



OPPORTUNITY DEFINED



University of New Mexico  
UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined Engagement Report  
July 6, 2021

Launched in April 2021, the UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined multi-year visioning project for The University of New Mexico began with a series of virtual activities to engage a wide range of stakeholders in conversations about the University's future. These activities consisted of focus groups, interviews and surveys: (1) 17 virtual focus groups with 317 participating faculty, staff, students and administrative and academic leadership conducted by The Involvement Practice, a Napa Group partner, and (2) 11 individual and small group interviews and surveys with internal and external influencers invited by President Stokes and conducted by The Napa Group. Additionally, the newly formed Steering Committee partnering with the President and Project Team in leading the project met on June 22, shortly before the early engagement activities completed. This meeting was informed by the consultants' situational analysis of trends in higher education, UNM peer institutions and New Mexico.

The initial focus groups responded to questions framed by the Project Team as critical issues for UNM's future; the questions were designed to be aspirational in nature and spark dialogue. Each audience was asked to comment on two-to-three selected topics framed by the Project Team. The individual and small group interviews probed more deeply on the "emerging themes" from these initial engagement sessions and the first Steering Committee meeting. The 11 participants responded to a short poll of choices related to (1) importance to New Mexico and (2) importance to UNM's strategic (visioning) plan.

There were 10 overarching themes that consistently emerged from these engagement activities – the focus group comments as validated and amplified by the individual and small group conversations:

1. Demonstrating student success while meeting the challenges of enrollment and changing demographics
  2. Offering multiple educational pathways
  3. Bridging the "Lomas Divide" (physical/interdisciplinary)
  4. Fostering research of public value
  5. Improving and modeling culture and climate – campus ethos and DEI
  6. Deepening relationships with legislators and public officials
  7. Ensuring financial sustainability through a reimagined business model
  8. Advancing New Mexico
  9. Increasing visibility and connecting with our communities by more effectively "telling our story"
  10. Guiding change through decisive and action-oriented leadership
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The Napa Group thanks everyone who participated and so generously provided their candid ideas and insights. The audiences were enthusiastic, appreciative of the opportunity to share their perspectives and both thoughtful and constructive in their comments.

Moving forward, the advantage of the 20-year horizon is that it enables the University to develop a vision framework, establish the platform and infrastructure for change in the first five years and build toward this future with thoughtful multi-year decisions, plans, actions and funding and consequential investments (public sector and philanthropic).

As the President's Executive Cabinet discussed on June 28 in its "strengths" exercise, the institution's leadership recognizes and values that its talent, location, ethos and community are key attributes to build on. The engagement conversations support and validate the concept that stakeholders are passionate about UNM's promise, seek institutional leadership to chart the path forward toward 2040 and are eager to participate in defining and making this difference for the University community, the nation and global society.

#### Next Steps

The Project Team will review the engagement report and Steering Committee discussions and develop the initial vision plan framework – the goals and objectives that will drive the University's focus for the next five years. This framework will be considered by the Steering Committee when it meets on September 9, 2021 to do a "deep dive" into the recommendations. Following those discussions, task forces will be formed to build out the plan in more detail and other broad community engagement will occur throughout the fall and winter. Through this process of "diverging and converging" and gaining feedback and insights from the UNM community, the vision plan will be finalized by February 2022. The Steering Committee is scheduled to meet as well in November and January, with dates to be scheduled soon.

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