

2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP
2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Day 1 Schedule

Friday, April 17, 2026 | UNM-Gallup Campus

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 8-9 a.m. | Registration & Continental Breakfast | Gurley Hall Commons |
| 9-10 a.m. | Morning Program & Keynote Address (See program details here) | Calvin Hall Auditorium |
| 10-10:15 a.m. | Break | |
| 10:15-11:15 a.m. | Morning Breakout Sessions (See Addendum 1 for session details) | Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC) |
| 11:15-11:30 a.m. | Break | |
| 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Lunch | Gurley Hall Commons |
| 12:30-12:45 p.m. | Break | |
| 12:45-1:45 p.m. | Afternoon Program & Keynote Address (See program details here) | Calvin Hall Auditorium |
| 1:45-2 p.m. | Break | |
| 2-3 p.m. | Early Afternoon Breakout Sessions (See Addendum 2 for session details) | Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC) |
| 3-3:15 p.m. | Break | |
| 3:15-4:15 p.m. | Mid-Afternoon Breakout Sessions (See Addendum 3 for session details) | Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC) |
| 4:15-4:30 p.m. | Break | |
| 4:30-5:30 p.m. | Late Afternoon Breakout Sessions (See Addendum 4 for session details) | Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC) |

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP
2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Day 1 Keynote Program

April 17, 2026 | Calvin Hall Center Auditorium

Friday Morning 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Master of Ceremonies

LD Lovett, Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, UNM-Gallup

Invocation

Joe Kee, Associate Professor, Navajo Language and Culture, UNM-Gallup

Land Acknowledgement

Nia Harrington, Lecturer, EMS I-Best, UNM-Gallup

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Sabrina Ezzell, Chancellor, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Dr. Antoinette Abeyta, Associate Professor, Earth Science, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Address

Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department

Friday Afternoon 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Mistress of Ceremonies

Mona Frazier, Community Activist and Former President of NAACP Gallup Branch

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Donna Lopez, Project Manager, Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE), UNM, Albuquerque, N.M.

Keynote Address

Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President, Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE) UNM, Albuquerque, N.M.

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Patricia Trujillo



Presentation Details

9 a.m. Friday
April 17, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

Solidarity in Action

Lessons from the New Mexico Basic Needs Movement

Speaker Biography

Patricia Trujillo, Ph.D., is the deputy cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department. She is a state leader and advocate focused on expanding access and affordability, advancing social justice, and supporting historically underserved communities in higher education. Dr. Trujillo was on the leadership team that secured tuition-free college and the Higher Education Trust Fund for New Mexico — the most comprehensive college promise program in the United States. Once tuition-free college became law, her work focused on the everyday realities students face beyond tuition — food, housing, mental and behavioral health, transportation, and family responsibilities. She has helped direct over \$5 million toward basic needs supports statewide and built shared infrastructure, including a basic needs survey across 27 institutions and the co-founding of the New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium. A native of the Española Valley, she is a tenured professor, was the founding director of the Office of Equity and Diversity at Northern New Mexico College and is a published scholar.

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Assata Zerai



Presentation Details

12:30 p.m. Friday
April 17, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

Elevating Experiences of Black and Indigenous Students at Hispanic Serving Institutions

Intersectional Identities and Agentic Responses to Structural Constraints

Speaker Biography

Dr. Assata Zerai is vice president and professor of sociology at The University of New Mexico. She also holds the titles of visiting professor in Human and Community Development at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa (2020-2026) and Professor Emerita at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Zerai is a founding member of the Feminist Decoloniality as Care transnational community of practice with colleagues at universities in South Africa and in the U.S. Zerai's strong record of leading, resourcing, and documenting the impact of efforts in the Division for Change and Empowerment have expanded UNM's programming and strategies to enhance institutional climate and inclusive excellence.

Zerai's research deploys decolonial feminist research methodologies to analyze inclusion in complex organizations, access to information and communications technologies, novel contributions of Black women's scholarship globally, and structural impediments to maternal and child health. She has published six books and numerous articles in academic presses spanning these topics. Her latest is, *Black Feminist Interventions to Decolonize the Westernized University* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2025).

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP
2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Day 2 Schedule

Saturday, April 18, 2026 | UNM-Gallup Campus

| TIME | EVENT | LOCATION |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 8-9 a.m. | Registration & Continental Breakfast | Gurley Hall Commons |
| 9-10 a.m. | Morning Program & Keynote Address (See program details here) | Calvin Hall Auditorium |
| 10-10:15 a.m. | Break | |
| 10:15-11:15 a.m. | Morning Breakout Sessions (See Addendum 5 for session details) | Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC) |
| 11:15-11:30 a.m. | Break | |
| 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Lunch | Gurley Hall Commons |
| 12:30-12:45 p.m. | Break | |
| 12:45-1:45 p.m. | Afternoon Program & Keynote Address (See program details here) | Calvin Hall Auditorium |

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP
2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Day 2 Keynote Program

April 18, 2026 | Calvin Hall Center Auditorium

Saturday Morning 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Mistress of Ceremonies

Dr. Aretha Matt, Associate Professor, English, UNM-Gallup

Invocation

The Rev. Dr. Hilary Borbón Smith, Adjunct Faculty, UNM-Gallup, Vicar, Holy Spirit Episcopal, Gallup, N.M.

Land Acknowledgement

Tara Ashley, Student Worker, UNM-Gallup

Welcome Remarks

Professor John Zimmerman, Dean of Instruction, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Markos Chavez, Library Director, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Address

The Honorable Deb Haaland, 54th U.S. Secretary of the Interior

Saturday Afternoon 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Master of Ceremonies

Markos Chavez, Library Director, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Karla Baldonado, Director, Center for Career and Technical Education, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Address

Dr. Eric Romero, Director of Native American Hispano Studies, New Mexico Highlands University, Las Vegas, N.M.

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
Keynote Speaker

The Honorable Deb Haaland



Presentation Details

9 a.m. Saturday
April 18, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

Delivering Solutions for Working Families

How Diverse Experiences Shape the Best Solutions

Speaker Biography

Deb Haaland is a fierce leader — repeatedly breaking down barriers for future generations. A 35th generation New Mexican who organized for President Obama and led the New Mexico State Democratic Party, she made an unprecedented run and win as one of the first Native women to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and then made history when she was appointed to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

In all of her roles, her prolific leadership led to accomplishments that make the lives of working families better. She brings her personal experience as a military kid, a single mom, and a Pueblo woman to stand up for working families, Native and underserved communities, and to address the climate crisis. Now, she's running to be the next governor of New Mexico.

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Eric Romero



Presentation Details

12:30 p.m. Saturday
April 18, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

We Have a Dream

Traditional Wisdom as a Foundation for Moving Forward

Speaker Biography

Dr. Eric Romero is, presently, the Director of Native American/Hispano Cultural Studies and is also faculty in the Department of Languages and Culture at New Mexico Highlands University. He benefits from over 40 years of university teaching and has served in several administrative, research and coordination positions. His academic background are Cultural, Linguistic and Cognitive Anthropology. He has taught in several states and abroad in many different disciplines. He has been involved in the New Mexico Highlands University President's Council for Diversity Equity and Inclusion since its establishment in 2015.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP 2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Keynote Program Participants



Dr. Antoinette Abeyta identifies as Chicana and is from Albuquerque's South Valley. She teaches earth and environmental science at the University of New Mexico-Gallup. The current focus of Abeyta's research is on improving access to STEM educational and research experiences by addressing social, economic, and technological barriers.



Tara Ashley is a human services major, with a focus on family and community education, with a specialized interest in substance abuse and counseling, at The University of New Mexico-Gallup. She is originally from Mexican Springs, N.M. She is Diné of the Tsi'naajinii (Black Streak Wood People) clan and born for the Todil'ozhi (Bitter Sweet Water) clan. Her maternal grandfather is of the Hoaghaahnii (One Who Walks Around) clan, and her paternal grandfather is of the TI'ogi (Zia/Hairy Ones) clan. Ashley serves as a student assistant for UNM-Gallup Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. She is committed to fostering inclusive environments and providing professional support to those in need. Recognized as a 2025 Community Citizens Award recipient by the Ministers Fellowship of Albuquerque & Vicinity, Ashley is a dedicated advocate for local service. Her commitment is further demonstrated through her active volunteerism with the Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial, the Gallup Community Pantry, and various outreach initiatives supporting the unhoused population in Gallup.



Karla Baldonado identifies as Filipino. She was born and raised in Manila, Philippines and has been in the K-12 and higher education industries for over 15 years. She currently serves as the director of the Center for Career and Technical Education at UNM-Gallup. She is also a proud mother.



Markos Chavez, who was born and raised in Gallup, graduated from Gallup High School and went on to earn college degrees from UNM, UNM-Gallup, and the University of Arizona. He plays soccer and currently runs the adult soccer league in Gallup. He is a member of the Gallup Kiwanis Club and a KGLP board member. In his free time he also enjoys attending comic conventions around the state and collecting autographs of celebrities. Currently, he is the director of Zollinger Library at UNM-Gallup. He has a Bachelor of Arts in English, a Master of Arts in secondary education, and a master's in library and information science.



Dr. Sabrina Ezzell is the chancellor at The University of New Mexico-Gallup with over 15 years experience in higher education. She previously taught as a nursing professor and worked in the clinical setting for 30 years. Ezzell has a Doctorate in Education from Creighton University and a Master of Science in nursing with a specialization in public health from Northern Arizona University.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP 2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Keynote Program Participants



Mona Frazier is African American and was raised in Kenner, Louisiana. She moved to Gallup, New Mexico, in December 1988. She is a UNM-Gallup alumni, former president of NAACP, caregiver, member of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Gallup, and a community activist. Frazier is presently on the boards of Boys and Girls Club of Gallup, CrimeStoppers USA, a member of UNM-G Diversity Summit Planning Committee, and Hozho Recovery Center. Feeding the unhoused and community members with food insecurities.



Nia Harrington is a visiting lecturer with a Master of Arts in adult training and education who offers academic support to UNM-Gallup's Emergency Medical Services program. Additionally, they work with the Center for Career Technical Education to educate local high school students interested in health careers.



Joe Kee, associate professor at UNM-Gallup, brings forth his years of experience and knowledge of the Navajo culture, history, and language. He is originally from Steamboat, Arizona. Teaching the Navajo language, culture, and history through lessons, songs, and stories requires a fine balance and understanding of an ever-changing world within the Navajo cultural base. Kee's work as a movie translator with the Navajo-dubbed "Star Wars: Episode IV" in 2013, "Finding Nemo" in 2016, and "Fistful of Dollars" in 2019 enriches his work; revitalizing the language from the past, tying it to the present, and preserving and retaining it for the future generations.



Donna Lopez, project manager with UNM's Division for Change & Empowerment, is a native New Mexican from Albuquerque's South Valley and understands firsthand the challenges faced by students from historically marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities. These lived experiences fuel her commitment to advancing equity in education and advocating for underserved students. She holds bachelor's degrees in sociology and Spanish from The University of New Mexico and a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix.



LD Lovett is the director of Diversity, Cultural Understanding, Inclusive Excellence and Respect for UNM-Gallup. His work experience includes 10 years at UNM-Gallup and over 25 years at the community college, the university, the school district, and the City of Reno. He was honored to be named professor emeritus at Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC). Lovett was honored by the Reno City Council with a proclamation declaring Dec. 12, 2012 as "L.D. Lovett Day." Lovett believes in the dignity of all individuals. He has served as a counselor, instructor, director of counseling, director of financial aid, director of affirmative action, director of multicultural diversification, and an assistant dean of diversity and division chair of business and applied technology, workforce, and adult basic education. He has developed, promoted, and hosted cultural programs, as well as three diversity summits and two workforce summits, diversity workshops, and diversity conferences for college campuses and the local business community. He has conducted focus groups and diversity audits, establishing 5- and 10-year goals, and monitoring results. Lovett's administrative experience demonstrates positive, effective interaction with the college administration, faculty, staff, students, and the local community. Lovett believes that knowledge, understanding, and attitude drive behavior.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP 2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Keynote Program Participants



Dr. Aretha Matt identifies as Charcoal Streaked (Division of the Red Running into Water Clan) and is born for Towering House. She is a citizen of the Diné Nation. Matt teaches academic writing at The University of New Mexico-Gallup. She employs culturally relevant and responsive teaching methods in her writing courses. She writes poetry and short stories.



Dr. Daniel T. Primozic returned to teaching philosophy as a full professor at UNM-Gallup after coming to the branch campus as dean of instruction and completing that contract. He has taught and been a higher education leader for multiple colleges and universities across the nation. He has chosen to finish his lengthy career here at UNM-Gallup.



The Rev. Dr. Hilary Borbón Smith earned her doctorate in history from the University of Virginia. Her dissertation focused on communities and culture in Early Modern England, "Community and Belonging in Early Modern England: Life in the Trent River Valley, 1520 - 1640." Dr. Smith also holds: a master's in divinity from the Virginia Theological Seminary; a Master of Arts from the University of Leicester, UK, in English local history; and a Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of Richmond. She attended the University of Leicester on a Rotary International Ambassadorial Fellowship. As an undergraduate, Smith was in the history honors program at the University of Richmond, graduated summa cum laude, and was a member of a number of leadership groups and honor societies, including Phi Beta Kappa. Smith is an ordained Episcopal Priest and has served in parish ministry for 26 years. Smith began teaching history as an adjunct instructor at UNM-Gallup in January 2026.



John Zimmerman is the Dean of Instruction at UNM-Gallup. Before serving as the Dean, Professor Zimmerman previously served as the chair of the UNM-Gallup Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Division. He has worked at UNM-Gallup since 2006 as an assistant professor, an associate professor, and a professor of fine arts. He was also the director of UNM-Gallup's Ingham Chapman Gallery. Zimmerman holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in ceramics from Bowling Green State University and a Master of Fine Arts with an emphasis in ceramics from San Jose State University. He has an extensive career as an internationally recognized ceramic sculptor, participating in numerous exhibitions across the U.S. and in China, and with work in multiple collections — both public and private.



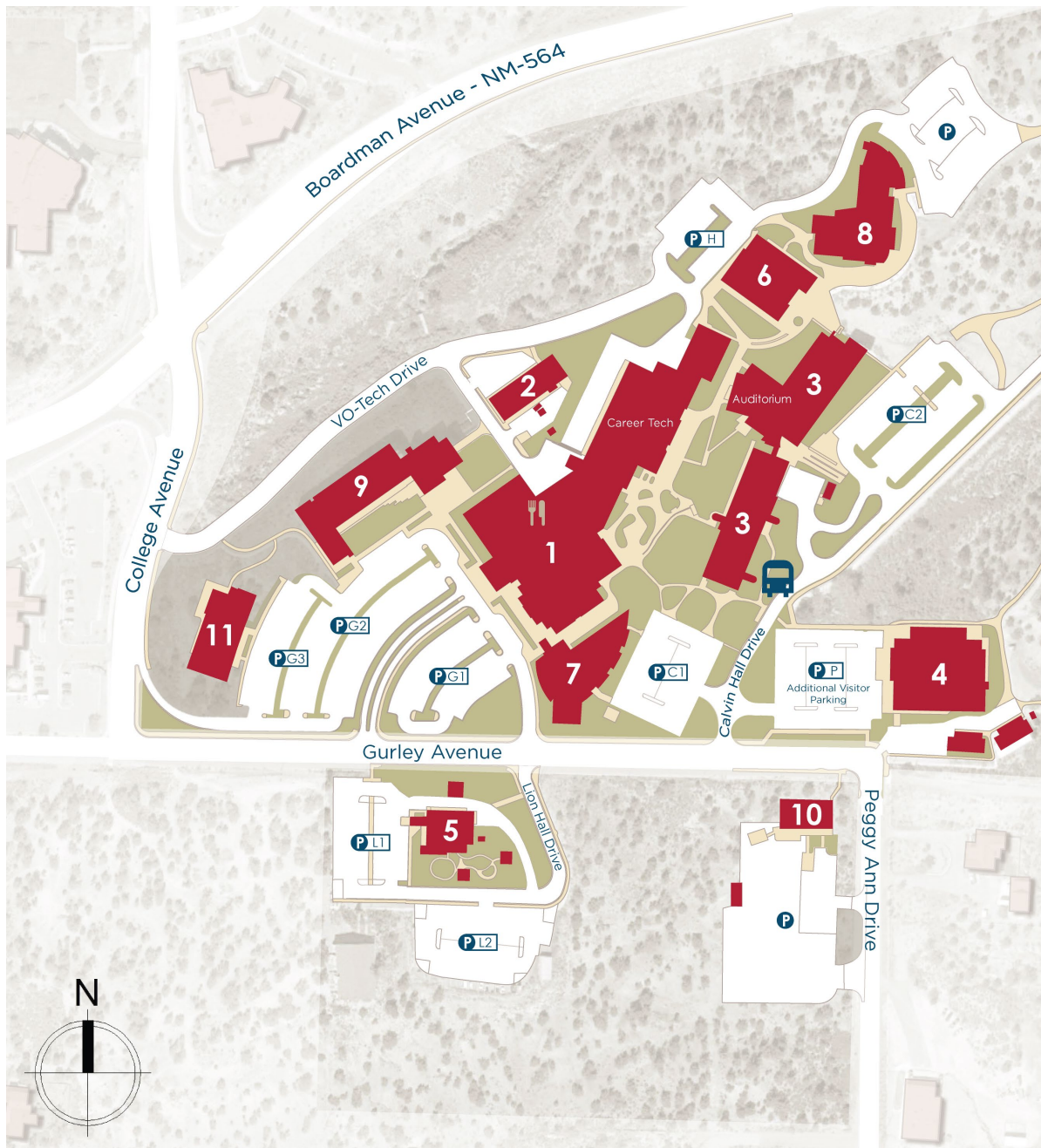
The Art Student Collective (ASC) is a group of students on the UNM-Gallup campus who serve to educate the campus about art through fun activities. The officers are Catalina Tomlinson (president), John Nakai (vice president), Isabelle Silentman (treasurer), and Nola Smith (secretary). The group invited all students, faculty, and staff to draw with chalk images and text that celebrate diversity on the UNM-Gallup campus, particularly on the smooth, light gray cement slabs in front of the SSTC building near the bike racks. This event was held on Wednesday, April 15, and Thursday, April 16, during regular daylight hours. The ASC offers many thanks to the Student Government for providing chalk and to the ASC advisors, Dana Aldis and Kristi Wilson, for their support on this project.

2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

Campus Map

Primary Locations

- **Gurley Hall:** Registration, Breakfast & Lunch in Commons (Building 1)
- **Calvin Hall Center:** Keynote Addresses in Auditorium (Building 3)
- **Student Services & Technology Center (SSTC):** Breakout Sessions in Various Classrooms (Building 9)



2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

Addendum 1: Morning Breakout Sessions

| 10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m. Friday, April 17 Choose a session (A-D) from the options below | | |
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| Session A | SSTC 200 | <p>The State of Immigrant Rights in New Mexico</p> <p>Presenters: Emma O’Sullivan, ACLU of NM; Jessica Martinez, New Mexico Immigrant Law Center</p> <p>Moderators: Daniel T. Primozic, Ph.D, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>This session briefs participants on the current state of immigrant rights in New Mexico and how recent wins are being defended and expanded. We will cover implementation of the Immigrant Safety Act and local noncooperation policies, litigation and advocacy to curb unlawful ICE collaboration, and practical strategies that keep families together, from access-to-counsel and detention-conditions work to rapid-response and community trainings. Using concrete New Mexico examples, we’ll map the 2026 threat landscape, including state and county pressure points, and identify near-term opportunities for coalition action, messaging, and policy fixes.</p> |
| Session B | SSTC 180 | <p>Preserving Our Voice: The Critical Role of Navajo Language Retention and Revitalization</p> <p>Presenters: Joe Kee, UNM- Gallup; & Carolene Whitman, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Moderator(s): Joe Kee, UNM-Gallup; & Carolene Whiteman, UNM - Gallup</p> <p>Type: Paper Presentations Name of Speaker</p> <p>Approaching native language teaching and learning from a Eurocentric viewpoint has serious consequences for students from non-western cultures and languages. Native language communities face an epidemic of language loss as the younger generation speaks English in their daily interactions. Navajo elders are helping to revitalize the ancestral understanding of teaching and learning using language immersion methods using TPR (total physical response). To facilitate the sense of sacredness of the Navajo language and increase language retention, educators must look at the elder’s perspectives and explore with students how their native language enables them to face the challenges in life.</p> |

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| <p>Session C</p> | <p>SSTC 172</p> | <p>Rooting Intellectual Sovereignty in Indigenous Traditional Knowledge</p> <p>Presenters: Kyle Harvey, UNM-Albuquerque; John White, UNM-Albuquerque; & Darrel Watchman, WNMU</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Sarah Llanque-White, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>This panel examines traditional knowledge, intellectual sovereignty, academic freedom, and the distinction between facts and misinformation. By prioritizing Indigenous epistemologies, speakers discuss standardized education through Diné-related cultural mathematics and artistic practices, including weaving, metalwork, and creative writing, as tools for trauma-informed healing and social work. The discussion addresses the legacy of boarding schools, modern issues such as environmental injustice, and violence against women and two-spirited relatives. Through grassroots approaches and traditional ceremonies, the panel advocates for de-anthropocentric relations, asserting that academic freedom must encompass traditional wisdom as a primary source of truth and restorative education.</p> |
| <p>Session D</p> | <p>SSTC 162</p> | <p>Beyond the Ordinary Dual Credit Coursework: Cultural Studies for Historical Literacy and Affirmation</p> <p>Presenters: Dr. Elena Valdez, NMHU; & Adrian Sandoval, NMHU</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Elena Valdez, NMHU</p> <p>Type: Paper Presentations</p> <p>This talk will focus on the rationale and potential for dual credit cultural studies courses in New Mexico’s high schools within our current sociopolitical contexts. Co-presenters will reflect on their own efforts to support historical literacy and affirm student identity in a local high school, what initial steps were taken to create a dual credit cultural studies course offering, and the challenges that presented themselves. Participants will be invited to dialogue with other attendees about the general interest in cultural studies dual credit opportunities in their institutions and surrounding communities.</p> |

2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

Addendum 2: Early Afternoon Breakout Sessions

| 2 p.m.-3 p.m. Friday, April 17 Choose a session (A-E) from the options below | | |
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| Session A | SSTC 200 | <p>Decolonizing and Indigenizing an Educational Leadership Program in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation</p> <p>Presenters: Shawn Secatero, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; Marnita A. Chischilly, UNM-A; & Bernard Chimoni, UNM-A</p> <p>Moderator: Shawn Secatero, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>In this interactive workshop, participants will learn about decolonizing and Indigenizing an educational leadership program entitled, “Promoting our Leadership, Learning, and Empowering our Nations,” (POLLEN) at the University of New Mexico. This successful teacher-to-principal leader pathway program has produced 72 graduates who are educational leaders in Native-serving schools in New Mexico and the Navajo Nation. This workshop will embed spiritual, mental, physical, and social well-being practices in research, service, and teaching by using the Corn Pollen Model (Secatero, 2022). Participants will create a vision statement, a leadership definition, and a life symbol.</p> |
| Session B | SSTC 180 | <p>Creating and Uplifting Queer Networks for staff on Campus through a Queer Center</p> <p>Presenter: Frankie Flores</p> <p>Moderator: Frankie Flores</p> <p>Type: Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>This session will discuss the origins of the UNM Arcoíris Center and our journey over 15 years in fostering relationships amongst Trans and Queer students, staff, faculty, and community. The session hopes to foster a safe-space by asking our allies and advocates to allow Trans and Queer people to be solely in community. We will discuss strategies for outreach, including the evolution of our advisory board. This will lead into a discussion of questions and concerns on attendees campuses. This will lay the foundation of creating networking opportunities for Trans and Queer staff and faculty across New Mexico Higher Education Institutions.</p> |

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| <p>Session C</p> | <p>SSTC 172</p> | <p>Strengthening Culturally Responsive Education Through Local Partnerships</p> <p>Presenter: Priscilla Benally, GMCS Board Vice President; Kevin Mitchell, GMCS Board President; Val Wangler, MD, GMCS Board; Georgianna Desiderio, GMCS Board; & Jvanna Hanks II, Interim Superintendent, GMCS</p> <p>Moderator: Priscilla Benally, GMCS Board of Education</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>The Gallup McKinley County School Board and Superintendent panel proposes to address the critical need for culturally-responsive primary and secondary education, and the inclusion of Indigenous viewpoints, constructs, curriculum and historically-informed perspectives on education. The panel will speak to the importance of learning from educators of a similar background and the impact of grow-your-own and alternative certification pathways on local educator development, recruitment and retention. GMCS and UNM-G share many common priorities, and strengthening collaboration around these components, and others, benefits the educational system of our community as a whole.</p> |
| <p>Session D</p> | <p>SSTC 162</p> | <p>Roanoke Ministries Leadership in the Time of Pandemic: Impact of COVID -19 on the Homeless</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Christopher Dyer, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Christopher Dyer, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>This presentation details the leadership of Roanoke Area Ministries (RAM House) serving the homeless during the COVID -19 Pandemic. RAM House started in 1971 when the local government and area congregations noticed an increase in homelessness in Roanoke, Virginia. Using Roanoke Area Ministries volunteer and client oral history interviews (N=50), five years of quantitative intake data (N= 500,-(2015-2020) we detail the impacts on recent service patterns of the COVID-19 pandemic, including social disruptions of homelessness, food insecurity, and job loss in historic context. Outcomes were provided to RAM House to identify the areas of greatest need, potential adaptive innovations in client services, and proposed post-COVID-19 strategies to increase fundraising efforts for novel programs and services.</p> |

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| <p>Session E</p> | <p>SSTC 108</p> | <p>Separate and Unequal: Student Experiences in Noncredit Postsecondary Education at Santa Fe Community College</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Monique Anair, SFCC</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Monique Anair, SFCC</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>In 2024, New Mexico’s community colleges and branch campuses received \$60 million dollars for noncredit workforce education. Noncredit workforce education can significantly increase students’ earning potential; however, data reveals that when we use the terms workforce training and noncredit education it masks the identity of students who are disproportionately Hispanic, Black, and Native American low-wage workers. New Mexico students navigate separate and unequal systems of postsecondary education, a barrier that is hard to recognize. Using quantitative and qualitative data along with a ten-minute documentary film, this study provides details about noncredit students’ experiences at Santa Fe Community College.</p> |
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2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

Addendum 3: Mid-Afternoon Breakout Sessions

| 3:15 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Friday, April 17 Choose a session (A-E) from the options below | | |
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| Session A | SSTC 200 | <p>Classroom Courage: Sustaining Critical Inquiry in Polarized Times</p> <p>Presenters: Nicole Capehart, UNM-Albuquerque; & Nayer Rimi, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Nicole Capehart, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>This roundtable examines the ethical and pedagogical responsibility of faculty to engage contested topics with integrity. In a climate of academic freedom challenges and rising misinformation, instructors often oscillate between avoidance and engagement. Moving beyond whether these topics belong in the classroom, this session focuses on the mechanics of shared inquiry. Drawing on diverse faculty and student perspectives, participants will develop strategies to foster psychological safety and student belonging, setting the stage for sustained critical inquiry. By balancing First Amendment principles with compassionate instruction, we explore how to counter misinformation and protect academic freedom in a fractured, polarized climate.</p> |
| Session B | SSTC 180 | <p>Academic Freedom in a Platform Economy</p> <p>Presenter: Jennifer Jordan, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Jennifer Jordan, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>Academic freedom is a core value of higher education, yet many faculty teach from materials they cannot revise, remix, or update. This session explores the shifting state of course materials in higher education. Open Educational Resources (OER) allow faculty to align course content with their scholarly and pedagogical expertise, respond to emerging research, and incorporate local and culturally relevant perspectives. In response, commercial publishers have reshaped their business models, potentially narrowing academic freedom.</p> <p>Participants will explore how they can use OER in their courses to support their students, meet their instructional needs, and increase their autonomy.</p> |

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| Session C | SSTC 172 | <p>Bridging Culture, Care, Continuity, and Equity in New Mexico Graduate Nursing Education</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Sarah Llanque-White, UNM-Albuquerque; Dr. Lisa M. Taylor, UNM-Albuquerque; & Dr. Vanessa Tahe, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Aretha Matt, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>In the unique cultural landscape of New Mexico—where the intersections of Indigenous heritage, immigrant experiences, and rural life define our student body—teaching is more than information delivery; it is an act of community engagement. This collaborative presentation brings together diverse faculty perspectives from the UNM College of Nursing to explore how culturally responsive pedagogy serves as a foundation for student success and institutional resilience. The session highlights three distinct but interconnected approaches to inclusive excellence. Dr. Sarah Llanque-White and Dr. Vanessa Tahe share strategies for embedding Native American culture and relevant case studies into nursing curricula. Dr. Lisa Taylor and Dr. Vanessa Tahe lead a critical conversation on academic freedom and preparedness. They advocate for trauma-informed “contingency planning”—such as flexible modalities and deadlines—to support students impacted by social tensions and the current climate of change. By reframing flexibility as a facet of academic freedom and student-centered leadership, this session demonstrates how faculty can maintain high academic standards while remaining fiercely committed to the mission of serving New Mexico’s diverse families.</p> |
| Session D | SSTC 162 | <p>A New Mexican Diversity Committee Work in Contentious Times</p> <p>Presenter: Layla M. Dehaiman, UNM-Albuquerque; Shiv R. Desai, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; Jair Munoz, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; & Jen Stacy, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Michael Dominguez, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>As university faculty at UNM-Main Campus in the COEHS, the Diversity Committee is aware of the need to uplift critical diverse works and disrupt spaces that train individuals who serve the larger NM community. In our work we have developed a series of events that has helped to transform the College into spaces where constant dialogue is happening around the critical topics needed to create a community of educators and providers that understand identity and community-engaged work and research as situated amidst today’s socio-political climate.</p> |

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| Session E | SSTC 108 | <p>Let Freedom Read: Libraries and the First Amendment</p> <p>Presenter: Markos Chavez, UNM-Gallup; Dr. David Cox, NMTU; & Valerie Nye, SFCC</p> <p>Moderator: Markos Chavez, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>This session will discuss the history of libraries and the first amendment. Today, attempts to ban books are being fought by libraries nationwide. Learn how libraries today are fending off first amendment attacks and are continuing to provide free and equitable information to everyone.</p> |
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Addendum 4: Late Afternoon Breakout Sessions

| 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, April 17 Choose a session (A-E) from the options below | | |
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| Session A | SSTC 200 | <p>Beyond Cause of Death: Forensic Pathology and Social Determinants of Death in New Mexico</p> <p>Presenters: Daniel F. Gallego, M.D., UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Daniel F. Gallego, M.D., UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>In this session, Dr. Daniel F. Gallego presents a series of forensic pathology case reviews that move beyond the morgue to illustrate the systemic 'Social Determinants of Death' in New Mexico. While forensic pathology is often viewed strictly through a medicolegal lens, the data gathered from cause and manner of death determinations provides an undeniable, empirical record of structural inequity. Through the presentation of clinical case data—including border-crosser fatalities, substance use trends, and deaths within carceral settings—this session demonstrates how medical findings translate into broader social realities. Attendees will examine how factors such as immigration policy, lack of healthcare access, and systemic neglect manifest physically in the human body. By framing the forensic autopsy as a tool for advocacy and public health, this presentation aligns with the summit's mission of Solidarity and Liberation, offering a data-driven foundation for addressing the disparities that disproportionately affect New Mexico's marginalized and underserved communities.</p> |

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| <p>Session B</p> | <p>SSTC 180</p> | <p>Diversifying Discourses of Immigration: A Perspective from International Faculty</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Cleophas Muneri, UNM-Albuquerque; & Dr. Meshell L. Sturgis, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderators: Dr. Cleophas Muneri & Dr. Meshell L. Sturgis</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>Depending on how “Black” is defined, New Mexico is home to a Black population that includes African Americans and those of the Black diaspora from Africa, the Caribbean, and South America. While these groups have unique histories and cultural experiences they are often viewed and treated as a monolith. The same can be said for discourses that surround immigrant identity in the state. So much discourse around immigration in efforts to align with New Mexico’s position as a border state, might miss the struggles and experiences of other minoritized international faculty. However, in this presentation, one faculty member will add to this conversation by sharing a diasporic conscious perspective about Black life in New Mexico where Black faculty must navigate not only flattened conceptions of what it means to be Black in the United States, but also reductionist ideas of who is considered an immigrant in the United States. This presentation is part of a larger research project entitled Black And... Negotiating the Complexity of Diaspora Community Building that is currently funded by a UNM RAC Grant with (Drs. Cleophas Muneri and Meshell Sturgis as lead PIs on the project).</p> |
| <p>Session C</p> | <p>SSTC 172</p> | <p>Narrative Sovereignty: After centuries of erasure, Indigenous authors still fight censorship</p> <p>Presenter: Deborah Taffa</p> <p>Moderator: Deborah Taffa</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>We need more Indigenous authors and filmmakers. By reclaiming our narrative sovereignty, we ensure authentic representation, define our own depictions, and prevent harmful stereotypes. Stories have power. Stories matter. Yet since the advent of modern media, Indigenous people have been portrayed, almost exclusively, through an outsider’s lens. What issues of censorship and erasure remain in publishing and film? Where are we in our collective struggle today? Some say we are entering a new golden age of Native literature, a second Native Renaissance. Given the statistics, and certain protocols in big publishing houses, how is this assessment problematic?</p> |

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| Session D | SSTC 162 | <p>Humanity Matters: Acknowledging Mrs. Henrietta Lacks and Her HeLa Cells</p> <p>Presenter: Deleso Alford, JD, LLM</p> <p>Moderator: Deleso Alford, JD, LLM</p> <p>Type: Individual Presentation</p> <p>This session will address Professionalism for legal and healthcare professionals by exploring the lived experiences of Mrs. Henrietta Lacks (circa 1951) during the legal dehumanization of black people in Baltimore, Maryland at Johns Hopkins segregated medical wards. Through the utilization of storytelling and story listening, learners will discover that the “arc of justice” bends toward acknowledging that humanity matters. Session goals include demonstrating how cultural humility can positively impact quality health care and dignity for all human subjects.</p> |
| Session E | SSTC 108 | <p>Moving Forward, the New Face of the Trades</p> <p>Presenter: Karen Torres, LCC; Cristino Griego, LCC; Dominic Garcia, LCC; Gene Sandoval, LCC; Tracy Morales, LCC; & Gene Martinez, LCC</p> <p>Moderator: Karen Torres, LCC</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>This session explores the transformative demographic shifts within Career Technical Education (CTE) at Luna Community College, specifically the “New Face of the Trades” in Northern New Mexico. As traditional classrooms evolve, our leadership team has collaborated to foster a unique environment of intergenerational mentorship and gender diversity within historically monolithic programs such as CDL, Welding, Auto Tech, Auto Collision, and Culinary Arts. We will examine how the shop floor becomes a space for “liberatory practice,” where “parent-students,” career-transitioners, and Gen Z learners build solidarity across diverse backgrounds. Participants will gain strategies for supporting non-traditional learners through inclusive technical training that serves as a powerful catalyst for community economic liberation.</p> |

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Addendum 5: Morning Breakout Sessions

| 10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m. Saturday, April 18 Choose a session (A-E) from the options below | | |
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| Session A | SSTC 200 | <p>Becoming a Leader in a System Not Built for You</p> <p>Presenters: Sierra Yazzie Asamoa-Tutu, LCSW; & Fidel Asamoa-Tutu</p> <p>Moderator: Sierra Yazzie Asamoa-Tutu, LCSW</p> <p>Type: Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>We will facilitate a roundtable discussion for students of color and International Students. We will share our personal stories and pose questions for discussion in a casual, Q&A format. Potential topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • systemic racism, • generational patterns, • education as a tool for generational wealth, and • living into your purpose. <p>We will steer discussion towards diverse topics: recognizing the impact of capitalism, colonialism, and binary systems; challenges with western models of academia/learning; and postcolonial identity for people of indigenous ancestry. Our goal is that students will leave feeling validated and encouraged to continue their educational journey in the face of systemic challenges.</p> |
| Session B | SSTC 180 | <p>Leadership for Basic Needs Security</p> <p>Presenter: Dr. Sarita Cargas, UNM-Albuquerque; Dr. Andy Stoker, Central United Methodist Church; & Charlie Doyle, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. Sarita Cargas, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>In New Mexico public colleges and universities, it is likely that thousands of students, faculty and staff struggle with the basic needs of food and housing. Our panel will discuss the need for leadership on our campuses to improve basic needs security for students, faculty, and staff. Needs insecurity is a serious problem on all our campuses especially affecting our minoritized students and low-income faculty and staff. Our panel will share the data and our work from a student perspective, a community pastor, and a faculty researcher. We seek your input on what we can do collectively to be leaders across the state and the nation in addressing basic needs security.</p> |

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| <p>Session C</p> | <p>SSTC 172</p> | <p>Critical AI Literacy Across STEM: Addressing Misinformation and Inequity</p> <p>Presenters: Karla Kingsley, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; Deena Gould, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; Jesus (Jacob) Villa, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque; & Fan Xu, Ph.D, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Fan Xu</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>As generative AI reshapes STEM education, it raises urgent concerns about misinformation, epistemic trust and vigilance, and inequitable access. In teacher education classrooms, educators and students must critically navigate AI-generated inaccuracies, algorithmic bias, and uneven institutional resources. This interdisciplinary panel brings together STEM scholars who are also teacher educators to examine equity-centered and culturally responsive instructional approaches. Panelists will share actionable strategies for teaching students to detect misinformation, evaluate AI outputs, and exercise teacher agency and academic freedom responsibly. Centering student voice, the session explores how New Mexico higher education can address misinformation while advancing educational equity through critical AI literacy.</p> |
| <p>Session D</p> | <p>SSTC 162</p> | <p>Embedding Equity: Using DEI Leadership Workshops to Cultivate Inclusive Praxis in Institutional Thinking and Programming</p> <p>Presenter: Bailey Rutherford, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Moderator: Bailey Rutherford, UNM-Albuquerque</p> <p>Type: Roundtable Discussion</p> <p>DEI workshops are often standalone trainings rather than tools for institutional change because many explore themes rather than practical applications. This roundtable will explore how leadership-focused DEI workshops can embed equity-centered thinking into organizational programming and decision-making. Drawing from experience as a student-leader, this session examines strategies for designing interactive trainings that move beyond awareness towards actionable change. Participants will discuss facilitation approaches that encourage reflection, collaboration, dialogue, and accountability among leaders responsible for campus initiatives. The session will also explore how DEI workshops can shape how leaders plan</p> |

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| <p>Session E</p> | <p>SSTC 108</p> | <p>UNM-Gallup Student Affairs: Promoting Academic Support, Holistic Student Development and Well-Being Through the Lens of Our Diverse Lived Experiences</p> <p>Presenters: Dr. Michelle Lee, UNM-Gallup; Shana Arviso, UNM-Gallup; Kimimila Simms, UNM-Gallup; Deanza Thompson, UNM-Gallup; & Todd Armitstead, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Moderator: Julia Simms, UNM-Gallup</p> <p>Type: Panel Presentation</p> <p>We aim to provide student support that is rooted in the concept of indigenous relationality through the lens of our diverse lived experiences. Our student body represents a majority minority student demographic, and we honor the opportunity to contribute to the academic success of each of our students. Through our own experiences from diverse backgrounds, we can relate to our students and also help them navigate higher education in ways that respect and bridge cross-cultural relationships. This panel of student affairs professionals will share their perspectives on student support through the lens of their own lived experiences and how this inherently translates into student success.</p> |
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Thank you to all the presenters and moderators for participating in The University of New Mexico-Gallup 2026 Statewide Diversity Summit.

Deleso A. Alford: Deleso A. Alford, JD, LL.M. is the UNM HSC of DEI Humanity Matters Visiting Professor. She is referred to as the “Architect of the theory of unjust enrichment, as applied to the immortal cell line of Mrs. Henrietta Lacks.” Her work bridges law, healthcare, and ethics using what she calls “HER stories”—the unique and particularized lived inhumane experiences of marginalized women intersecting with healthcare and research. She earned a B.S., magna cum laude, at Southern Univ. A&M College, a JD at Southern Univ. Law Center, LL.M. at Georgetown Univ. Law Center and Certification in Clin. Bioethics at Medical College of Wisconsin.

Monique Anair: Dr. Anair is the Director of Workforce Development at Santa Fe Community College and an adjunct lecturer at the University of New Mexico. Anair is an accomplished higher education professional with a proven record of intuitive and insightful leadership characterized by over 20 years of academic program development and teaching within New Mexico’s secondary and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE) sector. Her research has been presented at the Association for the Study of Higher Education (2024), Scholars Strategy Network (2025), and Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (2025).

Todd Armitstead: Todd Armitstead is from San Diego, California. He is Yonsei (4th generation) Japanese-American and a first-generation college graduate. He earned a bachelor’s degree at the University of California, Berkeley and a master’s degree at the University of Manchester, both in political science. He spent over 8 years teaching English in Japan, Taiwan, and China before working in student affairs for international students and staff at UC Berkeley. Since May of 2025 he’s been a Student Success Specialist with the NASSC at UNM-Gallup and enjoys using his experience and background to serve and learn from the diverse student population in this region.

Fidel Asamoah-Tutu: Fidel was born and raised in Accra, Ghana. He has a multiethnic heritage with family from both northern and southern Ghana. He immigrated to the US as an international student in 2001. He’s earned an undergraduate degree in Economics and Finance from Calvin University, and a Master’s in Accounting from Grand Valley State University, in Michigan. He built a career as a risk professional - auditor. He is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA). He is a Vice President, Audit Manager for U.S. Bank and enjoys working remotely from his home office. He relocated from Minneapolis to Gallup in 2020 with his wife Sierra and their children to be closer to her family. He keeps ties to his family and Ghanaian culture, and regularly visits home with his family.

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Priscilla Benally: Priscilla Benally (Dine) is the Executive Director of the Thoreau Community Center (TCC) in Thoreau, New Mexico. She is a proud mother of four children and Nana to two beautiful granddaughters, all proud products of Gallup-McKinley County Schools (GMCS). Ms. Benally identifies advocating for children and for the youth in her community as one of the most rewarding journeys of her life. Also a UNM graduate, Ms. Benally has dedicated herself to supporting youth and remaining actively involved in community leadership. As Executive Director of TCC, her work has focused on saving young lives, providing critical intervention, and supporting youth who are contemplating suicide. Ms. Benally has been the District 3 GMCS Board Member for over 12 years, also serving as the Region 1 President and representative to the national Johnson-O'Malley Board of Directors. Ms. Benally strongly believes that our communities need leaders who come from within and that our children deserve to see leaders who reflect their experiences, understand their challenges, and inspire them to believe in their own potential.

Nicole Capehart: Nicole Capehart is a full-time lecturer at the Anderson School of Management at the University of New Mexico, where she teaches Human Resources, Leadership, and Organizational Behavior. Since 2016, she has focused on creating inclusive classrooms where students feel respected and challenged. Her pedagogy emphasizes a growth mindset, psychological safety, and practices that cultivate belonging across differences. Nicole is particularly interested in helping students engage complex ethical issues with empathy and intellectual rigor, including the responsible use of emerging technologies such as AI. She maintains a current SHRM certification focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Sarita Cargas: Dr. Sarita Cargas, Associate Professor of Human Rights UNM Albuquerque and Director of the NM Basic Needs Consortium

Bernard Chimoni: Bernard Chimoni is a citizen of the A:shiwi Nation, from the Pueblo of Zuni and represents the Eagle and Deer clans. He has dedicated his teaching career to improving education outcomes for Indigenous students and is an advocate for bilingual and multi-cultural education. He is a life-long teacher educator and leader with 30-plus years of experience. He has served as a bilingual teacher, Zuni language and cultural teacher, and school administrator. His work is driven by a genuine desire to promote the well-being and success of Indigenous communities, with a focus on the best interests of Indigenous youth in recruiting and empowering future generations of teachers. Bernard is a cohort member of the Native American Leadership in Education (NALE) in UNM's College of Education, Teacher Education Educational Leadership Policy (TEELP) program and is currently a doctoral (EdD) candidate. When he is not teaching and researching, Bernard enjoys all genres of music and plays guitar, harmonicas, flutes, and sings.

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Marnita A. Chischilly: Marnita A. Chischilly, M.Ed. (Diné) is from Church Rock, New Mexico. She is from the Bitter Water clan (Tódich'ii'nii) born into the Mexican clan (Naakai dine'e); her maternal grandfather's clan is Zuni people (Naasht'ezhi dine'e), and paternal grandfather's clan is Towering House (Kinyaa'aanii). She earned her degree in elementary education and a master's in educational leadership from the University of New Mexico. She chose to enter the field of education because she believes it is one of the most important professions in any culture. She has more than thirty years of experience in education and is currently a middle school math teacher and a school leader at a Native-serving school. Her role as a teacher and school leader inspires Indigenous youth in her community to pursue their dreams; she supports their educational journeys and provides high-quality education for student academic success. She believes that Indigenous leaders play an essential role in advocating for changes in educational systems to better serve Native students in the future. Ms. Chischilly is currently pursuing a doctoral degree through UNM's Promoting Our Leadership, Learning and Empowering Our Nations (POLLEN) program.

David Elmer Cox: Dr. David Cox is in his ninth year of service as the Director of the Joseph R Skeen Library at New Mexico Tech, Socorro, NM. He has worked at NMT since June 2017. David has served as President of the New Mexico Library Association (2019-2020) and the New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries (2022-2023). His chief professional interests include: Emphatic Library Design; Improvement of Services for Neurodivergent Patrons; Literacy and the First Amendment; the pedagogical application of Generative AI in Higher Education; and Academic Library Sustainability. David is devoted to the leadership of academic libraries through a collaborative team management approach. David believes in this method of creating a living library, addressing the needs and success of students in STE2M research and application.

Layla M. Dehaiman: Layla M. Dehaiman currently serves as a Special Education Lecturer at the University of New Mexico. Layla has mentored and coached pre-service and early-career teachers, developed curriculum for teacher residency and certification pathways, and facilitated professional development focused on inclusive practices and culturally responsive teaching. She has supported and implemented restorative practices, social emotional learning, mindfulness, and other holistic approaches to behavioral support in schools for over 15 years.

Shiv R. Desai: Shiv R. Desai, PhD is an associate professor in the Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, and Policy (TEELP) Department at the University of New Mexico. His research focuses on ethnic studies, juvenile justice, hip-hop pedagogies and decolonizing methodologies.

Georgianna Desiderio: Georgianna Desiderio (Diné) is a new GMCS Board member, representing District 2. Ms. Desiderio is a lifelong Gallup resident who has served in a number of public capacities. Ms. Desiderio is deeply committed to the success of every GMCS student.

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Michael Dominguez: Michael Dominguez, PhD

Charlie Doyle: Charlie Doyle, UNM Student

Christopher L. Dyer: Dr. Christopher L. Dyer is an applied anthropologist, Fellow of the Society for Applied Anthropology, and has over 30 years of experience in social science research in 21 countries. Research funding has included sources such as USAID, NSF Polar Research Board, NSF Centers of Excellence Initiative, John D. and Catherine T McArthur Foundation, School for Field Research: Earth Watch, Economic Development Administration, NMFS, MARFIN, Natural Hazards Center, and the Organization of American States. He has 18 years administrative experience in higher education as a Dean of Academic Affairs (Missouri State), Dean of Strategic Initiatives (School for Field Studies), Dean of Arts and Sciences (University of Mount Olive), and CEO of the Gallup Campus. Community groups. Populations he has worked with include Navajo Nation, Zuni Pueblo tribal council, and civil servants including city planners, EMS personnel, first responders, the Eyak Village (Valdez Oil Spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska) and others. Ongoing research partners include the UNM Grand Challenge, George Mason University for Social Complexity, Navajo Nation, and Natural Hazards Center.

Frankie Flores: Frankie Flores (They|Elle) oversees the UNM Arcoiris Center. Frankie started as a student volunteer 15 years ago and has grown into leading the Center. Formerly the LGBTQ Resource Center, the AC is housed under the Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE).

Daniel F. Gallego: Daniel F. Gallego, M.D. is a Forensic Pathologist and Assistant Professor of Pathology at the University of New Mexico and the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator. His work focuses on determining the cause and manner of death for the State of New Mexico, with a particular interest in identifying social determinants of health and structural inequities. Dr. Gallego's expertise includes the investigation of border-crosser deaths, substance use fatalities, and deaths occurring in policing and carceral settings. He is actively involved in resident education, research, and statewide efforts to address health disparities affecting marginalized and underserved communities.

Dominic Garcia: Dominic Garcia serves as the Auto Collision Technology Instructor at Luna Community College. He focuses on creating an inclusive shop culture that attracts a diverse range of students, including women and non-binary individuals entering the collision repair industry. Dominic works alongside the CTE team to bridge the gap between traditional craftsmanship and modern technology. His instruction emphasizes hands-on mastery and professional safety standards, fostering a mentorship ecosystem where students of all ages and backgrounds collaborate on refinishing and structural projects to prepare for competitive workforce entry.

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Deena Gould: Deena Gould, PhD is an assistant professor of science education in the department of Teacher Education and Educational Leadership & Policy at UNM. She partners with children, youth, teachers, and communities on the design and research of STEM education programs. Her background includes STEM programs for K-12, teacher education, community-based STEM initiatives, and conducting research on STEM education. Her research focuses on serving youth and community interests instead of STEM pipeline interests.

Cristino Griego: Cristino Griego is a Culinary Arts Instructor at Luna Community College, dedicated to fostering intergenerational mentorship in the kitchen. By integrating traditional Northern New Mexico culinary heritage with modern professional standards, Cristino creates a collaborative environment where "parent-students" and younger learners master high-demand industry skills together. His work focuses on providing a diverse student population with the technical foundations and certifications necessary for success in the hospitality sector, ensuring that culinary education serves as a stable pathway toward economic mobility and community sustainability.

Jvanna L. Hanks II: Jvanna L. Hanks II is the Interim Superintendent of Gallup-McKinley County Schools, bringing more than 22 years of progressively responsible public-school leadership to one of New Mexico's largest and most culturally diverse districts. Recognizing the rich diversity of GMCS students and staff, Hanks continues to work to strengthen GMCS's Navajo Language and Culture program and to build school systems that support the whole child. A recognized advocate for equitable school finance, Hanks played a key role in legislative and legal efforts that corrected Impact Aid crediting and helped secure increased funding statewide through the Yazzie/Martinez education case.

Kyle Harvey: Kyle is Diné and is from Ts'idiilysiitah (Rabbitbrush, Arizona). He is Tłogí, and born for Kinłichiinii. Kyle is a PhD student in the Native American Studies program. He is currently the Student and Graduate Services Coordinator for the Native American Studies Department at UNM main campus. His research interests include gender-based topics and higher education.

Jennifer Jordan: Jennifer Jordan is the Open Educational Resources (OER) Librarian in the University Libraries at the University of New Mexico. She is also an assistant professor at UNM and a writer. Currently, she is the principal investigator on a grant program funded by the Department of Education to develop an OER Consortium in the state of New Mexico. Before working at UNM, Jennifer developed strong experience with creating and adopting OER, including serving as a Presidential Fellow for OER at Central New Mexico Community College, where she co-created the English department's open-source textbooks.

Karla Kingsley: Karla Kingsley, PhD is an Associate Professor of Educational Technology in the department of Teacher Education, Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of New Mexico. She teaches and conducts research on the effective integration of digital media and instructional technology in K-20 settings. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in technology, media literacy education, game based learning, and STEM/STEAM. Her research explores equity, access and social justice issues related to teacher preparation and educator professional development in the digital age.

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Michelle Lee: Dr. Michelle L. Lee (Dine’) is Kinyaa’áani from Rock Springs, New Mexico. She received her Associate’s degree at the University of New Mexico – Gallup. This is where she began her journey into the world of academia as a first-generation college student. Since then, she has earned her Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctoral degrees and continues to be a practitioner in the field of educational leadership. She is currently working as the Director of Admissions and Advisement, where she feels that her greatest strength as a student support professional is her ability to relate to the students on a personal level. She states, “I find that my own personal experiences and challenges help me to support and provide guidance to our students more effectively. I am every student that walks through my door.”

Sarah Llanque-White: Sarah is an Aymara Indian whose paternal family hails from a Village on Lake Titicaca (Bolivia/Peru) called Socca. Her maternal family is from the Philippines. She is currently on the Advisory Board for Navajo Technical University’s Nursing program. She also keeps a clinical practice for same-day and primary care appointments at Albuquerque Indian Health Center. Currently, she is an Associate Professor-Clinician Educator at UNM College of Nursing.

Gene Martinez: Gene Martinez serves as the Lead Welding Instructor at Luna Community College, where he plays a pivotal role in the Náásgóó (Moving Forward) initiative. With a focus on structural mastery and industry-standard precision, Gene fosters an inclusive shop environment that bridges the gap between traditional craftsmanship and modern technology. He is a dedicated mentor to a diverse student body, guiding intergenerational learners and non-traditional students—including a growing number of women in the trades.

Jessica Inez Martínez: Jessica Inez Martínez, Esq., is an immigration attorney and policy advocate who serves as Director of Policy and Coalition Building at the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center. Her work focuses on supporting immigrant children and families, particularly those eligible for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS). She has contributed to efforts that helped pass New Mexico laws such as the Special Immigrant Juvenile Classification Act (HB 15, 2023) and the Immigrant Safety Act (HB 9, 2026), aimed at expanding protections and limiting immigration detention. Through legal advocacy, coalition leadership, and statewide implementation efforts, Martínez works to advance systemic change, centering community partnerships, racial justice, and creative approaches such as activism (art through activism) to strengthen immigrant rights.

Kevin Mitchell: Kevin Mitchell (Dine) currently serves as the GMCS Board President and has been a GMCS Board Member for more than a decade. He is a proud small business owner, a lifelong advocate for local academic excellence, and a youth mentor, dedicated to the diverse student population served by GMCS.

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Tracy Morales: Tracy Morales is the CDL Instructor at Luna Community College, leading one of the most vital workforce pathways in rural New Mexico. Tracy is committed to diversifying the trucking industry by fostering an inclusive training environment for women and non-traditional drivers. Through a combination of rigorous safety training and hands-on driving experience, Tracy helps students of all ages navigate the complexities of the commercial transportation industry. His collaborative approach ensures that the CDL program serves as a rapid, high-impact tool for community economic revitalization and individual career success.

Cleophas Muneri: Dr. Cleophas Muneri is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism here at UNM. He teaches media and critical cultural communication courses by combining his background in media and journalism to explore how media constitute and reconstitute cultural identities in the struggle for democracy. In examining citizens' responses to globalization and the resultant disenfranchisement, his research focuses on social movements' contribution to democratization and how civil society groups/organizations engage with various media forms including digital media to organize, mobilize and broaden democratic engagement in countries still grappling with the legacies of colonialism.

Jair Munoz: Jair Munoz, PhD was recently hired at Lecturer III for both TEELP & LLSS. With the culmination of more than fourteen years in education; six in k-12, and more than nine in higher education. Dr. Munoz has worked in a wide variety of departments and capacities in disciplines ranging from Literacy/Biliteracy, Rhetoric and Writing Studies, AI, faculty development, disciplinary education, Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, Reading, English, and Bilingual Education. Dr. Munoz has also worked in Student Affairs where he worked in campus advocacy, educational trainings, coordinator, and presenter in areas relating to student advocacy and sexual violence.

Valerie Nye: Valerie Nye is the Library Director at Santa Fe Community College and has worked in libraries in New Mexico for more than 20 years. She holds an MLIS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and recently completed the American Library Association's (ALA) Law 4 Librarians training. Valerie currently serves as Advocacy Chair for the Mountain Plains Library Association and has edited two collections of stories published by ALA documenting librarians' experiences responding to First Amendment issues and challenges to library materials.

Emma O'Sullivan: Emma O'Sullivan is an Immigrant Rights Staff Attorney with the ACLU of New Mexico. Her work focuses on immigration detention, ICE enforcement, border policy, and other issues implicating civil rights for immigrants. Emma has spent the past 10 years as a public interest attorney working with immigrants across New Mexico. Previously, she represented hundreds of clients in a wide variety of immigration matters at Contigo Immigrant Justice. She also worked at the New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty, focusing on workers' rights. Emma is from Tomé, NM and received her BA and JD at the University of New Mexico.

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Nayyer Rimi: Nayyer Rimi is a Project Management graduate student at the University of New Mexico. Originally from Dhaka, Bangladesh, she brings a multicultural perspective to her work and a passion for cross-cultural learning. As Lab Coordinator at UNM's Anderson Behavioral Lab, she supports faculty research, oversees study coordination, and trains student researchers in ethical practices. Her background in Management Information Systems and project management shapes her commitment to collaboration and inclusive academic environments. Driven by curiosity and a lifelong commitment to learning, Rimi also enjoys travel and cooking in her pursuit of global perspectives.

Bailey Rutherford: Bailey Rutherford serves as the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Associated Students at the University of New Mexico, where they design DEI workshops aimed at equipping student-leaders with equity-centered approaches to leadership. As a queer Chicax and rising educational equity scholar, their work centers culturally rooted practices and education as liberation. They hope to transform student experiences by critically examining curriculum, centering students' lived experiences, and fostering spaces that value community and belonging. Growing up in rural, southeastern New Mexico, Bailey witnessed the need for creating equitable and inclusive learning environments so all students can succeed.

Adrian Sandoval: Adrian is an experienced educator, professional learning provider, and leader with 30-plus years of experience. He has served as a program coordinator, interim district-level director, and state-level administrator. Adrian currently is the director of the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations at New Mexico Highlands University. He believes in the importance of creating strong family and community partnerships with K-12 public schools and supporting youth leadership in ways that recognize students' cultural and linguistic assets. Outside of NMHU, Adrian is a member of the NM Biliiteracy Panel and the Transform Education New Mexico steering team.

Gene Sandavol: Gene Sandoval is the Automotive Technology Instructor at Luna Community College, where he specializes in preparing a diverse student body for the evolving landscape of automotive repair. Gene creates a supportive, high-tech learning environment where intergenerational students work side-by-side on everything from internal combustion engines to electric vehicle assembly. By focusing on industry-standard diagnostics and certifications, he ensures that his students—regardless of gender or age—graduate with the technical proficiency and "Skills & Solutions" needed to thrive in the modern, green-energy automotive economy.

Shawn Secatero: Shawn Secatero, Ph.D. is a member of the Canoncito Band of Navajo and serves as an Associate Professor in the UNM Teacher Education, Educational Leadership program. His research concentrates on holistic learning, Indigenous leadership, dual enrollment, rural education, and higher education. Dr. Secatero has 30 years of teaching experience in state and tribally controlled schools that includes the Gates Millennium Scholars Program, Canoncito School to Work Program, NMSU Grants Native American Program and other Native American leadership initiatives. He has published and presented research on his highly acclaimed Corn Pollen Model that has inspired organizations, students, and schools in promoting research, service, and teaching.

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Julia Simms: Julia Simms is a Caseworker for the Native American Student Success Center at the UNM-Gallup Branch. She is an enrolled member of the Sicangu Rosebud Sioux Tribe, born and raised in Vanderwagen, New Mexico. Julia is passionate about Indigenous rights, education, and mental health. She studied at Northern Arizona University for psychological sciences and a minor in criminology with the goal of bringing mental health awareness and resources back to the Gallup and broader Indigenous communities. Julia aspires to build a career in psychology, empowering Indigenous students to pursue their education and achieve their goals.

Kimimila Simms: Kimimila Simms is an enrolled member of the Sicangu Rosebud Sioux Tribe, born and raised in Rosebud, South Dakota. The daughter of a boarding school survivor and a non-native Army veteran, Kimimila grew up navigating the complexities of a mixed-race identity, neither fully fitting into Native spaces nor non-Native ones, a challenge that shaped her deep empathy and commitment to belonging. A current graduate student in the OILS program at UNM, she serves as Program Director of TRIO/SSS and oversees the Center for Academic Learning (CAL). With over 20 years of experience supporting first-generation, adult, rural, and Native American students, she is dedicated to breaking down barriers and empowering students to achieve their academic goals through holistic support and cultural awareness. Kimimila is a proud Lakota woman and mother of two whose life's work is rooted in uplifting every student she serves.

Jen Stacy: Jen Stacy, PhD is an assistant professor of Family and Child Studies at the University of New Mexico. Her research critically examines schools' perceptions of multilingual families and how these perceptions influence in/formal outreach and teaching. She is interested in how educators learn about family-school relations and how critical praxis in teacher education can support pre- and in-service teachers' development of equitable, culturally sustaining approaches to family-school relationships. Jen teaches classes in early childhood education focused on various aspects of family, culture, language, and literacies.

Andy Stoker: Dr. Andy Stoker, Pastor of Central United Methodist Church, Community Outreach Dir, NM Basic Needs

Dr. Andy Stoker: Andy Stoker is the senior pastor at Central United Methodist Church in Albuquerque.

Meshell L. Sturgis: Dr. Meshell L. Sturgis conducts a fun mixture of critical cultural media studies and community engaged research using research creation methods. She received her B.A. in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2013, and her M.A. in Cultural Studies from the University of Washington, Bothell and recently completed her Ph.D. in Communication at the University of Washington, Seattle in 2024. As her dissertation explored the political aesthetics of Black Girl Magic and self-representation in alternative media, Black feminism and Queer theorizing are central to her work, which you can find published in the Journal for Women's Studies in Communication, QED, Somatechnics, Lateral, and Souls. Her critical arts writing practice has led to publications in Art Practical, A Year in Black Art, and the Journal of African Art. She also has a background in trainings about power, privilege, and difference geared toward intergenerational audiences in the public and private sectors.

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Deborah Taffa: Deborah Taffa is the director of the MFA program at the IAIA. Her memoir *Whiskey Tender* was a finalist for the 2024 National Book Award and longlisted for the 2025 Carnegie Medal of Excellence in Nonfiction. Named a Top 10 book of the year by *The Atlantic* and *Time Magazine*, *Whiskey Tender* won a 2024 Southwest Book Prize, a 2025 International Latino Book Award, and the 2026 LULAC Book Award. A 2024 NEA fellow and 2022 winner of the PEN/Jean Stein Grant, Deborah grew up in Farmington, NM. She is a citizen of the Yuma Nation and Laguna Pueblo.

Vanessa Tahe: Dr. Vanessa Tahe (Diné [Navajo] Nation; Salt People, born for Bitter Water People) is an Assistant Professor at the UNM College of Nursing and one of only two Indigenous faculty members in the program. A practicing pediatric nurse practitioner, she integrates lived experience and clinical expertise to serve underserved communities. Her work focuses on Indigenous health, cultural humility, and social determinants of health, with a dedicated mission to prepare future nurse leaders to advance health equity across diverse populations.

Lisa M. Taylor: Dr. Lisa M. Taylor is a first-generation graduate and one of two Black faculty with University of New Mexico- College of Nursing (UNM CoN). She is the inaugural Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the CoN, and teaches in the nurse practitioner/leadership programs at the CoN. She is deeply interested in leadership pathways, particularly for people from marginalized/minoritized communities.

Deanza Thompson: Deanza Thompson (Dine') is born of the Zia Pueblo and into the Water Edge Clan. She grew up in Mexican Springs, NM and is a proud mother of 4 (3 girls, 1 boy), ages 15-27. She is a first-generation college student who received her Associate's degree at the University of New Mexico-Gallup. She is employed at UNM Gallup as a Financial Aid Officer for the past 11 years; through her job she was able to continue her educational journey earning her Bachelor's and Master's degree while working full-time. She is very passionate about her job and helping students obtain higher education through guidance in FAFSA and financial aid. She values each student and thinks of each student as her own children as they navigate college.

Karen Torres: Karen Torres leads the CTE and Workforce Development department at Luna Community College, where she works with her team to create inclusive economic pathways for a diverse rural student body. Her collaborative leadership focuses on removing barriers within the trades—specifically CDL, Welding, Culinary Arts, Auto Tech, and Auto Collision—to ensure these programs reflect the community's diversity. Specializing in high-demand, short-term credentials, Karen and her team have successfully implemented certifications like Water Distribution Level I and are currently launching OSHA 10 and 30 training to provide students with immediate, tangible professional value.

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Elena Valdez: Elena is an interdisciplinary teacher-scholar with expertise in Mexican American literature and print culture. Since earning a PhD in English from Rice University, she has worked in education and government in various capacities, serving as a librarian, an administrator for the New Mexico Public Education Department, and a high school social studies teacher. She is now the assistant director of the Center for the Education and Study of Diverse Populations at New Mexico Highlands University, where she co-designs professional learning for K-12 teachers, supports youth leadership development, and offers policy counsel. Her professional trajectory has been shaped by her commitment to place, community, and culturally sustaining education.

Jesus (Jacob) Villa: Jesus (Jacob) Villa, PhD is a Lecturer III in Science Education at The University of New Mexico's College of Education and Human Sciences. His research examines equity in STEM education, outdoor learning programs, and bilingual education. He is committed to preparing pre-service teachers to work with diverse student populations and has presented on culturally sustaining pedagogy, teacher preparation, and STEM outreach.

Val Wangler: Val Wangler, MD, is a local family physician and founding Executive Director at Gallup Community Health (GCH), which strives to make excellent primary care accessible to all. Dr. Wangler is a recently elected GMCS Board member and mom to two young GMCS students. A McKinley County resident since 2010, Dr. Wangler lived and worked in the Pueblo of Zuni before transitioning to the Chief Medical Officer position at Rehoboth Hospital and then starting GCH. Dr. Wangler believes that education reflective of and responsive to culture improves outcomes as well as educational experience, that public education is a major driver of equity in our society, and that every child should receive the education and support they need to thrive.

Darrel Watchman: Darrel is a proud member of the Diné Nation, residing in Tsayatoh, New Mexico. He is Tábaqhá (Waters Edge Clan), and born for Tsi' naajinii (Black Streak People Clan). Darrel honorably served as a United States Marine and is an Iraq War Veteran. Darrel earned his Associate of Arts in Social Work from the University of New Mexico (Gallup Campus) and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Social Work at Western New Mexico University. His research interests focus on the intersection of healing and mental well-being with Indigenous art forms, including creative writing, small metal works, weaving, and traditional feather fan-making.

John White: John (Diné) is a Navajo Nation citizen and a PhD student at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, enrolled in Language, Literacy, and Social Studies in the College of Education and Human Sciences. He also serves as a Graduate Assistant for the Native Curriculum Partnership Program. His research focuses on bilingual education, particularly on mathematics related to Diné (Navajo) culture. John holds a B.A. and a master's in architecture, with three years of experience at an architectural firm. He has taught introductory mathematics and architecture at UNM Gallup and has worked as a Math & Science Education Specialist.

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Carolene Whitman: Shí ei Dr. Carolene Whitman dashiji ní. Honágháahnii (One Who Walks Around Another Clan) nish'í Tsi'naajínii (Dark Streak of the Wood Clan) ei báshíshchín. Tódík'ózhi (Sour Water Clan) ei dashicheii doo Náneesht'ézhí-Náádáá ątsoii Dine'e (Zuni-Yellow Corn Clan) dashinálí. My name is Dr. Carolene Whitman. I grew up in the small community of Springstead, New Mexico, located approximately fifteen miles east-north of Gallup. I received my Doctorate in Philosophy in Language, Literacy and Sociocultural Studies from the College of Education at the University of New Mexico. Currently, I am an Adjunct Professor teaching Navajo I and Introduction to Native American Studies.

Sierra Yazzie Asamoa-Tutu: Sierra Yazzie Asamoa-Tutu, is a mother, clinical social worker, and city councilor. She was born and raised in Gallup and left New Mexico to pursue higher education, earning a BA in Global and Intercultural Studies from Calvin University and later a Master of Social Work from St. Thomas University & University of St. Catherine in St. Paul, MN. She returned to Gallup in 2020 to practice as a mental health therapist specializing in trauma care, and now acts as remote supervisor for a holistic recovery program for mental health and substance dependence called TribaLights. Sierra was recently elected to public office as a city councilor for the City of Gallup and is enjoying this new arena of service to her home community.

Fan Xu: Fan Xu, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Educational Technology in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of New Mexico. Her research focuses on AI literacy, computational thinking, and learning design. She is committed to conducting community-engaged, impactful research that supports the development of critical AI capabilities among pre-service and in-service teachers.

2026 Statewide Diversity Summit Hotel Accommodations

The following hotels are offering UNM rates for Diversity Summit participants:

1. Hilton Garden Inn Gallup

1530 W. Maloney Ave,
Gallup, NM 87301

Rate: \$154.00 before taxes per night.

Rate Code: [UNMEDU]

Option 1

You may book online using the direct booking link below:

Link: <https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=GUPGIGI&numAdults=1&numChildren=0&numRooms=1&srpCodes=UNMEDU>

Option 2

You may call the hotel directly at [505-722-9600](tel:505-722-9600), dial zero to be transferred to the front desk, and reference the negotiated rate code listed above.

2. The Comfort Suites

3940 E. Highway 66
Gallup, New Mexico 87301
[505-863-1227](tel:505-863-1227)

Hotel Website: <https://www.visitgallup.com/directory/comfort-suites/>

You can call the hotel directly and reference the Diversity Summit to access the special rate of \$89 plus tax for a single king or double queen room for April 17-18, 2026.

You may mention the Diversity Summit when calling to make your reservation or show the event poster upon arrival to receive the special rate.

3. Best Western Plus Gallup Inn & Suites

910 E. Aztec Avenue,
Gallup, NM 87301
[505-726-5380](tel:505-726-5380)
[1-800-780-7234](tel:1-800-780-7234)

Best Western Plus will provide the government rate of \$126.85 a night for standard king and double queen.

Hotel Accommodations continued on next page...

4. Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Gallup

Address: 3510 E Historic Hwy 66, Gallup, NM 87301

Phone: [\(505\) 863-0900](tel:5058630900)

UNM Diversity Summit Gallup 2026

Start Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026

End Date: Sunday, April 19, 2026

Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Gallup for 104.00 USD per night

[Book your group rate for UNM Diversity Summit Gallup 2026](#)

If you call, use the code: UNM Diversity Summit

5. Springhill Suites

1105 W Lincoln Ave

Gallup, NM 87301

Phone: [505-726-9940](tel:5057269940)

Rates:

April 16-17 King Suite \$127.00

2026 Statewide Diversity Summit

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