

WNMU Succession Planning Toolkit



Introduction

Western New Mexico University, in alignment with our strategic plan, works to improve quality faculty and staff recruitment and retention with special attention to Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles. WNMU is committed to providing additional professional development opportunities for faculty and staff to be able to achieve professional advancement and satisfaction. Succession Planning not only provides our employees with development opportunities, but also empowers us as an institution to proactively fill significant knowledge and skill gaps in anticipation of retirement or departure of employees in leadership and critical positions.

Succession Planning:

- Provides employees with development and leadership opportunities
- Develops a pool of strong internal candidates who will meet the minimum qualifications when the hiring process begins
- Ensures continuity in meeting business objectives and maintaining departmental competencies
- Builds mentoring relationships

Succession Planning is not:

- Pre-selection of candidates
- Favoritism or disregard for fair hiring practices
- A secretive process

Step 1 - Critical Role Analysis

The first step in the Succession Planning process is to identify critical roles at the university that may become vacant in the future. Determine how the role aligns with the strategic plan, the key competencies required of the position, and the impact of the vacancy on our operations. Review the job description and revise it as needed to align with the strategic plan and current or future operational needs. Reviewing the job description will also help you identify potential successors for the role.

Engage other leaders and employees in this process, to ensure you are identifying critical roles and gaining a full understanding of the competencies required for these positions.

Use the Critical Role Analysis tool to assist you in Step 1.

Critical Role Analysis

Role

Urgency

Impact

Competencies

Step 2 – Talent Assessment

Now that you have a job description and an understanding of the competencies required for the role, you can determine if there are employees who are interested, qualified, or have the potential to qualify for the role if given the opportunity to develop the required competencies.

You should review an employee's most recent resume while considering their potential. Consider their initiative, past performance, skills, and competencies related to the job. Consider their familiarity with the role, WNMU internal processes, policies and procedures, strategic priorities, and culture.

Use the Strengths and Gaps tool to assist you in determining an employee's potential.

Strengths and Gaps

Name

Needs/Gaps (Include competencies, skills, experience, and knowledge)

Recommended Actions (Include the tasks that need to be completed to develop the competencies)

Step 3 – Development Plan

Now that you have identified a potential successor candidate (or candidates) and have gained an understanding of their strengths and gaps in knowledge, skills and competencies, you can create a development plan using the Development Plan tool.

Ask the successor candidate for input on the development plan and ask questions to gain insight about their individual interests and career aspirations. Ideally, the development plan will align with their personal professional development goals.

What do you want to develop?

Competency	Learning Activities
University Knowledge and Awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Committee work <input type="checkbox"/> Job shadowing <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring by a different department leader <input type="checkbox"/> Event participation
Communication Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Toastmasters <input type="checkbox"/> Training courses <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations
Position Expertise	<input type="checkbox"/> Certifications <input type="checkbox"/> Professional organizations/ subscriptions <input type="checkbox"/> Conferences <input type="checkbox"/> Training courses
Leadership Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring by a senior leader <input type="checkbox"/> Training courses <input type="checkbox"/> Lead projects and teams <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership coaching

Transparency is critical at this step in the succession planning process. You should notify other leaders who can provide support and encouragement to the candidate while they progress in their development plan. You should notify members of the department, so they understand why the candidate may be involved in new activities or projects. Provide regular communication that succession planning is not pre-selection for the position, but rather professional development to prepare the candidate to meet the minimum qualifications, so they may apply for the position and potentially be considered.

Development Plan

Competency	Learning Activities	Target Date	Review

Step 4 - Evaluation

Meet with the successor candidate on a regular basis to review their progress and offer continuous feedback and support. The candidate (not the incumbent) should drive the process and take the initiative to complete the development activities. If the chosen successor candidate loses interest or is not making progress on the development plan, you should consider identifying another candidate.

The development plan and the candidate's progress should be evaluated at least every six months and adjusted as needed based on individual and university priorities.