

NMSU uses Web to guide

New Mexico State University has taken another step in its effort to reach out to students and ensure their well-being.

After extensive study and discussion, the university has created a Web-based program titled “Healthy Choices” that has two goals. The first is to help train students on the use of WebCT, a tool used in as many as 2,000 classes at NMSU. The second and possibly more important goal is to provide curriculum that will help guide students in making good decisions.

Introduced this spring as a pilot program in three pre-selected courses, the “Healthy Choices” material is presented as a module that is integrated into an existing course. That may or may not change as the program is tested for effectiveness, said Steve Jeffries, who designed the course with input from Counseling Center Director John Irvine and Police Commander Steve Lopez.

Lopez said it became evident to him in the health classes he taught that students needed preliminary training in the use of WebCT. The idea then was to introduce students to WebCT through the exploration of the healthy choices content, which deals with issues ranging from alcohol use and relationships to safety.

The course has a two-fold benefit. It helps students learn the Web tool without impacting their regular coursework. It also will make students more aware of the risky situations they could confront and helps ensure they deal with those situations in a smart manner. In the long run, this could result in increased student retention.

Still to be decided is the mechanism by which the WebCT course will be delivered campuswide in the fall.

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