



Photo Credit: University Communication and Marketing

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survey, noun. An examination of opinions, behaviour, etc. made by asking people questions.

Cambridge Dictionary

Education and learning are, at their root, about asking questions. Every two-year old knows this, and exercises their right to ask questions with gusto (Why are there birds? To sing to us. Why does it rain? To make the flowers grow. Why is the sky blue? Rayleigh scattering. Do birds wear coats in winter? Ask your Mother). Figuring out the right questions to ask is hard, for a good question has an essential elegance: a good question elicits the greatest quantity of information or produces the greatest opportunity for understanding, with a minimum of burden on the informant. Our faculty spend their intellectual lives developing great questions and exploring rich answers. Our students learn and practice this art, often without realizing it was one of the goals for their education all along.

At UNM, one of the many important areas of investigation we query concerns the experience of our students. What can we discover that will inform our choices and influence our actions as we seek to deepen the learning and enrich the lives of our learners? In some of this work, a survey is an excellent tool for asking a good question (or two). But a survey seeks to understand an issue across a population, and so an essential truth of survey work is that sufficient numbers of respondents, distributed appropriately across population subgroups, is necessary to create the greatest quantity of useful information. I'm asking your help this week, so that we can understand the experience of our student population to inform our choices and influence our actions.

Basic Needs and the Human Rights Survey

Food and housing insecurity are a part of many students' university experience, and negatively affect students' health and academic performance. This [video](#), produced by UNM's Communication and Marketing, underscores the issues that UNM students face. This is also a problem faced by some faculty and staff. You can help collect more information on this problem by taking the [Human Rights Survey](#), open from Feb 15–March 1. It is the first-in-the-nation statewide study to assess the prevalence of food and housing insecurity among everyone (faculty, staff, and students) in public higher education institutions in New Mexico, funded by the Governor's Food Initiative and the Higher Education Department. It is the creation of an interdisciplinary research team of UNM faculty, staff, and students from the Honors College, Nutrition, Population Health, Anderson and Law Schools. Your participation will help produce evidence regarding the health of the higher education workforce, and reveal additional information concerning food and housing insecurity among our students, not just at UNM but within higher education across the state. The data will be used to inform the Basic Needs Grand Challenge and the creation of evidence-based interventions. Questions can be directed to Dr. Sarita Cargas at basicneeds@unm.edu.

Student Survey from the Higher Learning Commission

The University of New Mexico is hosting a visit of Higher Learning Commission (HLC) peer reviewers on April 24-25, 2023. The HLC regularly reviews the overall quality of programs, governance, and finances of universities across much of the nation and accredits universities as an indicator of approval under delegated authority from the US Department of Education. In advance of the visit, the HLC is surveying UNM students to learn more about their experiences. That survey was emailed directly to students on Monday this week, so please check your inboxes! The survey will be open through Feb. 15, and is completely voluntary. It takes about 5 minutes to complete, and a summary of the feedback will be provided to the HLC team of reviewers visiting later this spring. The UNM community will also be afforded the opportunity to provide insight by participating directly in forums during the HLC site visit.

I know that doing another survey might seem like an annoyance, but what we learn will make us and our state better. Thanks for your help.

James Paul Holloway

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Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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