

Henry P. Roybal
Commissioner, District 1

Miguel M. Chavez
Commissioner, District 2

Robert A. Anaya
Commissioner, District 3



Kathy Holian
Commissioner, District 4

Liz Stefanics
Commissioner, District 5

Katherine Miller
County Manager

Date: November 17, 2015

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Orlando A. Romero, Constituent Services Liaison, and District 1

Via: Katherine Miller, Santa Fe County Manager *KM*

Subject: Letter of Support, A letter Expressing Support for ACCELERATE: A Northern New Mexico Technical Training and Job Placement Program.

SUMMARY:

This proposed letter of support expresses support to a Northern New Mexico Technical Training and Job Placement Program. ACCELERATE utilizes pro-active advising, unique and effective development math classes, professional readiness training, paid student fellowships, and professional development for instructors.

BACKGROUND:

Six Hispanic-serving Northern New Mexico colleges, regional employers, and the New Mexico Regional Corporation have collaborated since 2011 to pilot a "promising practice" program in order to graduate more technical career students, better prepare them for career and advancement and job placement.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Request that the Board of County Commissioners approve the letter of support and allow the RDC/ACCELERATE program to include the letter of support in its efforts to seek additional program funding to lead a regional-wide collaborative effort to expand, enhance, the program to meet the workforce demands of LANL and the region.

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November 16, 2015

Mr. Doug Hintze
Manager/LANL Field Office
Department of Energy/Office of Environmental Management
PO Box 1663
Los Alamos, NM 87545

Dear Mr. Hintze,

We are writing this letter to offer support for an on-going program that is making a difference in New Mexico by strengthening the workforce at Los Alamos National Laboratory and in northern New Mexico. We are pleased that the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) /Office of Environmental Management (EM) is addressing critical community issues in New Mexico by supporting the Accelerate Technical Training and Job Placement Program, known as Accelerate.

The Regional Development Corporation (RDC) and six northern New Mexico colleges, including Santa Fe Community College, have been collaborating to address workforce issues for over 4 years with Los Alamos National Labs (LANL), LANL sub-contractors, and private, public, and government sector entities. Through an innovative and cooperative approach, the Accelerate program has succeeded in its efforts to graduate more technical career students, better prepare them for career and educational advancement, and place them in jobs.

It is expected that LANL will lose 36% of its workforce over the next five years. However, recent studies indicate that students in the area are not choosing education programs that match the demand occupations at LANL and elsewhere in the region. Substantial workforce training is needed to prepare workers for existing and future jobs in technology fields at LANL and other northern New Mexico technology industries. The region's two and four-year colleges recruit, serve, enroll, and graduate a majority of non-traditional students and transitional workers in technology industries, many through certificate and associate degree programs. Yet, graduation rates remain low averaging around 14%, and companies often have difficulty finding skilled workers.

The Accelerate program is currently half way into year five of a 5 year grant award from the U.S. DOE/EM and the results are impressive. An independent program evaluation published in the spring of 2015 indicates a 20 percentage point increase in persistence and graduation rates for participating STEM students. Graduating students are career-ready, with more than 40% of program interns being offered positions by their internship employer.

The RDC/Accelerate program is seeking funding and support to lead a region-wide collaborative effort to expand, enhance, and fine tune the Accelerate program to meet the workforce demands of LANL and the region, address workforce issues by serving as a regional clearinghouse of information and resources, and act as the liaison between employers, education, and other service providers.

We appreciate you giving every consideration to continued funding and support of these efforts.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Anaya, Chairman
Board of Commissioners of Santa Fe County



Accelerate: Northern New Mexico Technical Training and Job Placement Program

Stimulating Economic Growth by Increasing College Graduation Rates and Workforce Training

Six Hispanic-serving Northern New Mexico colleges, regional employers, and the New Mexico Regional Development Corporation are collaborating since 2011 to pilot a “promising practices” program in order to graduate more technical career students, better prepare them for career and educational advancement, and place them in jobs.

Higher education is a critical mechanism for individual socioeconomic advancement, and an important driver of economic mobility. Moreover, a well-educated workforce is vital to increasing New Mexico’s future economic growth.



Substantial workforce training is needed in New Mexico to prepare workers for existing and future jobs in technology industries. Two and four-year colleges represent the vanguard of this type of training in Northern New Mexico. They recruit, serve, enroll, and graduate a majority of non-traditional students and transitional workers, many through certificate and associate degree programs. Yet graduation rates remain low, unemployment rates remain high, and Northern New Mexico’s technology companies often have difficulty finding skilled workers. As a result, jobs often go unfilled or are offered to out-of-state residents.

Since its inception in 2011, the Technical Training and Job Placement program, known as *Accelerate*, has been radically changing student outcomes. Accelerate is a new infrastructure, not a curriculum, assisting educational programs to work more effectively with transitional workers and non-traditional students in the educational pipeline and prepare them for jobs. Along with the need to increase persistence and graduation rates, it is widely acknowledged that students graduating with certificates and degrees lack the basic career skills required to compete for professional positions and to participate in the workplace.

Accelerate utilizes pro-active advising, unique and effective developmental math classes, professional readiness training, paid student fellowships, and professional development for instructors to improve the completion rates of existing technical certificate and associate programs and prepare students for the workforce.

Program Partners

- Luna Community College
- New Mexico Highlands University
- Northern New Mexico College
- Santa Fe Community College
- University of New Mexico-Los Alamos
- University of New Mexico-Taos
- Regional Development Corporation (RDC)
- Over 50 regional employers, & organizations

Program Successes

- 20 percentage point increase in persistence rates for program participants
- 20 percentage point increase in graduation rates for program participants
- 44% of students in fellowships offered employment by fellowship employers
- *Accelerate* developmental math program shown to eliminate achievement gap often found in non-traditional STEM students

Accelerate Student Participants

- 664 served to date (2015-2016 participants are estimated)
- 374 participants in developmental math program
- 28 = Average age of participants
- 78% non-White
- 100% non-traditional students

Awards and Publications

- URS Washington Group & Bank of America Grant Awards
- Gold Excellence in Economic Development Award from the International Economic Development Council
- *Accelerate* math program results published in a high-impact, high-profile international journal, *Problems and Perspectives in Management*.
- *Accelerate* math program featured in UNM’s Innovation Academy
- Independent Program Evaluation states the Accelerate program “is one of the best programs nationally that has enhanced the outcomes and successes of students.”

