



Economic Development and Job Creation through Strategic Workforce Training: The Role of New Mexico Independent Community Colleges

Submitted by New Mexico Independent Community Colleges to the New Mexico Department of Higher Education - August 12, 2011

The National Context

Community colleges are uniquely positioned to quickly and efficiently raise the skill and knowledge base of our workforce. Long at the forefront of training workers for some of the most highly-skilled and high-demand occupations in our economies, we serve the business community, industry and government, creating tailored programs offered on campus or at a preferred business location. Our programs lead to associate's degrees, and industry-recognized credentials and certificates. Our mode of operation is not to react to past industry needs or aging technologies, but to focus on meeting the present and future needs of the workforce. We use advisory groups comprised of industry professionals who help us ensure that our programs are teaching students the skills they'll need to succeed in the workplace.

Key points to consider are:

- In the coming years, jobs requiring at least an associate's degree are projected to grow twice as fast as those requiring no college experience;
- Over the next decade, nearly eight in 10 new jobs are projected to require some level of higher education or workforce training;
- Community colleges are the largest segment of the nation's higher education system;
- We enroll 8+ million students, and growth continues to be rapid; and
- Distinct features of community colleges include:
 - Open, equitable and inclusive access
 - Affordable tuition
 - Flexible course/program schedules
 - Convenient locations
 - Expert remediation programs
 - Address needs of the most disadvantaged/underserved
 - Target older and working students

Local Need and Response

According to a recent report from the National Skills Coalition (*"New Mexico's Forgotten Middle Skill Jobs, Meeting the Demands of a 21st-Century Economy"*) "...more than 396,000 of all New Mexico jobs in 2008 – 48 percent – were middle-skill jobs," and "the demand for middle-skill workers in the state will remain high in the decade between 2006 and 2016, with more than 133,000 middle-skill job openings – 40

percent of all job openings – expected during this time.” These middle-skill jobs represent the largest segment of current and future employment opportunities for New Mexicans.

In consistently rising numbers, the citizens of New Mexico are taking advantage of opportunities at community colleges to retrain, enhance their skills, and improve their employment prospects. Over 63,000 students were enrolled in college-credit courses at New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (NMICC) institutions during the 2009 fall term, which represents over 42 percent of New Mexico’s total higher education enrollment. Instructional programs offered by the NMICC institutions are highly concentrated in the New Mexico Career Cluster areas, as indicated in the following table:

NEW MEXICO CAREER CLUSTER AREAS	NUMBER OF PROGRAMS
Arts & Entertainment	41
Business Services	124
Communications & Information	51
Energy & Environmental Technology	33
Engineering, Construction & Manufacturing	108
Health & Biosciences	91
Hospitality & Tourism	17
All others	81

Total Career Programs: 546

In today’s economic development environment, employers are thoroughly evaluating prospective locations on a variety of fronts, with a high priority placed on the quality of the existing workforce and the skills that existing workforce can offer to a particular industry. Employers want to locate in areas that already serve companies affiliated with their industry, allowing them to take advantage of supply chains, including education and training. They are looking for local educational institutions and existing training programs that can quickly create a pipeline of workers specifically trained for that industry.

Where gaps remain, community colleges offer “Quick-Start” programs that expediently and effectively produce a trained workforce on the ground and at start-up, at extremely affordable rates. In many cases, such training can be offered through “stackable” certificates that allow workers and low-skilled adults to progressively earn a series of industry - recognized credentials that can eventually lead to a degree.

The consistently strong focus on instructional programs in high-demand career fields provides clear evidence that New Mexico community colleges are committed to meeting the workforce training needs of the state and its communities. NMICC institutions routinely develop programs that create the pipeline of future workers for specific industry clusters, including certificate and degree programs and short term pre-employment training tailored for specific employers or groups of employers. These employers can include state and local government, construction, manufacturing, healthcare, education, small business, hospitality and tourism, and much more.

The following current programs at NMICC institutions support economic development in New Mexico:

Central New Mexico Community College operates a Workforce Training Center that provides customized job training and business consulting services. CNM has expanded the capacity of its nursing program through the introduction of a simulation laboratory at the new Rio Rancho Campus. CNM also continues to be actively involved in efforts to train individuals for employment in the growing film-making industry.

Clovis Community College has developed active partnerships with area food producers/processors in connection with a new Industrial Technology training program.

Luna Community College is an active partner in regional economic development efforts with the Las Vegas/San Miguel Economic Development Corporation, Adelante Resource Conservation & Development Council and the Raton Chamber of Commerce.

Mesalands Community College provides state-of-the-art training for wind energy technicians, and through its North American Wind Research and Training Center, partners with industry, research laboratories and other educational institutions to advance wind energy.

New Mexico Junior College has developed a state-of-the-art training facility to provide training for employees of major oil and gas employers in the area. NMJC also has created customized training programs for employees in the renewable and nuclear energy industries.

Northern New Mexico College has established a Solar Energy Research Park and Academy (SERPA) on the Española campus. The center will have a particular focus on energy storage research. It will also provide affordable training in high-wage green jobs.

San Juan College has received a grant to support education of adults over the age of 50 who hope to transition to careers in education, healthcare and social services.

Santa Fe Community College is working with the Regional Development Corporation and four other community colleges to develop training programs for the green economy. New facilities have been developed to expand curricular offerings in career technical fields, including a Sustainable Technology Center.

Western New Mexico University hosts annual training programs for the New Mexico Industrial Development Executives Association.

Detailed reports on a sampling of five of our major institutions are attached to this report; they provide specifics on current workforce training initiatives at Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Mesalands Community College, New Mexico Junior College, and Santa Fe Community College. As these reports indicate, NMICC members are leaders among educational institutions in understanding and responding to local workforce intelligence and trends. Because of the close relationships our community colleges have forged with business and industries in our communities, and because we anticipate the need to respond quickly to regional workforce needs, our community colleges pay very close attention to public and private labor market information. Simply put, community colleges are more experienced and more agile than other higher educational institutions in responding quickly to the needs of employers.

Performance Data

Nearly 6,000 certificates and associate's degrees were awarded to graduates of the independent community colleges in 2009-10. The largest number of awards was granted in the health professions, liberal arts and sciences, and business services disciplines. Licensure pass rates for students completing programs at New Mexico Independent Community Colleges continue to be very high. For example, data for 2009-10 indicate that 85 percent of students graduating from Registered Nursing programs at the independent colleges passed the state licensing examination. In LPN programs, the pass rate was 96 percent, and in Dental Hygiene it was 100 percent.

Data from the 2010 NMICC Annual Accountability Report indicate that on average, 90 percent of community college graduates are placed in jobs or continuing their education in New Mexico (*Performance Measure #9, page 19*). This measure recognizes that many community college graduates continue their studies as transfer students at other New Mexico institutions. For the second year in a row, all of the independent community colleges have improved their performance on this measure from the previous year, and all exceeded the target established for FY 2010. These performance measures are critical, as pay commensurate with program completion and advanced education helps to raise the standard of living for our citizens, and directly impacts the overall strength of New Mexico's economy. While we don't currently have hard data on salary differences of community college graduates versus university graduates in New Mexico, a recent Florida study (*Vasquez, 2011 "Study less; earn more"*) indicated that recipients of bachelor's degrees from the state's 11 public universities earned an average starting salary of \$36,552 in 2009. Meanwhile, those who received Associate in Science degrees from Florida community colleges earned an average of \$47,708 -- a difference of \$11,000 more per year.

Our community colleges have established an enviable record in providing workforce training as part of our contribution to economic development. New Mexico's job training programs are well managed by the local institutions, and employer response to the quality of the training delivered has been positive. In FY 2010, New Mexico independent community college training programs served nearly 15,000 individuals in non-credit workforce training programs.

Unique Roles and Services

Through their Small Business Development Centers, special Institutes and Technology Centers, community colleges also serve as an invaluable resource for small business and entrepreneurs through training and technical assistance, including applied research. Further, community colleges offer a system of career centers across the state, serving both job seekers and employers. These centers serve a critical function, screening and assessing applicants for training and employment.

In today's economic development environment, employers are evaluating locations in terms of the existing workforce and the skills they bring to their particular industry. They want to locate in areas that already serve companies in their industry sector to take advantage of supply chains, including education and training. They are looking for local educational institutions and existing training programs that fill the pipeline with workers trained for that industry. Where gaps remain, community colleges offer "Quick-Start" programs that provide turn-key solutions to the need for a trained workforce on the ground and at start-up, at extremely affordable rates. In many cases, such training can continue through "stackable" certificates that allow workers and low-skilled adults to earn a series of industry recognized credentials that can be stacked one upon the other, eventually leading to a degree.

The Path Forward

New Mexico Independent Community Colleges (as well as our branch community college colleagues) welcome the opportunity to work with the New Mexico Higher Education Department, Executive and Legislative leaders, and other key stakeholders in developing partnerships to drive economic competitiveness by aligning economic development, workforce development and education planning. We are committed to the success of job creation and retention in New Mexico. Indeed, our communities depend on it.

As critical decisions are made about how to redesign a funding formula which optimize higher education resources, and focus on accountability, we encourage the New Mexico Higher Education Department to develop public policy, design systems, and recommend state funding to enhance our greatest resource in

the arena of workforce and economic development – community colleges. Since we have served a critical role in economic and workforce development for many years, we believe that the state’s best hope for progress in these arenas lies in the classrooms and training facilities of our community colleges. New Mexicans who are looking to improve their job prospects through affordable, high-quality education, and employers who will seek to expand or establish their businesses in New Mexico continue to be well served by the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges. We believe that if our community colleges continue to receive sufficient support, it will pay off in the form of a more robust economic rebound for our state and our citizens.

Key recommendations for such support include:

- Do not protect funding for other higher education institutions and programs at the expense of community colleges
- Design funding strategies to support and promote:
 - Timely completion of college credentials;
 - Early engagement in workforce training (dual credit);
- Integrate plans to educate and train the workforce with plans to strengthen the economy;
- Promote partnerships that engage community colleges in economic development;
- Target priority clusters and industry sectors critical to regional competitiveness and expansion;
- Provide quality data to evaluate and monitor targeted outcomes;
- Support K-12 initiatives to improve college readiness; and
- Recognize the need to serve working adults who seek retraining or who are seeking new careers

ATTACHMENTS

Reports from:

- Central New Mexico Community College
- Clovis Community College
- Mesalands Community College
- New Mexico Junior College
- Santa Fe Community College

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Central New Mexico Community College is the state’s largest institution of higher education in the state in terms of enrollment, serving more than 29,700 students. Serving the Albuquerque metropolitan area and Rio Rancho, CNM offers 80 certificate programs and more than 50 associate degree programs that produce a significant percentage of the region’s skilled workforce.

Through the education of students, combined with strong partnerships with local industry and the community, CNM’s strives every day to further its vision of “Changing Lives, Building Community.”

Since it was founded in 1965, CNM has always worked very closely with the local business community to develop top-notch educational programs that meet workforce needs and lead to quality job opportunities for students. In recent years, CNM has developed programs that have served the workforce needs of organizations like Sandia National Laboratories, Intel, Presbyterian, Lovelace, University of New Mexico Hospitals, General Mills, Hewlett Packard, Verizon, Kirtland Air Force Base, and countless more.

CNM’s career technical education programs are guided by advisory committees, which include industry representatives and business leaders from the career fields served by CNM programs. These advisory committees help to ensure that CNM students are receiving the education and learning the skills that will prepare them to succeed in the workplace, not just in the classroom.

CNM students, for decades, have continuously filled the high-demand, middle skill jobs that help strengthen the backbone of our region’s economy. Since its inception, CNM has served as a key element in the economic development of central New Mexico.

In addition to providing the most comprehensive offerings of degrees and certificates in the state, CNM’s Workforce Training Center also supports the region’s economy by providing customized training programs and consulting services for businesses big and small. Recently, the Workforce Training Center developed a statewide mechanics training program for the New Mexico Department of Transportation that’s expected to save the state in excess of \$1 million. This is just one of so many examples of how CNM supports the local, regional and state economy on a daily basis.

At CNM, “Changing Lives, Building Community” is not only our vision, it’s our driving force.



Clovis Community College serves the local community with a variety of partnerships which help with economic development and job creation through workforce training. The College has many long standing partnerships which facilitate entry level training as well as one time trainings to meet a specific need of a local business. The businesses send representatives to the College's advisory committees and express their needs through the Business and Industry/Non Credit training office.

Programs in the Allied Health division have excellent, long standing partnerships with area hospitals, skilled nursing care facilities and fire departments for training of registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, certified nursing assistants, radiologic technicians, emergency medical technicians and paramedics.

Area food processing and engineering plants partnered with CCC to develop an Industrial Technology program to train plant operation technicians and wind technicians. The partnerships with businesses related to training wind technicians are developing as more manufacturing and wind related businesses locate in the area. Student practicum experiences each summer are conducted at partner plants. The plants use the Industrial Technology laboratory for incumbent worker training in electrical troubleshooting. One plant uses the laboratory for testing new employees regarding skills and training needs. A specialized Welding class was designed for incumbent workers, too.

CCC partnered with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to provide a two day live workshop on teaching methodology followed with weeks of further training using Blackboard and an online format. When TANF was administered through the local Workforce Board, CCC partnered with the Eastern Area Board to do live and ITV training for Certified Nursing Assistant, Serve Safe and employability skills.

The Computer Information Systems area has done training classes for employees of a local communications business to obtain CCCNA certifications.

The City of Clovis has partnered with CCC for detention officer training and police officer training.



Mesalands Community College's primary service area is vast, covering approximately 11,860 square miles. The College also attracts students from all over the United States, as well as international students. Mesalands Community College offers several unique certificate and degree programs in addition to offering shorter, customized training programs that contribute to workforce development. Many of these programs evolved due to the College's historic location, which is rich in natural resources and culture. An icon of the College is the Dinosaur Museum, which features 200 million year old vertebrate fossils excavated and prepared by Mesalands Geology and Paleontology students. The Museum is a major tourist attraction and contributes greatly to local economic development by drawing in visitors that support a wide range of local businesses. The Agriculture workforce in the region is supported through Associate of Applied Science degrees in Agri-Business, Beef Science, Farrier Science, Equine Science and Gnathology Science. In an effort to preserve its history, the College also places a strong emphasis on Applied Science in Technology degree offerings including Fine Arts Bronze Sculpture and the College's flagship program, Wind Energy Technology. Both of these programs operate from one of a kind training facilities; the Bronze Foundry and the North American Wind Research and Training Center. The Center is a nationally recognized leading institute for research and workforce training in the field of Wind Energy. The College has secured MOUs with universities, a national laboratory and several corporations in order to meet research and workforce training needs. These include University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, University of New Mexico, and Sandia National Laboratories. The success of the Wind Energy program, which houses the only Turbine on a college campus in the United States, has led to immense interest from national and international businesses seeking to partner with the Center in pursuit of distinctive research opportunities as well as development of customized technical training institutes to meet specific workforce demands. International partnerships are currently in the planning stages with educational and business groups from Denmark, India, Brazil and Spain. These likely joint ventures have far-reaching potential for economic development and workforce training in the fast growing Wind Energy industry throughout the region and the State. Currently, the College has established relationships with nearly 100 regional, state, national and international Operations, Maintenance and Turbine Manufacturing businesses (list available upon request).

The Mesalands Small Business Development Center offers non-credit courses and workshops that are specific to meeting local workforce training needs. These include: Forklift Safety Training, Customer Service (Motel, Restaurant and Front Line Employees), Basic Office Skills, Developing a Service Atmosphere, and Conversational Spanish.

Mesalands Community College is the primary entity in northeastern New Mexico for providing workforce training and furthering economic development in the region.



New Mexico Junior College

Promoting Success Through Learning

Addressing the Workforce Needs of Lea County and Economic Development in New Mexico

New Mexico Junior College (NMJC) utilizes Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) to project training needs for business and industry. EMSI is a national firm specializing in developing economic, demographic, education, and employment-based information. The company is a subscription-based service that offers access to a wide range of statistical data and enables organizations to create unique models based on variables deemed relevant/important to Lea County. The power of the data is found in the immediacy of access – NMJC can do the modeling through a website link and receive immediate results – and the range of databases used by the service to develop the results. The models created can report current data, past data, or look into the future. New Mexico Junior College routinely uses the information for enrollment purposes, workforce planning, program planning and review, and economic impact analysis. The website for the service is: <http://www.economicmodeling.com/>

New Mexico Junior College maintains robust partnerships with business and industry, and the College meets weekly with business and industry leaders to assess the training needs as well as evaluating the effectiveness and relevance of our current training. Through the NMJC Training and Outreach Division, NMJC serves approximately 4,500 students annually (non-duplicated). The Training and Outreach Center specializes in non-credit customized training, workforce development, professional development, and community educational opportunities. Additionally, NMJC offers a comprehensive program of Career Technical courses that lead to a certificate or degree.

New Mexico Junior College maintains active non-credit and credit partnerships with numerous regional, national, and international businesses including: (**partial list**)

General Motors
Permian Ford
Lockheed Martin

Ford Motor Company
Sisbarro Buick
Landsun Health Service Center

Watson Chevrolet
Ross Hyden Auto
WIPP

Halliburton
URENCO USA

Basic Energy Services
Enrichment Technology - US

Zia Track and Casino
GEO Group

DCP Midstream
Nor-Lea Hospital
Desert Springs Medical Center
IMI Components

Lea Regional Medical Center
Vista Care Family Hospice
RDA Supplies
Desert Sun Motors

Seminole Hospital
International Isotopes
University Medical Ctr.
Johnson, Miller & Co

City of Hobbs

City of Carlsbad

Lea County



Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) is a major force in developing and delivering economic and workforce development opportunities for both employers and job-seekers. Whether the need is to forge new employment avenues or enhance existing scenarios, the College is a vital link in the system. The College partners with local and state economic development offices by providing a high-quality trained workforce for attracting new business to New Mexico. The College uses both existing coursework and also originates quick response in order to tailor programs as needed.

Ongoing career degrees and certificates cover healthcare areas (Nursing, Certified Nursing Assistant, Dental Assistant, Respiratory Therapy, Medical Assistant, Phlebotomy, and Emergency Medicine) business, entrepreneurship, film, education, arts and design, legal studies, criminal justice, culinary, building trades, environmental and alternative fuels. SFCC also provides training in many of these areas in non-credit offerings as appropriate.

Leveraging resources through grants and contracts is critical to the College's success. Prime examples of using both state and federal grants include training current teachers in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and providing training in environmental technologies to young students at risk. Contracts with the City of Santa Fe and the Environmental Protection Agency have helped the College bring current workers up to new standards.

The College's developmental programs help current workers increase skills in reading, mathematics, writing, and English, enabling them to increase job performance and move up to positions with a sustainable wage.

Regional government and private organizations count on the College to supply trained workers to meet their needs. Examples of current partners include the EPA, New Mexico Environment Department, Santa Fe Homebuilders Association, New Mexico Wired, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, Buckman Regional Water Treatment Plant, Christus Saint Vincent's Regional Medical Center, other regional health care facilities, Santa Fe City Fire Department, Santa Fe County Fire Department, Los Alamos Fire Department, and numerous dental, respiratory, phlebotomy, and doctor's offices.

The College is gaining a national reputation as a model of job development for the new economy. Recently, Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and President Obama's principal environmental policy advisor, visited Santa Fe Community College's Sustainable Technologies Center (STC) to highlight how clean energy innovation and education is building American economic and jobs opportunities.

Chair Sutley toured the facility and met with employees, students, and local leaders to discuss the work of the Center and how its success can be replicated across the Nation. The Sustainable Technologies Center integrates 21st century trades with advanced technologies and sustainability curricula, and works with community, state and national partners to develop and expand the renewable energy industry cluster in the region.

These are only a few ways Santa Fe Community College, and community colleges across the state and nation, have become the go-to institutions, combining efficiency and affordability to advance local, state and national agendas.