



ARCH - Advisory Committee Minutes, Spring 2025

Date: 4/16/2025

Number of Attendees: 26

Called to order: 12:36 pm

Adjourned: 2:17 pm

Chairperson: Eric Ghahate

Recorder: Katherine Meagher

Location: ATC 108/Zoom

Members present from industry: James Bajek- Pattison Sign, Kate Boles- UNM (zoom), Steve Borabos-, Norman Crowe- Critic (zoom), Jim DiMotto- Architect, Serri Grube- Valley High School (zoom), Richard Handel- RMKM, Joseph Lucido- CCCAP (zoom), Mike May- Future Focused Education, Lane McConnel- Alumni, Christopher Mead- UNM, Emmanuel Moreno- Dona Ana Community College (zoom), Angela Pacheco- UNM Advisor (zoom), Alfons Poblocki- UNM, Bill Sabatini- Architect, Melodee Saiz- APS (zoom), Jennifer Toledo- Alumni, Dave Williams- RMKM

Members present from CNM: Paul Anderson- PT Instructor, Joseph Andrade- Instructor, Stephen Dixon- PT Instructor, Eric Ghahate- Program Chair (zoom), Sionna Grassbaugh- Associate Dean, Katherine Meagher- ATA, David Miertschin- Instructor, Ashley Prelo- WCS Outreach Manager

Next scheduled meeting: TBD

I. Welcome/Introductions: Started the meeting at 12:36 pm. David made introductions and thanked everyone for being here as he is excited to be holding this meeting. He stressed the importance of his subject area in society at large and spoke about how vital it is to hold class in a studio setting. He said that what we provide at the community college level is very unique and important, especially with diverse points of view. He said that the current challenges of the program are enrollment numbers and student completion. The curriculum is highly demanding of students, which does pose a problem of completion. He is wishing to develop a dialogue about where we are and where we are going. Advisory members introduced themselves.

II. Reports:

- 1. College Updates:** Sionna spoke on the larger updates with the school of Skilled Trades and Arts. There has been an increase in enrollment from fall to spring and from last year alone, there was a 7% increase overall for Skilled Trades and Arts. The benchmark is looking at pre-COVID numbers and enrollment. STA is one of the few academic schools close to pre-COVID numbers. She also mentioned that summer enrollment is already looking great- STA is up 33% from last summer. Summer enrollment is also up for both the ARCH and ARDR programs. There has been a high demand for some of our programs while others need help with recruitment.

She also took some time to address the current shift in politics and how the recent rash of executive orders could be affecting funding. Perkins will be impacted as will CTE programs, professional development, travel, and equipment, which are funded by Perkins. One of the main focuses moving forward is to support students and staff during these times in the current political climate. Some activities may not be funded going forward, even if they were funded before. She also mentioned the impact of recent tariffs and how that could affect CNM's supply chain.



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Sionna also spoke on Rio-Tech, set for Fall 2025. HVAC and Plumbing will be two of the programs housed there, in addition to Welding, Carpentry, and Electrical Trades. The program will focus on high school students in grades 10-12, with 9th graders being taught core subjects before moving to trades in 10th grade. These students will be taking CNM courses with CNM faculty in conjunction with the required high school coursework. Currently, it is expected that there will be about 20 students per class. In addition, CNM will be able to offer classes outside of regular school hours. Hopefully, this will fill the need for trades in Sandoval County. The grand opening for the Rio-Tech building is slated for April 2025. Additional updates will be provided. She also spoke a little on the new STA building on Main Campus- the grand opening is slated for sometime in September. Updates will be provided as they come, including tours that will be open to guests.

Overall, CNM is still committed to their values and the goal to create a sense of belonging for anyone that wants to learn. She also brought up that since the birth rate going down in the country, fewer high school graduates will be coming to CNM. She stated that STA will have to enhance their recruitment strategies and target adults looking to go back to school.

2. **Enrollment and Graduation rates:** Sionna didn't share the program enrollment and demographic information but we are including it here in the minutes for your information. The majority of students enrolled in both Pre-Architecture and ARDR reside in the 87121 (Coors & Central) zip code, followed by 87123 (Tramway & Central) and 87120 (Unser & Universe). As of right now, Pre-Architecture has 96 active students, 65 of which are currently enrolled and have received a grade for classes in the Fall 24 term. The average age of students in the program is around 24-28 and 40% of them are female. There were 5 graduates in the 2023-2024 school year, 0 in Fall 24, and 0 expected for Spring 25.

III. Program Introduction, History, and Overview David spoke about the history of the program and shared a presentation. Also present was a SWOT assessment chart. The chart had four labeled quadrants for Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat. He asked that the members write their thoughts on the program on a sticky note and leave them on the chart to provide feedback, with those thoughts corresponding to the four different quadrants. The CNM Architecture program started in 2014, when an introduction class was put within the Environmental Planning degree. CNM approved the AAS degree for Pre-Architecture in 2016 and CNM has been working with UNM to use this as a bridge to the university program. The first graduating class was in 2019 and the program faced challenges when it went online for COVID the following year. In 2021, multiple departments were consolidated under a single chair and in-person education resumed in 2022. Since 2022, the department has experienced turnover in leadership roles due to retirements. In 2026, the program will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary!

David reviewed the learning objectives for the program. The program can be completed in two years if a student attends full-time. He stated that we don't tend to get a lot of students with art or drawing experience at all as many of them do not know how to draw. However, many of these students do learn the skills within their first semester. He then discussed the goals and objectives of each term alongside examples of student work.

IV. Discussion with Members: David opened the floor to discussion of the program- both to alumni and industry members. He wanted alumni to share what benefitted them as well as what they could have benefitted from now that they are done with the program. He also looked for input from those representing UNM to see how CNM students have done transitioning from the CNM program to the UNM program.



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Richard said that as an alumnus, CNM's program gave him a lot of confidence to transition to UNM program. He said that one of the benefits to the program was that it has a low barrier of entry. His only issue was the logistics of students having access to the building in order to work on projects in the studio space. He said that when he was a student, the hours the building was open were very limited. He stated that students really want to engage in the studio culture and enjoy flexibility. David said that this is dependent on his schedule as he is the one that has to open the studio for the students though he agreed that this is a challenge.

Joseph of CCCAP spoke on competency-based curriculum and asked if CNM and UNM have been coordinating on cross-competency efforts. Sionna said that CNM as a whole is expanding CBE program offerings. She is to explore CBE for Pre-Architecture and work with UNM as well. Joseph expressed that he is thinking of students getting licensed and how CBE could possibly help support licensure.

Steve said his time in the classroom was great and that he learned a lot from the students as well. He said that 1st year CNM students tend to be harder workers than the first years he's seen at UNM, so he has been very impressed. He stated that they learn to become flexible and to explain things concisely, and it's refreshing that they apologize for not knowing things. He recommended that students travel to see architectural examples up close and that CNM consider exhibitions of student drawings and models in gallery work. He also recommended to add landscape architecture as a class so students can look at Albuquerque and see what's needed architecturally.

Bill asked for a clarification of the grade-level of students. David said that the target audience are freshmen and sophomores in college, and Sionna said average age of CNM students is 28. Bill asked about education in humanities as he believes that students benefit from a general, well-rounded education. David said that many students come to the program with humanities exposure and humanities classes are built into the program requirements. Angela mentioned in chat that the remainder of General Education is completed at the university level at UNM.

Jennifer spoke on her experience as a non-traditional student and her time in the architecture program. She enjoyed the set-up of the course and said that it helped develop a lot of her skills. David said it was great that she came from a different background because she could bring a totally different experience to the table- he added that this helps an architect's perspective on how the world works. Richard added on with his own experience and how the course helped him with his focus. Jennifer also added that it would be helpful to learn more about Adobe programs since UNM has more of an art-based approach to their courses. She also said it would be best to teach more entry point skills and interview skills.

Sionna asked alumni what they felt like they were prepared for vs what they weren't when they transferred from CNM to UNM. Lane said that David made it very clear what UNM's expectations were and that this gave him more experience than students that were at UNM already. Alfons agreed that CNM students are extremely prepared when they get to UNM. He is wanting to see what CNM could offer to UNM so that UNM could potentially improve their own program in regards to teaching the basic skills to help students be successful.

Dave talked about the importance of also being in the field, especially in construction. He spoke on how the program has improved since the TVI days, with students being able to learn and offer more when coming into UNM. He said to not lose sight of the end goal- to build a building and get it built correctly.

Serri spoke on her experience in the UNM program, when she came from high school with no skills. She didn't understand certain concepts, such as elevation vs floorplan or how to use sliding scales- the basics are vital. She talked about digital programs like Rhino and CAD and how students don't have the exposure to said programs. She asked: what can high schools do to prepare those students? She also noted that her students could largely benefit from CNM's Pre-Architecture program. David said he would love to discuss this matter more one-on-one but it is definitely important to teach those fundamental skills. He also discussed analog vs digital tools in the classroom and profession at large. Alfons



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said that analog is still very important for the program- he expressed that digital tools get far too much focus and take away from skills to present an idea correctly. Serri added that Valley High School has an annual showcase on the evening of April 22nd in building S where her students will be showing off their work.

Christopher suggested to edit the SWOT analysis to combine weakness and threat into challenges, and strength and opportunity into advantages, as that would be easier to work with. He said that some of the challenges to the program aren't brand new such as how do we train and educate students, all while supporting literacy. He specially noted that literacy rates have been declining as of late. He said that architecture brings together many different skills and has a role in society at large. He emphasized that across the board, students are not ready for higher education and the workplace, be it educationally, training-wise, or even emotionally. CNM has a great advantage and is perfectly positioned to provide that bridge for UNM as universities are not well equipped to work with students who aren't entirely ready for that environment. He said that we should own the fact that we are working with UNM as he thinks more community colleges should be cooperating with universities. He also mentioned that with the advent of new technologies, there has been a lack of downtime for students to build skills in things like art. Students who will be best at CAD and Rhino will be even better if they know how to draw so it is a great need for studio culture. Having a physical presence in the classroom is also very important and it's great that CNM has a studio. He also urged us to think about architecture in the coming years- how do we adapt for climate changes, lack of resources, and other such issues? When a building goes down, the rubble is tossed- how do we build sustainability? He said to consider what else could be taught and teach for the future. CNM's program has a lot of room for flexibility and the advantage of being able to adapt.

David said that we have grown a lot and we still have a way to go but this has become a very good program. He discussed how CNM doesn't seem to recognize their impact on the community and how they may not see their ability yet but all that Chris said is true and very important. Sionna spoke on the college's CIPR process and the review of enrollment and fill rates. We do need support on how to do outreach and come together to help recruit students and encourage them to complete their CNM degree before transferring or entering the workforce.

Paul asked that people understand that certain disciplines, such as architecture, may have numbers that aren't the same from other traditional classes- but this doesn't lessen the value of architecture. David spoke more on this and the limits of space, especially for student models. Staffing is also another issue and limitation. Mike talked about creating internships for students and observed a ripple effect in the industry. He said that students like Serri's have some basic skills- some of these skills they've gotten from unexpected places such as the video game Minecraft- but have trouble with communicating their ideas. He is now being approached for help to get students connected to possible employers- so word of mouth is spreading very well! He recommended to look at points of entry for students so that we can help tend transitions to higher programs and employment.

Jim spoke on students who have great ideas but not an entire plan on how to get there. He spoke on the importance of advanced thinking and thinking for the future. He said that all that has been discussed so far could potentially lend to a potential mission for the program.

Melodee announced that La Cueva High School is hosting their 1st annual makers showcase on May 1st for Engineering and Architecture. This will include work in creative writing, engineering, architectural design, and similar fields. She would love to have us as VIP guests! She will send out an email invite within the coming days.

VII. Adjournment: David thanked everyone for their time and input and encouraged them to add more notes to the physical SWOT board before they leave, if they can. He asked if people would be interested in furthering the discussion and asked that those present please let us know if anyone else should be added, or even offer more input. The possible



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current plan for this advisory is to hold it once a year, alternating with the ARDR program. Meeting adjourned at 2:17 pm.