

Detailed history of

The University of New Mexico Honors Program and College

(compiled by Rosalie C. Otero)

The University of New Mexico Honors Program was founded in 1957 by Professor Dudley Wynn as part of a national movement in American Higher Education. Inspired, in part, by the tutorial system established in the 1800s at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, the American Honors movement began in the 1920s in Eastern private colleges. Many honors programs began after World War II when a surge of highly qualified students seeking higher education exceeded the capacities of private universities. Honors programs began in public universities around the beginning of the second half of the 20th century.

The University of New Mexico General Honors Program was founded with a \$30,000 grant from the Carnegie Corp. of New York. Dudley Wynn, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and one of the leaders of the National Collegiate Honors Council movement at the time, started the program with 30 students. The program was integrated permanently into the University in 1961. The Honors Program stressed intensive individual study on the part of students combined with personable interaction with faculty members, such as small seminar-styled classes, mentoring, and academic apprenticeship. The objective has been to cultivate a more enriched experience.

The Honors Program began in a Quonset Hut on campus.



However, it was quickly moved to a first-floor room in Zimmerman Library.



On April 12, 1988, the University of New Mexico Regents formally designated the west wing ground floor of the Humanities Building the Dudley Wynn Honors Center. In doing so, the University acknowledged the pioneering efforts of Professor Wynn, who, as Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences, drafted plans for a sequence of small seminars in general studies to be called the General Honors Program.



The mission of the UNM Honors Program and the Honors College has been to provide challenging opportunities for intensive, interdisciplinary, and cross-cultural liberal arts education to highly motivated, talented, and creative undergraduates in all majors and to build a community of scholars. The mission has been modified, expanded, and revised over the years to adapt to the changing standards for honors education and shifting demographics, social and technological advances, economic, cultural, environmental, political influences, and trends locally and globally. The unique grading

system, A, CR, NC, is designed to allow students to take academic risks and try new, challenging fields of study without risking their GPA.

The structure of the Honors Program/College provides academic and social opportunities and reflects the full diversity of the campus and region. The Honors Program at UNM has served as a model and inspiration for many programs across the country. Four of UNM's five directors, Dudley Wynn, John Howarth, Robert O. Evans, Rosalie C. Otero, and Dean Greg Lanier, have served as President of the National Collegiate Honors Council. Dr. Otero also served twice as President of the Western Regional Honors Council. That UNM should have played a role in setting the standards for honors education in the United States is a testament to the University of New Mexico's innovative and historic commitment to undergraduate excellence.

Despite New Mexico's relative financial disadvantages, the UNM honors ideal has given some of our best students world-class opportunities that compare favorably with those offered by prestigious and wealthier universities. Since 1998, for example, UNM Honors students have won 2 Rhodes Scholarships, 4 Marshalls, 15 Trumans, 14 Goldwaters, 14 Udalls, 1 Gates Cambridge, 8 Fulbrights, 3 Churchills, and 10 Phi Kappa Phi Fellowships, competing successfully with peers from the best schools in the nation. Dr. Diane Rawls, an Instructor in the Honors Program, administered the various scholarship programs. In 2009, Kiyoko Simmons was appointed Director of the Center of Academic Excellence, Leadership, and Development, responsible for administering multiple scholarship programs. That office was incorporated into the new Honors College in 2013. In addition, Honors graduates have been accepted to prestigious graduate and professional programs at schools such as Harvard, Brown, Yale, Princeton, Michigan, Stanford, Washington University in St. Louis, UT Austin, and Johns Hopkins.

Enhanced visibility is one reason to shift from a program to a college. However, the College's primary goals remain the same as those of the Honors Program. They include the following:

- To create lifelong learners.
- To develop people able to integrate knowledge from different sources.
- To create students who can adapt to new environments.
- To develop active participants in a democratic society.
- To develop professional skills.
- To broaden understanding and the interconnectedness of academic disciplines.

In addition, since 1982, Honors has offered various field-based courses. Conexiones, the name of the field-based course centered primarily in Latin America, was established by Dr. Michael Thomas (Honors) and Professor Enrique LaMadrid (Spanish). Conexiones gives students the opportunity to study Spanish language and culture as well as other relevant fields in Mexico, Spain, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. Other

Place as Text © programs have transpired in Argentina, Australia, the United Kingdom, and India, as well as locations in New Mexico.

In 1986, the Honors Program launched the *UNM Honors Review*, a literary and art magazine, a high-quality publication of art and literature. In 1988, the Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) agreed to co-sponsor the magazine. **In 1994**, the staff changed the name of the magazine to *Scribendi*. The new title reflected the magazine on many levels; it is the written word. Produced entirely by Honors students and led by a faculty advisor, *Scribendi* publishes creative works by undergraduate honors students in member schools from the WRHC's 13-state region. The National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) students were included in 2016. The magazine is organized around two honors courses that provide students with practical hands-on experience in proofreading, copyediting, typography, magazine design and layout, fundraising, marketing, and the process of producing such a publication. Under the successful leadership of Amaris Ketcham, faculty advisor, *Scribendi* won the 2006, 2013, and 2022 National Magazine Pacemaker Awards.

In 1989, the Board of Regents established the UNM Regents Scholars Scholarship. The scholarship covers tuition and fees, room and board, books, and other educational materials. Apart from its financial benefits, the scholarship offers access to a variety of academic and research opportunities as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities through UNM's Honors Program/College. Dr. Diane Rawls was appointed the Director of the Regents Scholarship Program. In 2012, Dr. Leslie Donovan became the Director of the RSP. As a merit-based undergraduate scholarship, the Regents Scholars Scholarship is awarded annually through a competitive application process. The minimum cumulative high school GPA to be considered for the scholarship is 3.90. Approximately 10-15 scholarships are awarded each year out of hundreds of applicants. In addition, students enjoy group activities and develop leadership skills by representing UNM at various community and university functions. They are also encouraged to engage in service activities within the UNM community and beyond.

Also in 1989, historic Hokona Hall (which had opened in 1956), one of UNM's architectural treasures and landmarks, was designated the resident hall for Regents and Presidential Scholars. Dubbed "Scholars Wing," the new fifty-person unit offered increased advisement, video and computer facilities, and academic and cultural programming. Dr. Michael Thomas, Lecturer in General Honors, was appointed to coordinate academic and cultural activities in Scholars Wing and to foster extended living/learning opportunities. Since Dr. Thomas's retirement in 2016, Dr. Christopher Holden, Associate Professor in the Honors College, has served in this role. The modern renovations, charming courtyards, and the newly furnished retro-style lounge made it

an ideal Scholars Community, a special option for Honors College students or those awarded academic scholarships.

In 1990, the Honors Student Association was established. It is a supportive and welcoming organization where Honors students can connect in a relaxed environment. HSA supports the growth and well-being of honors students. Members meet once a week to connect with each other and plan activities for the Honors community. HSA has assisted with Senior Day, Preview Night, Honors Freshman Orientation, the annual Halloween Event, movie nights, and many more community-building activities.

In 1991, UNM President Richard Peck singled out Honors in his inaugural address as an area that should be strengthened to help ensure that the quality of undergraduate education at the University be recognized as among the best in the Southwest by the year 2000. In recognition of the importance of Honors to this goal, the President also announced the creation of the Garrey Carruthers Chair in Honors, endowed through the generous gift of \$1 million by the Burlington Resources Foundation.

In 1992, the Carruthers Chair started with Cornel West (Princeton), Johnella E. Butler (UC Berkeley), and David Scott Palmer (Boston University).



After that, the Honors Program has had many visiting scholars from varied fields and institutions, including Pat Mora, Sam Schuman, Bernice Braid, Lloyd Jeffrey Dumas, and Peter Shive.

In 1992, the Senior Options required of students to graduate from the UNM Honors Program were extended, each with six hours of credit. The seniors could now choose a Colloquium with a service-learning component, student co-teaching with an honors faculty member, or an extensive research project/thesis.

Throughout the early part of its history, the Honors Program was staffed with one tenured faculty member from a department to serve as the Director and several contingent, non-tenure track instructors.

In 1995, the UNM Honors Program initiated a process for the promotion and tenure of its full-time faculty. Dr. Rosalie Otero was the first faculty member in both the UNM Honors Program and in honors programs across the country to be promoted to Associate Professor and tenured in honors rather than in a traditional academic field. The Honors Program was allotted a fixed number of slots for professors on the tenure track with clear roles in shared governance and access to research or professional activity support. They are responsible for providing continuity for various ongoing UNM honors programs.

Other full-time faculty appointments in UNM honors are teaching-intensive, and, depending on their experience and college degrees, these faculty are given the rank of Instructor I, II, or III. Currently, there are 10 tenured and tenure-track professors, 4 lecturers, 7 part-time faculty members, 4 staff members, and one Scholarship, Outreach Manager.

In 1998, the program's name was changed from the General Honors Program to the University Honors Program (UHP) to reflect more precisely the nature of the program.

In May 2000, the UHP relocated to a renovated space on the ground floor of the Student Health Center.



Appropriately, the name “Dudley Wynn Honors Center” relocated as well. George Pearl, an eminent architect, designed the new Honors Center. The large forum, library/computer lab, 6 classrooms, a main office, and 16 faculty offices gave the Honors Program more room than was available in the previous center.

In 2005, the Honors Center expanded to include the remainder of the ground floor of the Student Health Center with additional offices and classroom space.

In 2013, the Lobo Scholars Program was established. A collaborative effort between the University of New Mexico's Honors College and the Athletics Department, the Lobo Scholars Program fosters and supports academic excellence among high-achieving student athletes. This multi-tiered program seeks to provide student athletes with new opportunities for intellectual growth and cross-community

collaboration. More specifically, the Lobo Scholars Program provides a structure for students to assess their scholar-athlete experience in an intellectually rigorous manner. Directed by Dr. Ryan Swanson, Professor in the Honors College, the program encourages and facilitates more student athletes joining UNM's Honors College.

In 2018, the Carruthers Chair changed from funding distinguished visiting scholars to developing a lecture series, the Carruthers Lecture Series (CLS), which hoped to spark a conversation that lasts far beyond one evening- creating connections, strengthening relationships between the Honors College and other UNM departments, while serving as a recruiting tool for the University. In 2018, Vince Gilligan, from the popular *Breaking Bad* television series and Albuquerque's Mayor Tim Keller initiated the Carruthers Endowment Lecture series. It was followed in 2020 by a lecture by Olympic and World Cup Champion Hope Solo.

In 2022, the Honors Pathmaker Program was established. It is a peer-mentoring, community-building connection to UNMHC that creates an even stronger student community. The Honors Pathmaker Program is a student-led organization within the UNM Honors College. Students in the program work directly with the Dean, Honors staff, administration, and Honors faculty to make the community more welcoming and inclusive.

History Specific to College Status

In 2010, a Task Force was established to explore the possibilities of an Honors College at UNM. The Task Force unanimously supported the idea. The following year, a Planning Committee was formed to determine the Honors College's specific characteristics and features.

In 2012, the UNM Faculty Senate and the UNM Board of Regents approved the plans to create the UNM Honors College. This plan provided students with three options for participation in the new College: Designation, the Interdisciplinary Studies Minor, and the Honors Interdisciplinary Studies Major. In August, Professor Catherine (Kate) Krause was appointed Dean of both the Honors College and Dean of University College, respectively.

In 2013, the new College was officially opened, and in the fall of that same year, the College accepted its first freshmen class.

UNM students can pursue multiple credential opportunities in the Honors College to study Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts (HILA) or Interdisciplinary Design. From the HILA Major through the Certificate, these options make it possible for students of any major to pursue interdisciplinary study during their UNM education.

Four transcribed credential options exist for students admitted to the Honors College to study Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts.

- Bachelor of Arts in Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts (36 Credit Hours),
- UNM Honors Scholar Distinction (27 Credit Hours),
- Minor in Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts (21 Credit Hours),
- Certificate in Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts (15 Credit Hours),
- Interdisciplinary Design Certificate (12 Credit Hours).

In addition to one of the transcribed credentials above, Honors College students may pursue the following in-house Honors College recognition:

- Honors Distinction in International Studies (18 Credit Hours),
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Distinction (12 Credit Hours).

In Spring 2014, Claire Stasiewicz and, **in 2015**, Austin Miller were the first two students to graduate with the new Honors Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts Major.

In 2019, the Honors College relocated to a renovated space on the ground floor of the Anderson School of Management. The new Honors Center includes three classrooms, 18 offices, and an enclosed patio.



History Specific to Alumni Chapter

In 2010, the UNM Honors College Alumni Chapter was founded. It is committed to enhancing the relationship between the College and its former students. As alumni, they carry the UNM Honors name throughout the world and in the work that they do, so it's critical for the College, students, and alums that everyone stays connected through activities, alum events, awards, and the annual newsletters. The Alumni Chapter assists with Homecoming events.

In 2015, the UNM Honors College Distinguished Alumni Award salutes the achievements of outstanding alums whose research, professional achievements, leadership, and/or community service contribute to the success and reputation of the UNM Honors College.

Recipients:

2019: Daniel Abraham '95 BS

2018: William "Bill" H. Pickens '68 BA, '71 MA

2017: Gary L. Gordon, '83, '86, BBA, JD

2016: Matthew J. Martinez, '97 BA, Political Science and Spanish

2015: James C. Moore, '66 BFA, Art History

In 2023-24, a year-long celebration of the founding of the Honors College began with a Discovery Series Virtual lecture in September. The Discovery Series events modeled the core values of honors: inquiry, active learning, participation, engaged listening, and community building, and thus, from lectures to workshops, participants will re-live the honors experience. The celebration will culminate in the spring with the unveiling of the Honors College 10th Anniversary commemorative mural designed and executed by students, staff, faculty, and alums.

Directors/Deans

Dudley Wynn, Director	1957-1971
John Howarth, Director	1971-1976
Robert O Evans, Director	1976-1982
Charles Biebel, Director	1982-1992
Rosalie C Otero, Director	1992-2013
Catherine Krause, Dean	2012-2017
Gregory Lanier, Dean	2017-2020
Diane Marshall, Interim Dean	2020-2021
Eric Lau, Dean	2021-2023
Leslie Donovan, Interim Dean	2023-