Dean’s Column
Welcome to the College of Education

Welcome to the first edition of the College of Education newsletter, Core of Knowledge. This publication represents the first of many innovations that will be implemented over the next few years as we begin a process of re-imagining new possibilities for our college. As we do this, we will be guided by our new core values:

**Excellence/Excelencia** Striving towards excellence in our research, teaching and service as our discipline specific standards rise along with new academic expectations.

**Integrity/Integridad** Exhibit ethical behavior and accountability in our actions while at the same time demonstrating respect in the absence of agreement.

**Diversity/Diversidad** Make inclusivity a distinct and foundational pillar of our college in word, deed and behavior.

**Transparency/Transparencia** Embrace a shared process of communication, providing rationale and clarity as important decisions are made that affect our college.

**Leadership/Liderazgo** Embrace a leadership and management style in which we are humble in our disposition, but ambitious for our college.

**Innovation/Innovación** Engage in the continuous process of discovery in our respective fields so that what we provide our students is cutting edge.

In order for us as a community to live up to these expectations, we need you as collaborators in this process. I ask that you, from time to time, provide us with your feedback and suggestions that will encourage and support us in our educational endeavors so that we can give the very best to future generations of students in the College of Education.

I welcome your participation and conversations as we strive for distinction and impact in education both locally and nationally. Please feel free to send me an email at the address below with your ideas.

Sincerely,

Don Pope-Davis, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education
education@nmsu.edu

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Educator, and civil rights activist speak at 2016 Don & Sarrah Kidd Literacy Conference

The College of Education hosted the Don & Sarrah Kidd Conference (pictured below) this spring. Pictured top (from left): Anita Hernandez, the Don and Sarrah Kidd Endowed Chair in Literacy; author Denise Chavez; associate professor Jeanette Haynes Writer; Kelley Coffeen, assistant dean for advancement; and Dean Donald Pope-Davis. Pictured bottom (from left): civil rights activist Sylvia Mendez, Dion Kidd Johnson and educator Vivian Maria Vasquez.

Vasquez, professor of education at American University in Washington, D.C., and Mendez, whose parents filed the landmark 1946 court case of Mendez v. Westminster, et. al., spoke to hundreds of attendees, including teachers from Las Cruces Public Schools and the Gadsden Independent School District and students from NMSU and Doña Ana Community College. Attendees also browsed exhibits and attended workshops.
Alum Profile

NMSU College of Education Distinguished Alumna gives children a voice

Amy Heil, a New Mexico State University alumna and a forensic interviewer for Phoenix Children’s Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona, is the recipient of the 2016 NMSU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award for the College of Education.

Heil received bachelor’s degrees in criminal justice and psychology from NMSU in 1996, and her specialist degree in school psychology through the College of Education’s Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology in 2008.

As a forensic interviewer, Heil has the difficult job of interviewing children who are victims of or witnesses to a possible crime. Heil said although her job is tough, she finds it incredibly rewarding.

Her first introduction to forensic interviewing was while working at the Doña Ana County District Attorney’s Office in 1998. At the time, she worked in the juvenile unit, helping develop and run a program for first-time, low-risk juveniles who needed to get through the juvenile justice system quickly so they could get the services they needed. Prosecutors handling the juvenile cases asked Heil if she could review videotaped forensic interviews of children. That experience has evolved into a career in forensic interviewing, which gives a voice to children who are victims of horrific crimes.

“The prosecutors asked me to start assisting them by watching these videos, taking notes and just helping them so they could look over the notes and see what was said during the interviews, then they would go on and make their decisions on whether a case was going to be filed or not,” Heil said. “That was my first introduction to forensic interviewing and I loved it. I thought it was really fascinating and really interesting.”

Since completing her education at NMSU, Heil has returned to campus to speak at undergraduate criminal justice and psychology classes about victimology. She has also spoken at conferences and has testified as an expert witness in Arizona, where she’s also a trainer for law enforcement and child welfare investigators. She also has experience as a school psychologist at schools in Las Cruces and Gilbert, Arizona.

Besides helping child victims find justice, Heil has other causes that are near and dear to her heart. As a huge believer in animal therapy, Heil supports organizations that train and provide therapy animals.

“I’ve seen the wonders those animals can provide to either children who have had trauma or with disabilities,” Heil said. “It’s amazing the power of an animal. We have therapy dogs who will go into the forensic interview room and just be there. The kids will sometimes pet them or just lay on them. Just having that dog as a presence is amazing.”

Heil attributes her successful career to her education at NMSU, saying it has had a “huge impact.”

“When I started college in 1991 I thought I knew what I wanted to do. It’s obviously changed throughout the years, but at the core it’s stayed the same,” Heil said. “It’s afforded me the opportunity to find my path and blend all of my interests into a desired outcome.”

And as an alumna, Heil found a support network waiting for her after moving from Las Cruces to Arizona in 2009.

“I’m still good friends with people who I met 20 years ago,” Heil said. “You just have those connections. Even now, I have my degrees hanging on the wall in my office. Every once in a while, I’ll have someone walk by and ask, ‘Are you an Aggie?’”
Doctoral student, professor to present at instructional leadership conference

Ana Lopez, a doctoral student in the Special Education and Communication Disorders department in New Mexico State University’s College of Education, will attend a prestigious leadership conference Oct. 27-28 in San Antonio alongside her mentor, SPED/CD professor Loretta Salas.

The Collaborative Educational Programs for the Americas Consortium is hosting the annual leadership conference with the theme, “Leadership: Growing the next generation of global partners.” Lopez and Salas were invited to submit a proposal to attend, and after their proposal was accepted, they received an email sent directly by conference director Fred Rodriguez.

Lopez, who received her bachelor’s degree in education from Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez (Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez), is enrolled in the NMSU College of Education’s Special Education doctoral program with a concentration in bilingual/multicultural special education. While studying in Juarez, she worked with visually impaired students and their families, which inspired her research in multicultural special education and how it intersects with families along the U.S./Mexico border.

“I’m interested in topics related to the border and special education issues involving families,” Lopez said. “When I worked with families with kids with visual impairments in my undergraduate program in Mexico, I started seeing all the needs these people had, and the anxiety of the parents, especially those in the working class or who live in poverty.”

At the CEPA conference, Lopez and Salas will present their research on the resilience of Mexican mothers of children with disabilities, and the challenges and obstacles they face during their search for a better life and education for their children.

“It’s no coincidence to me that these families and these mothers want to come across the border to get services for their kids,” Salas said. “They want their kids to have a chance and have an opportunity.”

Lopez graduated from NMSU with a master’s degree in special education in May, but decided to pursue her doctoral degree from NMSU to continue her work with Salas. After graduating from Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez two years ago, Lopez visited NMSU knowing only she wanted to pursue her studies in special education, but wasn’t sure what direction she wanted to take. After meeting with Salas and other faculty members, Lopez knew she wanted to attend NMSU.

“I didn’t have to think about it,” Lopez said. “I saw the research and what was available to me, the opportunities here. It was a good fit for me.”

Enedina Vazquez, associate dean

Student success is our business

The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs office has many responsibilities, but at the core are our students.

As associate dean of academic affairs, my main consideration is to make sure that we have signature programs to offer students and help them achieve their goals. It is essential that our office work closely with departments, and particularly faculty, to make sure that students are progressing through their programs successfully. This can take many different forms, from making sure that program handbooks are updated and clear, to helping students navigate their world when challenges are presented.

Our office has a strong commitment to excellence. As part of this commitment, we engage in assessment and accreditation processes that grant us the seal of approval. We are very proud that we have held our national accreditations for many years. The College of Education holds nine national accreditations, including from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Excellence goes beyond accreditations, and making sure our faculty has the support they need to do what they can to help our students is essential. As a result, we have expanded our mentoring program for new faculty to include their first three years. The expansion will bring new ideas to build community among our newest faculty members, keeping them connected to each other and the college. By investing in our faculty, students are the recipients of our faculty’s success.

Scholarships are another important component of what we do to help our students. In fall 2015 we awarded $120,000 to College of Education students and we are committed to helping raise more funds to exceed past levels of awards.

A new initiative that we will implement in the fall is our CLASS dialogs. For our inaugural Collaborative Learning and Student Success dialogs we will be inviting our recent teacher education graduates to talk about their experiences in the schools and how the College of Education can provide additional support. We are very excited about our new initiative and following a successful first CLASS; we hope to build on it in the future.

I invite you personally to visit with us. We want to get to know you and let you know of the great things the College of Education has to offer! My door is always open.
Honored Faculty

KARIN WIBURG, co-director of the College of Education’s Institute for Equity in Mathematics and Science Education at NMSU and a distinguished faculty member in Curriculum and Instruction, was selected to receive the Distinguished Career Award for the 16th annual University Research Council Award for Exceptional Achievements in Creative Scholarly Activity. Wiburg received the award during fall convocation in August.

Wiburg was also invited to speak at the TEDxABQ Education 2016 event in March. The event focused on access, fairness, responsiveness, justice and equity, and discussed how to honor the rich multicultural assets of New Mexico and families to provide greater equity in education.

EVE ADAMS, professor in the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department, received a $900,000 grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration for her project, “Graduate Psychology Education Program: Integrated Primary Care Behavioral Health Training on the U.S.-Mexico Border.”

Adams said the overall goal of the project is to increase the number of trainees in counseling psychology who have been taught how to engage in interprofessional collaboration with mental health counseling, nursing, social work, pharmacy and family medicine trainees in order to provide culturally sensitive, integrative primary care services in a medically underserved community. The expansion will include a pre-doctoral intern in addition to six counseling psychology doctoral students in an academic program per year, for a total of 21 counseling psychology trainees.

“When Man Meets Dog,” a book authored by CHRISTOPHER BLAZINA, psychologist and research professor in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, has been recognized with the National Indie Excellence Book Award in the Men’s Health category.

“Men and Their Dogs: A New Understanding of Man’s Best Friend,” co-edited with Lori Kogan of Colorado State University. It’s the first academic book to focus research on the bond between men and dogs in terms of their positive impact across varying contexts and across the life span from boyhood to old age.

SRIKANTA MISHRA, an assistant professor in the New Mexico State University College of Education’s Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders, has received a prestigious research grant to study hearing mechanisms in children.

The R03 grant from the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders of the National Institutes of Health is the college's first NIH grant, which is known to be highly competitive and supports outstanding research. It provides a total amount of $438,000 for three years. The project will investigate auditory mechanisms in children, particularly how the descending hearing pathway works in children.

HENRIETTA WILLIAMS PICHON, an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Administration, has been chosen as the Donald C. Roush Excellence in Teaching Award recipient for the College of Education. The accolade is named after Roush, a former NMSU executive vice president, in recognition of his 35 years of teaching improvement in New Mexico.

Pichon also won the Distinguished Faculty award during the Teaching Academy Gala last fall. Her teaching focus is higher education administration, and her research focus is the access and persistence of historically underrepresented groups in higher education.

As a faculty member in ELA, she has focused her professional development time on events that will make her a better teacher, scholar and university citizen.

The STEM Outreach Center, under the direction of SUSAN BROWN, recently received a nearly $12 million grant to fund after school STEM programs in the Las Cruces, Hatch and Gadsden school districts.

The grant was awarded by the New Mexico Public Education Department’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program to implement programs in schools in the Gadsden Independent School District, Hatch Valley Public Schools and Las Cruces Public Schools. The grant provides $2.6 million to NMSU annually for the next four years, allowing the STEM Outreach Center to provide its programming to qualifying elementary schools in each district. Hatch Valley Public Schools received a $433,147 sub-award from NMPED, of which $125,000 will go to the STEM Outreach Center to pay for after school programs in Hatch.

Brown, who was recently named the College of Education interim associate dean of research, said that with the recently awarded funds, the STEM Outreach Center will serve more than 11,000 children a year in southern New Mexico.
The College of Education is committed to providing educational opportunities for those who have typically not had access and to its core values of excellence, integrity, diversity, transparency, leadership and innovation. The college is also dedicated to providing excellent educational opportunities for traditional students and partnering with schools to enhance the education of New Mexico’s children.

- **80** regular tenure and tenure track faculty members
- **46%** faculty diversity, with **32%** Hispanic representation
- **50%** undergraduate student diversity
- More than **2,600** students
- Approximately **1,700** undergraduate students
- Approximately **900** graduate students
- **30+** active research grants
- **80** part-time and temporary faculty members
**Dean’s fellows learn effective leadership**

Two New Mexico State University professors – Debra Knapp and Nicholas Natividad – are the first to be selected to participate in the Dean’s Fellowship, established by College of Education Dean Donald Pope-Davis.

Debra Knapp served as NMSU’s director of dance from 2001-2015. She is a certified teacher in the Evans’ Dance Pedagogy Method, and has danced professionally with several national and international dance companies.

“It is an honor to be selected to be a Dean’s Fellow. I am looking forward for the opportunity to be mentored by Dean Pope-Davis and seeing how I can contribute and enhance my artistic and leadership skills,” Knapp said.

Knapp has choreographed more than 60 dances and produced 40 dance concerts as director of the NMSU dance program. She hosted the American College Dance Festival Association South-Central Region’s conference in 2011, the National Dance Association’s pedagogy conference in 2010, and the National Association of Ballet Folklorico Conference in 2007, along with several summer dance festivals. Knapp has also been a keynote speaker at conferences and festivals in the U.S., China and Mexico.

Knapp received the National Dance Association’s 2012 University Dance Educator and 2013 Scholar/Artist awards; the Donald C. Roush award for teaching excellence; and the Research Council’s award for creative scholarly activity. She received the NMSU College of Education Dean’s Excellence Award in Service, Leadership and Teaching. She also received the Doña Ana Art Council’s Art-in-Education Award, and is a New Mexico Kennedy Center artist.

Nicholas Natividad is an assistant professor of criminal justice at NMSU’s College of Arts & Sciences. Natividad received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in New York, and earned his doctorate at Arizona State University. He is a native of El Paso and is sixth generation from the Las Cruces, El Paso and Juarez region.

In 2015, he was nominated and selected to be a Leadership Fellow in the New Leadership Academy at the University of Michigan. He serves as the director of the New Mexico Leadership Institute at NMSU.

“The Dean’s Fellowship is an incredible opportunity to be exposed to everyday leadership decisions that take place in higher education administration,” Natividad said.

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**Susan Brown, associate dean**

**Research key to increasing college’s national reputation**

As the interim associate dean of research for the College of Education, I look forward to working with faculty and staff to increase the number of grant proposals that are submitted and awarded, and bringing an awareness to the many ways the Educational Research and Budget Office can help.

ERB staff has the responsibility of assisting college faculty and staff with pre- and post-award work, as well as approving new hires, reimbursements and purchase order documents. We are a land-grant institution dedicated to serving the community, and the College of Education fulfills this obligation with its many outreach programs across New Mexico. These programs are excellent but also require a solid research and evaluation component to increase funding and contributions to the national educational knowledge base.

The NMSU Advancement office has given each college the opportunity to join a new foundation directory called Foundation Search. We are taking advantage of this opportunity to provide this premier, fully searchable online database of foundations. There are more than 100,000 U.S. foundations listed, and I am sure that we will be able to match faculty research interests to a foundation with similar funding interests.

As the fall semester starts, I will be meeting with individuals to learn more about this and to match specific interests to funding opportunities. Over the last 17 years, I have had success funding our STEM Outreach Center programs with the help of national foundations such as Tommy Hilfiger, Toyota USA, American Honda, Quest, Hunt and Engineering Information.

We will also work with national resources such as the U.S. Department of Education, National Science Foundation, Institute of Education Sciences and others to find funding sources that will give our faculty and staff the support they need to continue their research. I am willing to help prepare funding proposals by finding a request for proposal that fits the person’s interest; brainstorming ideas; obtaining letters of support; editing and writing; and providing other assistance as needed.

As always, my door is open and I welcome your visit so that we can work together and make a difference in the lives of students, families, educators and administrators in our state, as well as improving our national presence.
NMSU alumni provide essential services to children, adults with disabilities

Eleven years ago, three graduates of the New Mexico State University College of Education’s Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders saw a need in the local community for services for children with developmental disabilities.

Over the years, the Aprendamos Intervention Team – founded by Abel Covarrubias, Bryan Tierney and Danny Palma – has developed into a group that has not only had a statewide impact, but is starting to develop a national impact to share their best practices in serving infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities. Covarrubias was recently selected to participate in the Zero to Three Fellowship Program sponsored by the Zero to Three National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. The program is a prestigious fellowship that engages, enriches and inspires leaders who are dedicated to advancing the health, development and well-being of infants and toddlers.

Aprendamos is one of three New Mexico Infant Toddler Programs in Doña Ana County that provide a number of therapy and support services for infants and toddlers up to age 3. Currently, Aprendamos serves about 900 families in Doña Ana County, and has about 130 staff members. The success of Aprendamos led to the creation of Direct Therapy Services, a separate company. Palma is director of Direct Therapy Services, and Tierney is a partner for both Aprendamos and Direct Therapy Services, which provides services for developmentally disabled adults.

Covarrubias, Tierney and Palma, along with former NMSU faculty member Connie Stout and College of Education professor emeritus Stephen Farmer, founded the annual Tri-Unity Conference to provide education and professional development opportunities to professionals in the region. The group also created the Tri-Unity endowment, which is funded by the proceeds from the annual conference. In the last few years, the Tri-Unity Conference committee has generated about $35,000 in contributions to the Tri-Unity endowment, which is used to benefit the Special Education and Communication Disorders department at NMSU.

“We saw it as beneficial to both the university and the community. It helps increase the quality of training for medical professionals and provides training opportunities for students,” Palma said of Tri-Unity Conference. “It’s a win-win for everybody.”

Covarrubias said that his education at NMSU has enabled him to serve his community through projects such as the Tri-Unity Conference, Hearts for Autism Camp and New Amigos, and his continued collaboration with the College of Education and the Department of Social Work in the College of Health and Social Services.

“I feel NMSU provides an environment and space for students to allow them to establish amazing relationships with their fellow students and professors,” Covarrubias said. “It is an institution that truly believes in empowering its students and provides them with the necessary tools to become excellent employees and make a difference in their communities. I am an example of this.”

What’s new?
Honors? New Job? New address? New spouse? New baby? Please keep us informed of your news so we can tell other alumni through Core of Knowledge. Return this form or submit news online at eduevents@nmsu.edu

Name ___________________________ Degree(s), years(s) ___________________________

(Please include former name used in school)

Title ___________________________ Employer ___________________________

Home address ___________________________ Work address ___________________________

Email ___________________________ Phone (home/cell) ___________________________

News

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