



Open Pathway

Quality Initiative Institutional Proposal Template

The enclosed Quality Initiative proposal represents the work that the institution will undertake to fulfill the Improvement Process of the Open Pathway.

Signature of Institution's President or Chancellor

Date

12/18/13

Dr. Garrey Carruthers, President

Printed/Typed Name and Title

New Mexico State University – Las Cruces

Name of Institution

Las Cruces, NM

City and State

The institution completes the Quality Initiative proposal by responding to the questions in each category of the template. The institution may choose to include a brief implementation plan that addresses many of the questions below and replaces portions of the outline. Proposals should be no more than 4,500 words.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

1. Provide a title and brief description of the Quality Initiative. Explain whether the initiative will begin and be completed during the Quality Initiative period or if it is part of work already in progress or will achieve a key milestone in the work of a longer initiative.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

2. Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.
3. Explain how the proposed initiative aligns with the institution's mission and current operational or strategic priorities.
4. Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic core.

Clarity of the Initiative's Purpose

5. Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.
6. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments, and determine what has been accomplished.
7. Describe potential challenges and issues in implementing the initiative.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

8. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.
9. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative.
10. List the human, financial, technological and other resources that the institution has committed to this initiative.
11. Describe the plan for continuing the work and sustaining the results of the initiative.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative (The institution may include a brief implementation or action plan.)

12. Describe the primary activities of the initiative and timeline for implementing them.

Institutional Contact for Quality Initiative Proposal

Include the name(s) of the primary contact(s) for the Quality Initiative.

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New Mexico State University – Las Cruces
Institution

New Mexico State University Quality Initiative Proposal to the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association

NOTE: "NMSU/campus community" refers to the students, faculty, staff and administrators of New Mexico State University-Las Cruces' and -Grants' campuses.

Overview of the Quality Initiative

NMSU will launch its proposed Quality Initiative "Expert Insider Prose: Developing Students' Disciplinary Expertise in Writing" Fall 2013. This project grows out of the university's participation in and completion of the HLC Assessment Academy (June 2013), and responds to the sustainability of our Academy work which was grounded in a grassroots process to develop and implement institution-wide assessment of the baccalaureate experience. The specific focus of this initiative, student writing, grew from concerns expressed by faculty about the ability of students to write, both generally and within the disciplines. As English faculty strove to respond to these concerns, they posed questions about available data on student writing, faculty expectations for writing, and the types and amounts of writing required of students in the disciplines. This proposed Quality Initiative aligns these concerns with the university's baccalaureate learning objectives "effective communication" and "academically prepared" while maintaining the grassroots integrity of our Assessment Academy work – it provides a "next step" in the continuing assessment of broad, institutional learning objectives. In addition, our Grants campus is working to develop a writing center, and plans to apply for Title V grant funding to explore accelerating student progress in developmental English courses.

New Mexico State University consists of five geographically dispersed campuses—four, two-year community colleges and one four-year research university. This initiative focuses on student writing in two institutions in our system that fall under a single HLC accreditation: NMSU-Las Cruces (our four-year institution) and NMSU-Grants (a two-year community college). It includes aligning and assessing course-level learning objectives in developmental English (Grants campus), basic English (ENGL 111) and 200-level general education writing courses (Grants and Las Cruces campuses), and writing in baccalaureate degree-granting disciplines (Las Cruces campus). This project builds on recent initiatives in NMSU's system-wide English departments and writing centers to improve the students' writing experiences as they relate to student success in writing generally and in the disciplines, expands on recent system-wide efforts to align learning objectives across the NMSU system campuses, and places significant focus on developing students' disciplinary expertise in writing. Finally, this initiative calls for alignment of undergraduate program-level learning objectives related to student writing with our broader institutional learning objective, "effective communication."

This project has a broad focus on students' expertise in writing, from the lower level developmental and general education writing program, which promotes success in writing generally, to writing in the disciplines which is required for matriculation to baccalaureate degrees. This project also seeks to identify areas in the co-curriculum that require and enhance student writing. This approach acknowledges the importance and interconnectedness of writing at all levels and within all areas of the college experience, whether at a community college or in a baccalaureate program.

This four-year project (2013-2017) will be completed during the Quality Initiative period.

Sufficiency of the Initiative's Scope and Significance

Relevance and significance

Current research indicates that external stakeholders, particularly employers, identify written and oral communication as a critical skill necessary for success in professional settings. In a 2004 survey of 120 major American corporations that employ nearly 8 million people, survey results overwhelmingly indicate

that writing is a “threshold skill” for hiring and promotion among salaried employees (United States: The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges. *Writing: A Ticket to Work... Or A Ticket Out, A Survey of Business Leaders*. College Board, 2004). NMSU identifies effective communication as a learning objective for all students, regardless of the campus they attend. In recent years faculty have expressed concern about students’ ability in written communication, including their ability to transfer skills in writing from basic composition courses to other courses, and particularly to discipline-specific contexts. This internal concern, coupled with the national trend of increased scrutiny by the public for both accountability in learning and stewardship of resources, provides further impetus for this project. Identifying gaps, for the purposes of improvement, between desired student performance and institutional expectations for graduates is a worthwhile and potentially game-changing endeavor. The systematic review of faculty expectations of students’ writing in their disciplines and the written products themselves, along with identifying factors that contribute to student success or lack of success in writing will provide critical information that can inform institutional decision-making at multiple levels, including decisions about policy, practice, curriculum and pedagogy.

Alignment with NMSU’s mission and strategic priorities

NMSU is a land-grant institution, and as such, is committed to serving the educational needs of the citizens of the state of New Mexico. As a designated Hispanic Serving Institution, we specifically seek to serve the needs of our unique student population and put the educational needs of our students at the center of all decision-making.

This project specifically relates to three of the seven institutional goals identified in NMSU’s “Vision 2020” strategic plan: Graduation–Teaching, Learning and Programs; Economic Development; and Resource Stewardship. The primary focus of Graduation–Teaching, Learning, and Programs is to “provide effective academic programs, stellar teaching and learning, and enhanced student engagement to advance highly capable graduates.” Our proposed initiative affords widespread opportunities for faculty development on using writing to enhance learning in course content and disciplinary fields, and for faculty to share ideas and experiences in teaching and learning related to student writing. More importantly, this initiative provides a collaborative backdrop for an institution-wide focus on student learning and a clear pathway to explore how operations across the system, both in and out of the classroom, impact student success.

NMSU’s goal for Economic Development calls for the university to “be a driving force for economic progress in New Mexico.” As indicated above, employers identify skill in communication as necessary for success in virtually any profession. As NMSU strives to increase economic progress across the state, a workforce equipped with effective communication skills will contribute to the state’s potential for economic development.

Finally, because this initiative involves procuring donor support to develop innovative and data-informed instructional strategies to improve teaching and learning through the use of writing, it supports NMSU’s goal for Resource Stewardship “to increase philanthropy and alternative revenue to support teaching, research, and service.” In fact, in an initiative modeled on Purdue University’s IMPACT program (<http://www.purdue.edu/impact/mission.html>), NMSU will seek the support of the community, local and state-wide businesses, alumni, and other constituents to fund innovative teaching initiatives that increase student learning.

Intended impact

Kara Powell of the Fuller Youth Institute once said, “People tend to support what they help to create.” Toward that end, this project is a comprehensive effort to create ownership and understanding of what effective assessment looks like, and how it can be used in meaningful ways to change institutional practices to improve student learning and success. Through engagement of the campus community, and faculty in particular, this initiative propels the institution to shift from data collection to institutional change grounded in evidence, based on the best interests of our student population. “Expert Insider Prose: Developing Students’ Disciplinary Expertise in Writing” will ensure NMSU recognizes that complex and

inter-related factors, such as academic course work, co-curricular activities, and the policies and practices of the institution, together with decisions at all levels of the institution, impact student progress and success in writing.

This project will explore three major influences on student success in writing:

- 1) Institutional policies and procedures that affect entrance into and the parameters of general education writing courses
- 2) How NMSU fosters and communicates, directly or indirectly, that writing is valuable
- 3) The types of writing and where faculty incorporate writing within courses across the curriculum, and the extent of faculty practices in using writing to foster learning in course content

Project outcomes. The NMSU community, as a community of life-long learners and writers will demonstrate its value for

1. Writing both generally and in the disciplines by
 - a. Continuously reviewing institutional policies, procedures, practices, and curriculum as they relate to student success in writing
 - b. Changing/enacting institutional policies, procedures, practices, and curriculum to support improved student success in writing
 - c. Engaging in ongoing assessment (including discourse-based and/or outcomes-based) of student writing
 - d. Valuing writing experiences of students across the curriculum and in the co-curriculum
2. Writing generally by
 - a. Making explicit the role of ENGL 111 (basic English) and the 200-level general education writing courses in the undergraduate curriculum, and identifying what students who have successfully completed these courses should be able to do related to writing
 - b. Distinguishing between “learning to write” and “writing to learn.” The former is generally concerned with standard writing conventions often demonstrated through formal, summative writing assignments whereas the latter is concerned with using writing, often through informal, formative assignments, as a tool to engage with and facilitate enhanced learning of content.
3. Writing in the disciplines, evidenced by
 - a. Academic departments and programs that clearly communicate to students what “expert insider prose” looks like in their disciplines
 - b. Students who are able to identify characteristics of “expert insider prose” in their disciplines
 - c. Students who create “expert insider prose” in their disciplines
 - d. Departments and programs that are engaged in ongoing discourse- and outcomes-based assessment of writing to ensure curricular scaffolding supports development of expert insider prose

Clarity of the Initiative’s Purpose

Purposes and goals

We envision students graduating from our institution demonstrating strong competency in written communication, including expert insider prose. To do this, we believe we must ensure that the institution creates optimal opportunities and requirements that facilitate the desired outcome, and that faculty and students share similar expectations for and value of writing. Toward that end, this project strives to create communities wherein responsibility for writing is shared across the general education core and the disciplinary majors. This project will focus and equip our campus communities to facilitate improved student writing at all levels.

Specifically, this project proposes that through a systematic investigation of institutional practices—from individual courses to institutional policies and procedures—any needed changes can be identified and implemented that will lead to improved student writing. Data will be collected to

- determine explicit and implicit expectations for student writing
- provide evidence of student writing
- identify institutional policies and practices that impact student writing
- identify resources, for both faculty and students, that support writing

In addition, learning theory suggests that providing a clear, articulated path for students to develop expertise in writing is critical. Faculty, staff and administrators all agree that writing is crucial to academic as well as professional success, including general and discipline-specific writing. For example, graduating students moving into the public sector should be able to use appropriate rhetoric to dispute a questionable charge to a personal account, write their congressperson, post a blog, position themselves in a diplomatic exchange of ideas, and so on. It is generalizable knowledge that positions students to do this. Likewise, as graduating students begin to navigate the professional or continuing education communities, they must be able to adapt general writing and domain-specific rhetorical abilities.

Each discipline has its own rhetorical styles and expectations for effective communication. However, many faculty are overwhelmed at the thought of increasing, or incorporating at all, writing assignments into their courses – faculty are often concerned about core course content and may not feel equipped to deal with formal writing assignments, which they feel puts them in the dual role of content instructor and English writing instructor. By equipping faculty to incorporate meaningful writing assignments into the curriculum that require minimal grading/feedback from the instructor, much can be gained. Integrated writing not only supports improved writing, but also supports enhanced learning in the content area.

There is a long history of research that indicates writing aids critical thinking skills, and that writing is a unique mode for learning. A posted statement on the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research website about the use of writing as an effective method to teach content reads, “To learn we must place new knowledge into a cognitive framework. Writing provides the *process* needed to relate new knowledge to prior experience (synthesis). It also provides a means by which knowledge is symbolically transformed via language into icons. Finally, the written material, the *product* of this process, is concrete and visible and permits review, manipulation, and modification of knowledge as it is “learned” and put into a framework.” (<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/cl1/cl/doingcl/writing.htm>).

In summary, this proposal anticipates that as NMSU communicates clear and consistent values and expectations for writing as demonstrated through policy, procedures and practices, and as course-level practices and program expectations reflect those values and expectations, students will ultimately become better writers both in the disciplines and generally.

Evaluation of progress, needed adjustments, and accomplishments

We will evaluate our progress bi-annually, and submit written progress reports to our Academic Deans Council, Executive Vice President and Provost, President, NMSU-Grants President, NMSU-Grants Chief Academic Officer, and the NMSU Board of Regents. Reports will also be distributed to the NMSU community via website and campus news releases as determined by a pre-established communication plan. Reports will include

- Progress to date
- Updates on current findings
- Any changes/redirections/foreseeable challenges
- Resources/support requests
- Acknowledgments/recognition of efforts

Potential challenges

There are numerous potential challenges to the successful completion of this project. Securing widespread campus participation and investment is key. An advantage of our grassroots approach is that faculty identify strongly with efforts that support improved writing by students. Preliminary conversations with faculty and administrators indicate general support, but primary challenges will be in communicating clearly to a broad community to garner widespread support and engagement. Although this is manageable in face-to-face conversations, it is not always equally successful in a less personal distribution; we will not always be available to speak directly to all involved, and therefore will not be available to immediately answer questions/concerns and dispel any misinformation/misunderstanding. Consequently, full support by Academic Deans, area Vice Presidents, and upper administration is critical. Equally important is their full understanding of the goals and potential impact of the project, and their ability to communicate to their constituents about the initiative.

Specific challenges anticipated by the Quality Initiative Team, include

- Data collection
- Effective, timely and ongoing communication
- Survey participation
- Collection of sample materials and evidence of student writing
- Facilitation of conversations at the institution-level
- Authentic inclusion of both NMSU-Las Cruces and -Grants campuses
- Engagement across and within disciplines
- Follow-through on potentially controversial or perceived costly changes to institutional policy, procedure, practice and/or curriculum

Potential obstacles for project impact may include

- Human and fiscal resources needed to effect change in policy, practice and/or curriculum and instruction
- Possible changes in leadership of the English Departments and/or writing center
- Possible changes in leadership of the Las Cruces or Grants campus

Other challenges remain unforeseen at this time, and will be dealt with as they arise. Unforeseen challenges will be addressed through ongoing evaluation of progress and ongoing adjustments to the plan as needed.

Evidence of Commitment to and Capacity for Accomplishing the Initiative

Support

Again, our grassroots approach has served us well in garnering support from faculty for this initiative. This approach also provides strong evidence for faculty engagement and governance, as called for in HLC accreditation requirements identified in Criteria 5.B specifically.

The idea of focusing on student writing was first considered by faculty through our assessment committees (5 total), which include representation from all of our academic colleges and from our co-curricular, operational and administrative areas. The proposed focus was also discussed at an open forum in our Teaching Academy on March 1, 2013, and later shared through various departmental faculty meetings between March 6 and April 16, 2013 (12 faculty meetings in 5 academic colleges and the library) as part of “sharing the results” of our institutional assessment of student self-awareness. Faculty meetings were arranged between department heads and the Director of Assessment, by request through Associate Deans for Academics in each college.

At our annual Assessment Retreat (May 2013), this focus was again brought before the assessment committee membership for input and consideration with no apparent or expressed dissent for it.

On June 4-6, 2013, our HLC Assessment Academy team, with the addition of the director of the NMSU-Las Cruces Writing Program, attended the Academy Results Forum. There we began to draft a formal proposal for the present initiative, as part of our commitment to the sustainability of our Academy project. On June 16-19, 2013, a new team, including our Assessment Academy team leader, the director of our Writing Program (who also attended the Results Forum), a faculty member who participated on our English 111 system-wide team, and a Psychology Department faculty member with expertise and interest in reliability and validity of assessment methodology traveled to an assessment retreat and continued to work on the proposal. On July 2, 2013, the HLC AA team leader met with the Associate Provost for Accreditation, Assessment and Institutional planning, and the Executive Vice President and Deputy Provost, to discuss the proposal and consider next steps. On July 22 and 23, 2013 this proposed focus for our institutional Quality Initiative was presented and accepted by the Associate Deans for Academics Council, and the Academic Deans Council, respectively.

The Board of Regents, NMSU President, NMSU Executive Vice President & Provost, NMSU-Grants President, NMSU-Grants Chief Academic Officer, Academic Deans, Associate Deans and Vice Presidents are committed to

- Making and supporting decisions that are responsive to findings and that best support student learning
- Providing visible and consistent public support to the campus community, the local community, donors and alumni and other external constituents
- Publicly recognizing and rewarding faculty, staff, student, and administrator efforts to measure and improve student writing
- Providing necessary resources
- Prioritizing the initiative
- Supporting a donor campaign to fund Course Redesign Grants (awardees, in turn, provide NMSU Teaching Academy workshops, and document assessment of student learning to demonstrate impact of instructional change)

Multiple and varied institutional entities and individuals will participate in research design, data collection, development of assessment instruments, assessment of writing, analysis of results, interpretation of findings, recommendations for interventions, and implementation of changes to positively impact student writing. These will include but are not limited to

- Standing Institutional Assessment Committees
 - Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning in General Education (CASL-GE)
 - CASL-GE working group to develop writing assessment tool
 - Departmental Assessment Liaisons (role expanded to include communication and input regarding the Quality Initiative)
 - University Outcomes Assessment Council (UOAC)
 - Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning across the Baccalaureate Experience (CASL-BE)
 - Advocates for Scholarly Teaching (AST)
 - Outcomes Assessment Committee for Co-curriculum, Administration & Operations (OAC-CAO)
 - Grants Campus Assessment Committee
- Provost's Research Scholars (students)
- Academic Programs/Departments
- Co-curricular, Administrative and Operational units
- Office of Institutional Analysis
- Quality Initiative (QI) Team
- University Writing Center
- English Department Writing Program
- English Department faculty

- Center for English Language Programs (CELP)
- Graduate Student Transition program
- Individual faculty at various course levels (e.g. General Education, Viewing a Wider World, capstone)

Programs to Support Faculty to Improve Writing

- NMSU Academic Club – a donor program to develop Course Redesign Grants; grants awarded during the Quality Initiative time period will be specifically for initiatives directly related to the improvement of writing. Our President recently secured a corporate grant from Ernst & Young to sponsor development of writing intensive courses in our MA Accountancy program.
- Faculty, administrator and staff writing groups that focus on writing and publishing in assessment and scholarly teaching and learning
- Encouragement for faculty to publish in journals for teaching and learning, particularly within their disciplines, as appropriate
- Peer Review Network (PRN) – an online review network where faculty interact about student learning and instructional practices related to student writing.

Initiative leaders

In addition to those individuals and entities identified above, those who will be directly involved with the initiative will include the Grants campus Chief Academic Officer and Assessment Coordinator, the Las Cruces campus Director of Assessment and the Quality Initiative Team.

Institutional resource commitment

Our Provost and Sr. Vice President for Finance have identified specific funds to meet the needs in the proposed budget (see below). We anticipate finalization of resource allocation (the majority of which is for graduate assistants and Team member course release/summer compensation) no later than January 2014. Institutional funding for assessment reporting software *WeaveEngaged* was secured this month, and we are working to have it fully implemented by May 2014

QUALITY INITIATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY					
BUDGET		Resource Needs			
		Yr1	Yr2	Yr3	Yr4
1	Quality Initiative (QI) Team				
2	1 Course Reassign/yr for 3 faculty	\$27,500	\$27,500	\$27,500	\$27,500
3	Travel - 4 faculty: HLC; NMHEAA; NMHEAR	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200	\$5,200
4	Onsite Consultation: Teagle Assessment Scholars		\$8,000		
5	SUBTOTAL	\$32,700	\$40,700	\$32,700	\$32,700
6					
7	Office of Assessment				
8	QI Graduate Assistants	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
9	Public Relations/Communication	\$2,700	\$2,700	\$2,700	\$2,700
10	Survey Incentives (prizes, food, drawings) - Faculty, Students, Staff	\$6,000	\$6,000		
11	Hospitality - faculty scoring, writing groups, discussions, workshops	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$4,900	\$4,900
13	SUBTOTAL	\$60,600	\$60,600	\$57,600	\$57,600
14					
15	Assessment Committees				
16	16 faculty/staff attend NM Higher Education Assessment Conference	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
17	SUBTOTAL	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
18					
19	TOTAL	\$101,300	\$109,300	\$98,300	\$98,300

Project sustainability

Because this project is situated in our assessment of institutional learning objectives, it supports and sustains efforts to systematically assess the baccalaureate experience. In short, this will be the model for continuing in that vein. Additionally, many of the committees that will support this initiative are pre-existing, and will continue to exist as we move beyond this particular initiative. Other means of sustaining momentum include the development of the NMSU Academic Club to support Course Redesign Grants for faculty, and the development of writing groups across campus.

Appropriateness of the Timeline for the Initiative

Primary activities and timeline

The time-line below reflects the essential, specific activities for each year of the project. Activities are not necessarily limited to those identified in the timeline. As this project unfolds, it is anticipated that additional interests may be identified and carried out by specific groups/units. Our goal is to track these activities and link them to the project. We will cultivate widespread ownership by the entire campus community. A particular strength of this project is its grassroots foundation. While maintaining a grassroots approach may extend the amount of time between findings and response, it also assures broader and deeper commitment to identified actions by those best positioned to impact our students. This collaborative approach transcends discipline specific responses, and creates a community and a culture that explicitly and consistently demonstrates value for writing.

YEAR 1 (2013-14)

Initial Groundwork

- The Teaching Academy designated 2013-2014 as the “Year of Writing across the Curriculum”
- Quality Initiative Team consulted with Dr. John Bean, Seattle University, regarding development of expert insider prose
- Dr. John Bean presented two workshops in our Teaching Academy, September 2013
- All rhetoric and professional communication faculty in the English department offered workshops (7 total) on writing in the disciplines or writing for English Language Learners in our Teaching Academy, Fall 2013
- The English department hosted two panels – Science and Social Science faculty - to help GE writing instructors understand the types of writing that happens in those disciplines
- Developing proposal; secure necessary resources; obtain necessary approvals; submit to HLC
- Developing a website
- Developing promotional tools and a communication plan
- Coordinating efforts of assessment committees and other entities
- Developing a “common language” for student writing at NMSU: i.e., articulating the role of ENGL 111 (basic English) and the 200-level general education writing courses in the undergraduate curriculum, and the specific learning outcomes related to writing in general and in the disciplines for students who have successfully completed these courses
- Developing a campus community that distinguishes between “learning to write” and “writing to learn,” and that uses both for improved expert insider prose

Assessment

- Survey the NMSU campus community to determine perceptions, attitudes, behaviors and expectations about writing
- Collect artifacts from faculty, students and staff that are currently used to communicate expectations about writing
- Review policies, procedures and practices for their impact on student success in writing
- Identify needs of our unique student population in relation to success in writing (e.g. developmental English, English Language Learners (ELLs), etc.)

Actions/Deliverables

- Complete frequency and correlational analyses of survey responses and distribute to the campus community; expand data collection as necessary; collect response from the campus communities
- Analyze strengths and weaknesses of artifacts used to communicate expectations for writing to students; make recommendations for improvement; identify best practices
- Summarize impact of institutional policies, procedures and practices as they relate to student writing; present summary to campus community for feedback; propose interventions/changes to campus for consideration
- Determine pressing needs of our students as they relate to writing (e.g., international students, English Language Learners, students transitioning from community colleges, and students transitioning into graduate studies); make recommendations based on evidence, input from relevant stakeholders, and best practices
- Qualitative analysis of progress to date

YEAR 2 (2014-15)

Assessment

- Localized direct assessment of student writing at various levels across the institution, including in developmental English, ENGL 111 (freshmen); upper-division general education courses (juniors); and those completing degrees, or near completion, in the disciplines (seniors)
- National Survey of Student Engagement with Experiences in Writing module (Las Cruces campus); Grants campus will administer Center for Community College Student Engagement and is exploring options for a community college Writing module counterpart

Actions/Deliverables

- Distribute findings from developmental English and ENGL 111 assessment and from upper-division general education assessment to the campus community; facilitate campus conversations regarding findings and resultant actions; determine a course of action
- Each academic discipline examines findings within their program and determines appropriate actions; decisions/plans of action are shared with the campus community; integrative analysis guides broad recommendations for institutional response
- Qualitative analysis of progress to date

Continuing Goals

- Continue to develop a “common language” for student writing by identifying and articulating expectations we as an institution have for student writing
- Disciplines/programs continue to define and communicate to students what expert insider prose “looks like” in their respective disciplines; disciplines/programs scaffold curriculum to ensure graduating students write expert insider prose
- Course- and program-level learning objectives for writing are aligned with Baccalaureate Experience learning objective: effective communication

YEAR 3 (2015-16)

Assessment

- The NMSU community will collect and analyze data as deemed relevant by years 1 and 2 (flexibility to follow where the data/findings lead is crucial), interpret findings, identify challenges and opportunities, and determine interventions
- Ongoing assessment/reassessment at various levels as determined necessary
- Review progress of recommended changes; develop plan (including timetable) to reassess and determine effectiveness of changes

Actions/Deliverables

- Implement identified instructional and/or curricular changes
- Implement institutional policy, procedure and practice changes for improved student writing

- Qualitative analysis of progress to date

Continuing Goals

- NMSU has an articulated “common language” for student writing and clearly identifies expectations for student writing
- All disciplines/programs have defined and accessible descriptions of what expert insider prose “looks like” in their respective disciplines, and curriculum that ensures graduating students will have opportunities to practice and demonstrate the same
- Course- and program-level learning objectives for writing are aligned with Baccalaureate Experience learning objective: effective communication

YEAR 4 (2016-17)

Assessment

- National Survey of Student Engagement with Experiences in Writing module will be planned for 2017-18 (Las Cruces campus); Grants campus will administer Center for Community College Student Engagement, and is exploring options for a community college Writing module counterpart
- Re-assess campus communities as outlined above, under “Assessment” and “Actions/Receivables” in year 1;
- Document institutional findings concerning student writing and resultant actions taken to improve student writing
- Inventory institutional decisions made, based on evidence of impact or potential impact on student writing
- Assess institutional response to needs as they impact student writing
- Develop ongoing plans to directly assess student writing to determine full impact of implemented changes
- Track and share resulting faculty publications on writing in respective disciplines

Data Collection will include

- Institutional policies and practices that impact/are related to student writing
- Artifacts that reveal how faculty and students define, describe, and identify quality writing
- Faculty attitudes and beliefs about and behaviors toward student writing and the teaching thereof
- Student attitudes and beliefs about and behaviors toward writing and the learning thereof
- Identification of where writing is occurring on our campus in academics and the co-curriculum
- Artifacts of student writing
- Artifacts of how faculty communicate expectations for writing
- Documentation of how NMSU facilitates development of skill in writing
- Documentation of how NMSU assesses student writing

With this initiative, NMSU seeks to promote expertise in writing both generally and within disciplines. By identifying areas of strengths and areas for improvement in our policies, procedures and practices, and instruction and curriculum, we can enhance student success in writing and at the same time enhance student disciplinary knowledge through writing. We look forward to gaining insight into our students’ learning as it relates to writing, and how we can best serve the needs of our students in acquiring and perfecting writing abilities.