



Charting a Map to Student Success: Learning Outcomes



Division of Student Success

From goals to outcomes

NMSU's Division of Student Success provides programs and services for students, faculty, staff, and constituents external to NMSU that are critical to student success. Our goals outline how we support student success. Learning outcomes are derived from our goals, providing structure for defining and assessing the effectiveness of our efforts to achieve our goals.

This emphasis on learning outcomes requires a deliberate shift from focusing solely on the quantity and quality of programs and services we provide to an emphasis on what our students gain from our efforts. This entails:



- reflecting on our current practices and their effects on student success.
- using this reflection to develop desired learning outcomes for those affected by our practices.
- developing and implementing methods to assess if desired learning outcomes have been achieved.
- conducting ongoing assessment for continuous improvement of our practices.

The Division of Student Success Learning Outcomes (page 4) are intended to:

- provide an overview of how participants in our programs and services are affected by our work.
- guide staff in creating, aligning, and assessing learning outcomes for their own programs and services.
- frame our interactions with students, faculty, staff, and constituents external to NMSU as opportunities for learning.

“We are a catalyst for student success at NMSU and a recognized leader nationally.”

Vision, Mission, and Goals

NMSU Vision

By 2020, New Mexico State University will be a premier university as evidenced by demonstrated and quantifiable excellence in teaching, research and service relative to its peer institutions.

NMSU Mission

New Mexico State University is the state's land grant university, serving the educational needs of New Mexico's diverse population through comprehensive programs of education, research, extension education and public service.

Living the Vision (LTV)

1. To be nationally and internationally recognized for its academic programs at all levels (two-year, undergraduate and graduate).
2. To have a high quality, diverse faculty, staff and student body.
3. To be nationally and internationally recognized in research and creative activity.
4. To serve as an engine for economic, social, educational and community development in New Mexico.
5. To be an excellent steward of all resources dedicated to achieving the vision of the University.

DSS Vision

We are a catalyst for student success at NMSU and a recognized leader nationally.

DSS Mission

The Division of Student Success provides comprehensive and effective services through collaboration across University communities, facilitating the development of a diverse and vibrant student experience.

DSS Goals

Division of Student Success: Improve institutional effectiveness by leading innovative efforts and by effectively using human, technological, and fiscal resources to support student success (LTV 3, 5).

Faculty and Staff: Improve services for faculty and staff by providing effective, quality support and professional development (LTV 1, 5).

Recruitment: Develop and implement effective recruitment strategies and collaborate within the University and throughout the region (LTV 1, 2, 4).

Retention: Improve student learning, engagement, and satisfaction (LTV 1–5).

Assessment: Assess the effectiveness of our efforts by establishing measurable outcomes for interactions with all audiences and use the results to continuously improve our practices (LTV 1–5).

Student learning in the Division of Student Success



Establish purpose

Self-awareness and self-direction are vital to success. Students construct their own definition of success in all contexts, providing a sense of purpose for their experiences in higher education and in life.

Employ strategies

Fulfilling academic, personal, and professional goals requires skills, principles, and motivation. Students believe in their own abilities when they understand how to use their strengths to succeed.

Value involvement

Involvement in and out of the classroom leads to greater learning and development. Students engage in active participation and citizenship and make connections between their activities and their goals.

Be socially aware

Global awareness is essential to functioning effectively in the world. Students understand how experiences and surroundings influence personal development and perspective, promoting cultural empathy and social responsibility.

Think critically

Complex questions require examination from various perspectives. Students evaluate information, situations, and solutions and take purposeful action based on creative and rational thought.

Communicate effectively

Effective and respectful communication facilitates both understanding of other perspectives and being understood. Students present information, thoughts, and opinions in formal and informal settings for diverse audiences.

Division Learning Outcomes

Through involvement with the Division of Student Success, our constituents will be able to:

Students

- A. **Establish purpose:** Identify personal attributes and establish academic, personal, and professional goals.
- B. **Employ strategies:** Formulate and practice strategies for academic, personal, and professional success.
- C. **Value involvement:** Relate participation and engagement in curricular, co-curricular, and community activities to individual goals and values.
- D. **Be socially aware:** Describe personal cultural identity and analyze how it affects interactions with others and experiences within larger communities.
- E. **Think critically:** Apply qualitative, quantitative, and ethical decision-making skills to practical situations, both individually and in collaboration with others.
- F. **Communicate effectively:** Articulate and support points of view using diverse forms of communication.

Division staff

- A. **Recognize institutional context:** Explain the vision, mission, goals, and learning outcomes of the Division of Student Success, their office, and the programs and services they represent.
- B. **Recognize individual context:** Relate their individual roles and responsibilities to supporting student success.
- C. **Improve practices:** Examine current and best practices to create and revise strategies supporting student success and Division goals.
- D. **Steward resources:** Use human, technological, and fiscal resources to improve institutional effectiveness and to support student success.

Internal partners at NMSU

- A. **Recognize resources:** Identify resources, information, and roles of offices within the Division in supporting student success.
- B. **Recognize strategies:** Identify and apply strategies to support student success.
- C. **Enhance NMSU:** Identify and apply strategies to support research, service, and improvement of institutional effectiveness, both individually and in collaboration with others.
- D. **Steward resources:** Use human, technological, and fiscal resources to improve institutional effectiveness and to support student success.

External partners and constituents

- A. **Recognize resources:** Identify resources, information, and roles of offices within the Division in supporting student success.
- B. **Recognize strategies:** Identify strategies to support student success.

Three steps to Learning Outcomes

Step 1: Assessing audience and practice

What activity or program are you addressing, and who is your audience?

What are the current goals and objectives of the activity or program?

How do the activity or program goals align with DSS goals or LTV?

Step 2: Writing a Learning Outcome

Draft a learning outcome that will allow you to evaluate the knowledge, attitude, or skill-based task your audience should be able to do following the activity or program. (See examples, page 6.)

(Audience, defined as people participating in something) _____

will be able to (behavior) _____

Step 3: Self-evaluation of Learning Outcomes

Does the LO align with the program goals and objectives?	Y	N
Does the LO describe what the program intends for the audience to be able to do or understand following participation?	Y	N
Is the outcome important or worthwhile?	Y	N
Is the outcome detailed and specific?	Y	N
Is the outcome measurable?	Y	N
Can the program or activity enable students to learn the desired outcome?	Y	N
Can the outcome be used to make decisions on how to improve the program or activity?	Y	N

Adapted from Gail Short Hanson, American University in *Learning Reconsidered 2*

Defining Learning Outcomes

1. Review department planning documents such as vision, mission, goals, and objectives to align learning outcomes with them.
2. Research learning outcomes for similar departments at other institutions and from professional organizations and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS). Additional resources are available on the Division of Student Success website.
3. Draft learning outcomes for your department or for programs within your department (see samples below).
4. Complete the Learning Outcomes Map (page 7) by listing your learning outcomes, audiences, and aligned DSS outcomes. Departmental grids will be compiled to illustrate how the Division-level outcomes are represented across departments and to identify where gaps exist.
5. Use learning outcomes to plan, implement, and assess your programs.

Sample learning outcomes and their alignment with DSS Learning Outcomes, page 4.

	Students	Division staff	Internal partners at NMSU	External partners and constituents
Financial Aid Students seeking financial aid will be able to evaluate different loan programs and select one or more that fits their current and future financial position.	A, B, E			
Career Services Student seeking internships and employment will be able to organize and document their qualifications in their resumes submitted to employers.	B, C, E			
American Indian Programs Future American Indian Scholars will be able to identify programs and services they can use as students at NMSU.				A, B
Teaching Academy Instructors in the Learning Outcomes workshop will be able to design and apply rubrics in assessment of student learning outcomes.		B, C		
Student Information Management All NMSU instructors will be able to submit student grades for courses via Faculty tab in Banner.			D	
Student Marketing and Transition Programs Parents participating in family events at Aggie Welcome Week will be able to identify five offices on campus providing academic resources to students.				A, B

Notes

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