

The Renegade Mage's Technomancer Manabelt Universities

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Eastern Arizona University

When the Trinity Event created the Manabelt, the only institution of higher learning in the small slice of Arizona that was raised to high mana was Gila Junior College of Graham County, renamed Eastern Arizona Junior College in 1950. An influx of Federal grant money and researchers in the early 1960s swelled the school, and it was raised by the state legislature first to Eastern Arizona College in 1962, then to Eastern Arizona University in 1966.

Eastern Arizona University is not particularly noteworthy in any academic field (except the Top 25 thaumaturgy program), and the whole county only has a population of 60,000, including the 15,000 students. The stereotype of the student body is that it comprises non-mages with Arizona residency taking advantage of in-state tuition rates to attend a college where they can cast spells. The fairly high rate of students dropping out or transferring after one or two semesters when they discover how much work is involved in mastering a variety of spells is locally known as “The magic wearing off”.

Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (Artesia, New Mexico)

Not a university, but still an important post-secondary educational institution, the Artesia campus of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center occupies the grounds of the defunct College of Artesia, about forty miles south of Roswell and the same north of Carlsbad. It houses the U.S. Border Patrol Academy, the U.S. Indian Police Academy, and the CDC HazMET Academy. It also provides training for other federal, state, local, campus, tribal, and international law enforcement agencies, whether because it's more geographically convenient for the trainees (the other FLETCs are on the East Coast) or for the Opal Valley contractors hired to assist in magical training, particularly of SWAT teams.

Mexican Universities in the Manabelt

The Mexican higher education system can be opaque to foreigners, especially given the overlapping names used. The five major institutions in Ciudad Juárez are as follows:

Instituto Tecnológico de Ciudad Juárez

Established in 1964, this is the local branch of the Mexican public technological institute system. It is considered to have the top applied thaumaturgy program of any public institution in Mexico.

Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey de Ciudad Juárez

This is the local campus of the private Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (often simply called “Tec”), one of the most prestigious universities in Latin America. This campus is considered to have the leading Spanish-language thaumaturgy program (both theoretical and applied) in the world, and one of the top 5 in any language.

Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez

Formed in 1973, this is part of Mexico's national system of public universities. It is the top public university in Ciudad Juárez, and the top public theoretical thaumaturgy program in Mexico.

Universidad Tecnológica de Ciudad Juárez

A school of Mexico's public two-year “technical university” system, opened in 1999.

Universidad Tecnológica de México de Ciudad Juárez

The local campus of the private Universidad Tecnológica de México (“UNITEC”).

Minor New Mexico Public Universities

Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico Highlands University, the New Mexico Institute of Technology, and Western New Mexico University each have approximately 4,000 students. All of these institutions have strong applied thaumaturgy programs, comparable to those at state flagship universities outside the Manabelt, and they charge out-of-state tuition rates to match. This subsidizes newer-and-better facilities than otherwise would be expected at such regional institutions. New Mexico Tech also ranks quite well as a theoretical thaumatology school.

Navajo Technical University

Navajo Technical University, in Crownpoint, New Mexico, began as a technical training center for unemployed members of the Navajo tribe, and it has retained much of that focus. Its two doctoral programs are in thaumaturgy and in Diné (Navajo) culture and language; its masters programs are in those two fields and Management Information Systems. The list of available bachelor, associate, and certificate programs is heavy on hard sciences, engineering, and job skills, and light on the humanities.

The university has an ongoing relationship with Disney Land of Enchantment (popularly known as “Disneyland New Mexico”) to recruit and train tribe members to work in the park. There is an emphasis in this training on applied thaumaturgy, with a particular accent on flashy no-Magery-required spells used by employees to make the experience of the New Mexico park distinctive from other Disney locations.

New Mexico Military Institute

Though *Technomancer* says “it has 1,000 junior and senior high school students”, this was an apparent misedit. The word “college” should be added after “junior”, as the New Mexico Military Institute is jointly a senior high school (grades 9-12) and junior (that is, a two-year) college. All students are members of the corps of cadets; the high school students are Army JROTC, while the college students are Army ROTC. A large majority of the graduates of the college go on to one of the United States service academies, while a distinct but sizable minority join the Army through the Early Commissioning Program as second lieutenants.

New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, has something of a chip on its shoulder. It’s New Mexico’s “second” school, trailing the University of New Mexico in prestige and budget. It’s also the Opal Valley’s “second” school, trailing the University of Texas at El Paso in the same categories. And it doesn’t even get the respect of a true rival; both UNM and UTEP concentrate on each other a lot more than either pays attention to NMSU.

That said, New Mexico State is a fairly well-regarded general university, and it has a top ten reputation in thaumaturgy, both applied and theoretical. In the Opal Valley, a thaumaturgy degree from NMSU will open more doors than one from more nationally-prestigious schools such as Harvard or Yale, if only because it indicates the holder was intently focusing on the study of magic from the beginning.

College Football

Wealthy alumni boosters produced by the UNM, UTEP, and to a lesser degree Eastern Arizona and NMSU thaumaturgy programs have been an enormous help to their football programs. They, along with the Air Force Academy, Boise State, Brigham Young, Colorado State, UNLV, the Space Force Academy, Utah State, and Wyoming, are members of the Mountain States Conference (MSC), one of college football’s so-called “Power Six” conferences.

Except when the College Football Playoff system dictates otherwise, the team that wins the Mountain States championship plays in the Sun Bowl. Tied for the second-oldest bowl game in the country, the Sun Bowl is in El Paso, and has been sponsored for the last four decades by Manadynamics. An original member of the Bowl Alliance and Bowl Championship Series, the Sun Bowl is now one of the prestigious “New Year’s Six” bowl games that host the College Football Playoff semifinals in rotation with the Rose, Orange, Sugar, Cotton, and Peach Bowls.

Rio Grande Pontifical University

Historically, there were two Catholic colleges in the Manabelt, St. Michael's College in Santa Fe, and the College of St. Joseph on the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. In 1966, they each changed names, to the College of Santa Fe and the University of Albuquerque, respectively. Enrollment and financial troubles struck both schools in the 1980s, stemming in part from the expansion of the state's community college system. The attention of the Vatican, a number of American bishops, and the devoutly Catholic owner of a major U.S. pizza chain were drawn to the schools' issues. An agreement was brokered which merged the two schools into the Rio Grande Pontifical University (RGPU), inheriting both campuses and bankrolled by the pizza magnate's fortune and a nationwide fundraising campaign.

RGPU has seven colleges for both undergraduate and graduate studies, located in Santa Fe.

1. Queen of Heaven College of Arts and Sciences
2. St. Albertus Magnus College of Thaumaturgy
3. St. Bede College of History
4. St. Catherine of Alexandria College of Philosophy
5. St. John Baptist de La Salle College of Education
6. St. Raymond of Peñafort College of Canon Law
7. St. Thomas Aquinas College of Theology

It also has two graduate schools, located in Albuquerque.

1. St. Jerome School of Library Science
2. St. Thomas More School of Law

The university's choice to have colleges of history and thaumaturgy separate from the college of arts and sciences was to make an unusual and deliberate emphasis of those fields. The choice to open a school of library science at a time when many major American universities were closing theirs (between 1978 and 1994, sixteen such schools were closed, including the esteemed programs at Columbia and the University of Chicago) was similarly a specific ideological declaration of the value of the field, and the school has not followed the modern trend of relabeling itself an "Information Science" school.

As a pontifical university, RGPU is governed by the 2017 Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (previously by the 1979 *Sapientia Christiana*), with particular regard to the ecclesiastical faculties of canon law, philosophy, and theology. Accordingly, RGPU's rector and the dean of each of those three colleges are appointed by the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education, and every professor in those three colleges has their employment conditioned on a revocable declaration of *nihil obstat* by the Vatican. As an additional rule of the university, a professor who incurs a sentence of excommunication from the Church subsequent to being hired is suspended from teaching until the sentence is lifted. RGPU is, as a result, under censure by the American Association of University Professors for restrictions on academic freedom, tenure, and faculty governance.

RGPU has a student body of 3,000 undergraduates at the Santa Fe campus. It also has 1,000 graduate students, 600 in Santa Fe, 400 in Albuquerque. The Santa Fe campus is over 90% Catholic and has a decidedly conservative student culture; the Albuquerque campus is around two-thirds Catholic and rather more moderate (but certainly not liberal, particularly by American university standards).

Southwest University (at El Paso)

The name of this institution often leads to confusion; there's an unrelated Southwest University in Louisiana, the University of the Southwest in Hobbs, New Mexico (q.v.), and a Southwestern University in the central Texas city of Georgetown. This particular Southwest University is the institution founded in 1999 as the Southwest Career Institute, was renamed Southwest Career College in 2009, and claimed its current name in 2012. It is a fairly typical American for-profit career college, notable mostly for the confusion caused by its name. As is usual for such schools in the Manabelt, it has an extensive applied thaumaturgy program, given the ability of non-mages to learn spells in the high-mana area.

United States Space Force Academy and Space University

The Space Force initially used the Air Force Academy as its military academy and Air University for its professional military education requirements. However, the same substantial differences in operation that led to the separation of the teleport-oriented Space Force from the aircraft-oriented Air Force led to a need for differences in education. The Space Force gradually created its own alternatives to elements of the Air University system at a site east of Alamogordo on the grounds of the White Sands Missile Range and Space Teleportation Center, culminating with the creation of the Space Force Academy in 2019.

As a result of this history, the Space Force is the only branch of the US military that has its officer academy on the same physical campus as its Advanced Warfighting School, Command and Staff College, Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and War College.

University of New Mexico

The University of New Mexico is the foremost of New Mexico's public universities and has the leading Thaumaturgical Sciences program in the world. UNM maintains the Working Handbook of Applied Thaumaturgy, which contains every publicly-known spell in existence, now provided as an online service for a \$50/month subscription. The university is also the host institution for a number of high-energy physics facilities, since nowhere but the Manabelt provides a convenient high-mana zone large enough to host large particle accelerators.

University of the Southwest

Hobbs Baptist College was founded as a private two-year institution in 1956, became the four-year New Mexico Baptist College in 1958, was re-founded as a non-denominational Christian school under the name the College of the Southwest in 1962 and took the name University of the Southwest in 2008. Over time, its student body became dominated by the growing Rachelite movement, initially to the dismay of the university administration. Though still not officially affiliated with the denomination, the now 4,500-student university is often called "the Rachelite BYU", even though only approximately a third of the student body are members of the Church Militant of the Holy Trinity.

University of Texas at El Paso

At the time of the Trinity Event, the College of Mines and Metallurgy of the University of Texas was a rather neglected institution in a minority community on the fringes of the state (El Paso is closer to California than to the state capital of Austin). The change of name in 1949 to Texas Western College ("of the University of Texas") didn't mark a substantial change in its fortunes, but the start of magical research in the early 1960s did – and in particular, doctoral candidate Michael Scott's invention of the Powerstone in 1964. Its 1967 promotion to the "University of Texas at El Paso" by the state legislature was a nod to the transformation of the school's importance rather than an engine of it.

Today, the University of Texas at El Paso is the largest four-year institution in the economically vital Opal Valley, contender for the title of Best University for Thaumaturgy in the world (disputed by the University of New Mexico and the University of California at Berkeley). The money, attention, and prestige drawn by magic and technomagical industry (lead by the El Paso-headquartered Manadynamics, founded by the aforementioned Michael Scott) has been used by the institution to build its other programs up, sufficiently successfully to have UTEP's overall reputation approach that of the flagship University of Texas campus in Austin (to the in-state disgust of partisans of Texas A&M University).