

May 15, 2025

Raúl Torres, Attorney General
New Mexico Department of Justice
408 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Honorable Attorney General Torres,

I wish to express my appreciation for the time, effort, and dedication demonstrated by your office in preparing the final report titled *"Title IX and Hazing on Campus: Lessons Learned from New Mexico State University."* The report's insights—particularly the identification of seven primary areas of concern and the 35 actionable recommendations—are of significant value as we continue our efforts to foster a safe campus environment.

Attached to this memo, please find a detailed progress report outlining the university's response to each of the 35 recommendations. I am pleased to report that progress has been made on all recommendations, with nearly two-thirds already completed and meaningful advancement underway on the remaining items. We remain on track to fulfill all recommendations later this year.

Please be assured that New Mexico State University continues to approach these matters with the utmost seriousness. The safety and well-being of our students and the broader university community remains our highest priorities.

Sincerely,



Valerio Ferme, Ph.D.
President
New Mexico State University

HAZING PREVENTION & TITLE IX AT NMSU

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For NMSU: A Checklist for Further Improvement

1. Institutional Governance and Student Engagement

- 1.1 Prioritize consistent communication from senior leadership to students focused on awareness efforts, policies, reporting options, resources and programs designed to prevent sexual assault and/or hazing; Increase frequency of updates to the Board of Regents regarding developments and hazing prevention initiatives.

COMPLETED: Since his first day as President, Valerio Ferme has emphasized to our entire university community the seriousness of this topic. The President has often met multiple time per week to discuss the list of recommendations from the New Mexico Department of Justice and what steps were needed for the university to achieve those goals. Additionally, the President and other university employees have participated in various hazing prevention programming throughout the spring semester and other programming will be ongoing to promote awareness for all students, faculty and staff.

- 1.2 Develop and refine communication of sexual assault and hazing prevention information and engage students by pursuing recurring campus awareness campaigns and tabling events; Clearly publicize the Title IX Coordinators contact information.

IN PROGRESS: The Office of Institutional Equity, the Dean of Students – *Student Conduct & Community Standards*, and the Office of Health Promotion provide targeted educational programs, informational tabling events, train-the-trainer initiatives, and continue to deliver multiple presentations to each athletic team on an annual basis. These efforts are designed to raise awareness around sexual assault and hazing prevention and is a regular part of training. Title IX Coordinator contact information is prominently publicized across university materials. The Office of Health Promotion also delivers peer-led workshops on alcohol use, sexual health, and hazing prevention, and coordinates regular tabling during awareness weeks and campus-wide campaigns.

With the addition of a dedicated Director of Hazing Prevention expected hire in Summer 2025, NMSU will significantly enhance its prevention and education efforts. This new role will lead the coordination and expansion of training initiatives across campus, including the development of new curriculum for student organizations, athletic teams, and residential communities. The Director will also work to ensure consistent messaging, increase access to prevention resources, and expand collaboration with faculty, staff, and existing offices to reinforce a culture of accountability and safety.

1.3 Earmark recurring funding to sustain anti-hazing efforts.

COMPLETED: This has been prioritized by NMSU President Valerio Ferme and completed by the university's Chief Financial Officer.

1.4 Ensure the OIE is allocated sufficient financial and human resources to fulfill its mission of preventing and investigating sexual misconduct.

COMPLETED: As with recommendation 1.3, this has been prioritized by NMSU President Valerio Ferme and completed by the university's Chief Financial Officer.

1.5 Consider appropriate placement of OIE within larger organizational structure to best align with its Title IX mission.

COMPLETED: NMSU's Office of Institutional Equity is now part of the NMSU President's Office, reporting to the President's Chief of Staff.

1.6 Elicit student feedback through periodic climate assessments related to campus safety concerns, reporting barriers, accessing resources and university investigative practices.

COMPLETED: NMSU routinely elicits student feedback. The university's Institutional Analysis Office centralizes all surveys and assessments for review.

1.7 Prioritize transparency measures, including publicizing aggregate stats of sexual assault and hazing investigation outcomes.

COMPLETED: To meet the transparency expectations outlined in the new federal regulations under the Campus Stop Hazing Act, NMSU has launched a dedicated website: <http://stophazing.nmsu.edu>. This site provides public access to required information, including the names of any organizations found responsible for hazing violations within the past seven years. In addition to these disclosures, the website offers educational content about what constitutes hazing, guidance on how to report concerns, information on campus partners involved in prevention efforts, and broader resources

related to interpersonal violence prevention. This initiative reflects NMSU's commitment to transparency, accountability, and campus safety.

In addition, appropriate data will be provided to NMSU Clery Officer for 2025 Annual Campus Security Report as per federal reporting requirements.

2. Policies

2.1 Perform cyclical evaluation of university policies and procedures to ensure they are not overlapping, unclear, inconsistent or irrelevant.

COMPLETED: An annual review by the University General Counsel's Office, supplemented by OIE, HR, DoS, and other units as needed was completed in February 2025. Cyclical review is an ongoing and collaborative process.

2.2 Solidify scope of anti-hazing policies and ensure conformity of definitions across the various university authorities.

IN PROCESS: The NMSU Campus Hazing Consortium is actively reviewing the clarity and consistency of hazing-related definitions to ensure alignment with federal and state guidelines. While the overall policy review has been completed, the NMSU Consortium is committed to ongoing assessment of educational resources to promote understanding among students, staff, and faculty. These efforts will be embedded in online education programs and continuously evaluated to ensure effectiveness.

The NMSU Stop Hazing website will be updated frequently, and regular messaging will be shared through appropriate and widely used NMSU social media channels to reach and engage various campus stakeholders.

2.3 Conduct an annual review of the student-athlete handbook to ensure an accurate reflection of current Athletic Department practices and University policies.

COMPLETED: An annual review has taken place for 2025, and an updated handbook will be published in August 2025.

3. Reporting

3.1 Reassess available reporting options and the functionalities and limitations of reporting systems.

IN PROCESS/ONGOING: The current reporting offerings have been reviewed and updated for greater clarity. As part of this effort, the university refined the language used in the web portal and reporting forms to ensure accessibility and ease of use. Additionally, NMSU continues to explore enhancements to its reporting infrastructure, including options for real-time anonymous communication and improved user experience. These efforts are

accompanied by enhanced promotion of the "Aggies Stand Up, Speak Up, Step Up" message related to hazing and other forms of interpersonal violence, including direct links to report.nmsu.edu to encourage engagement and timely reporting.

3.2 Clearly communicate the distinction between responsible employees who possess a duty to report sexual misconduct, and those employees who may serve as confidential resources.

COMPLETED: A memo outlining this distinction was distributed to all students, faculty and staff during the spring 2025 semester.

3.3 Increase athlete and staff understanding of appropriate reporting avenues under university policy for both sexual misconduct and non-sexualized hazing.

COMPLETED: The <http://report.nmsu.edu> website is clearly identified on all sexual violence & hazing prevention resources, health & safety resources, and is emphasized in regular training programs for orientation leaders, student leaders, organization advisors, and athletic staff training.

4. Training

4.1 Maintain an interactive approach to providing NCAA and Title IX training to athletes with an emphasis on bystander intervention.

COMPLETED: These efforts have been in place at NMSU for many years.

4.2 Continue a perennial hazing prevention curriculum for students and employees, including targeted trainings for coaches.

COMPLETED: These efforts are already in place for student-athletes.

Targeted training for coaches and staff to be implemented later this year.

4.3 Expand Title IX training for all university students, regardless of athletic team or student organization affiliation.

IN PROCESS: This training has been contracted and will be implemented later this year.

4.4 Hold staff accountable for failure to complete mandatory trainings.

IN PROCESS: The university will follow up after training is delivered.

5. Athletics Department Culture and Recruiting Practices

5.1 Set expectation that athletic department administrators and coaches be proactive and intentional in creating a culture rooted in mutual respect, concern for athlete wellbeing and accountability.

COMPLETED: The NMSU Athletic Director will set the expectation, and Compliance will reinforce the expectation through monthly Compliance meetings by addressing the concern for student-athlete wellbeing and accountability. Administration will now be included in those meetings.

5.2 Consider development of policy to ensure sufficient oversight of under-supervised areas, including locker rooms, buses and hotel rooms.

IN PROCESS: A potential policy is in review with NMSU's Athletics Department.

5.3 Examine methods to obtain greater participation in exit surveys for departing athletes and initiate an anonymous survey for athletes remaining at NMSU to provide ongoing feedback on team practices.

COMPLETED: NMSU's Dean of Students and Athletic Director have reviewed processes for existing survey instruments. The proposed plan is to assign responsibility of survey administration and data collection to take place annually to a member of Student Life staff.

5.4 Employ consistent and stringent disciplinary measures for athlete misconduct; Reinforce to athletes the effect of misconduct on financial aid awards, and name, image and likeness agreements.

IN PROCESS: A memorandum of understanding between Athletics and Student Conduct & Community Standards specific to conduct/behavior concerns is under development. A finalized draft is currently under review and sanction updates in the Student Code of Conduct are also under revision/review.

5.5 Demand further scrutiny in coaching hires; Reevaluate Athletic Director contracts to require that lapses in program management leading to sexual assault or hazing of athletes yields termination for cause.

IN PROCESS: NMSU is looking into 3rd party background reviews for coaching hires to determine feasibility.

5.6 Consider ending the practice of recruiting prospective athletes with felony and certain misdemeanor criminal convictions.

COMPLETED: A process to establish a risk level and support requirements needed for prospective student-athletes with felony and certain misdemeanor criminal convictions has been completed and will be in place for the Fall 2025 semester.

5.7 Augment current attestation/disclosure form to identify the full extent of a recruit's criminal history and prior misconduct.

COMPLETED: This has been completed as part of a collaboration between NMSU's Dean of Students Office and University Athletics.

5.8 The Dean of Students, the OIE and/or the President should make final admissions decisions on prospective student-athletes with criminal or disciplinary histories, and if admitted, those athletes should be placed on a student behavior plan.

IN PROCESS: This proposal is in process and would utilize an established risk level and support requirements for prospective student-athletes with felony and certain misdemeanor criminal convictions.

6. Resources for Sexual Assault Victims

6.1 Prioritize comprehensive routine and crisis healthcare at Aggie Health and Wellness Center for sexual assault victims and regularly evaluate the need for expanded services.

COMPLETED: This was achieved as a part of NMSU's recent AAACE Accreditation review process.

6.2 Increase staffing of mental health providers within the Aggie Health and Wellness Center and encourage utilization of virtual counseling options.

COMPLETED: The implementation of TimelyCare for students (and employees) in 2024 has significantly expanded mental health care capacity at NMSU. The addition of the CrisisNOW online option, along with a new case manager in Student Assistance Services, has strengthened follow-up support for students in crisis—ensuring they are aware of, connected to, and actively utilizing available wellness resources both on campus and in the local community. These enhancements also improve the coordination of support for students' needs beyond the classroom.

6.3 Create a resource center on campus to champion causes of sexual assault and interpersonal violence prevention and response, including participation in ongoing education campaigns.

IN PROCESS: The NMSU Dean of Students and Asst Vice President for Student Health & Wellbeing, in partnership with Human Resources and the Office of Institutional Equity, is currently reviewing existing staffing structures and the onboarding of a new Director of Hazing Prevention to identify realignment opportunities. This review is intended to explore the potential for expanding health education staffing and programming and formalizing it into a comprehensive interpersonal violence resource center. The aim is to strengthen prevention efforts, education, and support services related to hazing, sexual misconduct, and other forms of interpersonal violence across the campus community.

6.4 Seek additional victim advocates on campus to act as liaisons between sexual assault survivors and service programs/investigative entities; Pursue grant funding to supplement capacity as appropriate.

IN PROCESS: NMSU is reviewing a proposal for an interpersonal violence resource center. This review process will take place throughout summer 2025.

7. Coordination Between University Components

7.1 Evaluate the efficacy of standing meetings between leadership of OIE, Dean of Students, Police, Housing and Athletics, to discuss sexual assault/hazing prevention measures requiring cross-team collaboration.

COMPLETED: These groups meet regularly as part of the NMSU CARE team and other standing meetings. Going forward the membership of these committees will periodically evaluate meeting frequency, attendees and objectives.

7.2 Assign the coordination of anti-hazing initiatives to a single individual within Athletics and another within the Dean of Students office, who meet frequently to ensure continued focus and momentum.

IN PROCESS: The new Director of Hazing Prevention will be the primary person to lead the HPC initiative and meet with Athletic representatives. This will be completed once the new director is hired. Until then, the Dean of Students will continue to meet regularly with University Athletics.

7.3 Scrutinize the intersection of OIE's ARP 3.25 investigative process and the Dean of Student's SCC 5.26 conduct process, including whether procedural changes related to sanctioning authority are justified.

IN PROGRESS: These offices have been meeting to discuss this topic since January 2025. A draft of a memo to address this issue is in development.

7.4 Clarify protocols governing Athletics coordination with Dean of Students on discipline, including the authority to sanction athletes during the pendency of the conduct process, and mandating Dean of Students provide all sanction decisions to Athletics.

COMPLETED: This has been codified and was in process when the DOJ issued their report.

7.5 Adopt written guidelines requiring Athletics staff to refer athlete misconduct issues that may implicate the student code of conduct to the Dean of Students.

IN PROGRESS: Discussions between University Athletics and the Dean of Students Office have taken place on this topic. A draft of a memo outlining these guidelines is in development. As referenced in 5.4 the finalized draft of a memorandum of understanding outlining these guidelines is under review.

7.6 Improve communication and information sharing between OIE and Athletics regarding confidentiality considerations and provision of supportive measures upon the report of athlete sexual misconduct.

COMPLETED: Regular communication and ongoing communication between OIE and Athletics has been established. The NMSU Athletic Director is in regular communication with TIXC or Deputy for all active Athletics matters.