

Technology Pathways for Incarcerated Students

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New Mexico State University



About NMSU Grants

NMSU Grants provides an accessible quality education through innovative teaching and learning that promotes respect and service for our diverse students and community.

NMSU Grants is recognized by the United States Department of Education as both a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution (NASNTI).

Providing access to Cibola County including: Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni Pueblos, the Navajo Nation, the community of To'Hajiilee and three correctional facilities.

32% Native American
43% Hispanic
80% Receive Pell Grant
83% Part-Time
Average Age 24



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Partnership between NMSU Grants & NMCD

- Began as an informal discussion between the Computer Technology Program Manager and the Education Coordinator from Western NMCF.
- Classes began in Spring of 2017 with students taking courses to earn a certificates in Web Fundamentals, Computer Technology and Creative Media.
- Expansion in Fall 2021 to include Associate of Applied Science Degrees in Computer Technology and Creative Media.



Technology & Electrical Energy Pathways

- **Computer Technology Certificate:** Prepare students for entry level work in any setting needing software support, computer repair, information management, networking, office product and presentation skills.
- **WEB Fundamentals Certificate:** Prepare students for positions in web design, graphic design and marketing, as well as opportunities in game design or film.
- **Electrical Systems Certificate*:** Basic electricity, applications of electromechanical devices, technical math and industrial and construction safety prepare students for entry level work in communications, film, industrial, energy, transportation, and maintenance areas.
- **Computer Technology - Associate of Applied Science*:** Prepares students for entry-level work in the IT field. Skills include PC repair, installing and configuring operating systems, managing network systems and installing and configuring standard business software and customer support.
- **Creative Media Design - Associate of Applied Science*:** Skills working with audio and video equipment, editing, writing, WEB development and use of industry standard products for most creative fields. Students also build cross-over skills in communications, project management, and computer support.

*Added Fall of 2021 as an additional pathway



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New Mexico Corrections Department Partners

Western New Mexico Correctional Facility – Grants, NM

- Current participation:
Fall 2021: 28 students taking 55 classes

Spring Correctional Center – Springer, NM

- Current participation:
Fall 2021: 23 students taking 39 classes

Northwest New Mexico Correctional Center – Grants, NM

- Classes beginning Spring of 2022



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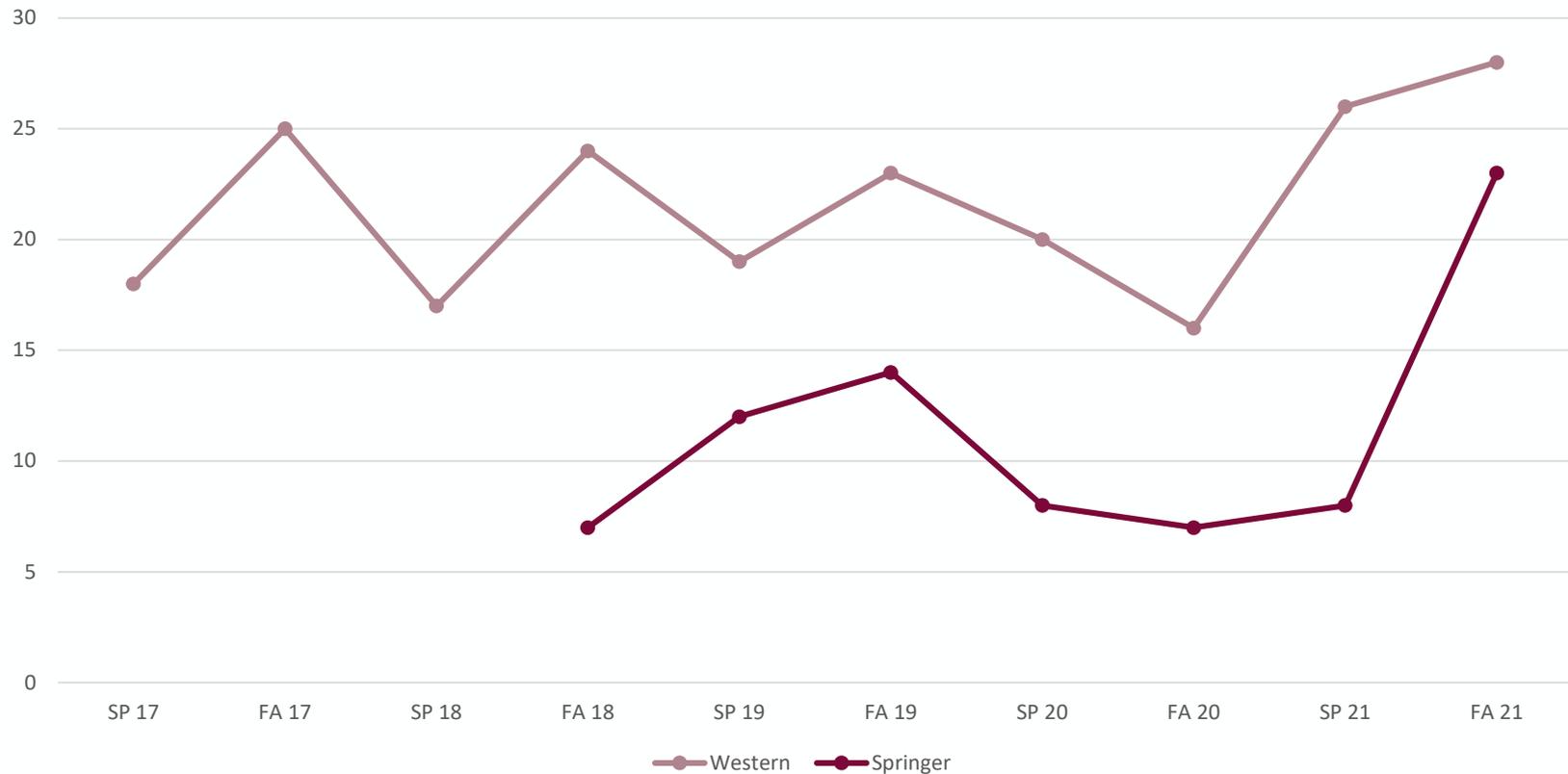
Current Enrollment and Completion Data

NMSU / NMCD Computer Technology Program				
Program	Enrolled	Graduates	Pending Graduates Fall21	Released / Reentry
Computer Technology Certificate	38	14	3	3
WEB Fundamentals Certificate	11	4	3	0
Electrical Systems Certificate	9	0	0	0
Computer Technology Associate of Applied Science	5	0	0	0
Creative Media Design Associate of Applied Science	5	0	0	0



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Enrollment History Spring 2017 to Fall 2021



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Certificate Completions

	Computer Tech		WEB Fundamentals	
	WNMCF	SCC	WNMCF	SCC
Fall 2019	4			
Spring 2020	3	2		
Fall 2020	4		3	
Spring 2021				
Fall 2021	2	2	2	2
Totals	17		7	

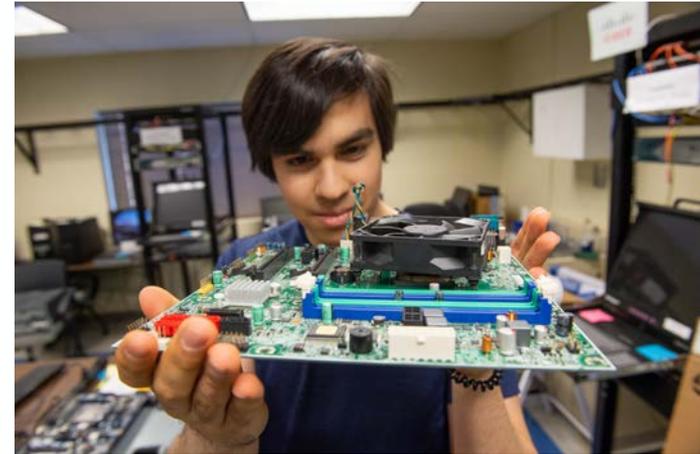


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NMSU LEADS GOAL: Increase Social Mobility

Education for Incarcerated Students

- Reduce Recidivism
- Develop Career Pathways in Technology
- Support Social Mobility



There is a 43% reduction in recidivism rates for those prisoners who participate in prison education programs.

The higher the degree, the lower the recidivism rate is: 14% for those who obtain an associate degree, 5.6% for those who obtain a bachelor's degree, and 0% for those who obtain a master's degree.

Robert Allen, "An Economic Analysis of Prison Education Programs and Recidivism". Emery University, Department of Economics (2006)



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Program Impact on Participating Students

"In such a toxic environment this program has become my light in the darkness. I am more confident in myself and my future than I have ever been before. I visualize my future career in Computer Technology, and it keeps me motivated every day."

"After spending 15 years in prison focusing on supporting myself and not on my education, I finally had the opportunity...with some peer pressure...to get into college courses. It has changed my focus and my drive completely. I actually have gained some skills that are viable in the world outside these walls. I have career options for when I am released from prison because of this program and the skills it offers."



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Program Impact Continued

“I have received a certificate in IT, it has been an awesome journey and has gave me hope for the future. With this education under my belt I feel like I have paid back my contribution to society and I will fulfill my duty as a productive member of society upon entering the community once again, thank you NMSU.”



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Challenges

Standalone servers in each facility were labor intensive

- NMCD staff needed for troubleshooting issues.
- Remote access for instructors slow
- Created NMSU server under NMCD standards serving both facilities

Interaction/Engagement with Students

- Student schedules in education can be sporadic
- Students need instructors to do all required internet research for them
- Communication without live Q&A can become frustrating for the students

Static Curriculum

- Instructors must provide parallel curriculum with additional resources that would normally be assigned as research.
- Technology changes rapidly and it is a challenge provide the newest information when much of the supplemental material is on line.



Challenges Continued

Barriers to Develop Soft Skills

- No access to outside research and resources hinders ability to be competitive in the job market.
- Students have limited team based projects or in-person (live or video) instruction.
- Lacking the communication and other soft skills acquired from these activities puts them at a disadvantage.
- Students have limited ability for continued practice and practical use of skills.



Recommendations

- Ensure that incarcerated people have access to robust educational services that prepare them for both higher education and 21st century jobs. Educational opportunities should be conceptualized as a means to begin the reentry process, not as a frivolous “extra.”
- States should immediately “ban-the-box” on all applications for admission to state funded colleges and universities. Postsecondary educational institutions should give everyone a fair opportunity to pursue their educational goals, not further punish criminalized people looking to get their lives on track.
- Restore Pell Grants to incarcerated people and remove other barriers to financial aid for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people. Like public education, Pell Grants and other sources of student aid should be seen as public goods, available to everyone and enhancing both public safety and the social and economic mobility of all people.
- The program has shown success. Additional funding to support Faculty to offer more degrees in high-demand fields.



Thank you!

Contact Information

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