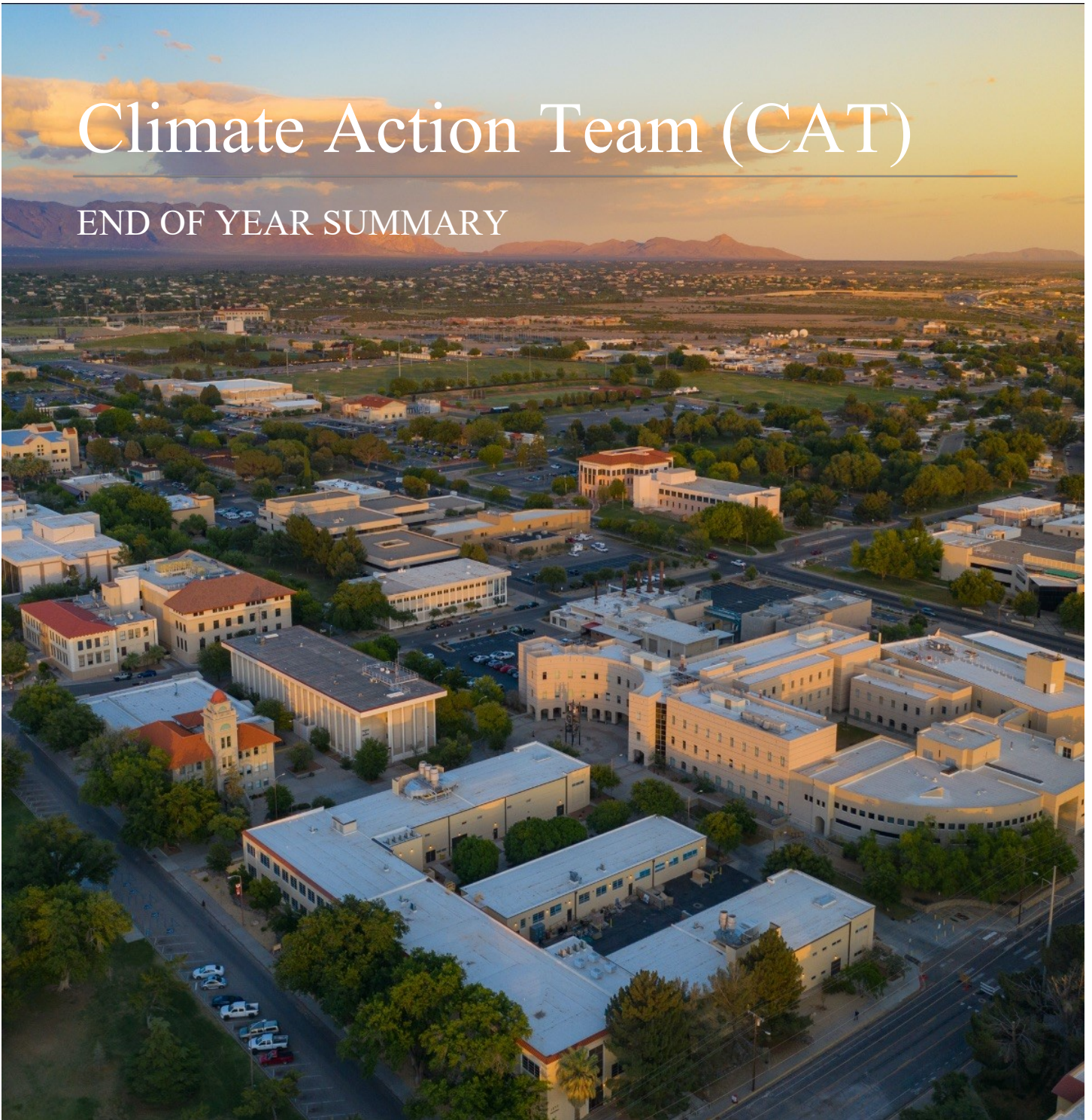


Climate Action Team (CAT)

END OF YEAR SUMMARY



November 30, 2021

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY | LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO



Office of the Chancellor

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DATE: March 18, 2021

TO: Climate Action Team

FROM: Chancellor Arvizu and President Flores

SUBJECT: Charge – Climate Action Team (CAT)

Thank you for your willingness and/or nomination to serve on the Climate Action Team, which will be administered by Dr. Gena Jones, Assistant Vice President, HRS and co-chaired by Jagdish Khubchandani, Professor of Public Health and Rosa De La Torre-Burmeister, Director, TRIO Upward Bound Program – GISD/LCPS.

As a follow-up to the Climate Survey and aligned with LEADS 2025 Goal 4: Build a Robust University System, we appointed a Climate Study Action Team (CSAT) during 2020 to begin addressing the issues of greatest concern. The team did a fantastic job. The next iteration of this team—to be called the Climate Action Team (CAT)—will involve your creative and enthusiastic participation. We want to continue the work of the CSAT and identify aspects of the university that are functioning well and those in need of improvement, which are key elements to achieving NMSU LEADS 2025 goals.

The NMSU administration is committed to acting on the findings from the external and internal surveys and will use them to improve how we work together. This team is charged with the following:

1. Identify NMSU systemwide activities to address the most pressing issues.
2. Align work with LEADS 2025, with focus on all four goals, and especially on Goal 2: Elevate Research and Creativity, with assistance from Luis Cifuentes, vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School.
3. Develop a plan to build on our community and business partnerships, and to add benefits for employees.
4. Explore volunteer engagement with organizations that align with the NMSU mission, and make specific recommendations on how that might work, including impact, tracking, and time.
5. Continue to work on ideas to improve internal communications, with support from Marketing & Communications, and with special focus on enhancing [Unidos](#), a new website developed by CSAT to motivate, celebrate, and educate the campus community.
6. Develop social justice statement with the new vice president for Equity, Inclusion & Diversity, when in place.
7. Discuss and create a recommendation on how to build trust within NMSU across all levels, including between leaders and employees and among people from different units and colleges.
8. Design leadership development opportunities for managerial and supervisory personnel at all levels.
9. Track improvement.

We will reach out to you regarding the first meeting. If you are unable to serve on the team, please contact Dr. Gena Jones at genaj@nmsu.edu by end of day, Friday, March 19.

Again, thank you for your participation in this important endeavor.

CAT 2021 Members

Gena Jones, CAT Lead, Assistant Vice President
Elyssa Hernandez, Admin Assistant, Special Executive
Jagdish Khubchandani, CAT Co-Chair, Professor
Rosa De La Torre-Burmeister, CAT Co-Chair, Director
Tiffany Acosta, Public Information Officer
Erin Blaugrund, College Professor, Marketing
Lisa Butler, Senior Administrative Assistant
Joan Erben, Professor
Carol, Flinchbaugh, Associate Professor
Brandon Francis, Educational Resources Coordinator
Debbie Giron, Associate Registrar
Karen Hamilton, PSL Operations Specialist
Olga Lavrova, Associate Professor
Mario Navarrete, Accountant, Sr.
Paulo Oemig, Director
Enrico Pontelli, Dean
Hiranya Roychowdhury, Professor of Biology
Franklin Jason Thomas, Lab Tech
Diana Toups Dugas, ICT Director
Margie Vela, Program Manager, Sr.
Tina Wilson, Program Specialist, Sr.
Jack Kirby, Assistant Director
Sheri Pettit, Assistant to the Dean

COMPENSATION AND APPRECIATION

INTRODUCTION

Compensation and Appreciation Subcommittee followed concerns listed in the “CSAT Pay and Benefits Report” from November 18, 2020 to guide discussions during the year. The subcommittee focused primarily on benefits and recognition given that compensation issues were being addressed through the Faculty and Staff Compensation Studies.

The subcommittee addressed eight items during 2021. The table below identifies each action item, the action taken, and how it aligned with the CSAT Report and LEADS 2025.

Action item	Action taken	Date	CSAT executive action	LEADS 2025
Compassionate Leave Request	Reviewed details of compassionate leave in other peer universities and outlined our proposal. Submitted proposal to the Executive Council, through Gena Jones, for consideration.	June 2021	2.2, increase days of compassionate leave	4.3.7
Appreciation Ice Cream Social	Planned and hosted main campus event.	August 2021		4.2.3
Leadership Development Training	Discussed need for coordinated and mandatory training for all employees in leadership roles and those who aspire to leadership roles. <i>Tabled until new CLPD leadership begins.</i>	September 2021	3.3, enhance our current professional development trainings	4.2.5
Financial Literacy training for employees	Worked with Tony Marin to offer existing financial literacy training software to employees. Financial literacy program ECMC is now available to faculty/staff, in addition to students.	November 2021	3.1, partner with financial entities to offer training on financial planning	4.2.4
"Virtual Office Hours" for HRS Benefits	Talked with Celeste Martinez about the possibility of HRS benefits to offer monthly virtual office hours. <i>Tabled due to new benefit enrollment period; did spin-off to address #4-financial literacy.</i>	October 2021	4.2, provide targeted and increased communications about existing benefits	4.3.7
Crimson Community Networking Groups	Met with VP-DEI Linda Scholz to discuss the idea of affinity groups. There was interest across many existing units (DEI, HRS, Employee and Diversity Councils). Next step is to find a unit able to "lead" this initiative.	September - October 2021		4.1
Childcare Taskforce	In initial discussion phase with Laura Madson from Diversity Council about providing additional childcare for students, staff, faculty. Taskforce in the development stages. Need to get formal approval from Executive Committee.	November 2021		4.3.7
Investigated allowing employees to volunteer during work hours	This is prohibited by NM State anti-donation clause, but the NMSU Office of Experiential Learning is partnering with the City of Las Cruces to observe Martin Luther King Jr. "Day of Service." Subcommittee will look to increase marketing and publicity of this event.	November 2021	2.3, allow employees to participate in community service during work hours	4

CHALLENGES, CONCERNS, COLLABORATIONS

The subcommittee had success in engaging with other NMSU units about our ideas. Collaborative conversations occurred with the Center for Leadership and Professional Development, Diversity Council, HRS Benefits Office, Office of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, and Student Success. Individuals across the NMSU system are interested in improving the ideas recommended by the subcommittee.

The challenges and concerns arise from the lack of resources.

- The lack of financial resources is widely known, leading to our intentional focus on targeting ideas that could make a positive impact without increased funding.
- The resource constraint that we often faced (see leadership development, virtual benefit hours, Crimson Community Networking Groups) was limited by the lack of personnel to take the lead on new initiatives. We hope to confirm the appropriate leaders in the Spring 2022.
- The subcommittee frequently discussed lack of coordinated communication as another concern. However, our list of collaborators illustrates that it is possible to communicate and problem solve across various units.

INTRODUCTION

In reviewing the Survey of Employee Engagement (Institute for Organizational Excellence, SEE-2019) and the Climate Study Action Team (CSAT-2020) executive summary, this subcommittee assessed opportunities to support LEADS Goal 2: Elevate Research and Creativity. These two previous studies did not address this goal directly. The subcommittee customized a survey to target the research climate and perception of research and creative activities by faculty. The survey was revised after input from CAT members and separate discussions with VPR Luis Cifuentes and Provost Carol Parker.

AREAS OF INTEREST

Four areas of interest are targeted in the Research and Creative Activities Climate survey:

1. Self-assessment of level of research/creative activities. This construct seeks to understand level of academic year effort dedicated to research and creative activities and overall self-reported satisfaction with these endeavors.
2. Sense of institutional support for research/creative endeavors. This construct to understand institutional support perceived by faculty toward pre-post award phases and cost-sharing assistance.
3. Respondents' perceptions on how their particular research/creative activities are valued by NMSU and self-assessment regarding ability to develop collaborations across disciplines and institutions. This construct seeks to understand faculty engagement across disciplines and institutions as opportunities to secure large grants, appreciate work across disciplines and foster collegiality.
4. Rating of understanding and importance of R1 mission. This construct seeks to understand faculty's preponderance regarding achieving R1 status.

CHALLENGES, CONCERNS, COLLABORATIONS

Timing of survey implementation has yet to be determined. Once it is conducted and, depending on return rates, inferences will be drawn for the four areas described above. Preliminary and indirect findings from the 2019 SEE survey and 2020 CSAT study, suggest that research and creative activities may be enhanced by providing competitive pay and benefits (e.g., one item from the 2019 survey; 'salaries are competitive with similar jobs in comparable institutions,' only 13% of faculty participants agreed with the statement).

The subcommittee, however, has identify the following challenges, concerns and potential collaborations.

- Approach to career mentoring for faculty members (e.g., progression from Assistant to Full Professor).
- Leverage and integration of NMSU's MSI/HSI status in all research and creative activities.
- Recognition/encouragement towards interdisciplinary work.
- Diversity of perspectives across disciplines (e.g., STEM vs. Non-STEM disciplines).
- Diversity of perspectives between main campus and DACC (e.g., lack of main campus recognition of the scholarship of teaching developed by our branch campuses).

Among concerns, the subcommittee has identified the following:

- Clarity/understanding about becoming a Carnegie R1 institution.
- Communication from upper administration to faculty.
- Opportunities to retain successful faculty members.

Key to pursue are involvement of department heads across the university system. Department heads are a bridge to relay information, assist with developing appropriate career mentoring opportunities, and identify and implement best practices.

INTRODUCTION

Trust and Communication subcommittee reviewed concerns expressed in the “CSAT Trust Committee Report” from October 19, 2020; and examined the 2019 NMSU Main Campus Climate Survey through an informal SWOT analysis. This committee focused primarily on concerns expressed by employees at multiple levels of the organization in the Climate Survey that aligned with the Trust Committee Report. The subcommittee crafted two memos addressed to Executive Leadership at all campuses across the NMSU System with recommendations for immediate action to improve trust and communication throughout the NMSU system.

Next, we will identify the items addressed in the above-mentioned memos and the action taken, aligning each with the CSAT Report and LEADS 2025. The Trust Committee for the CSAT 2020 identified five focus areas for improvement:

- 1) Trust Boosting Initiatives and Programs;
- 2) System-wide Infrastructure of Communication;
- 3) Trustworthy Employee Related Policies & Procedures;
- 4) Accountable Leadership;
- 5) Final Thoughts: Trust within LEADS 2025

In addition, the actions recommended to executive leadership align with LEADS 2025 Goal 4: Build a Robust University System; and the CAT Charter charge 7 - *Discuss and create a recommendation on how to build trust within NMSU across all levels, including between leaders and employees and among people from different units and colleges.*

Memo Title	Action Item	Recommended Action	Action Taken by Main Campus Executive Leadership	Date	CSAT Executive Action	LEADS 2025
Communication and Trust	Institutional and System-wide Meeting Best Practices	Define the purpose of the meeting; define the audience; establish a clear message and communicate directives with affected personnel/department leaders; and establish a time frame for the meeting.	Improved consistency in communication pre- and post-meeting.	15-Jun-21	4	4.2
Communication and Trust	Establish a Common Hour for the NMSU System	Set a timeframe that should be free for all employees across the campus and system. This timeframe is intentionally open for all employees to have the availability to attend the Townhall.	Pending	15-Jun-21	2, 3, 4	4.2
Communication and Trust	Demonstrate Actions that Align with Protocols/Directives	The NMSU community expects leadership to set the example for newly established protocol. Demonstrating this action reinforces trust and ensures consistency in messaging and communication.	Pending	15-Jun-21	2, 3, 4	4.2
Communication and Trust	Commission a Communication/Public Relations Coaching Team	Identify a team of public relations experts to enhance system and campus Executive Leadership communication to the system/campus community in various ways that ensure delivery of one unified clear, consistent, and concise message.	Pending	15-Jun-21	2, 3, 4	4.2
Communication and Trust Addendum	Communication & Listening	Listening sessions, polls, and interactive town halls, among other methods create this dialogue between senior administration and the campus community. In addition to listening, communicate key points that were extracted from the dialogue for consideration in the decision-making. Give employees frequent opportunities to interact and communicate with senior administrators.	Pending	15-Sep-21	1, 2, 3, 4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3

Communication and Trust Addendum	Dissemination of CAT Communication to the NMSU System-	Disseminate communication from CAT to all executive-level administrators for every NMSU campus. Executives should share this communication with the appropriate personnel as needed for implementing recommendations.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 4	4.3
Communication and Trust Addendum	Unidos. United. NMSU Website as the Landing Page for NMSU System Website-	Centralize access to the NMSU website with the Unidos. United website as the landing page for the NMSU system with links to every autonomous NMSU campus website. Redirect all campus URLs to this site. Provide a graduate assistant for maintaining the website to work closely with the CAT Communication Sub-committee. Create a robust system-wide marketing campaign that clearly communicates these changes.	Pending	15-Sep-21	1, 2, 3, 4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Access to Financial Reports and Summaries	Improve access to financial information including budget reports, summaries, and operating budget. Share frequent budget updates and summaries with NMSU employees. Share financial reports, budgets, and presentations of this information with NMSU CAT for posting to Unidos United for employee access to critical financial information, including all budget reports and presentations shared publicly with the NMSU community.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 3, 4	4.2, 4.3
Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Communication Before Budget Realignment	Hold public information and listening sessions before taking drastic action due to budget realignment.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 3 ,4	4.2, 4.3
Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Communication Regarding Financial Decisions	Generate and broadly disseminate annual reports and summaries to NMSU stakeholders regarding programs, departments, and positions/offices eliminated due to budget realignment.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 3 ,4	4.2, 4.3

Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Empower Faculty and Staff to Engage in Advocacy, Fundraising, and Forming Partnerships (P3s)	Support, train and encourage employees at all levels of the organization to engage in state and federal advocacy days for the institution's various interests specific to their work and disciplines,	Pending	15-Sep-21	1, 2, 3 ,4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3
Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Student Fee and Differential Tuition Transparency	Generate and broadly disseminate annual reports and summaries to NMSU stakeholders regarding student fees and differential tuition.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 3 ,4	4.1, 4.3
Communication and Trust: Financial Information	Communication Regarding Standard Policy for Hiring	On an annual basis, provide all NMSU stakeholders with information regarding the policies and procedures guiding hiring practices, highlighting exceptions and exemptions from these policies.	Pending	15-Sep-21	2, 3 ,4	4.1, 4.2, 4.3

CHALLENGES, CONCERNS, COLLABORATIONS

The subcommittee had success in reviewing the Climate Action Survey for understanding the needs of the campus community to build trust and improve communication throughout the system. The subcommittee engaged in creating detailed recommendations to executive leadership for improving trust and transparency, using existing data and documents as the foundation of the recommended actions.

The following are concerns for implementing solutions to long-standing concerns across the NMSU system:

- **Communication with Executive Leadership:** The subcommittee welcomes more frequent interaction with executive leadership to implement recommended actions in collaboration with executive leaders.
- **Graduate Assistant:** The Communication Subcommittee requests the assistance of a graduate assistant or student employee for Unidos. United. NMSU website development and maintenance.

CSAT and CAT are system-wide teams that are working on solutions for system-wide concerns and problems. Solutions should be disseminated to all Executive leaders for the system. The subcommittee is challenged to find ways to improve and share consistent communication with leaders throughout the system.

LOOKING FORWARD: SPRING 2022

The Trust & Communication Subcommittee began this term of service as a joint committee focused on trust and communication. The charge for the subcommittee has rendered it necessary to form two separate subcommittees. Both subcommittees will focus on the following chartered action items for Spring 2022:

Communication Subcommittee:

- Continue to work on ideas to improve internal communications, with support from Marketing & Communications, and with special focus on enhancing Unidos, a new website developed by CSAT to motivate, celebrate, and educate the campus community. (#5)

Trust Subcommittee:

- Develop social justice statement with the new vice president for Equity, Inclusion & Diversity. (#6)
- Discuss and create a recommendation on how to build trust within NMSU across all levels, including between leaders and employees and among people from different units and colleges. (#7)