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# Web-based program to help freshmen

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## Round up reports

When many students arrive at college, they feel the need to test their new-found freedoms.

However, some incoming freshmen may need guidance decide which new experiences are acceptable and which are detrimental to their future.

A new service that offers New Mexico State University freshmen information about some of the life-changing challenges and choices they may face in college is scheduled to be available as early as the fall semester.

The NMSU Counseling Center and NMSU Police Department have been working with Information and Computer Technologies to create the Web-based Healthy Choices program. Through WebCT, the program is meant to increase students' awareness of alcohol and substance abuse, stalking, abusive relationships and personal safety, said John Irvine, director of the Counseling Center.

NMSU Police commander Stephen Lopez said that while designing the program, developers realized students are in need of a better understanding of WebCT, so Health Choices also will include a tutorial on using the online system.

Irvine said he believes this program will help address many issues. "We want as many students as possible to see it," he said. "The material is meant to get young people to question their decision-making process."

Healthy Choices is being piloted in three classes this semester and will be adjusted according to student input, Irvine said. The program was combined with WebCT in order to ensure that every student will have access to it, according to a University Communications press release.

Developers are considering using the program as part of the admissions, registration and orientation processes for incoming freshmen, according to the press release.

Benjamin Woods, vice president for human and physical resources at NMSU, said, "We wanted a way of touching all incoming students, to say to them, 'You need to make smart lifestyle decisions.'"

Woods said those involved hope to make Healthy Choices relevant and interesting to students and helpful to those who are away from home for the first time.

Woods said if a student rides in a car with a driver who has been drinking, leaves a party with a stranger or parties all night, he or she has made a questionable personal choice.

"NMSU wants to ensure that the potential impacts of those choices are brought home to students so they stay well and graduate," he said.

Irvine said the program creates long-term, visual contact with students and requires interaction, making it different from shorter sessions on lifestyle choices. The program also provides information about other services available to students, according to the press release.

One of those services is Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education, which has most of its content on WebCT. Jessica Adkisson, a member of WAVE, said she feels the program is a good start toward

helping students.

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