Accreditation teams visited two academic units in the College of Health and Social Services in 2011, and both visits reflect positively on the future of the units.

The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) visited the School of Nursing last fall for an accreditation review. The school received excellent marks on all levels. Pam Schultz, associate dean and director of the school, said, “An external body found no problems with our curriculum. They interviewed upper administration, students, faculty and community leaders and made their determination based on the input they received. I’m very pleased with their findings and see this accomplishment as a positive step toward full accreditation.”

The School of Nursing has been accredited until June 30, 2022.

Also last year, the Council for Education in Public Health (CEPH) notified the Department of Health Science that accreditation status for the Master of Public Health (MPH) program has been extended until 2018.

“The CEPH accreditation site visit is one of the most rigorous in academics,” said Mark Kittleson, academic head of the Department of Health Science. “Our program passed with excellent marks, something in which our faculty in the department and the college can take great pride.”

NMSU is the only university in the U.S. with a CEPH-accredited MPH program as well as an undergraduate-approved program by the SOPHE-AAHE Baccalaureate Program Approval Committee (SABPAC).

School of Nursing, Masters in Public Health program achieve reaccreditation

Hospital donates money to nursing program in Grants

Cibola General Hospital will donate $80,000 per year during the next four years to support NMSU’s Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in Grants. The program seeks to address the statewide shortage of trained, qualified nurses by sending professors from NMSU’s Las Cruces campus to teach classes and mentor students at the Grants campus.

A number of instructors in NMSU’s School of Nursing regularly travel from Las Cruces to teach classes and mentor students at the Grants campus.

“We are proud of the contribution that the School of Nursing has made to increase the number of BSN’s practicing in the Grants area,” said Pam Schultz, director of NMSU’s School of Nursing.

NMSU Grants President Felicia Casados said rural community colleges understand the need to align their academic programs to local workforce needs, a sentiment echoed by Cibola General Hospital CEO Michael Makosky.

“Our hospital has hired several students from the program who would have had to leave the community for their education and careers,” Makosky said. “Having the program here not only benefits the hospital, but it also benefits the community and our people who choose nursing as their career.”

Munson Senior Center Accreditation

From left to right: First Gentleman Chuck Franco, Dean Tilahun Adera, Almaz Tiruneh (Adera’s wife), Gov. Susana Martinez and Associate Dean Donna Wagner at the Munson Senior Center dinner celebrating the center’s selection as an accredited senior center—the first accredited senior center in New Mexico.

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New academic programs at CHSS

The School of Nursing admitted its first cohort of students into the new Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) program last fall. This is the first program of its kind in New Mexico. The DNP program will provide doctoral-level education to advanced practice nurses (nurse practitioners and clinical nurse specialists), which will result in improved primary care for New Mexicans in the areas of adult health, psychiatric mental health and community/public health.

“While our Ph.D. program elevates the science of nursing to the scientific inquiry level, our DNP program elevates the practice of nursing to the doctoral level,” said Pam Schultz, associate dean and director of the school.

Students who already have a non-nursing baccalaureate degree and who would like to earn a Master of Science in Nursing degree (MSN) may apply for the Roadrunner program. These students will be eligible to be admitted into the program as graduate students, will receive undergraduate and graduate nursing courses and will be educated to take the national licensure exam (NCLEX) to obtain their registered nurse’s license and an MSN from NMSU. This is the first program of its kind in New Mexico.

Students now have an opportunity to earn a minor degree that is aimed at stopping child abuse. The Child Advocacy Studies or CAST degree is meant to help social workers, teachers, law enforcement personnel and others recognize child abuse and know how to report or investigate it. The CAST minor comprises three core courses and three electives worth three credits each, adding up to 18 credits required for the minor.

Scholarships help students thrive

Dean Tilahun Adera presents nursing student Thomas Hayth with a scholarship certificate at a recognition ceremony this past spring. Hayth, one of the many students who benefit from the generosity of donors, chose nursing as a second career after 18 years of respiratory therapy. Many of his family members are in Las Cruces healthcare.

Bingaman part of Brandon lecture series

Sen. Jeff Bingaman was the guest speaker at the Jeffrey E. and Mary T. Brandon Distinguished Lecture Series on Health Disparities in April. Bingaman has taken a leadership role in legislation addressing numerous public health issues along the border. He was one of five congressional sponsors of the 1994 law that led to the creation of the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission.
Awards, appointments and recognition

Melanie Goodman, a field representative for U.S. Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), was honored as the 2011 College of Health and Social Services Distinguished Alumna.

“I can’t stress enough how critical the mission of this college is to the future of our state,” Goodman said. “I am really proud of my experience at NMSU and its deep commitment to preparing students to meet the enormous challenges that come with the kinds of health and social inequities we have along our border. I’m glad to see that the college continues to make great progress.”

Goodman received her Master of Public Health degree in 2005 and was named Outstanding Graduate Student.

Associate Professor of Health Science Sue Forster-Cox received highly acclaimed awards in December 2011 and January 2012. During the December 2011 NMSU Board of Regents meeting, Forster-Cox was presented with the NMSU “Above and Beyond” Award, which recognizes full-time employees who have demonstrated a strong commitment to NMSU and made a significant contribution to our institution. Forster-Cox is the first faculty member to receive the award.

Forster-Cox was one of 10 NMSU professors who received the Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award at the spring 2012 NMSU Convocation. The award is named after a former NMSU executive vice president in recognition of his 35 years of teaching improvement in New Mexico.

Chuck Kozel, associate professor of health science, and Anne Hubbell, academic department head of communication studies, won first place for the poster they displayed at the University Research Council Fair. The winning poster was titled “Agenda Setting for Expanded Policy-Driven Change: Research Directions and Implications for Leadership and Practice Development.”

Cindy Kratzke, assistant professor of health science, was named a “Rising Star” by the Office of the Vice President for Research. The award is given to NMSU faculty whose proposed research projects would significantly add to knowledge and understanding of social science, educational or humanistic endeavors.

Carnegie Fellow from Armenia visits CHSS

This past spring semester, the College of Health and Social Services hosted Tamara Tonoyan, an associate professor of economics from Armenia. She conducted research at NMSU in the framework of a Carnegie Research Fellowship. Her project, “Health Care Reform in Armenia: Finding Ways to Overcome Challenges,” investigated the impact of various effective programs and multiple types of funding mechanisms. It also looked to find out the most applicable paths to overcome problems in the field of healthcare in Armenia based on the best practices of developed countries.

Her areas of specialization include micro-macroeconomics principles and health economics, financing and policy. Her most recent research interests have included health transitions and health policy, health reforms, international comparison of health systems, health financing and health insurance and health inequality and equity.

Tonoyan currently works at the Yerevan State Medical University, where she teaches health care managers. She also serves as head of the Department of Health Policy, Economics and International Relations at the National Institute of Health in Armenia’s Ministry of Health.

Donors make a difference

We are grateful to our generous donors who have made their mark in giving, thereby allowing students and faculty to turn their goals into achievements. Your support is vital to the important work of our college, the fastest-growing college at NMSU. In fact, the generous contributions of our alumni and community partners represent a significant resource for the college’s programs and services, including:

- Scholarships to ensure students are able to pursue dynamic careers in health.
- Endowed faculty positions to attract and retain leading scholars.
- Research centers to expand the research capacity of our faculty and students.
- Programs to foster further educational development in our students to become the outstanding health professionals our community needs.

If you would like to make a contribution, or have an idea for an innovative gift, please contact me at 575-646-5985 or at jcervant@nmsu.edu.

Thank you for your continued involvement with and commitment to the CHSS family of faculty, students, staff and alumni. I look forward to hearing from you!

– Jennifer Cervantes
Assistant Dean for Advancement
CHSS Advisory Board

Thank you to the CHSS Advisory Board. We are grateful for their service, including providing advice and active support for fundraising as well as advocating by sharing the CHSS and NMSU story with alumni, business leaders, elected officials and community leaders.

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