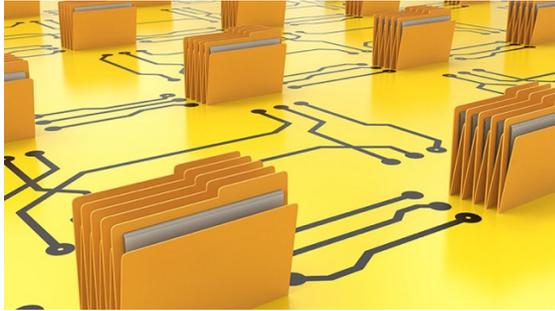


CHES prepares move toward one, shared system



BY JIM PATERSON JUNE 27, 2022 PRINT

A unique collaboration by community colleges and four-year institutions in New Mexico linking key internal functions and student services is offering participants a new perspective on their operations, officials say, and a look at how the project – first dreamed of four years ago – will pay off.

“We are now beginning to see even more clearly how this will benefit each institution, each department and the group as a whole,” said Matthew Wright, associate director talent management at [Central New Mexico Community College](#) (CNM), one of the six colleges participating in the non-profit [Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services](#) (CHES).

Formed in early 2021, CHES is expected to take a major step forward in December when, after months of testing, the shared enterprise resource planning (ERP) portion of the platform will go live for the first four of the six schools involved: CNM, [Clovis Community College](#), [Northern New Mexico College](#) and [Santa Fe Community College](#). The other part of the platform with student information will go live soon. After that, the CHES Wave 2 institutions, [San Juan College](#) and [Mesalands Community College](#), will shift to the platform at a later date.

Other state higher education institutions have expressed an interest, CHES officials say, noting they expect more will join the collaborative.

The system is designed to standardize and sync student and employee records and other data along with key institutional systems across the collaborative, according to officials. It will bring the colleges into a single, shared system for student information continuing education, finance and human resources.

It also will streamline admissions and financial aid processes, including standard, applications to the participating schools, and allow students to plan their college pathway more easily with a standardized course numbering and structuring system throughout. Planners expect it will improve advising with simpler, standard, efficient student record-handling, freeing up counselors to provide more personal support.

Early steps

Wright, who heads the human capital management (HCM) workstream for the ERP portion of the project, said extensive work was needed to upgrade the diverse legacy platforms among the colleges.

However, decision-making about the thousands of connected functions and establishment of a framework for the system went smoothly, and the extensive testing has gone better than expected. The work has been underway in four workstreams: HCM, finance, technical and change management.

“There was a lot of clean-up with the systems at each school initially, and I would advise anyone considering such collaboration to allow plenty of time for it,” he said. “But other than that, the development process has involved a lot of work, but has proceeded pretty smoothly.”

According to Amy Pell, associate vice president of finance and controller for Santa Fe Community College and the CHESS lead for the finance workstream, representatives of all the schools in the four workstreams carefully considered how their functions would operate on the platform. It utilizes the Workday suite of applications for enterprise planning, financial management, human capital management and student services. How those functions then interface with other areas had to be fine-tuned, she said.

“So much of finance is driven by other areas of operations. The colleges started early to create a common chart of accounts, which is the base for alignment of other functional finance areas. It was very time-consuming but well worth the effort,” Pell said, noting that the 15 different “work tags” in finance alone can be combined to create thousands of different data transactions.

Added benefits

Pell noted that the system is primarily designed to streamline the student experience at every step – from the application process and registration for classes at any of the participating institutions, to the alignment of credits and transfer process.

“The ultimate goal is for students to have the ability to apply once and be admitted to all the participating colleges and be able to take courses at any of the institutions,” she said.

Wright pointed out that other benefits have surfaced, including overdue upgrades to school functions where the best practices of the participating schools will become the standard. He noted, for instance, that employee evaluations were done on paper at his and other schools. The CHESS structure will automate that process and other key functions in the human resources arena and make them uniform for the institutions.

Also, for example, the best practices of the participating colleges when it comes to financial aid applications and management will be an upgrade for some institutions and allow for student aid data to flow between them. Student and staff records will be uniform and accessible by each, while purchasing can be coordinated around the best practices discovered.

“The alignment of payroll will be very valuable, for example,” Pell said. “The goal is to have a payroll director at the CHESS level to oversee and assist with payroll processing at each college. Previously, each college completed an entire payroll process bi-weekly with limited staff. After the alignment and identification of best practices, we’ll be able to assist each other, cover for staff on leave and troubleshoot issues. We will also have experts in specific payroll functions who could perform that function across all institutions.”

Looking back

Along with creating the time for system research and refinements necessary to prepare institutional legacy systems for the change, human resource officials found various collective bargaining agreements had to be considered, Wright said. In the new aligned personnel platform, they required more detailed and complex discussions and planning.

He said colleges considering collaboration should think ahead regarding areas where structures in participating schools differ significantly.

Pell, meanwhile, noted that the work on CHESS has often been consuming for those involved in the transition, and that backfilling staff to fill the gaps is important.

Buy-in was also important. In a baseline survey of faculty and staff at the Wave 1 colleges (CNM, Clovis Community College, Northern New Mexico College, Santa Fe Community College) in February, CHESS officials found that 63% understood the need for the platform and 62% believed the change was being done for good reasons, while 41% said they were “ready for the change.”

Mesalands Community College Joins Collaborative For Higher Education Shared Services (CHES)

Submitted by c_clark on April 10, 2022 - 10:21 pm



Mesalands President Gregory T. Busch, Ed.D

CHES News:

SANTA FE — Mesalands Community College, in Tucumcari has joined the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services.

CHES is a nonprofit organization that works to transform the student experience and modernize administrative processes through a new shared-services Enterprise Resource Planning platform and Student Information System.

“Our board, our employees, and our community are excited to provide more opportunities for our students and better administrative operations for our employees through our membership in CHES,” Mesalands President Gregory T. Busch, Ed.D said. “Being a part of CHES will exponentially increase our ability to serve Tucumcari, and beyond, in ways we only could have imagined on our own as a small, rural college.”

Mesalands joins these CHES colleges:

Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Northern New Mexico College, San Juan College and Santa Fe Community College.

Together, the colleges are designing an enterprise resource planning and student information system that includes student services, finance, human resources, payroll and more. Each college retains its independence and governance structure.

Dr. Busch emphasized that participation in CHES will allow students and employees to encounter the same interface that more fully funded colleges can offer.

The college is a Hispanic-Serving Institution with a mission to eliminate barriers and ensure success. Although located in an economically challenged area, Mesalands is known for its innovative programs in creative arts, agri-business, paleontology, and wind energy, training that lands good-paying jobs for its graduates.

Membership in CHESS will expand access to Mesalands' programs to students elsewhere while opening more possibilities for its local students. Additional benefits include supporting a shorter time to degree completion and transfer, resulting in cost savings for students.

"The presidents of CHESS join me in welcoming Dr. Busch and Mesalands to CHESS," Chief Executive Officer Kathy Ulibarri said. "We look forward to their contributions, which will strengthen our goal to share our collective knowledge and resources to advance student success."

Dr. Busch is serving as a member of the CHESS Board of Directors. The college will begin its full participation as part of Wave 2 of the CHESS ERP implementation later this year.

More information about Mesalands can be found at mesalands.edu.

Quay County Sun - Serving the High Plains

By Staff report

April 6, 2022

Mesalands joins collaborative group

Mesalands Community College announced Thursday it has joined the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services, or CHESS.

CHESS, a nonprofit organization, will expand access to Mesalands' programs to students elsewhere while opening more education possibilities for its local students.

Mesalands joins these CHESS colleges: Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Northern New Mexico College, San Juan College, and Santa Fe Community College.

Together, the colleges are designing an enterprise resource planning and student information system that includes student services, finance, human resources, payroll and more. Each member college retains its independence and governance structure.

“Being a part of CHESS will exponentially increase our ability to serve Tucumcari, and beyond, in ways we only could have imagined on our own as a small, rural college,” Mesalands President Gregg Busch said.

Busch said participation in CHESS will allow students and employees to encounter the same interface more fully funded colleges can offer.

Additional benefits to CHESS membership include supporting a shorter time to degree completion and transfer, resulting in cost savings for students.

Busch is serving as a member of the CHESS board of directors. The college will begin its full participation as part of Wave 2 of the CHESS ERP implementation later this year.

Connect With Us

Quay County Sun

902 S. First Street
Tucumcari, NM 88401
Ph: (575) 461-1952

© 2022 Clovis Media Inc

Powered by [ROAR Online Publication Software](#) from Lions Light Corporation © Copyright 2021

NEWS

Mesalands Community College partners with 'CHESS'

by: Dailyn Wells
Posted: Mar 31, 2022 / 09:46 PM CDT
Updated: Mar 31, 2022 / 09:47 PM CDT

SHARE    ...



TUCUMCARI, New Mexico (KAMR/KCIT) — Mesalands Community College ([MCC](#)) partnered with the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services ([CHESS](#)) on Thursday.

According to MCC reports, CHESS is a nonprofit organization that works to transform the student experience and modernize administrative processes through a new shared-services Enterprise Resource Planning platform and Student Information System.

Gregory Busch, who is the President of Mesalands Community College, is also currently serving as a member of the CHESS Board of directors.

“Our board, our employees, and our community are excited to provide more opportunities for our students and better administrative operations for our employees through our membership in CHESS,” said Gregory Busch. “Being a part of CHESS will exponentially increase our ability to serve Tucumcari, and beyond, in ways we only could have imagined on our own as a small, rural college.”

MCC joins these CHESS colleges:

- Central New Mexico Community College
- Clovis Community College
- Northern New Mexico College
- San Juan College
- Santa Fe Community College.

Together, the colleges are designing an enterprise resource planning and student information system that includes student services, finance, human resources, payroll, and more. Each college retains its independence and governance structure.

For more information on MCC's partnership with CHESS visit, [here](#).

Copyright 2022 Nexstar Media Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

| OUR PUBLICATIONS



Tracy Hartzler

2021-22 Aspen New Presidents Fellow

The Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) Governing Board unanimously selected Tracy Hartzler to become its sixth president, starting in 2020. Since 2015, Ms. Hartzler had served as CNM's Vice President for Finance and Operations and in other senior administrative roles.

As president, she has led CNM's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, an acute recession and civil unrest, while focusing on regional and state needs. She has led fellow presidents to form the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS), a coalition of five independent colleges to transform student experience and business practices with common finance, human capital and student information systems. She continues to expand opportunities to build a national "skills to workforce" pipeline for adult learners, national employers, and community colleges.

Since 2011, Hartzler has played a significant role in shaping New Mexico postsecondary education, beginning with the New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee, where she served as the Legislature's nonpartisan higher education policy and funding expert.

Ms. Hartzler served as a Special Assistant Attorney General for the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, and as Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. In these roles, she helped local, tribal, state and federal government elected and appointed leaders, as well as community advocates, address complex challenges.

President Hartzler earned her J.D. from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America. She earned her Master of Education Degree from the University of Virginia with highest honors; and her B.A. cum laude, from Saint Mary's College in Indiana. She is a member of the New Mexico, Indiana (inactive), and District of Columbia Bars.

Visit [AspenInstitute.org](https://www.aspeninstitute.org)

Santa Fe Reporter



By **Julia Goldberg**
December 08, 2021 at 6:53 am MST

Listen up

Inside Higher Ed's podcast, *The Key*, takes a look at New Mexico's Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS), an alliance between Santa Fe Community College, Clovis Community College, Central New Mexico Community College, Northern New Mexico College and San Juan College, announced last February, in which the five schools are jointly developing a shared enterprise technology system to manage student, financial, human resources, and other campus services and records. Hosted by Inside Higher Ed Co-founder and Editor Doug Lederman, SFCC President Becky Rowley and Central New Mexico Community College President Tracy Hartzler discuss the initiative and the changes it has and will engender.

Santa Fe New Mexican: More colleges want to join database collaborative

By Jessica Pollard jpollard@sfnewmexican.com

Oct 3, 2021

Two more New Mexico community colleges announced interest last week in joining a partnership that aims to streamline administrative processes through the nonprofit Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services.

Luna Community College in Las Vegas, N.M., and Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari would join five other small schools in the state, including Santa Fe Community College and Northern New Mexico College, as part of the collaborative, known as CHERS, which started in April. The hope of the initiative is to create an online database for sharing records such as student and employee applications and integrating human resources and financial systems. Last month, the colleges selected a human resources and financial software suite called Workday to carry out plans for establishing a shared database — and administrators are “jazzed,” said CHERS spokeswoman Laura Mulry.

Mulry said having such a database may ease issues in schools where hiring staff to register and recruit students can be difficult.

The database also could make it much easier for students enrolled at one of the schools to take credits at another by making academic and financial information more widely available.

“The whole reason we’re doing this is for students,” Mulry said in an interview. “The ease of transitioning from one institution to another will be much better.”

That would be a boon for students at a school like Mesalands Community College, in a town of fewer than 5,000 people.

“Our students are sometimes hindered in completing their degrees on time due to our rural location,” noted Mesalands President Gregory Busch in a recent news release about the colleges’ interest in joining CHERS.

Administrators at Luna and Mesalands will need to evaluate their current information technology systems before recommending to each of their governing boards that the school joins the CHERS project.

State lawmakers allocated \$3 million toward the collaborative during the 2021 regular session. But in an interview in spring 2021, Santa Fe Community College President Becky Rowley noted it could cost millions more.

Kathy Ulibarri, the CEO of CHERS, said schools are still able to join the effort to streamline data and information — although the benefit of the collaborative will differ from school to school.

The project is a few years away from its expected completion.

Ulibarri said work on a financial and human resources module will begin in November and is expected to be finished in January 2023. A student module could be ready by spring of 2024.

[Enterprise Resource Planning](#)

New Mexico CC Collaborative Chooses Workday and CampusWorks for Consistent Student Experience

By Dian Schaffhauser | 08/24/21

A community college collaborative formed earlier this year to develop shared services expects to launch its first programs shortly. The Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS), which was started by five schools in New Mexico, announced that it is working with Workday's suite of applications, which includes enterprise planning, financial management, human capital management and student services. The project will be aided by CampusWorks, a higher education consultancy, to provide an independent perspective and additional components of the system.

In coming months, the original five CHESS colleges – Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Northern New Mexico College, San Juan College and Santa Fe Community College – will work with Workday and CampusWorks to set up multi-institution HR and financial services modules, followed by a student service platform intended to handle numerous aspects of the student journey, from recruitment and registration to completion and career.

Implementation, which is expected to start this fall, will be structured to enable other U.S. colleges to participate in the adoption too.

The project's goals are ambitious. The big ones are to improve the student experience with easier access (one application, one set of student records); enable students to take class offerings from any of the member colleges for faster degree completion; and provide a consistent experience across member colleges, so regardless of where students are enrolled, the platforms and processes will be the same.

Other objectives include:

- Helping close achievement gaps in New Mexico, a majority-minority state;
- Reducing costs for students, member colleges and taxpayers; Boosting services by sharing personnel resources and expertise; Adapting and standardizing best practices among member institutions;
- Creating shared, standardized reporting to state and national entities;
- Improving the security and access to data and student information; and
- Providing modern solutions for institutions that otherwise couldn't afford them.

"This is another major milestone for our partnering colleges as we prepare for the next steps on this groundbreaking journey," said Central New Mexico CC President Tracy Hartzler, in a statement.

"Together with Workday, we're ready to get to work on creating a consistent and exceptional higher education experience for students across all of our colleges. We will provide students outstanding support every step of the way. Respecting our distinct colleges and cultures, this new system will help us align our systems and business processes, share expertise and be more collaborative – all to better serve our students. We hope that this unique higher education collaboration will help other colleges in our state and across the country realize what's possible when institutions – our boards, our presidents, our faculty and staff – commit to working together to achieve historic progress on behalf of students."

"Clovis Community College and the CHESS colleges are devoted to the primary mission of providing student success and completion and equitable outcomes to all of our students," added Charles Nwankwo, president of Clovis CC. "Workday has a solid reputation for delivering systems that serve students holistically, resulting in increased student success. I believe the CHESS colleges have found a committed and worthy partner in Workday. We at CHESS look forward to this partnership and the opportunity to move services to our New Mexico students to the next level."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dian Schaffhauser is a former senior contributing editor for 1105 Media's education publications THE Journal, Campus Technology and Spaces4Learning.



New Mexico Colleges Seek to Streamline Tasks

February 8, 2022

Before 2018, there hadn't been much coordination between the 27 state and community colleges in New Mexico.

Around that time, members of the New Mexico legislature began to question the costs of running the sprawling infrastructure of the state-funded education system.

"We were going through a time in the state when resources were tight and colleges were struggling," says Kathy Ulibarri, who spent many years in leadership and finance roles at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) before taking on the role of CEO at the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS).

In response, five college presidents decided to address the issue among themselves. The presidents wanted to keep their local governance boards and independence while pooling resources and standardizing operations. The result was the formation of CHESS.

"Blending distinct college cultures through this effort takes a lot of preplanning and careful communication," says Ulibarri.

Wiley, of Eduventures, agrees.

"For initiatives like CHESS, it's fantastic that senior leaders of each college are involved," he says. "You need institutional leadership at a high level."

Before the institutions begin course sharing, they are focused on streamlining administration. The staff considers CHESS a transformation initiative, but technology plays a major role.

"We were looking for a modern technology base, one that would pave the way for the next five to 10 years," says Victor Leon, CIO at CNM. "We eventually chose Workday. It has a robust, cloud-native platform and has made a strong investment in student information systems."

Because of the rural nature of some of CHESS's member institutions as well as the shift toward cloud-based, mission-critical platforms, network and internet access, stability, bandwidth, and availability have emerged as critical infrastructure components of the organization's overall IT strategy.

This includes designing a new Microsoft Azure AD-based identity and access management framework, with the goal of supplying students, faculty and staff with a secure and seamless experience navigating between the various colleges while also fully leveraging Workday's multitenancy architecture and role-based security model.

Another initiative — still in the planning stage — is the New Mexico Statewide Education Network, or SEN, which will leverage several of the CHESS member locations as backbone nodes. If SEN is viable, it may be able to provide CHESS members with reliable, cost-effective, high-speed connectivity.

CHESS currently has five members but is open to welcoming more. As college presidents decide on organizational issues, school CIOs like Leon work together to implement technology to address the challenges of centralization.

"One challenge is data governance and management," says Leon. "Before, we were all working autonomously. Now, we need all member organizations to have a clear understanding of various terms, so we formed a data governance committee. If we architect this right, we can use it with other institutions."

**"We were looking for a modern technology base, one that would pave the way for the next five to 10 years."
Victor Leon CIO, Central New Mexico Community College**

NEW PODCAST
THE KEY
with *Inside Higher Ed*



Conversations and insights with higher ed's newsmakers about the pandemic, recession and more.

Ep. 69: A Major Cross-College Collaboration

This week's episode explores how five community colleges in New Mexico are working together to transform how they function.

Colleges tend to compete rather than collaborate. That's why a new five-college cooperative in New Mexico is so unusual.

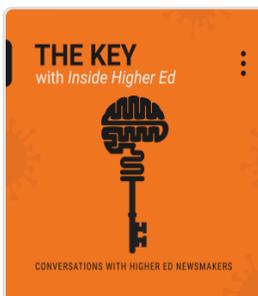
This week's episode explores the Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services, or CHES. It's made up, so far, of five independent community colleges in New Mexico that have teamed up because they think they're stronger together than apart.

They've started by agreeing to create a common enterprise resource planning structure to share resources and information in areas such as accounting, student records, human resources and payroll, but the vision ultimately includes many of the features you might see in a formal college system, including smoother student mobility and more efficient and cost-effective campus operations.

In the conversation, the presidents of two of the colleges, **Becky Rowley** of Santa Fe Community College and **Tracy Hartzler** of Central New Mexico Community College, discuss the combination of trust, subjugation of institutional ego, and internal culture change required to bring about a massive cross-institutional collaboration like this. They acknowledge the help they've gotten from the external partners guiding their work, CampusWorks and Workday.

Hosted by *Inside Higher Ed* Co-founder and Editor Doug Lederman.

This episode is made possible by the support of Formstack



The Key with Inside Higher Ed

Ep 69: A Major Cross-College Collaboration



0:00

0:00