

NMSU presents State of System address

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LAS CRUCES - New Mexico State University Chancellor Dan Arvizu delivered the first State of the NMSU System virtually on Thursday, delivering remarks on how the university is handling the pandemic and also touching on partnerships that help NMSU meet its goals.

This follows the State of the University address, which was delivered by NMSU President John Floros on Monday.

The NMSU System is comprised of the main campus plus four community colleges — Doña Ana Community College and branch campuses in Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Grants.

Arvizu began the address by presenting how the university has handled COVID-19. With assistance from Ruth Johnston, NMSU vice chancellor, he noted the following of public health guidelines as well as the use of outdoor tents on campus to encourage students to remain outside, where there is better air circulation, whenever possible.

According to Arvizu, about half of the student population is enrolled completely online, with about 40% of students opting for hybrid learning.

"We're recognizing we're gonna have to live with (COVID-19)," Arvizu said.



New Mexico State University Chancellor Dan Arvizu delivers the "State of the University" address at Domenici Hall on the main campus in Las Cruces, Monday, Oct. 14, 2019.

ALGERNON D'AMMASSA/SUN-NEWS

"One thing is clear: it's a serious, serious disruption in everything from our health system to our economy, and it is important that we continue to make progress and to move forward."

Strategic partnering

Throughout the address, Arvizu highlighted the role that strategic partners play in fulfilling the goals set by the NMSU LEADS 2025 plan, which highlights four goals: enhancing student success and social mobility; elevating research and creativity; amplifying extension and outreach; building a robust university system.

Partners include both private companies and public departments such as Sodexo, New Mexico Economic Development, New Mexico Department of Health, El Paso Electric, TriCore and White Sands Missile Range.

He said that the partnerships with those in the health and medical fields have been especially important during the pandemic. Those include TriCore, Sandia National Laboratories and the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Arvizu said that without the TriCore COVID-19 testing lab that is stationed in Foster Hall, the university would have more challenges ensuring that students, staff and faculty are safe on campus.

NMSU will also be using its private partnerships to help promote sustainability, claiming that the new partnership with Sodexo will decrease the university's carbon footprint by 90%. The university OK'd an agreement with Sodexo in September for the private company to administer the Auxiliary Services unit, the Facilities and Services unit and other services.

Arvizu told the NMSU regents earlier this year that having a contract take over these services could stimulate economic growth and "catalyze the local job market and economy."

During his address Thursday, Arvizu also mentioned a partnership with Pat-

tern Energy that will construct 39 wind turbines to produce energy for the university.

Apart from private partnerships, Arvizu said it is a goal of NMSU to work closely with the state to expand economic development and connect with the community.

One big economic opportunity that Arvizu noted was Arrowhead Park, a \$24 million project that will begin construction in 2021 and promoted as a hub of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Arvizu said these partnerships and economic developments will generate

funding and opportunities for more research project for students.

"We're back to that level of ... reimagining higher education," Arvizu said. "We're looking at this from a perspective of 'how can we be better servants of the communities?' in which we've resolved that's part of our mission."

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A student walks near the Corbett Center Student Union on the NMSU campus in March 2018.

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