

Innovative Shared Services by CHESS Sets New Standard for Higher Education Institutions

Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS) earns national recognition for pioneering efficiencies and streamlining operations across New Mexico community colleges

Albuquerque, NM – November 5, 2024 – The Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS) announced their recent achievements that are transforming the landscape of higher education in New Mexico. As a nonprofit organization focused on supporting a network of six independent community colleges across the state, CHESS has successfully implemented shared services, centralized support functions, across institutions that promote efficiency, streamline processes, and improve overall institutional effectiveness. These changes, paired with a centralized technology implementation, have resulted in streamlined staffing, alignment of business processes and a 52% reduction in audit findings.

Shared services are crucial in higher education as they allow New Mexico's community colleges to streamline their operations, reducing staff burden and aligning processes, centralizing administrative functions, reducing redundant processes and cutting operational costs. This improves the experience for both students and staff, and enables colleges to focus more resources on student success and academic quality.

CHESS's pioneering approach and cloud-based software have earned it national recognition as a leader in higher education collaboration and shared services. Across its member colleges, the organization achieved over 90% alignment of hundreds of business processes in Finance, Human Resources and Payroll; each designed around industry best practices.

One of CHESS's most notable accomplishments is the 52% reduction in audit findings across its member colleges in FY23. This improvement demonstrates the impact of enhanced compliance and more consistent operational practices, further reinforcing CHESS's commitment to high standards in financial management and transparency.

The collaborative approach also produced significant workforce efficiencies, including a reduction of over 30% in the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) staff required to process payroll. Through strategic reallocation of roles, the result is a streamlined, agile workforce without the loss of any staff.

"As a collaborative, CHESS has demonstrated how resource sharing and strategic alignment can drive meaningful improvements in operational efficiency and educational outcomes," said Kathy Ulibarri, CEO of CHESS. "We're proud of what we have accomplished with our member colleges and are excited about the positive impact this work will have on the future of higher education in New Mexico."

Additionally, CHESS remains on track to complete its major technology implementation project on time and within budget, a critical factor in today's higher education environment, where fiscal responsibility and technology-driven efficiencies are essential for institutional sustainability. This

complex project promises to modernize key operational areas, ultimately delivering an enhanced and more consistent experience for students and staff alike.

About Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS)

Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services (CHESS) is a nonprofit organization that supports independently governed member colleges in New Mexico by sharing resources, talent, and best practices to enable high-quality education and services that advance student success. Through a transformative, student-centered approach, CHESS empowers institutions to maximize their focus on student success and community impact. Members include: Central New Mexico Community College, Clovis Community College, Luna Community College, Northern New Mexico College, San Juan College, and Santa Fe Community College.