New Mexico State University (NMSU), a minority-serving, land grant, and space grant institution, seeks a strategic leader and relationship builder to be its inaugural Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity (VPEID). Reporting to the President, and serving as a member of the President’s Executive Team, the VPEID will join NMSU at a pivotal moment as the university is determined to provide a more inclusive environment that values all, ensures equity, and celebrates diversity in all its forms. Working across the university and the NMSU system, the VPEID will provide leadership in the development, coordination, and implementation of initiatives, programming, and services that promote equity, inclusion, diversity, social justice, access, and opportunity.

NMSU has the opportunity to be a model for other land-grant institutions for how best to serve a diverse student body and surrounding community. As a Minority-Serving Institution (MSI), Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and as one of the most diverse land-grant universities in the nation, situated near the Mexican border on the Central and Latin American corridor, NMSU is positioned like no other land-grant, research university. It has the main campus in Las Cruces and four community colleges across the state, a satellite learning center in Albuquerque, cooperative extension offices located in each of New Mexico's 33 counties, 12 agriculture research and science centers, and distance education. NMSU Las Cruces campus enrolls approximately 14,300 students, with 70 percent of the student population New Mexico residents. Approximately 58 percent of students identify as Hispanic, 2.6 percent as African American, 2.3 percent as American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.3 percent as Asian American, 0.2 percent as Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and 2.3 percent as multiracial. Also, as a military and veteran-friendly university, NMSU offers a highly accessible education with a spirit of service.

The VPEID will be joining the university at a time of great anticipation with the recent adoption of an aspirational strategic plan, NMSU LEADS 2025, which understands that EID is essential to the university’s ability to achieve its goals of becoming a Carnegie Research 1 institution, recognized for all-embracing student success, research and scholarship that addresses global challenges, and borderlands economic development. The new VPEID will be part of the executive leadership team deeply committed to inclusive excellence, and will partner with passionate faculty, staff, students, and alumni who are equally dedicated.

The VPEID will provide visionary leadership with extensive operational expertise and an ability to facilitate the adoption of best practices across the university and system. To that end, the VPEID will be expected to have program-building and administrative experience in an academic setting and a deep understanding of how best to achieve EID goals in higher education. The VPEID will also possess well-developed skills in facilitating inclusive dialogues that enable growth and improve campus climate; the capacity and expertise to develop and translate strategic goals for implementation; the ability to fundraise and grow revenue through grants; and the experience needed for institutional change management in a complex environment.

The VPEID will be expected to address a set of key opportunities and challenges, listed below:

- Define a shared strategic vision and operationalize equity, inclusion, and diversity efforts in line with NMSU LEADS 2025 and in close collaboration with the NMSU community
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- Lead the effort in bridging, integrating, and significantly expanding EID initiatives across the university
- Broadly increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and students and foster a culture of equity and inclusivity
- Serve as a visible and trusted leader and thought partner for EID
- Effectively manage and expand resources to advance EID efforts
- Strengthen community engagement that enhances the broad impact of NMSU

A full list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the VPEID can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to provide background information and detail the key opportunities and challenges related to the position. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

About New Mexico State University

New Mexico was still a territory when Las Cruces College opened the doors of its two-room building in the fall of 1888. By 1960, the school had grown greatly, and its name was changed by state constitutional amendment to New Mexico State University. From humble beginnings, NMSU has emerged as a driving force in the state, region, and world. Today, NMSU comprises seven colleges including College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES), College of Arts and Sciences, College of Business, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Health and Social Services, and Honors College – the first Honors College in the state. The University also houses the Graduate School and the NMSU Library – one of two major academic research libraries in New Mexico.

There are 24 tribes that have ancestral homeland ties to New Mexico including 20 Pueblos, the Navajo Nation, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, and the Fort Still Apache Tribe. NMSU honors Native American knowledges and worldviews based on intimate relationships to the natural world. As the state’s land-grant university, NMSU acknowledges and respects the sovereign Indian Nations and Indigenous Peoples. NMSU pledges to have a meaningful and respectful relationship with the sovereign Indian Nations, Indigenous communities, and Native American Peoples within the institution.

On July 1, 2018, Dr. John Floros became the 28th President of NMSU. During his first year in the office, he engaged in a long dialogue with faculty, staff, and students centered around a strategic planning process that resulted in NMSU LEADS 2025, which was approved by the Board of Regents in May 2019. The goals include advancing student success; elevating research and creativity; amplifying extension and outreach; and building a robust NMSU system. In December of 2019, NMSU Foundation completed the Ignite Aggie Discovery campaign, which raised $126 million and was the largest campaign in the University’s history. Aggie donors helped to add $50 million in scholarship endowments, which created a total of 36 new scholarships to support student success.

NMSU’s success is in large part due to a long-standing commitment to meeting the contemporary needs of its students by faculty dedicated to academic excellence. NMSU faculty have received numerous local and national awards for outstanding research and contributions to their field of practice. They are frequently selected for recognition as experts in their fields by their colleagues as well as national professional associations, including many faculty who are considered agents of institutional and societal change. There are about twice as many staff as faculty at NMSU, and 32 percent of faculty and 55 percent of staff identify as minority, which includes American Indian, Asian American, Black, Hispanic, and multi-racial. About half of the faculty and staff are women.
Besides the main Las Cruces campus, the NMSU system has four branch campuses: New Mexico State University–Alamogordo, New Mexico State University–Carlsbad, New Mexico State University–Doña Ana Community College, and New Mexico State University–Grants. Total enrollment across all campuses as of the fall of 2020 was 22,360. Chancellor Dan Arvizu is the university’s chief executive officer and responsible for oversight of the entire NMSU system. All the campus presidents report directly to the Chancellor. Starting in 2020, the system will consolidate leadership at NMSU Alamogordo, NMSU Carlsbad, and NMSU Grants to operate under central leadership, which aims to reduce expenses in regard to pandemic-related budget cuts. NMSU launched the Aggie Pathway Program to help students at community colleges in the system to fulfill the requirements to graduate with a bachelor’s degree.

**The Current Context of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Efforts**

President John Floros has been committed to hiring someone to oversee strategy around equity, inclusion and diversity efforts since arriving at NMSU. This public commitment translated to one of the four prominent goals identified in NMSU’s strategic plan LEADS 2025, Goal 4. Objective 4.1 – “be a recognized leader in valuing the inclusion of diverse participants and in recognizing diversity as an asset among minority-serving, land-grant and space-grant institutions.”

This led to a variety of initiatives on campus to help define the role. In the fall of 2019, Provost Carol Parker invited an external team of reviewers from the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE) to provide perspective and input on the campus’s readiness for a Chief Diversity Officer position. The results of the External Review Report were made public. In May 2020, the Diversity Council – the standing advisory body to Chancellor Arvizu and a partner to NMSU administration on issues relating to diversity and inclusion – and President Floros hosted a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Town Hall to discuss the external review findings and gather input from the NMSU community. As a result, President Floros determined that the role should be a Vice President position reporting to the President and with a cabinet-level office.

In the fall of 2019, NMSU also partnered with the Institute for Organizational Excellence at the University of Texas at Austin to simultaneously conduct the Employee Engagement Survey, which gave NMSU a “desirable” overall score of 362 out of 500. To briefly summarize the results, staff and faculty feel supported at NMSU, but it also provided a clear picture for improvement in areas of pay, benefits, and internal communication. The combined results of the External Review and Employee Engagement Survey show the need to better support historically marginalized groups for a better sense of value and belonging and a more equitable and inclusive environment that goes beyond compositional diversity.

In 2020, the NMSU Faculty Senate approved a memorandum to support the elimination of systemic discrimination at NMSU. The memorandum laid out recommendations for all institutional levels, from faculty to department heads to deans and senior leadership, to take part in building a more just and inclusive NMSU, with one specific recommendation supporting the hiring of a Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity.

Despite challenging financial times due to COVID-19 and other funding constraints, the President and much of the NMSU community believe the university is past due for this position and much-needed progress cannot wait. Over the years, faculty, staff, and students have made some progress in these areas through both organized and grassroots efforts, but many initiatives remain siloed and underdeveloped and need an overarching strategic approach to bring efforts together in a more structural and systematic manner. These initiatives are currently housed in a variety of units:
Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity

- Four Diversity Programs, including American Indian Programs, Black Programs, Chicano Programs, and LGBT+ Programs, two of which currently have interim directors. The programs currently report to different offices, including the Chancellor’s Office, the Provost’s Office, and the Vice President for Student Success. These Diversity Programs will now be reporting to the VPEID.
- Two student-centric programs, Military and Veterans Programs, and Student Accessibility Services, which also currently report to the Vice President of Student Success will continue to do so; however, the VPEID will find these offices to be strong partners in efforts to broaden programming for veterans and the disabled.
- Other pre-existing campus-wide, grant-funded student programs include: TRIO Student Support Services, College Assistance Migrant Program, the New Mexico Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP), Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC), and the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE) to the Postdoctorate program.
- Interdisciplinary academic programs in the College of Arts and Sciences include: Borderlands and Ethnic Studies (online Graduate certificate), Gender & Sexuality Studies (online BA major and minor and Graduate minor), an Africana Studies course, Native American Studies, and Chicano Studies.
- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) currently oversees all equity compliance and education functions at NMSU and administers Title IX, ADA, EEO, and the NMSU system’s Affirmative Action Plan. This office reports to the General Counsel. NMSU anticipates that the VPEID will assume oversight of its Affirmative Action Plan and play a significant leadership role in ensuring best practices in its EEO recruitment and hiring initiatives, in partnership with OIE, Human Resource Services offices, and the Academic Affairs offices.
- Nascent efforts to establish an Ombuds program(s) for faculty, staff and students have taken place; however, this initiative needs leadership and support, and NMSU anticipates that the VPEID could play a significant leadership role in ensuring this effort launches and is well managed.
- Several additional programs and initiatives are in place within its colleges and branch campuses. NMSU anticipates that the VPEID will ensure coordination among such efforts and programs within the colleges, branches and administrative units.

NMSU is poised to build the capacity of those within NMSU to be EID leaders, and the university has many aspirations for growth, including: 1) greater representation of faculty and staff of color, especially Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic, to better reflect the diversity of the student body; 2) EID training for search committees or best practices in recruiting and hiring faculty and staff; 3) professional development in support of EID efforts in teaching, research, and service; 4) initiatives that extend diversity programming beyond undergraduate students; 5) the elimination of student inequity and achievement gaps by ensuring all students have access to resources and opportunities to succeed, especially Native and Indigenous students and Black students who are still a very small portion of the student body; 6) untapped opportunities to leverage NMSU’s status as an MSI and HSI for fundraising and grants, in close collaboration with the Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School; 7) bridging the curricular and co-curricular for thoughtful discussions to promote social justice, improve campus climate, and adopt policies and practices to promote EID; 8) ensuring NMSU units engage with external contractors and vendors who also promote EID efforts, such as through research contracts and procurement and 9) collecting and monitoring data with an emphasis on gathering critical stories and doing participatory action research to make timely adjustments. These are some examples of opportunities for NMSU to come together around common EID
objectives. The university community is ready for a unifying leader, resource and facilitator who can challenge the university to better fulfill its strategic plan and mission.

**Role of the Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity**

Reporting to the President, the VPEID is responsible for leading and coordinating the university’s strategy and efforts to create a more equitable, inclusive, diverse, and welcoming environment for all students, staff, faculty, and community partners. As a member of the President’s executive leadership team, the VPEID will serve as a critical advisor, bridge builder, strategic leader, and partner, enabling leaders and the campus community to identify and execute initiatives to effect lasting institutional change. This will include assisting with achieving the NMSU LEADS 2025 strategic goals of enhancing student success and mobility and becoming a Carnegie Research 1 university. The VPEID will be facilitating the coordination and implementation of strategic planning; the creation of training and educational programming; the creation of an Ombuds program; policy development; faculty and staff hiring and retention best practices; student success initiatives for historically marginalized populations; bridging and expanding university-wide EID initiatives; improving campus climate; fundraising; and assisting in growing NMSU’s capacity and reputation as an MSI and HSI.

The VPEID will found, lead, and oversee NMSU’s Office of Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, which is responsible for successful outcomes from NMSU’s goal of creating an inclusive environment for students, faculty, staff; efforts to diversify its student body, faculty, staff; ensuring equitable outcomes for and treatment of its students, faculty, staff; and ensuring it provides access and equal opportunity for all through its programs and business practices. This office will include the Diversity Programs of American Indian Programs, Black Programs, Chicano Programs, and LGBT+ Programs, with the opportunity for growth. The direct reports are the Directors of these programs, or 4.5 FTE, with an additional 2.0 FTE of support staff. This number does not include student and graduate assistant employees. The VPEID’s office will be in the university’s executive suite also housing the President, Provost, and Vice President for Student Success, and adjacent to the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor’s offices. The FY2020-2021 total expenditures budget for staff and operating costs is $867,412, including annual disbursements from $815,752 in endowed principal held in gift accounts earmarked for various diversity initiatives. The budget may grow over time as the portfolio expands depending on experience, mutual interests, timely opportunities and funding available. The VPEID will fundraise to augment existing resources.

The VPEID will work collaboratively across the university, including working closely with the Vice Presidents of Student Success, Academic Affairs, and Research, and leaders from Human Resources, OIE, the Deans, as well as faculty, staff, and students to create a shared responsibility for advancing the university’s goals around programming, grants, and strategies related to promoting inclusive excellence. This will include working closely with the Faculty Senate and NMSU System Diversity Council* (*serving as an ex-officio member), Office of Student Involvement & Leadership Programs, and numerous campus student organizations.

**Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Vice President for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity**

*Define a shared strategic vision and operationalize equity, inclusion, and diversity efforts in line with NMSU LEADS 2025 and in close collaboration with the NMSU community*

Upon joining the university, the VPEID will encourage broad participation in determining a shared EID vision and convene all stakeholders of the university community regularly to listen, strategize, and operationalize planning. While planning will be important, the VPEID will be expected to hit the ground running on a variety of EID fronts, ensuring university stakeholders are involved at every step of the process. The VPEID will serve as the strategic leader and facilitator for all EID efforts, gaining buy-in with
the backing of data and maintaining a high level of transparency through frequent communication. This will include leading the President’s executive leadership team in ongoing, thoughtful discussions around strategy and progress in achieving a more equitable and inclusive environment, and working across the university and system-wide to accomplish EID goals collectively in support of LEADS 2025 and the land-grant mission.

**Lead the effort in bridging, integrating, and significantly expanding EID initiatives across the university**

While there are pockets of significant EID work across the university, there is a pressing need to unite efforts and expand programming to shift the institutional culture towards more holistic and integrated efforts. The VPEID will be a hub for collaboration within this decentralized environment by coordinating existing EID activities, identifying new cross-institutional opportunities, and developing formalized communications structures and processes to ensure ideas and initiatives can come to fruition. This will include bridging and expanding curricular and co-curricular EID efforts using benchmarks, data, and best practices while also appreciating the effectiveness of any current programming. With direct oversight over the Diversity Programs, the VPEID will find better ways to integrate programming across the university, leveraging the expertise and resources of others while also recognizing the intersectionality of the university community. The VPEID will build on the extensive foundational work completed by the Diversity Council, Faculty Senate, university leadership, and other faculty and staff who are also highly dedicated to the success of this VPEID. The VPEID will work closely with the Provost’s Office; the Office of the Vice President Research and Graduate School; Student Success and Enrollment Management; the Deans; Human Resources; OIE; the Faculty Grievance Review Board; related academic units; and the entire university leadership team to ensure success.

**Broadly increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and students and foster a culture of equity and inclusivity**

The university will look to the VPEID to lead efforts that ensure a more equitable and inclusive workplace while also assisting in increasing the diversity of faculty, staff, and students. The VPEID will engage the university community in the critical inquiry on the value of institutional equity and inclusiveness, leveraging faculty and staff expertise when possible, and will serve as a consultant and thought partner as faculty, staff, and senior administration work to put theory into practice. While the VPEID will work closely with the campus community to determine metrics of success in these areas, there is a consistent sentiment around the desire to increase the number of Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic faculty and staff to further enhance academic excellence and the educational experience of students. The VPEID will drive the development of a robust infrastructure and processes that work to attract, advance, and retain faculty, staff, and administrators from historically marginalized groups with the assistance of OIE. This will include building programming across disciplines and units, and enhancing programs already in place, such as the ADVANCE and ASPIRE programs. The VPEID will serve as a trusted advisor to administrative and academic units in these efforts and oversee the successful implementation of the Affirmative Action Plan, in partnership with OIE, Human Resource Services, and the Academic Affairs offices, by expanding recruiting, training, and mentoring initiatives and developing an effective Ombuds program for faculty and staff. Additionally, the VPEID will work closely with the Provost, Vice Presidents, and Deans to augment initiatives to recruit, retain, support, and graduate a diverse student body by cultivating relationships in the community, providing professional development to faculty, staff, and senior leadership, and helping to ensure all prospective and current students feel supported from recruitment through graduation.

**Effectively manage and expand resources to advance EID efforts**

At a financially challenging time, the VPEID will need to be creative with existing resources, stretching the budget where possible and encouraging the sharing of resources across university leadership in support of
mutually beneficial initiatives. The VPEID will also be expected to be a fundraiser, working closely with the Vice President for University Advancement and Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School to garner new funding from state and federal agencies and philanthropic entities that have an interest in promoting and supporting EID initiatives. The VPEID will partner with others on campus to help identify program-specific opportunities for resource generation and external funding, fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship and an eye for creative partnership opportunities. Over time, with progress proven through data, the VPEID will be able to make the case for additional investment and growth.

Serve as a visible and trusted leader and thought partner for EID

The VPEID will be a visible and trusted voice and will serve as the university’s champion and lead spokesperson on matters of EID. This will entail serving as a thought partner to the university community and engaging them regularly in thoughtful philosophical and practical conversations around EID, with the goal of instilling an institutional culture that encourages and values such discussions. The VPEID will educate the community regarding the importance and advantages of such a culture by being well-versed in the language and literature on EID and the potential positive impacts on the core academic, land-grant mission and the student experience. The VPEID will encourage important institutional discussions, pose challenging questions, and provide insightful solutions on difficult topics that will guide problem-solving and promote intellectual engagement across the university community, including university leadership. The VPEID will encourage individual and collective responsibility in improving the campus climate.

Strengthen community engagement that enhances the broad impact of NMSU

The VPEID will also represent NMSU externally by engaging and partnering outside the university community, including with community leaders from all cultural groups, civic and grass-root organizations, local government, public-private partnerships, and with external contractors and vendors who foster EID efforts within their organizations to promote equity at NMSU and achieve mutual objectives. The VPEID will be an ear for the university, listening to their needs and continuing to foster mutually beneficial relationships in support of the teaching, service, and research missions of the university. The VPEID will also facilitate connections for the Chancellor, President, and other university leaders to continue to augment and build relationships locally and beyond. Ultimately, the VPEID will lead and oversee strategies to grow NMSU’s capacity and reputation as an MSI and HSI for more prominent national exposure and recognition.

Qualifications and Characteristics

The successful candidate will be a resourceful strategist, relationship builder, thought-leader, change-agent, and collaborator with exceptional communication skills. The search committee understands that no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, but it seeks candidates with the following experiences and abilities:

Required qualifications:

- A master’s degree;
- At least 3 years of demonstrated progressive leadership in developing and implementing EID large-scale initiatives and programs in a complex public academic setting;

Preferred qualifications:

- A Ph.D., Ed.D., or other terminal degrees.
- Demonstrated experience in program-building and administration with proven impact;
- Proven ability to provide visionary strategic leadership; experience guiding the implementation of strategic planning, establishing metrics, measuring progress, and adapting as necessary;
• Strong record of advocacy and deep commitment to developing effective equity, inclusion and diversity initiatives for faculty, students, staff, and the community;
• An understanding of affirmative action and equal opportunity regulations, as well as diversity concerns and issues in higher education;
• A desire to work in a research-orientated environment; experience with grants submittals;
• Analytical skills and data-driven focus; ability to use data with deep knowledge of their contexts and leverage analytics to drive strategic planning and change management;
• Excellent interpersonal and communication skills and an ability to listen, inspire, influence, and facilitate inclusive dialogues that enable growth;
• Demonstrated experience in higher education administrative leadership working collaboratively with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders;
• Demonstrated skill in developing effective, engaging training programs for employees, students, and college patrons;
• Demonstrated success in generating support for EID efforts, including fundraising, within the broader community and the academic setting;
• Demonstrated ability to successfully lead teams by influence and direct oversight, and effectively prioritize multiple projects; and
• Demonstrated scholarly accomplishment and intellectual depth and breadth that will command respect and establish credibility in all areas of an academic setting.

Finally, owing to NMSU’s border/borderlands context, the successful candidate should recognize the importance of understanding and being sensitive to the experiences of historically marginalized populations, particularly people indigenous to New Mexico, and seek to conceptualize intersecting identities that include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, other abilities, age, language, citizenship, immigration status, parental education level, and socio-economic status. Correspondingly, the successful candidate must value Spanish and languages of the Indigenous peoples of New Mexico.

The City of Las Cruces

The community of Las Cruces is well known for its hospitality, its people, and its deep appreciation of a colorful past and enthusiasm for a future rich with possibilities. The geography, climate, demographics, and ambiance combine to offer a truly excellent place to live. Combined with the unsurpassed beauty of sunsets, purple mountains, and a climate that is warm and inviting, Las Cruces offers a very high quality of life.

The City of Las Cruces is the second-largest city in New Mexico, located in Doña Ana County, approximately 45 miles north of El Paso, Texas, and 225 miles south of Albuquerque. Las Cruces is the economic and geographic center of the Mesilla Valley, the agricultural region on the floodplain of the Rio Grande which extends from Hatch to the west side of El Paso, Texas. The Organ Mountains, 10 miles to the east, are dominant in the city’s landscape, along with the Doña Ana Mountains, Robledo Mountains, and Picacho Peak. Las Cruces lies within a short driving distance of the Mexican border at Santa Teresa.

The historic downtown features an open-air plaza with an extensive farmers market where a variety of foods and cultural items can be purchased from local farmers, artists, and craftspeople. Las Cruces features multiple outdoor recreation areas including more than 100 parks covering over 700 acres. Throughout the year residents enjoy festivals celebrating local culture and food as well as local and national historical sites, national monuments, galleries, theaters, museums, and the symphony.
Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications consisting of a CV, a cover letter, and a statement that defines equity, inclusion, and diversity should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: [www.imsearch.com/7588](http://www.imsearch.com/7588). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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