives, and rewards to NMSU employees
- Develop meaningful benefits, incentives and rewards for employees via vendor and community partnerships

Executive Summary

NMSU is the land-grant institution of New Mexico, a state with historical and contemporary relationships with communities of color and a nationally recognized leader in access to higher education and social mobility. As such, the success of the NMSU system relies heavily on being able to attract and retain talented employees from diverse backgrounds. This objective is consistent with LEADS 2025 Goal 4 Build a Robust University System.

In order to do so, NMSU must offer a competitive compensation and benefits package. Given that the 2019 Climate Survey concluded that compensation and benefits were two of the three areas of concern for the institution, it is clear that NMSU must make significant improvements in compensation and benefits in order to make progress toward Goal 4. Acknowledging that improving employee compensation is a long-term issue which Provost Parker and Dr. Jones are already addressing, NMSU must have exceptional benefits in order to recruit and retain the best employees.

Purpose

Examine NMSU's compensation policies and compare NMSU's benefits packages to those of our peer institutions in order to provide an informed action plan to NMSU's Executive Leadership that will contribute to the retention and recruitment of excellent, diverse employees.

Goals

Provide creative approaches for NMSU Executive Leadership to enhance its current and future compensation and benefit plans including:

- Reiterating the need for NMSU Executive Leadership to articulate a realistic plan to improve employee compensation over time
- Providing various methods to improve internal communication with current and future employees regarding existing benefits

- Developing partnerships with community organizations, private businesses, and existing vendors to provide low- or no-cost opportunities to expand and enhance current employees' benefits
- Creating platforms for open dialogue between employees, supervisors, and Human Resources regarding current policies and practices
- Providing straightforward and accessible procedures for modifying employee compensation as employees take on new tasks, skills, or roles
- Rewarding top performers based on transparent and consistent criteria of merit and standardized procedures for determining the type and amount of reward
- Articulating consistent and transparent policies regarding employee classification, compensation, and benefits that remain flexible as a tool to incentivize and reward excellent work and hire/retain excellent personnel

Objectives

- Review current compensation policies
- Review existing NMSU employee benefits
- Compare benefits packages offered by NMSU's peer institutions to obtain ideas
- Identify ways to improve employee satisfaction with existing benefits

Key Audiences

NMSU's compensation and benefits is one of the main components in recruitment and retention of current and future faculty, staff, and undergraduate/graduate/professional students.

Defining Compensation, Benefits

- Compensation refers to wages paid by employers to employees in exchange for work.
- Benefits are the non-financial compensation provided to an employee as part of the employment contract.

Concerns, Actions, Collaborations

CONCERN 1: IMPROVE EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.1: ARTICULATE A CLEAR PLAN FOR MAKING STRATEGIC, INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN STAFF COMPENSATION.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Human Resources, Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, College Deans, Department Heads, Employee Union, and Employee Council.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.2: USE EXTERNAL MARKET DATA TO ARTICULATE CLEAR GUIDELINES FOR SETTING COMPETITIVE AND EQUITABLE FACULTY STARTING SALARIES ACROSS COLLEGES.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration

Collaboration needs to include Human Resources, Executive Leadership, Vice Presidents, College Deans, Department Heads, Employee Union, and Employee Council.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.3: ARTICULATE CLEAR CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING AND REWARDING MERIT FOR ALL EMPLOYEES.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Provost, Human Resources, College Deans, Employee Union, Employee Council, Faculty Senate

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.4: ARTICULATE AND PUBLICIZE STRAIGHTFORWARD PROCEDURES TO ADJUST EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION AS EMPLOYEES ACQUIRE NEW SKILLS, TAKE ON NEW TASKS, OR NEW ROLES.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Provost, Human Resources, College Deans, Employee Union, Employee Council, and Faculty Senate.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 1.5: PROVIDE ALL EMPLOYEES REGULAR, AUTOMATIC COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Provost, Human Resources, College Deans, Employee Union, Employee Council, and Faculty Senate.

CONCERN 2: IMPROVE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 2.1: ANNUAL LEAVE RAISED WITH CONTINUATION OF EMPLOYMENT WITH NMSU.

To promote longevity with the university, allow the Annual leave to accumulate in higher amounts and carryover amount to increase as employment continues at NMSU. See examples from peer institutions, and UTEP/Texas Tech.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Human Resources Benefits and Executive Leadership.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 2.2: INCREASE DAYS FOR COMPASSIONATE LEAVE FROM THREE TO FIVE.

Currently, NMSU only allows for 3 days of Compassionate leave. Increase the compassion days to five.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Human Resources, and Employee Council.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 2.3: PERMIT EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES DURING WORK HOURS.

Allowing community service opportunities for those who want to participate in life giving practices or assist organizations that support NMSU's mission. Examples: Volunteer in K-12 schools, give blood four times a year (two hours maximum); organ or bone marrow donation (not to exceed five days).

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Executive Leadership, Human Resources, Employee Council, community organizations.

CONCERN 3: EXPLORE PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXISTING VENDORS TO MAXIMIZE THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.1: PARTNER WITH FINANCIAL ENTITY(S) TO OFFER WEBINARS/TRAININGS ON FINANCIAL PLANNING

Prepare NMSU employees with options for their future planning and retirement choices (e.g., tax-sheltered annuities, investment 101, planning for retirement, financial planning and development).

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include NMSU HR Benefits, local financial planning consultants to offer monthly online sessions to all NMSU employees.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.2: PARTNER WITH MEDICAL ENTITY(S) TO OFFER WEBINARS/TRAININGS ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES THAT MAY BE PRESENT TODAY.

Topics to be covered would include but not be limited to Overall health, wellness, and current health matters such as COVID-19. Educate NMSU employees with options for both mental and physical health challenges/preventions.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Human Resources Benefits, Aggie Health and Wellness Center, local medical consultants to offer monthly online sessions to NMSU employees.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.3: ENHANCE OUR CURRENT TRAINING PROGRAM TO OFFER WEBINARS/TRAININGS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

Offer multi-hour certificate programs on management development, communication development, supervisory training, dean training, Crucial conversations as well as Service Excellence Workshops.

Prepare NMSU employees for opportunities to enhance their current work situation/position.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include NMSU HR Benefits, Center for Learning & Professional Development, local training consultants to offer monthly online sessions to NMSU employees.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 3.4: COMPARE EXISTING NMSU BENEFITS TO EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY TO ELIMINATE DUPLICATION AND MAXIMIZE THE AVAILABILITY OF COMPETITIVE NMSU RESOURCES.

NMSU offers competitive benefits that are superior to or not readily available in the community (e.g., the pool) and duplicates other resources that are equal to or superior in the community (e.g., weight training and cardio machines in the Activity Center). Where possible, make NMSU's superior resources more available to employees and work collaboratively with community partners to allow employees to make better use of community resources (e.g., allow employees access to the pool independent of paying for AggieFit and create an arrangement with local gyms where employees can use their facilities for equal or reduced cost). Seek and use input from local supervisors and managers prior to making decisions about fees, hours, availability.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include NMSU Benefits, AggieFit, Activity Center, and community organizations.

CHALLENGE 4: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION ABOUT EXISTING BENEFITS

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 4.1: MAKE ALL EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL/TRAININGS AVAILABLE IN SPANISH.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Human Resources, Center for Learning & Professional Development, and Marketing and Communications.

EXECUTIVE ACTION REQUIRED 4.2: PROVIDE INCREASED AND TARGETED COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING EXISTING EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

New employees are flooded with information in their initial orientation and would benefit from follow-up communications about benefits they may not have processed during that orientation. Additionally, existing benefits become more or less important to employees over time. For example, information about maternal health benefits or retirement planning would ideally be redistributed to employees when that information is immediately relevant to their lives.

- CSAT Action Taken
No action taken.
- Collaboration
Collaboration needs to include Human Resources, Center for Learning & Professional Development, and Marketing and Communications.

Alignment to NMSU Leads 2025 Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: BUILD A ROBUST UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Objective 4.1: Be a recognized leader in valuing the inclusion of diverse participants and in recognizing diversity as an asset among minority serving, land grant, and space grant institutions.

Objective 4.2: Cultivate faculty and staff excellence.

Support faculty and staff through professional development and programs that support their financial, mental, and physical well-being

KPI: Personnel Assets (satisfaction, compensation, productivity, excellence) which includes Employee Productivity and Excellence. Providing opportunities to enhance

employee's talents and skills work to the benefit of the university and the overall Leads 2025 plan.

Objective 4.3: Establish operational excellence through a metric-driven, service-oriented approach. Develop and align human resource policies to support recruitment and retention of faculty and staff

KPI: Personnel Assets (satisfaction, compensation, productivity, excellence) which includes Employee Satisfaction. Employee satisfaction aligns with retention of excellent employees both Faculty and Staff.

Objective 4.4: Identify grand challenges and mobilize the University system to executive effective solutions.

Resources

LINKS

- <https://president.nmsu.edu/employee-climate-survey-communication-from-chancellor-and-president/>
- <https://president.nmsu.edu/files/2020/01/06b-2019-Climate-Survey-Summary.pdf>
- <https://oia.nmsu.edu/files/2015/02/Results-Data-v1.pdf>
- <https://oia.nmsu.edu/data-reports/peer-institutions/>
- <https://hr.nmsu.edu/>

DEPARTMENTS

- Human Resources
 - Employment and Compensation Services
 - Benefit Services

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