



Aggie Next Step College Experience

2021

Newt McCarty and Laura Bittner

4-H and Youth Development

SITUATION

In 2017, a joint policy resolution of the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, Dept. of Labor, Workforce Development, and the Governor's Higher Education Council set a goal of 66 percent of New Mexico's workforce population having a postsecondary degree, certificate, or training beyond high school by the year 2030.

The national average of post-secondary educational attainment stands at 51.9 percent. Forty-five percent New Mexico's workforce population has attained post-secondary education or training.

Increasing awareness of postsecondary degree, certificate, training, and career options can serve to develop a more skilled and educated workforce.

Findings show field-trip-based interventions can meaningfully affect student college decisions and preparation and suggest programs including opportunities to shadow college students during a campus visit can increase persistence in higher education.

NMSU EXTENSION RESPONSE

Considering life after high school can be daunting to many students, Aggie Next Step College Experience (ANS-CE) focuses on encouraging youth to think about life after high school. ANS-CE invites youth to campus starting in eighth grade and introduces them to faculty members, college students, and student life at a university. ANS-CE piloted its first three-day campus visit in December 2021. The visit included five NMSU colleges, 17 departments and 22 experiential learning activities. Activities included Fire Science and EMT programs at DACC; flying drones at the Ag Institute; building bridges in the Aggie Innovation Space; careers in athletics; mini med school at Burrell College; cultural, linguistic, and forensic anthropology; and working with horses and companion animals.

IMPACT

Pre-Survey of 8th grade participants:

50% have not been on a university campus
25% have visited NMSU
5% answered "very likely" to attend NMSU

Post Survey of 8th grade participants:

43% changed at least one of their top three career choices due to their experience
57% answered "very likely" to attend NMSU

"I liked the science building because I want to go down a science career and I liked that it had almost everything. Another thing that caught my attention was the size of the campus, it was so big it surprised me. Overall, it was a blast, and I would definitely consider going there after high school." *Cliff Middle School Student*

"As the school counselor, I felt this was a wonderful opportunity for the students to have exposure to different postsecondary learning options and to begin thinking about their own future plans. Since returning home, I've had multiple conversations with students that went on the trip about their plans, some of who are already planning on attending NMSU or DACC." *Tommye Allsup, Cliff Middle School*

DEMOGRAPHICS

Female: 66% Male: 33% • Hispanic: 40% White: 60%

