The Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services Journey:
A Story of Innovation for College Survival in the 21st Century

Presented to the Universities at Shady Grove Strategic Planning Workshop
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A Bit About New Mexico

- 5th largest state in terms of land mass
- 37th in the nation in terms of population (2.1 million people)
- 46th in the nation in terms of population density
- Divided politically by region
- Majority minority state (47% Latinx, 10.6% Native American)
New Mexico’s Higher Education Landscape

29 Publicly Funded Colleges & Universities

Four-Year Public Colleges & Universities: 7 separate Boards of Regents created in the NM Constitution, appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the NM Senate.

Two-Year Community Colleges: 7 separate, locally elected Boards of Trustees, 1 (NMMI) separate Board of Regents.

Two-Year Branch Community Colleges: Governed by the Board of Regents of “parent” university, with 10 separate, locally elected advisory boards.

Tribal Colleges: All governed and managed by the US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Education.

Source: NM Higher Education Department
Higher Education Challenges in New Mexico

Financial Challenges
- Reductions in state appropriations
- Declining enrollments
- Large software licensing expenditures required to maintain separate enterprise technology solutions
- Outdated, complicated current systems
- Expense and difficulty hiring systems administrators at all institutions

Political Challenges
- Pressure to reduce physical presence/campus square footage
- Desire to improve educational attainment levels
- Frustration over students’ ability to seamlessly move from one institution to another
- Threat of institution closure or merger to address cost of maintaining 25 separate state-funded colleges & universities
Threats Lead to Opportunities – Conversation Begins

In 2016, small rural college asks large urban college for help in managing and maintaining its ERP/SIS.

- Small college under threat of closure by state legislature
- Small college using outdated ERP/SIS with inadequate staff to properly maintain it and insufficient resources to move to a more modern platform
- Large college’s ERP/SIS unable to manage system for small college without the small college buying expensive licenses
- Conversation raised at New Mexico Independent Community Colleges, where idea to collaborate more broadly was born
What Is CHESS?

CHESS - The Collaborative for Higher Education Shared Services, Inc.

A nonprofit corporation that:

- Optimizes a groundbreaking partnership of independent educational institutions that share tools, talents, and best practices to power seamless, student-friendly experiences, and
- Supports the delivery of high-quality education and services that advance student success.
INITIAL GOAL

Align all business processes across member institutions using a single-instance, cloud-based ERP/SIS while maintaining each college’s unique culture and independent governance structure.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Cost savings through:

- Reduction in need for high-priced contractors to maintain existing systems
- Reduction in third-party, bolt-on software applications necessary to make systems meet student expectations
- Sharing of talent across institutions

Improved capacity for smaller institutions by:

- Providing access to more sophisticated tools in a more affordable manner
- Developing shared cybersecurity support across member institutions

Consistent, high quality student user experience regardless of size:

- Improved graduation rates and shortened time-to-degree by allowing students to package courses from any member college
- Improved student transfer success by providing a familiar, comfortable student experience at all member colleges
Financial Model

CHESS Budget Developed
Approved by CHESS Board/Member Presidents

MOU with Budget Allocation Methodology Adopted
- Budget allocated based on agreed-upon methodology
- CHESS invoices colleges for their proportional share of the budget

Annual Review of Factors Driving Allocation Methodology
- Leadership costs shared equally across all colleges
- Student FTE drives allocation of SIS subscription costs
- Employee FTE drives allocation of Finance/HR modules

Proprietary and Confidential
Opportunities for Universities at Shady Grove

- **Strength**: Existing partnership experience with 9 public universities in one location.

- **Strength**: On-campus collaboration to provide services such as academic coaching, career advising, internship preparation, and others.

- **Opportunity**: Achieve greater efficiencies by sharing back-office processes and staff in areas such as institutional research, accounting, payroll, benefits management, and others?

- **Opportunity**: More cost effective to procure some enterprise software such as an LMS through Universities at Shady Grove rather than on their own?

Additional opportunities?