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August 17, 2023

New Mexico Higher Education Department  
2044 Galisteo St #4,  
Santa Fe, NM 87505

**RE: 5.7.37 NMAC-Comments in Response to Proposed Rulemaking for Opportunity Scholarship Program**

Dear Colleagues at the Higher Education Department:

Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) submits the following written comments in response to the New Mexico Higher Education Departments notice for a public rulemaking hearing to be held on August 18, 2023 concerning the Opportunity Scholarship Program. CNM is advocating for further clarification and modification of the following sections noted below to maximize access to our wonderful Opportunity Scholarship and best serve and support the needs of all of our students.

**5.7.37.8 Student Eligibility**

**Section A.** There has been confusion on the recent graduates who sit out during their 16 months and return to school. CNM recommends clearer language for students who graduate from high school, do not decide to enroll full-time and whether Opportunity Scholarship applies to them as a “continuing student” under current rules.

**Section C.1.(a).** CNM recommends a reduction of the required GPA from a 2.5 to a 2.0 to align with federal regulations and to make the Opportunity Scholarship more accessible for many of our students. 1,477 CNM students are no longer eligible for the Opportunity Scholarship and have a GPA between 2.0 and 2.49. This GPA level remains a significant barrier for students and for the College as we strive to raise our term-to-term persistence goals.

**Conclusion**

For the reasons detailed above, CNM recommends the changes and clarifications of the proposed rule to best maximize this scholarship for all New Mexicans, and especially our adult population seeking to complete their education. Please do not hesitate to contact our Policy Liaison, Martín Olea at 505-728-7944 or molea1@cnm.edu, should you like further information and answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Tracy Hartzler



Central New Mexico Community College

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