

**- DRAFT -**

## New Mexico Junior College - NM

HLC ID 1502

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OPEN PATHWAY: Mid-Cycle Review

Review Date: 6/8/2020

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## Context and Nature of Review

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### Review Date

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6/8/2020

#### Mid-Cycle Reviews include:

- The Year 4 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Biennial Review for Applying institutions

#### Reaffirmation Reviews include:

- The Year 10 Review in the Open and Standard Pathways
- The Review for Initial Candidacy for Applying institutions
- The Review for Initial Accreditation for Applying institutions
- The Year 4 Review for Standard Pathway institutions that are in their first accreditation cycle after attaining initial accreditation

### Scope of Review

- Mid-Cycle Review

*There are no forms assigned.*

## Institutional Context

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New Mexico Junior College (NMJC) is a public two-year college offering associate degree and certificate programs in liberal arts as well as several technical and professional areas. Located in Lea County, New Mexico, the college serves a large geographic district in southwestern New Mexico. According to the NMJC Factbook, the college enrolled 2,136 students in the spring of 2020; 1,587 of these students were district residents. The diversity of the student population mirrors that of the district. The college also offers lifelong learning and workforce development programs. According to the NMJC Factbook, enrollment at the college has declined in recent years. In the fall of 2015, the college enrolled 3,022 students, and in the fall of 2019, the college enrolled 2,327 students.

NMJC was established in 1965 as the first independent community college in the state and was granted accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in 1970. NMJC has received continuous HLC accreditation for the past 50 years and was selected by the HLC as a Pathway Pioneer institution. NMJC had its most recent affirmation of accreditation in 2015-2016. This Year 4 Review was conducted virtually in June 2020, and the next Reaffirmation of Accreditation is scheduled for 2025-2026.

## Interactions with Constituencies

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Because this is a virtual review, the team chair had interactions with President Kelvin Sharp and Vice President of Instruction Larry Sanderson. Throughout the review period, the team chair and team members interacted with Vice President Sanderson to request additional evidence or clarification of existing evidence.

## **Additional Documents**

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The additional documents requested and reviewed by the team members, including information on dual credit courses, academic program review, co-curricular program assessment, faculty roles and responsibilities, and detailed financial information, are included in the addendum section of the report.

## 1 - Mission

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### 1.A - Core Component 1.A

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The institution's mission is broadly understood within the institution and guides its operations.

1. The mission statement is developed through a process suited to the nature and culture of the institution and is adopted by the governing board.
2. The institution's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
3. The institution's planning and budgeting priorities align with and support the mission. (This sub-component may be addressed by reference to the response to Criterion 5.C.1.)

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The current version of the college mission statement was first adopted by the governing board in 2005. The mission statement reads "New Mexico Junior College, as a comprehensive community college, promotes success through learning." The current vision statement reads "New Mexico Junior College's mission will be achieved by building a culture that values and promotes excellence, effectiveness, responsiveness, access, and community involvement."

The college mission documents are reviewed, approximately every five years, as part of the college's strategic planning process. In 2017, the college conducted their most recent review of the mission and vision statements as part of the strategic planning process. Numerous internal and external stakeholder groups were involved in this process, and changes to the mission and vision statements were proposed. However, at the end of process, the existing wording was retained for both statements, and the college's governing board affirmed the decisions to maintain the existing mission and vision statements.

NMJC's academic programs, student support services, and enrollment profile appear to be consistent with its mission as a junior college. The college currently offers 14 associate degree programs and 23 certificate programs. The institution also offers non-credit training programs for local employers, as well as community education programs. Adult Basic Education (ABE) is offered to individuals who have not completed high school, and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are also offered by the college. To meet the needs of students who are spread across a wide geographic region, NMJC offers courses and programs through a number of delivery methods, including traditional classrooms, interactive television, online, and mobile training labs.

The college offers appropriate student support services including academic advising, enrollment services, financial aid, career advising, and disability resources. An Academic Success Center provides tutoring support for students in multiple subject areas. Library and information technology resources are also available for students, as well as a student center and a museum of western heritage. The college also offers a number of co-curricular activities and events.

NMJC's student profile is consistent with the demographic profile of the surrounding area. Most of the students served by NMJC come from within 50 miles of the campus (Lea County in New Mexico and three counties in Texas: Gaines, Andrews, and Yoakum). The percentage of minority students at the college has increased steadily over the past 15 years, from 48.5 percent to 68.7 percent. The college's service area is approximately 8,000 square miles. NMJC also serves a number of area high school students through its dual credit programs.

The college's mission and priorities are used to make decisions relative to budget and resource allocation. The goals and the objectives of the strategic plan are reviewed at the beginning of the annual budget process and proposed college programs and activities should be in alignment with the plan. NMJC's top priority is support of academic programming, and the college has managed to increase funding for instruction and academic support despite continued decreases in state funding (see 5.C. for more information on the alignment of planning and budgeting).

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.B - Core Component 1.B

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The mission is articulated publicly.

1. The institution clearly articulates its mission through one or more public documents, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans, or institutional priorities.
2. The mission document or documents are current and explain the extent of the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development, and religious or cultural purpose.
3. The mission document or documents identify the nature, scope, and intended constituents of the higher education programs and services the institution provides.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC articulates its mission through multiple public channels. The mission documents are published on the college website and in the college catalog, student and employee handbooks, and governing board policy book. The mission is reviewed in presentations made to faculty and staff each semester and at the beginning of the annual budget process. NMJC outlines its mission, vision, goals, objectives, and priorities in the college's strategic plan.

As described in 1.A, NMJC's mission and vision were formally reviewed in 2017, although the language in these statements has not been changed since 2005. The college mission focuses on student success, while the vision focuses on building a desired culture. Five core values support the college mission and vision: access, responsiveness, effectiveness, excellence, and community. These values are embedded in the vision statement.

The assurance argument states that the college serves the mission through career and technical training, lifelong learning, general education, support of cultural and social activities and regional economic development. However, these five major areas were not specifically listed in any of the mission documents reviewed by the team, including the college's Strategic Plan for 2017-2022.

Although NMJC's mission, vision, and values are general and enduring in nature, the Strategic Plan for 2017-2022 does identify the nature, scope and intended stakeholders of the programs and services provided by the college. The primary institutional goals involve increasing enrollments and completion rates for students in academic programs. The goals also include increasing workforce training, professional training, and community education enrollments. There are a number of strategies and objectives to support each of these goals.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.C - Core Component 1.C

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The institution understands the relationship between its mission and the diversity of society.

1. The institution addresses its role in a multicultural society.
2. The institution's processes and activities reflect attention to human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC appears to address its role in a multicultural society through a number of programs, services, and activities. The college's service area, described in 1.A, is quite diverse, and the student population mirrors the demographics of the communities it serves. In 2019, the student body was comprised of Hispanic (52.3 percent), White (31.3 percent) and African American (8.4 percent) students. The average student age is 23.7, although the college serves students from a wide range of age groups.

Programs and services designed to support this diverse population include credit courses, workforce education, lifelong learning, cultural activities, and community activities. Examples of these activities include Women's History Month, youth sports camps, and college/community theater programs (further examples may be found in 3.D). The college is also involved in volunteer activities in the community, providing food and school supplies to low income children. Although the college currently offers a number of programs and services that are appropriate for the constituencies it serves, there is no reference to the institution's role in serving a multi-cultural society, or related initiatives, in the college's Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022.

Over the past decade, the composition of the NMJC governing board has become more diverse. A decade ago, the seven-member board was comprised of six White members and one African American member. By 2019, the board composition had shifted significantly, and currently the board includes three Hispanic members, three White members and one African American member. At this time, the board also has gender balance, with three female members and four male members.

Recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce with appropriate academic credentials is a challenge for the college given its remote location. However, NMJC has made progress in this area over the past five years, doubling the number of Hispanic faculty members from 6.2 percent in 2015 to 12.5 percent in 2019. According to the narrative in the assurance argument, the college remains committed to expand minority representation within the faculty and professional staff. However, there are no goals, strategies, or objectives related to recruiting or retaining minority faculty or staff members in the college's Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 1.D - Core Component 1.D

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The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

1. Actions and decisions reflect an understanding that in its educational role the institution serves the public, not solely the institution, and thus entails a public obligation.
2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.
3. The institution engages with its identified external constituencies and communities of interest and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Established in 1965 as the first independent community college in New Mexico, NMJC was originally funded entirely from local resources. During the 1980's, NMJC began to receive state funding; however, approximately 85 percent of the college's funding comes from local sources. Given the college receives significant local support, college leaders have focused on providing programs and services that meet the needs of the local communities (see 1. B and 1. C).

These community-based programs and services include dual credit opportunities for area high school students, academic degree programs, workforce training programs, community education, and economic development initiatives. Examples of these programs include the Lea County Distance Education Consortium, the New Horizons Foundation, and a new community recreation center. NMJC maintains strong relationships with area employers, and its workforce training programs consistently rank in the top three in the state. The college recently became involved in a project to develop a new medical complex in Lea County.

As a public community college, with an elected local governing board, NMJC's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes. In 2018-2019, more than 80 percent of the operating funds were allocated to instruction, academic support, and student services. Each year, the college budget is developed around the college mission and the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan. As a public educational institution, NMJC does not have investors, a parent company, or external financial interests.

As described above, NMJC has a long history of collaborating with external stakeholders and community groups. External stakeholders are formally involved in the college's advisory boards and panels, campus master planning activities, and the strategic planning process. The college's quality improvement project (under the HLC's Pathways process) involves participation in the Lumina Degree Qualifications Profile Project. This project included conversations with students, employees, area K-12 schools and employers. Other examples of how the college supports local communities are listed in 1.C.

## **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary**

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The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

### **Rationale**

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The mission, vision and values of NMJC are clear and are articulated publicly through a number of channels. The mission documents guide the major functions of the college which include dual credit courses, academic programs, workforce training, community education and economic development. The diversity of the student body mirrors the diversity of the communities served by the college. The college is engaged with the communities it serves and external stakeholders are involved in a number of key college processes.

## 2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### 2.A - Core Component 2.A

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The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions; it establishes and follows policies and processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty, and staff.

#### Rating

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Met

#### Rationale

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NMJC operates with integrity in its financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The college establishes and follows policies and processes for ethical behavior on the part of its governing board members, administrators, faculty members, and staff members.

New board members complete a formal orientation to board operations and policies. The governing board's policy manual includes a code of ethics, code of conduct, and a conflict of interest policy that apply to all board members. Each year, board members sign an agreement that they will abide by the ethics, conduct, and conflict of interest requirements.

Board meetings are held monthly, and each meeting includes a financial review provided by the college's chief financial officer. This detailed monthly financial review includes expenses and revenue relative to instruction, academic support, student services, operations, plant maintenance, the auxiliary enterprises and athletics. The board formally approves the annual college budget. The college's finances are audited annually by an independent auditor, and the audit results are shared with the board members.

Board members and college administrators have established policies, processes, and procedures to assure integrity and ethical behavior on the part of all college employees. These policies, including conflict of interest, copyright, and whistle blower, are outlined in the employee and faculty handbooks. Similar to board members, all faculty and staff members are required to sign a code of conduct as part of their annual contract renewal process. In addition, all college employees are required to participate in annual training on federal compliance issues, including FERPA, Title IX Awareness and Violence Prevention, and Unlawful Harassment Prevention. Employee completion of this mandatory annual training is tracked by the college.

The faculty handbook contains information on academic freedom, academic honesty, and numerous other topics related to fair and ethical behavior for faculty and students. However, the most current faculty handbook located by the review team was a draft document from 2014-2015; there is a need

for this document to be finalized and shared with faculty members. Academic policies and procedures are also found in the college catalog, in the student handbook and on the college website.

In addition, there are numerous policies to ensure employees act with financial integrity, including policies on use of college resources, purchasing, and contracting. NMJC's research policy and procedures manual provides guidance for faculty, staff, and students on engaging in ethical research activities. Finally, NMJC provides opportunities for faculty, staff and students to make complaints and offer suggestions through formal processes. All complaints are tracked by the college to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.B - Core Component 2.B

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The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC presents itself clearly and completely to students and the public with regard to its programs, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, control, and accreditation relationships. All academic programs and their current requirements (provided in a degree plan format) are listed on the college website and in the college catalog.

Each faculty and professional staff member has a webpage on the college website that includes contact information, office hours, and academic credentials. Faculty members and their academic qualifications are also listed in the college catalog.

Detailed information on tuition and fees; funding and payment policies; and financial aid is also available on the college website, including a net price calculator to help students estimate cost of attendance. This information is also provided in the college catalog.

NMJC displays its HLC accreditation information on its website with a link to the HLC website. HLC accreditation is also described on the website for the Institutional Effectiveness Office. However, that information is not current as it states that "NMJC will seek continued accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission in 2015-2016" and goes on to summarize accreditation activities from 2012 to 2016. There is no mention of activities from 2016 to the present.

NMJC has obtained specialized accreditation for some of its academic programs, such as nursing and the law enforcement training academy. The college has also received recognition from external training organizations, such as the International Association of Drilling Contractor's for its well control certification. This information is also displayed on the college website.

Although most of the information on the college website was current relative to the items above, team members found a considerable amount of information on the website that was in need of updating. For example, under the tab "College Tours," the webpage states that the date for NMJC Thunderbird Discover Day 2019 will be announced soon. The most current reports accessible on the Institutional Effectiveness Office are from 2017. It is recommended that the college website be reviewed and updated as not to provide misleading information. It is also suggested that the website, as well as related documents and forms, be made available in Spanish for greater accessibility to students, parents, and members of the public.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.C - Core Component 2.C

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The governing board of the institution is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity.

1. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
2. The governing board reviews and considers the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
3. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties when such influence would not be in the best interest of the institution.
4. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the administration and expects the faculty to oversee academic matters.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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Established under the 1963 Junior College Act of the New Mexico legislature, NMJC is governed by a board of seven members elected from single-member districts located throughout Lea County. Guided by three primary documents, the college's strategic plan, master plan and annual budget, the governing board's priorities and actions involve preserving and enhancing the institution.

The board has policies and processes to review and consider the needs and interests of the college's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations. In accordance with the state's open meeting laws, all regular meetings of the governing board are open to the public. Agendas and supporting materials are posted on the college website and shared with the local media. Each monthly board meeting includes time on the agenda for open comments from the public. In addition, members of the public can comment on any agenda item.

The college's governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of elected officials, ownership interests, or other external parties through its established policies and procedures. The governing board's policy manual includes a code of ethics, code of conduct, and a conflict of interest policy that apply to all board members. Each year, board members sign an agreement that they will abide by the ethics, conduct, and conflict of interest requirements. As part of the annual college finance audit, each board member completes an interview involving ethical practices and college operations.

To ensure that board members are not influenced by donors, all donations and gifts to the college are reviewed and accepted by the NMJC Foundation. The NMJC Foundation has a separate board of directors and a separate set of policies dealing with the acceptance of monetary and in-kind contributions to the college.

NMJC's governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the president, and

there are specific sections of the board's policy manual that describe the responsibilities of the president and the evaluation of the president (policies 400 and 401). A review of board agendas and meeting minutes indicates that the board has delegated daily management of the college to the president and vice presidents. According to NMJC's organizational chart, the vice president for academic affairs and the academic deans oversee faculty members who are responsible for academic programs and the curriculum. Although the faculty handbook is still in draft stage, the draft includes a section on faculty roles and responsibilities that describes the faculty role in overseeing and improving academic programs.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.D - Core Component 2.D

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The institution is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC is committed to freedom of expression and the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning. The college's governing board maintains a specific policy (number 601) on academic freedom in teaching and learning. The policy focuses on the instructional process and does not include research as the policy states "New Mexico Junior College shall not embrace that of research as commonly found in senior colleges and universities." The policy does not appear to include co-curricular activities or other activities outside of the classroom.

This same board policy that ensures academic freedom for faculty members also provides guidance relative to appropriate behaviors in the classroom. According to the policy, "professional employees shall not knowingly misrepresent facts. They shall be careful in their teaching not to introduce controversial matter bearing no relationship to their subject. They shall not force their own ideas and ready-made decisions on the student, but shall get the student to make his/her own decisions in the light of all available information." This same language is repeated in the employee handbook under the topic of academic freedom.

The student handbook describes freedom of expression for students. In Section II (Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities of Students) it is stated that "freedom of discussion, inquiry, and expression is protected and nurtured in the classroom as the safeguard of the freedom to learn. Students are expected to exercise their freedom to learn in a manner consistent with the maintenance of civil discourse and orderly conduct." Again, it is not clear that this language applies to learning activities outside of the classroom. It is recommended that the college's policies related to academic freedom be reviewed and updated to include co-curricular activities, college social media, etc.

Finally, NMJC maintains formal grievance processes that are open to all employees and students. This process is described in the employee and student handbooks. Employees are additionally protected by a whistleblower policy. And, as mentioned previous, there is a time for public comment at each governing board meeting.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 2.E - Core Component 2.E

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The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, students and staff.

1. The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.
2. Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.
3. The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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As a junior college with a primary focus on teaching (see governing board policies), there are no research or scholarship expectations for faculty members. However, the college does maintain an Institutional Review Board (IRB) to provide oversight and ensure integrity of research that is conducted by faculty, staff, students, or others using NMJC data for research purposes. The college's Office of Institutional Effectiveness is responsible for oversight of college research activities and for managing the approvals required for the use of human subjects or protected records in research projects. The college maintains a policy and procedures for conducting research involving human subjects. This document was last updated in 2005 and may require further updating to deal with advances in technology used to collect data.

NMJC students are given guidance on the ethical use of information resources through a number of channels. The college library provides information on the appropriate use of print and electronic materials, including an online library skills tutorial that is available through the library's website. Common courses, such as English and history, include specific information about ethical use of information, and this information is included in the syllabi for these courses. Faculty members utilize Turnitin software to review and monitor the ethical use of information sources, as well as academic integrity and plagiarism.

Within the college's student handbook, there is a student code of conduct that describes student expectations for academic honesty, consequences for violation of college policies, and the student appeals process. This information is also outlined in the faculty handbook, on the college website, and in some course syllabi. Penalties for violation of the policies for academic integrity and honesty range from a warning, to failure for a specific assignment, and potential removal from the class. These policies are enforced by the instructors, deans, and the academic vice president.

Some course syllabi, including "gateway courses," include information on ethical use of information resource and college policies on academic honesty and integrity. However, it would be helpful for each course syllabus to include this information to ensure that each student is aware of this information. This information could also be shared during new student orientation.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary**

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The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

### **Rationale**

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NMJC acts with integrity, ethics, and responsibility. The governing board and the college maintain and enforce policies to ensure integrity and ethics in financial, academic, personnel, and auxiliary functions. The college requires annual employee training and follows processes for fair and ethical behavior on the part of its administration, faculty, and staff.

NMJC's governing board is sufficiently autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution and to assure its integrity. The governing board delegates daily operations of the institution to the president and vice presidents, and to the faculty for the oversight of academic programs. The college's governing board maintains a specific policy on academic freedom in teaching and learning, and this language is repeated in the employee and student handbooks.

## 3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

### 3.A - Core Component 3.A

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The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.
3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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As a junior college, NMJC awards associate degrees and certificates. The college currently offers 14 associate degrees and associate of applied science degrees and 26 certificates. Program requirements and descriptions for each degree and certificate program are published in the college catalog and on the college website. Courses and programs appear to require appropriate numbers of credits and levels of student performance, and there are systems in place to assess student learning in courses and programs.

The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its courses and programs. Only college-level courses can be applied to degree requirements; remedial and transitional studies courses do not count towards degree requirements. All associate degrees require a minimum of 60 semester credit hours for completion, and all associate degrees include general education courses. Associate of applied science degrees also provide career-oriented technical courses.

NMJC's certificate programs require anywhere from 9 and 51 credit hours. Certificates are designed to prepare graduates for entry-level employment in specific occupations or as advanced credentials for individuals to improve their current career opportunities.

Learning goals for courses and programs are consistent across all modes of delivery and locations. NMJC offers several online courses, and online courses comprised approximately one-third of enrollments. The college employs professional staff members who support faculty and students who are engaged in online teaching and learning. All faculty who teach online courses are required to complete a training course, and the college maintains a handbook for faculty who teach online

courses. Finally, all online courses are subject to a specialized course review designed to evaluate the effectiveness of this delivery mode.

Each high school offering dual credit courses must submit a signed uniform master agreement every three years. The agreement must specify eligible courses, academic quality of dual credit courses, course approvals, and course requirements. Courses eligible for dual credit must meet the rigor for NMJC credit and be congruent with NMJC's academic standards. Dual credit courses offered at high schools must conform to college academic standards. Course requirements for high school students enrolled in dual credit courses must be equal to those of NMJC college students.

According to the NMJC Dual Credit Policy Guide, NMJC must approve faculty for all dual credit courses in accordance with HLC guidelines for accreditation. However, unlike online education, the college does not appear to provide any training or professional development for faculty who teach dual credit courses. Nor does there appear to be any specialized course review to evaluate the effectiveness of dual credit courses.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.B - Core Component 3.B

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The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application, and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.

1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings, and degree levels of the institution.
2. The institution articulates the purposes, content, and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.
3. Every degree program offered by the institution engages students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.
4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.
5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution's mission.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC has identified institutional learning outcomes that describe the knowledge and abilities achieved by students who graduate with associate degrees from the college. All graduates will achieve these general outcomes: communication; critical thinking and problem solving; and self and community outcomes (includes outcomes related to ethics and diversity). Students will also achieve learning outcomes specific to their programs.

The institutional learning objectives are integrated into all NMJC courses. In addition to course-specific objectives, all courses are required to include components of the institutional learning objectives. The integration of these objectives is intended to be a reflection of the college's commitment to integrated learning. The institutional learning objectives are identified in individual course syllabi across all programs, and example syllabi were included in the assurance argument. Thus, it may be concluded that every degree program offered by NMJC involves students in collecting, analyzing, and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

The college philosophy of general education also reflects these outcomes and serves as a guide for development of courses. The general education requirements at NMJC are intended to promote broad, integrative knowledge; encourage curiosity and disciplined thinking; and support appreciation for the diversity. All NMJC degree programs are based on a foundation of general education. This foundation includes coursework from a range of general education topics including communication,

mathematics, science, social science, and humanities.

A search of the NMJC catalog confirms that the college offers diversity-related courses in several disciplines, including Race and Ethnic Relations, World Religion, Spanish, Sign Language and History of Lost Civilizations. However, a review of degree plans found that several degrees do not include diversity-related courses. Other degree plans include general education electives where students may choose to complete that requirement with a diversity-related course. It is recommended that all degree programs include courses or course content on human and cultural diversity.

The state of New Mexico has been re-designing the common general education core requirements for a number of years. This initiative involves common learning objectives for general education courses, negotiating agreement among institutions for the structure of the common core, and reviewing courses for transfer. To date, NMJC has secured approval for 77 general education courses. When finalized, the new common curriculum ensures that general education courses will be accepted for transfer across all public higher education institutions in New Mexico. General education reports were submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department annually through 2017. With the state-wide process of certifying general education courses, the state no longer requires annual reports by general education area.

A review of courses, course syllabi, and co-curricular activities indicates that NMJC faculty and students appear to contribute to scholarship, creative work, and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and to the institution's mission. The college offers courses in art, music, and drama/theater, and general education assessment reports refer to required research papers in a number of courses that are used for the purpose of assessing student learning outcomes. However, the college's governing board policies clearly state the NMJC is not a research institution, and there was little mention of faculty or student research, scholarship, or creative activities in the assurance argument.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.C - Core Component 3.C

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The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

1. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning.
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual, and consortial programs.
3. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising, and co-curricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained, and supported in their professional development.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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With 71 full-time faculty members and 85 part-time faculty members, NMJC has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty. Full-time faculty, who teach 80 percent of the college's credit hours, are required to teach 15 credits per semester, and the average class size is approximately 16 students. Other responsibilities of full-time faculty include curriculum development, course preparation, office hours, mentoring students, and committee work.

NMJC evaluates the credentials of all faculty members in accordance with governing board policies and the assumed practices of the HLC. All full-time faculty members are expected to have the appropriate academic degrees, and transcripts are verified by the college. For technical and professional courses, relevant experience is also a consideration. Part-time and dual credit faculty members must also meet the academic requirements established by the HLC. Currently, all NMJC faculty members meet or exceed the HLC established expectations for faculty credentials.

All full-time faculty members are formally evaluated on an annual basis. The faculty evaluation process is documented and accessible to all faculty members. The process includes annual goal setting, observations of teaching practices, student course evaluations, and student success rates. This process is currently being updated through a collaborative process involving administrators and members of the Faculty Senate. At this time, there does not appear to be a formal process for evaluating part-time and dual credit faculty members.

NMJC provides numerous opportunities for faculty development, including speakers, workshops, and formal training programs, including required training for faculty who teach online courses. In-service activities are provided at the beginning of each semester. To keep current in their disciplines, faculty members attend conferences and seminars sponsored by the state of New Mexico and various professional organizations. Funding for faculty development is provided by deans and by a subcommittee of the Faculty Senate. However, it is not clear if part-time and dual credit faculty members are offered similar opportunities for professional development.

All full-time and part-time faculty members are accessible for student engagement and inquiry outside of the classroom. All full-time faculty members are required to be accessible 10 hours a week through in-person or virtual office hours. Contact information for faculty is included in the course syllabi, and full-time faculty members have personal webpages with contact information and office hours listed. Although part-time faculty members are also required to be accessible to students, the college does not appear to have requirements relative to this issue.

NMJC's professional staff, who provide services to students, are appropriately qualified and also participate in a number of training and development programs appropriate to their roles at the college. Several examples of staff development activities are provided in the assurance argument. Staff members also participate in in-service sessions on general topics including ethics, customer service, and safety training.

In summary, NMJC has the faculty and staff needed for effective academic programs and student services. However, policies and formal requirements for part-time and dual credit faculty members relative to professional development, accessibility to students, and performance evaluation appear to be lacking.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.D - Core Component 3.D

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The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.
3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its programs and the needs of its students.
4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).
5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC provides student support services for prospective, new, and current students. Available services include advising, enrollment assistance, financial aid, library services, information technology, tutoring, learning support, and student life services (housing and dining). There are also special services available to veterans and students with disabilities. The college uses a number of channels to communicate with and provide services to students including in-person, telephone, e-mail, and web-based communications. A large number of the current student services staff members are bi-lingual and are able to provide services in Spanish. However, the college website and related documents and forms do not appear to be available in languages other than English.

The college provides a transitional (developmental) curriculum and learning support for students who may not be prepared for college-level courses. Various placement exams, standardized test scores, and high school grades are used to determine readiness for college-level English and math courses. This use of multiple measures to place students in appropriate courses has helped to make transitional studies more efficient and effective for both the students and the college. An Adult Basic Education program and an Academic Success Center are available for students who are not ready for college-level course work.

NMJC provides both general and specialized academic advising for students. The college employs full-time counselors who provide general advising to new and continuing students through a number of channels. Faculty members provide specialized academic advising for the students in their programs, and coaches advise student athletes. The college provides advisement tools for faculty, counselors, coaches, and students including degree audits, Who's Next software, as well as a student information system.

The college provides faculty, staff, and students with the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning. NMJC maintains more than 177,000 square feet of classroom and laboratory space, as well as 18,000 square feet of study space. As mentioned previously, the campus also houses a museum. The campus also has adequate technology resources, including Banner and Canvas, to support an infrastructure for online learning. That infrastructure was tested during the recent pandemic as the college shifted to greater use of online teaching and learning.

Students are guided in the effective use of research and information resources by faculty members and librarians. Library staff members provide training to faculty members and work closely with students. The college uses Turnitin software to detect plagiarism. However, it is unclear if all students receive a formal introduction to this topic by librarians. All faculty and staff members are expected to enforce policies related to academy honesty, plagiarism, and cheating. These policies are outlined in the student handbook and faculty members explain their expectations regarding academic integrity and the effective use of information resources in their course syllabi.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 3.E - Core Component 3.E

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The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution's mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students' educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose, and economic development.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The college offers a number of co-curricular programs, including athletics, that are appropriate to its mission and contribute to the educational experience. The Office of Student Life coordinates student activities, including intramural athletics, and the Office of Residential Life plans activities and programs for resident students. Student clubs and activities include band, campus ambassadors, political clubs, religious organizations, honorary societies, and technical activities (Skills USA). However, the number or percentage of students who participate in athletics, intramural sports, clubs, and other activities is not provided.

NMJC also contributes to the student experience through community-based and cultural activities including lecture series, Black History Month activities, and Women's History Month activities. Volunteering and service learning activities are provided in specific courses and at college-sponsored events including Stuff-a-Bus, Stuff-a-Truck, and a Foster Kids Christmas party. Again, the number of students who participate in these activities was not included in the assurance argument or evidence files.

As mentioned previously, the college operates the Western Heritage Museum and Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame. The museum hosts major exhibitions that are open to students, faculty, staff, and members of the community. The museum also hosts a summer event that typically brings more than 2,000 students to campus for activities. However, it is unknown if the event was held in the summer of 2020 because of the pandemic.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

### **3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary**

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The institution provides high quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

#### **Rationale**

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NMJC provides its educational courses and programs on its campus, through online delivery systems and at area high schools. All faculty members meet the HLC's requirements relative to academic credentials. Full-time faculty are provided numerous opportunities for professional development, and they are evaluated on an annual basis. However, it is not known if part-time and dual credit faculty are involved in professional development activities or evaluated on a regular basis. The college has an adequate physical and technological infrastructure to support both traditional and online teaching and learning. The college provides adequate support services and co-curricular activities given its mission and student populations.

## 4 - Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### 4.A - Core Component 4.A

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews.
2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.
3. The institution has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It assures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution assures that the degree or certificate programs it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission, such as employment rates, admission rates to advanced degree programs, and participation rates in fellowships, internships, and special programs (e.g., Peace Corps and Americorps).

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The institution has established a new program review process since joining the Pathways Cohort 3 and as a result of their Degree Qualifications Profile work. Although it is not stated, this appears to have happened sometime in 2014 or 2015. The description of this process is rather brief, and does not include a schedule or cycle of program reviews for particular areas. The narrative describes that the college has gone away from formal reporting structures to concentrate on outcomes and quality improvement. One caution for this approach would be the ability to maintain sustainable records of growth and development of programs over time. A comprehensive repository of program reviews was not mentioned by the Institution or made available upon request.

The institution does have a detailed process for evaluation and transcription of credit courses documented in the college catalog, within the admissions information. Included in this process is an appropriate mechanism for an appeal of course evaluation decision. Credit for prior learning is specifically outlined for law enforcement/corrections experience relative to criminal justice courses, but it appears that other topics are handled through an "institutional challenge." The institution's narrative speaks of an updated process, which is marked as draft in the evidence file, so it is not clear if or when the new process will become official. Also included in this section of the catalog is a crosswalk for AP exam scores and corresponding award of credit. NMJC also has policies that assure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The institution maintains authority over prerequisites and curriculum matters through the oversight of the Academic Standards/Curriculum committee. This is a standing committee that has significant faculty representation across divisions. Additionally, the program review process for the transitional studies area led to changes in some of the placement requirements for college-level courses. These changes, as well as changes that were made necessary as a result of the COVID19 situation that limited student access to testing, will be analyzed through collected course outcomes data to understand their impact and/or success. NMJC provides and maintains appropriate learning resources through their library, academic support center, and online tutoring.

The appropriate specialized accreditation for specific programs is maintained for the following programs: Law Enforcement, Corrections, Nursing, Automotive and Cosmetology. More information about these specialized accreditation agencies is provided on the college website.

With the exception of the programs holding specialized accreditation, evidence supporting the success of graduates is not robust. National Student Clearinghouse information is tracked for students continuing onto to four-year colleges, but the institution might consider graduate, alumni or employer surveys to gain more insight in this area.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 4.B - Core Component 4.B

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
2. The institution assesses achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members.

### Rating

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Met With Concerns

### Rationale

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NMJC is committed to the assessment of student learning. The college uses several venues including a public website, course syllabi, and institutional reporting to communicate their goals and student learning outcomes. These goals and student learning outcomes are stated and assessed at the course, program, and institutional levels. The New Mexico State framework for general education outcomes and common course outcomes is used in this process as well.

The assessment of student learning occurs in a structured and systematic way. This is documented in the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes Guide and supported by the Student Assessment course, housed in the Canvas, which is available to all full- and part-time faculty. Assessment results are compiled and shared in coordination with the Institutional Effectiveness Office, assessment coordinators and the appropriate deans.

While the regular and systematic assessment of student outcomes is true for curricular areas, it has not been developed in the co-curricular areas. The assurance document addresses the need to focus on co-curricular assessment but does not offer documentation of a common definition of co-curricular activities (other than a draft document that was submitted at the very end of this review period) or a plan for an assessment process.

NMJC uses the information gathered from their assessment activities to plan improvements. This is documented through their use of departmental assessment reports. These reports serve as launch pads for discussion for faculty to discuss gaps in outcome attainment and possible strategies for improvement. Several examples of improvement were provided in the reports.

Faculty are deeply involved in the creation and execution of the assessment process at NMJC. The creation of a faculty-led Student Learning Outcomes Assessment committee assures that faculty are central to the student assessment process. The addition of the assessment coordinator role, with the responsibility of compiling and communicating the annual assessment reports, further deepens the

faculty involvement. The appropriate deans and vice president are involved to further support the continuous improvement of student learning.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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Monitoring is needed on processes to address co-curricular assessment. In the assurance document, NMJC refers to co-curricular assessment as a "lagging" area, and this area was not addressed in the college's previous HLC review in 2015-2016. When the team requested additional information on co-curricular assessment, the college submitted a document indicating that a large group of faculty and staff are currently working on definitions and categories for co-curricular activities.

Before their next formal reaffirmation of accreditation in 2025-2026, NMJC will need to develop, document, and execute a plan to accomplish sustained and meaningful assessment for its co-curricular programs. A report on the assessment of co-curricular programs, including definitions, outcomes, methodology, data collection, data analysis, and recommendations for improvement will be embedded in the assurance argument that the college will prepare for its 2025-2026 review.

## 4.C - Core Component 4.C

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The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational improvement through ongoing attention to retention, persistence, and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence, and completion that are ambitious but attainable and appropriate to its mission, student populations, and educational offerings.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence, and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The state of New Mexico has an organized system around collecting and reporting retention and success data across higher education institutions, including student persistence and completion rates for each public community college in the state. These metrics are part of a performance-based funding model. According to the most recent report (April 2020), NMJC had a steady increase in fall-to-fall retention rates for full-time students from 48.2 percent from fall 2013 to fall 2014 to 59.6 percent from fall 2017 to fall 2018. However, the retention rate dropped from fall 2018 to fall 2019 to 46.6 percent, the lowest retention rate of the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges. Yet the fall 2019 to spring 2020 retention rate was 88.6 percent, which was the highest rate of the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges. No explanation was provided for these significant variances or how these metrics impacted enrollments, finances, or other areas of the college.

Although the NMJC Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022, includes a focus area on student success, it doesn't appear that the college has set specific goals for improvement in this area. NMJC's Strategic Plan 2017 to 2022 focus on student success includes the following tactical objectives: increase percent of graduates (for both full-time and part-time cohorts), reduce time and credits to completion, increase semester-to-semester retention, and increase course completion. However, there are no specific goals/targets, strategies, or action steps associated with these tactical objectives. Further, it is not clear which groups or individuals at the college are responsible for achieving these tactical objectives.

The institution does collect and analyze student information and has made concerted efforts to track success of at-risk students specifically by demographics. This information serves as catalyst for early alert efforts, active interventions, as well as course and program improvements. The college began

tracking "at-risk" students in 2008 and identified approximately one-third of the student body "at risk" at that time. However, as of fall 2018, the percentage of "at-risk" students had dropped to 23 percent (down almost 10 percentage points from 2008).

In addition to the required state reporting described above, NMJC gathers and reports information on student retention, persistence, and completions in IPEDS, on the college website, in reports to the governing board, and in internal reports. Information on course completion and student retention has been used to modify course placement policies and courses, particularly courses in developmental math with positive outcomes. The college is currently undertaking a significant initiative involving improving retention of part-time students.

It is clear that NMJC is committed to student success and gathers appropriate data in this area. It does appear that the process is more reactive than proactive, however. Further exploration of the equity gaps in groups by ethnicity and economic status could benefit the students. Although this information has been collected, it is not apparent that interventions have been implemented to address specific equity gaps.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## **4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary**

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The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

### **Rationale**

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NMJC demonstrates its commitment to student learning and the quality of its educational programs and learning environments. The processes around assessment of student learning outcomes is particularly strong. Further attention to documentation of narratives surrounding academic program review would benefit the college over time.

The use of data to inform curricular change, continuous improvement, and appropriate changes to policy and procedures is well documented. Setting and articulating targets for the college community to become invested in student success and work together as a team would be beneficial. While the college seems to be trending in positive directions for student success, it does not seem there is an intentional plan around the activity.

One area of serious concern, as noted in 4.B, is assessment of co-curricular activities. The college will need to address this area before its next formal review through an embedded progress report.

## 5 - Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### 5.A - Core Component 5.A

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The institution's resource base supports its current educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

1. The institution has the fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The institution's resource allocation process ensures that its educational purposes are not adversely affected by elective resource allocations to other areas or disbursement of revenue to a superordinate entity.
3. The goals incorporated into mission statements or elaborations of mission statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources, and opportunities.
4. The institution's staff in all areas are appropriately qualified and trained.
5. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring expense.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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New Mexico Junior College has fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support the mission of a comprehensive community college.

As stated in the assurance argument and the institution's financial reporting, NMJC maintains an enviable financial position to support its operations. Unlike most of the country's public community colleges, NMJC has less dependence on state support as a percentage of its overall operating revenue. It has a heavier reliance on local sources: property taxes and energy taxes. NMJC is able to weather volatility associated with local revenues using a conservative projection model. Despite fluctuations in revenues, the institution has surpassed its revenue projections (budgeted to actual) in each of the past five years, FY14 through FY19. The college maintains a non GASB 68 primary reserve of over 60 percent.

The college also maintains a nine percent annual reserve, which exceeds state requirements. Reserve funds are used for unanticipated events, to protect against risks and to take advantage of opportunities. In addition, foundation and auxiliary revenues are increasing while state support is

decreasing.

Annual surplus revenues are set aside in support of the master facilities plan and other one-time spending events (projects) including technology. The master plan is comprehensive and reflects significant investment strategies in physical assets designed to enhance academic programs and student life services. The master plan was last updated in 2019 as an effort to maintain existing campus assets and guide future investments.

The college recently invested in a two-year rotation cycle of smart classrooms. In addition, NMJC has a robust information technology infrastructure and state-wide enterprise system (Ellucian Banner XE) designed to support students and the financial and human resources of the institution for years to come. The annual budget allocated to information technology increased in FY21. However, the college's information technology plan dates back to 2015. The college will benefit from updated IT planning priorities, particularly in light of the current pandemic situation.

NMJC organizational charts reflect sufficient human resources in key areas of the college: instruction, student support, and administrative services. Like many community colleges, the college has a larger number of adjunct faculty (85) than full-time faculty (71). However, full-time faculty teach the vast majority of credit courses.

The primary institutional goals are realistic, but not likely, within the given time frame. The institution has the human resources to address areas of focus and strategic objectives, but may need additional planning, staffing and strategies to achieve their primary enrollment goals. This is especially true given the current pandemic and all of the related uncertainties relative to future college enrollments.

NMJC's resource allocation and baseline budgeting ensure educational programs remain a priority in the annual budget process. The college increased its instructional and academic support spending from 2013 to 2019 by over 34 percent. This illustrates how NMJC's resource allocation process is intentionally directed toward supporting its mission, success by learning.

The employee handbook has established policies and procedures to hire qualified individuals for open positions. Once hired, NMJC provides training opportunities. It was not clear if the college annual performance reviews are connected to achieving its priorities or focused work. However, the amount of mandatory training for the NMJC workforce is impressive and provides additional risk mitigation. The college provides employees multiple opportunities for both professional development and personal enrichment.

Employees are an important part of NMJC's budget and strategic priorities as stated in an April 16, 2020, board budget work session. Staff are supported in workplace training reflected in the high number of active participants in Canvas, the college's learning management system. This serves as evidence that staff in all areas are appropriately qualified, trained, and engaged. A 2017 employee survey indicates that 100 percent of employees are satisfied to very satisfied with their work environment, considerably higher than their mean group. The college's employee handbook is well detailed and was updated in July 2019.

Board policy (#204) outlines committee and advisory group structures to include internal stakeholders. It appears as though the budget planning model, budget timelines, and rationale for tuition increases are not well documented. However, presentations to the board and monthly financial reports are detailed and transparent. Department leaders have the ability to monitor their budgets.

College financials are independently audited each year, and college leadership provides regular financial presentations to its board. The board is required to approve a quarterly financial action statement to the New Mexico Higher Education Department. These statements are part of a well-developed, system-wide process for monitoring against financial problems at NMJC.

NMJC has the resource base to support its current educational programs and plans for maintaining and strengthening operations in pursuit of its desired future.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.B - Core Component 5.B

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The institution's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the institution to fulfill its mission.

1. The governing board is knowledgeable about the institution; it provides oversight of the institution's financial and academic policies and practices and meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.
2. The institution has and employs policies and procedures to engage its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff, and students—in the institution's governance.
3. Administration, faculty, staff, and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy, and processes through effective structures for contribution and collaborative effort.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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The New Mexico Higher Education Department (<https://hed.state.nm.us/about>) mission is to provide financial, academic, and policy oversight and support to the New Mexico public higher education institutions and formal community partners for the purpose of promoting efficiency, accountability, and student success. The department also provides oversight and guidance for local boards to meet their legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

In addition to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, NMJC is governed by a seven-member board elected from the NMJC district. The NMJC board evaluates college proposals for improvement and monitors the delegated responsibilities of campus leadership. The governing board demonstrates their knowledge of and support for the institution through their engagement in monthly meetings, training sessions, work sessions, and professional development activities. Regular monthly board meetings are open to the public, and minutes of each regular, special, or emergency meeting serve as a formal record of discussions and decisions.

The college president is charged with overseeing the day-to-day operations and implementing board and college policies. The president is held accountable through regular evaluations and active monitoring of key operating data by the governing board. The president and vice presidents have open communication with the board as reflected in monthly open sessions and president's reports.

College policies (404-405) specify how the college engages its internal/external constituencies in the institution's governance. The NMJC Faculty Senate, Support/Maintenance Staff Council and Citizen Advisory Committee have formal roles in advising and influencing campus decisions and improving communication across the college. Faculty members are represented on key committees, including Academic Standards and Curriculum; Diversity; and Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Committee. The college actively seeks student input through the Student Government Association, focus groups and informal meetings. A student satisfaction survey is also used in collecting feedback

from students.

It is difficult to confirm from the evidence provided that governance allows for collaboration across all policy and process development and implementation. A roster of core committees and related minutes are not posted on the college website. The master planning and strategic planning processes serve as evidence that the college does engage in collaborative leadership efforts. The strategic planning process is clearly outlined and allows for substantial input.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.C - Core Component 5.C

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The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning.

1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity. Institutional plans anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue, such as enrollment, the economy, and state support.
5. Institutional planning anticipates emerging factors, such as technology, demographic shifts, and globalization.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC has resources, structures, and processes that are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. Current and historical budgets reflect that the institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities. The college states its highest priority is support of academic programs. Spending in instructional and academic support areas has increased by over 40 percent since 2009 serving as proof of the college's commitment to its mission, promoting success through learning.

Another priority for the college is maintaining and improving its instructional facilities and other physical spaces, as reflected in its project spending. NMJC's vision, as stated in the master and strategic plans, requires a strengthening of its operational planning and planning implementation. Budgets do reflect that the institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, but not all the dots are clearly connected between assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning, and budgeting.

The master and strategic plans encompass the institution as a whole and consider the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups. This process is documented within both plans. However, NMJC does not provide evidence on how it integrates these plans with other planning efforts, such as diversity initiatives. It is unclear how committee activities are integrated with strategic planning and how committee plans align with the college's strategic plan. The assurance argument states that "data from these sources is linked through a variety of processes and systems." However, there are no descriptions of processes and systems, only a list of various meetings (Assurance Argument, page 68).

Although some examples were provided, there appears to be a lack of systematic and formal processes for integrating the annual outcomes of assessment of student learning processes to strategic

planning and resource allocation. Currently, assessment activities do not include co-curricular measures. Similarly, it is unclear how the non-academic units are assessing their effectiveness.

Overall, the college plans on the basis of an understanding of its current capacity, and plans do anticipate the possible impact of fluctuations in its revenue sources. NMJC's current strategic plan identifies several regulatory and financial uncertainties. For example, the college is anticipating the impact of fluctuations in energy revenues and declining state support. The college is aware of its declining enrollments and has a focus area on student recruitment and retention in its strategic plan. However, factors related to technology are not addressed in an updated IT plan, demographic shifts are not identified in an enrollment management plan, and the impact of globalization is not addressed in planning documents.

In summary, NMJC is positioned to meet its expectations through improved systematic and integrated planning. The college should stay focused on its work in creating alignment between assessment of student learning, student support, operating practices, planning, and budgeting.

### **Interim Monitoring (if applicable)**

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.D - Core Component 5.D

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The institution works systematically to improve its performance.

1. The institution develops and documents evidence of performance in its operations.
2. The institution learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts.

### Rating

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Met

### Rationale

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NMJC's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIE) helps coordinate assessment efforts across the NMJC campus. The office provides dashboard and factbook data. Institutional research at NMJC also plays a role in monitoring strategic planning progress, serving as a clearinghouse for college reports and administering surveys. The college currently utilizes several surveys to measure student and employee engagement and satisfaction.

OIE provides specific data and reports to internal offices, assisting in student success and compliance reporting. OIE also develops annual risk reports and benchmark measures. For example, the 2017 IPEDS data, available on the OIE web site, benchmarks many key indicators for the college and also reflects areas of opportunity such as increasing financial aid and improving transfer-out rates.

There is some linkage between these opportunities reflected in the IPEDs data and the strategic plan, but specific percentages, targets and other improvement metrics have not been established. The use of data in goal setting and decision-making is evident in some of the documents included in the assurance argument but not detailed in the Strategic Plan or OIE web site. Outside of the finance area of the college, the degree to which enterprise system standing reports are used to improve performance of college's administrative operations is not clear.

As indicated in previous sections of this report, the college has developed processes to review student learning outcomes and academic programs. However, there does not appear to be a formal process to evaluate support services, administrative services or co-curricular programs.

From the evidence provided, it is clear that NWJC learns from its operational experience and applies that learning to improve its institutional effectiveness, capabilities, and sustainability, overall and in its component parts. As described in 5C, the college is attempting to align its assessment of student learning, planning, operations and budgeting processes to drive systematic institutional improvement.

### Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

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*No Interim Monitoring Recommended.*

## 5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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The institution's resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities. The institution plans for the future.

### Rationale

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Financial documents affirm that the college has maintained positive cash flow to meet its mission for the last 10 years. There are no major outstanding audit issues. Based on the evidence provided in the assurance argument and reinforced by the vice president for instruction, NMJC has the financial, physical, and human resources in place to support its mission, and that it is actively and responsibly managing resources to meet its desired future. The institution's unique resources, structures, and processes are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

However, existing institution plans vary in comprehensiveness and clarity and do not reflect integrated efforts. As demographics change and the college appears to struggle in meeting enrollment goals, the college would benefit from a diversity framework and well documented recruitment and retention strategies.

Institutional effectiveness is hard to determine based on the evidence provided. Much of the evidence provided, including surveys and reports, are prior to 2017. The college acknowledges its lack of alignment between processes and planning. Other areas for continuous improvement include a more systematic approach to website accessibility, navigation and maintenance. There is a structured hierarchy of governance, but more documentation of shared governance such as core committee minutes will provide further evidence that NMJC is an inclusive organization.

## Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.D	Core Component 1.D	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.E	Core Component 3.E	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.D	Core Component 5.D	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

## Review Summary

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### Interim Report(s) Required

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#### Due Date

10/28/2025

#### Report Focus

Monitoring is needed on processes to address co-curricular assessment. In the assurance document, NMJC refers to co-curricular assessment as a "lagging" area, and this area was not addressed in the college's previous HLC review in 2015-2016. When the team requested additional information on co-curricular assessment, the college submitted a document indicating that a large group of faculty and staff are currently working on definitions and categories for co-curricular activities.

Before their next formal reaffirmation of accreditation in 2025-2026, NMJC will need to develop, document, and execute a plan to accomplish sustained and meaningful assessment for its co-curricular programs. A report on the assessment of co-curricular programs, including definitions, outcomes, methodology, data collection, data analysis, and recommendations for improvement is to be embedded in the assurance argument that the college will prepare for its 2025-2026 reaffirmation of accreditation.

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### Conclusion

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Located in Lea County, New Mexico Junior College serves a large geographic area in southeastern New Mexico and three adjacent counties in Texas. Although student enrollment has been declining, the diversity of the students has been increasing, and currently more than two-thirds of the students are minorities, mostly Hispanic. The college offers associate degree and certificate programs as well as adult basic education, English as second language programs, lifelong learning, and workforce training.

The college has the physical, financial, technological, and personnel resources to deliver all of these programs, as well as administrative and student support services. Faculty and staff are appropriately credentialed and receive professional development opportunities. The college practices shared governance with responsibility shared between an elected governing board and the administration, and faculty members oversee the academic programs. The college has developed and implemented a plan to assess student learning at the institutional, program, and course levels. However, the college has struggled to develop a process to assess its co-curricular programs, and the team is recommending a monitoring report on co-curricular assessment to be submitted with NMJC's next assurance argument in the fall of 2025.

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### Overall Recommendations

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#### Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

**Sanctions Recommendation**

No Sanction

**Pathways Recommendation**

Not Applicable to This Review