

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

FALL CONVOCATION



**CLASS OF
2023**

4 p.m.

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

University Arena

Message from the Dean

To the Fall 2023 University of New Mexico School of Engineering Graduates

Welcome to the fall 2023 School of Engineering Convocation ceremony. I am honored and excited to be part of this important milestone in your lives.

Since becoming dean this spring, I have been impressed and greatly moved by the accomplishments and hard work of our students, as well as the various support they have in their lives, including family, friends and the School of Engineering staff and faculty. Earning a degree in engineering requires a lot of dedication — both personal and in your community — and everyone attending here today had a role to play in the success of each student graduating. Thank you for your hard work and tireless dedication. You truly make the School of Engineering a great place to be.



Congratulations, graduates! I look forward to hearing about the transformation you will make in the world in the years to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Donna". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a trailing flourish.

Donna Riley

Jim and Ellen King Dean of Engineering and Computing

FALL CONVOCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2023 • 4 P.M.

University Arena

BOARD OF REGENTS

The laws of New Mexico provide for a Board of Regents which is responsible for the governance of The University of New Mexico. The Board's power to govern the University includes fiduciary responsibility for the assets and programs of the University, establishment of goals and policies to guide the University, and oversight of the functioning of the University.

The Board is comprised of seven members who are appointed by the governor of New Mexico, with the consent of the Senate, for staggered terms of six years except for the student regent, who is appointed for a two-year term. The governor and the secretary of education are designated as ex-officio, non-voting members.

The Regents

Kim Sanchez Rael, Chair

Jack L. Fortner, Vice Chair

Robert L. Schwartz, Secretary-Treasurer

William H. Payne

Paul Blanchard

Paula Tackett

Randy Ko, Student Regent

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Convocation Program

Processional

FACULTY MARSHAL

Andrew Shreve, professor emeritus.
Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering

BANNER CARRIER

Yvoné Nelson, Biomedical Engineering Program
and Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering

PROCESSIONAL MUSIC

“Pomp and Circumstance March Number 1,”
Composed by Sir Edward Elgar
“Procession of the Nobles,” Composed by Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov
Performed by The New Mexico Brass Quintet

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Charles B. Fleddermann, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
and Community Engagement

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Casey DeRaad, B.S., M.S., Electrical and Computer Engineering

STUDENT SPEAKERS

Sarah Maurice, B.S., Computer Engineering
Odey Yousef, M.S., Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

PRESENTATION OF BREECE AWARD

Presenter: Steven Graves, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
Kristina Ji, B.S., Computer Engineering and Mechanical Engineering

PRESENTATION OF DEGREE CANDIDATES

Charles B. Fleddermann, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
and Community Engagement

RECESSIONAL

Platform Party

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING ADMINISTRATION

Donna Riley, Dean, School of Engineering

Charles B. Fleddermann, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
and Community Engagement

Eva Chi, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs

Steven Graves, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation

Sang M. Han, Chair, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering

Susan Bogus Halter, Interim Chair, Department of Civil, Construction and
Environmental Engineering

Lydia Tapia, Chair, Department of Computer Science

Mark Gilmore, Interim Chair, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Yu-Lin Shen, Chair, Department of Mechanical Engineering

Hyoung K. (Hank) Lee, Chair, Department of Nuclear Engineering

Matthias Pleil, Director, Manufacturing Engineering Program

Christina Salas, Director, Biomedical Engineering Program

Nathan Jackson, Director, Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering Program

Daniel Feezell, Director, Optical Science and Engineering Program

Convocation Traditions

Throughout their long and proud history, universities have retained and cherished strong ties to their ceremonial roots. When English universities were taking form in the 12th and 13th centuries, scholars were also clerics. They adopted robes similar to those of their monastic orders. Caps were a necessity in the drafty buildings, and copes, or capes with hoods attached, were needed for warmth.

School of Engineering Convocation

The School of Engineering Convocation pays tribute to the history and traditions of graduations throughout the ages. The bachelor's gown is red, has long sleeves, and is worn closed. The master's and doctor's gowns are black. The cap, originally round, is now a square mortarboard and is the same for all degrees. Caps are traditionally black with a long tassel fastened to the mid-point. The tassel is worn on the right side until the degree has been conferred; it is then worn on the left. The hood indicates the type of degree and the official color or colors of the university conferring the degree. For example, the color orange represents engineering, and that color is used on the velvet binding or edging of the hood. The official University of New Mexico colors are cherry and silver, so the hood is lined with silver gray with a chevron of cherry red.



The Convocation begins and ends with a colorful academic procession, led by a staff member carrying a banner in front of the School of Engineering degree candidates. The faculty marshal is usually selected from School of Engineering emeritus faculty, an honorary title for retired full-time faculty. The faculty marshal carries a mace or ceremonial staff and leads the platform party, composed of School of Engineering academic leadership, UNM regents and dignitaries, and convocation speakers.

The mace traces its origins to a medieval weapon and was later carried before kings and high church officials as a ceremonial emblem of authority. The current mace was created by Peter Vorobieff, a professor of mechanical engineering, staff member Jason Church, and student Daniel Freelong. It is made of steel and leather, similar to the maces used during the siege of Valetta (1565) by combat engineers.

Keynote Speaker

Casey DeRaad

B.S., M.S., Electrical and Computer Engineering

Casey DeRaad, who grew up in Taos, N.M., has a dream for what her beloved state could one day become. That passion to make New Mexico the hub for space research fuels her motivation for creating NewSpace Nexus.

DeRaad didn't always dream of being an engineer, but remembered loving math in school. Since she was good at it, a teacher encouraged her to pursue engineering. She first chose chemical engineering, but decided it wasn't for her and switched into UNM's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.



She earned a bachelor's degree from UNM in 1985, then a master's in 1992, both in electrical engineering. As a grad student, she worked at the Air Force Space Technology Center (the precursor to the AFRL), which started her on a career trajectory with the Air Force.

In 1994-95, she was the Air Force liaison to NASA's chief technology advisor in Washington, D.C., then was the Air Force National Polar-Orbiting Environmental Satellite System Integrated Program Office in Maryland. From 1997-2008, she was the assistant to the AFRL associate director for space in the Space Vehicles Directorate, and from 2008-16, started and led the AFRL Tech Engagement Office. In November of this year, she was selected as one of the Distinguished Alumni Award recipients for the School of Engineering.

Although her years of service in the Air Force would have allowed her to retire, she soon found that lifestyle was not for her — at least not now.

"I retired for six months and wasn't going to do anything. Then I told my husband, 'There's not enough closets to clean. I need to go back to work!'"

So instead of an ordinary job, DeRaad chose an extraordinary job, one that she said is "fun, flexible and helps the New Mexico workforce." That job was creating NewSpace Nexus, which incorporates efforts she thought about but wasn't able to do when she was a part of the government.

"I'm hoping that New Mexico can be great if we get out of our own way and help each other," she said.

The organization, which helps space-related companies get started and established, went through a name change (formerly NewSpace New Mexico) because "our reach is national, and we wanted to reflect that," DeRaad said.

She and her husband William have three grown sons and two grandsons. When she has time, she enjoys camping and spending time at their second home in Durango, Colo.

Undergraduate speaker

Sarah Maurice

B.S., Computer Engineering

Like most engineering students, Sarah Maurice chose her major because she enjoyed math, science and technology. But she also had another motivation – one that was much more personal.

Born in Haiti, she lost her leg when she was 8 in the devastating 2010 earthquake that hit that country, killing hundreds of thousands of people, including her mother. Thanks to the efforts of relief organizations, Maurice was able to travel to the U.S., where she was outfitted with a prosthetic leg and a chance at a whole new life.



After living in different cities in the U.S including Albuquerque (her favorite was Cape Cod), she made her way back to Albuquerque for high school in 2016 at Sandia Prep. She first wanted to study biomedical engineering (to research how to improve prosthetic limb design through 3D modeling), but ended up falling in love with coding, so opted for computer engineering.

She said that beginning UNM in the fall of 2020 during the height of the COVID pandemic was a strange experience, but she persisted through her degree program and is even doing a shared credit program where she is also earning a master's degree (that she will finish next year). Maurice said she was particularly inspired by Eirini Eleni Tsiropoulou's reinforcement learning class (and Tsiropoulou is also her graduate advisor).

Maurice has been working at an internship at Intel since 2021 and would like to continue working there and with semiconductors after she completes her graduate degree. Down the road, she might pursue at Ph.D.

In addition to schoolwork, she also has been involved in student organizations such as Tau Beta Pi, serving as the event coordinator, as well as the Society of Women Engineers and IEEE. Her hobbies include e-sports, especially League of Legends, and arcade games.

Maurice's unique experience has undoubtedly contributed to her success and fortitude, which has helped her overcome challenges both personal and academic.

"I've learned that it's possible to overcome adversity," she said. "You may fail, but you can also succeed."

She said she has also learned that sometimes, we can't do it all alone. "Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's OK."

Graduate speaker

Odey Yousef

M.S., Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

Graduating from high school at the age of 16, UNM was a natural choice for Albuquerque native Odey Yousef. He graduated from Albuquerque Institute for Mathematics and Science (better known as AIMS) High School on the south end of the UNM campus, so UNM was close by, plus his father had earned a degree from UNM several years before.

Yousef said he was always good at math and science, so engineering was always a possible path for him, but it was a trip in high school to the School of Engineering's Open House event for prospective students with his uncle that turned him on to civil engineering, and in particular, structures. "I saw a finite element model of a bridge and thought it was really cool."



He earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 2020, then immediately entered grad school. He has been working with faculty member Fernando Moreu in his Smart Management of Infrastructure Laboratory (SMILab), researching dynamic testing of structural components with funding from Sandia National Laboratories, which could have implications for aircraft, missiles or automobiles.

He said he favorite class at UNM was CE 302 - Mechanics of Materials with Walter Gerstle.

During his time at UNM, he has been involved with Chi Epsilon and the student chapter for the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). He has been both an undergraduate and graduate research assistant and was a photovoltaic design intern at Affordable Solar in 2020.

His hobbies include video games, exercising and reading.

Having several years of academic and research experience now behind him, what advice would he give to a student just starting out in engineering?

"Take advantage of events in professional societies and all of the opportunities available to students for networking."

After he graduates, Yousef would like to enter the workforce full time, perhaps at someplace like Sandia National Laboratories or a structural firm.

Degrees Awarded

Order of Presentation

Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

Department of Computer Science

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Department of Mechanical Engineering

Department of Nuclear Engineering

Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering

Biomedical Engineering

Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering

Optical Science and Engineering

STUDENT HONORS RECOGNITION

"Graduating with Distinction" (symbolized by a † by the student's name) recognizes the exceptional performance of students who graduate with a master's or doctor of philosophy degree. The status is determined at the time of the final examination through agreement of the examining committee members, with final approval given by the department chair.

About the George E. Breece Award

The George E. Breece Award was established in 1921 to honor the UNM School of Engineering senior with the highest grade-point average from each graduating class. The recipients of this award consistently have grade-point averages higher than 4.0, reflecting a majority of A+ grades throughout their undergraduate courses.

This year's honoree is **Kristina Ji**, who is earning bachelor's degrees in both computer engineering and mechanical engineering.

Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Adan Baca	Eliaz Garcia	Olivia Tafoya
Dylan Childs	Constanza Kremer	Dylan Venaglia
Kayla Fuentes	Dru Martinez	
Gabriella Gallegos	Brandon Sisk	

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Jacqueline Benitez	Lance Radnich	Ben West
Jesus Castro	Adrian Tarango	

MASTER OF ENGINEERING

Derek Bohannan	Benjamin Gallegos	Marinha Santos
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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Carl Abadam	Cristian Kremer Farina	Gena Robertson
Taylor Busch	Asmita Kaphle	Raquel Valdez
Tammy Huynh	Haley Ormsbee	Odey Yousef

MASTER OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Jason Burns	Gary Larkin
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

Ishtiaque Anwar	Serafin Garcia Fernandez	Aashish Sanjay Khandelwai
Tybur Casuse	Mahya Hatambeigi	Najvani
Mohammad Amin Dehghani	Zafrul Haim Khan	Justin Nichols

Computer Science

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Ashish Singh Basnet

Jaylen Davis

Nathaniel Garcia

Christopher Gilbert

Estefan Gonzales*

James Green

Kelvin Kemper

Spoorthi Menta

Austyn Mitchev

Daniel Morales-Garcia

Bryce Palmer

Alecto Perez

Michel Robert

Jude Sanchez

Lasair Servilla

Andy Thornhill

Christopher Tye

Michaela Urich

Junyi Zheng

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Siva Abhishek Avala

Mark Eberlein

Ruchina Shakya

Jonny Sykora*

Mohammad Yousefi

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Torin Adamson[†]

Zeinab Akhavan

Farhan Asif Chowdhury[†]

Sarika Kumar

Md Parvez Mollah[†]

Electrical and Computer Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Kristina Ji

Sarah Maurice

Isaiah Mize

Ralph Mora

Joshua Oluwatayo

Giancarlo Orozco

Nicholas Ross*

Muhammad Shuja Saleem

Sean Tsikteris

*Summer 2023 Graduate

[†]Graduating with Distinction

Electrical and Computer Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Mustafa Alkwaz

Christopher Billie

Amanda Romero

Laila Fauzi

Nam Trinh

Abduallah Almutairi*

Brandon Kvech

Khaled Almutairi *

Nathan Nava

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Khulood Ali Jumah Aljarman

Charles Ford

Veera Venkata Sai Akhilesh

Alzaabi

Erik Guaderrama Marin

Padmanabhuni

Anindya Bal

Md Sahabul Hossain

Jordan Patrizi

Benjamin Bean

Joseph Ikogho

Mahendra Reddy Pusapati

Richard Briggs*

Vinod Kumar Kanakam

Aisha B. Rahman

Rachel Cazzola

Harsh Kumar

Benjamin Rutherford

Neeraj Chityala

Clarizza Morales Chacon

Md Sadman Siraj

Qingquan Cui

Kranthi Swaroop Murari*

Petro Tshakwanda*

Brian Dubbert

Dinh Nguyen

Yonatan Melese Worku

Ugesh Egala

Andres Ortiz*

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Robert Billette

Benedict Fawver

Ken Le

Sydney Billingsley*

Justin Gonzales*

Jonathon Maestas

Ian Chavez*

Kevin Huang

Nicolas Gonzalez Padilla

Srinidhi Chillara

Aadesh Neel*†

Matthew Proctor

Ravi Kiran Chityala*

Andrew Rechenberg

Robert Beattie-Rossberg

Ruhin Chowdhury*

Carlos Tovar

Yusuf Sahin*

A K M Sharoar Jahan Choyon*

Christian Jajlardo*

Nicholas Sagartz

Joshua Cooper

Sumith Reddy Likkidi

Mahtab Vahabpour

Aaron D'Arezzo

David Krawczyk

Kimberly Faris*

Georgia Kaufman*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Nestor Pereira Ferrero

Jean-Elie Pierre

Petro Tshakwanda

Jonathan Milton*

Idris Somoye

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Andre Chavez†

Seyed Iman Habibi*†

Alexander Newell†

Cameron Harjes*†

Grant Heileman

Oameed Noakoasteen

Evelyn Dohme*

Seth Miller

Seyed Alireza Ghasempour Shirazi

*Summer 2023 Graduate

†Graduating with Distinction

Mechanical Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Ryan Alford	Nick Garcia	Daisy Belmares-Ortega
George Buttler	Jaime Holmes	Wilder Parks
Jared Carnes	Kristina Ji	Nicholas Phelps*
Taylor Cross*	Alexandra Kozai*	Cameron Reeder
Leo Duran	Carlos Loera	Garrett Rose
Samuel Fisher	Robert Lutz	Andy Stroughton
Damian Garavito*	Raju Nayak	John Vandenkieboom

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Ganiyu Azeez	Daniel Jibson	Jorell Phillips
Maren Baur	Stewart Livsie	Chad Rathbun
Robert Berrens	Riley McCarthy	Ethan Schmidt*
Jonathan Chavez	Shivaleela Macharla	Bryan Steiner
Stephen Davis	Valentin Martinez*	Ely Teran
Robert Erickson	Tyler Mitchell	Julien Valdez
Kyle Ferguson	Graham Monroe †	Randolph Vazquez
Jonathan Hernandez*	Erik Morton	Gregory Whiteside

MASTER OF ENGINEERING IN MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

Elena Martinez*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Mohamed Abuhegazy	Zeynel Guler
Rubel Das	Scott Shore

*Summer 2023 Graduate

†Graduating with Distinction

Nuclear Engineering

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUCLEAR ENGINEERING

Christian Arguello

Tatiana Espinoza*

Jake Noltensmeyer

Riley Bulso

Jared Justice

Dylan Weatherred*

Lauren Crabtree*

Eric Markham

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

Ragai Altamimi*

Aaron A. Overacker

Colin Weaver*

Kyle S. Beling

Bobbi Riedel

Mark Wetzel

Chemical and Biological Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Eric Cruz

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING

Ryan Alcala

*Summer 2023 Graduate

†Graduating with Distinction

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Biomedical Engineering

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Jasmine Jackson

Veronica Mitchell

Karyl Wolfram

Adam Magana

Ann Tran*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Lewis Larsen

Blaise Mariner†

Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Juan Alejandro Ormaza Rojas

Shea Tonkinson

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Mina Faltas†

Kaitlyn Read

Optical Science and Engineering

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Franco Buck

Johnathan White

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Sayed Hassan Dibaji Foroushani

Xuefeng Li

Ali Rastegari*

Forrest Hubert*

Yankang Liu

Brian Topper*

*Summer 2023 Graduate

†Graduating with Distinction



Congratulations and Welcome!

Congratulations, graduates! Now that you have graduated, you are automatically a member of the UNM Alumni Association. There are no dues. Visit the UNM Alumni Association website for information and a complete listing of benefits at <http://www.unmalumni.com>.

We also welcome you to the School of Engineering alumni family. The UNM School of Engineering strives to keep you connected to the School in the most convenient way possible. As you move forward, please keep us informed regarding address changes, career moves, and significant events in your life. If you are interested in collaborating on an activity to engage fellow alums, let us know. Please contact us at engineeringalumni@unm.edu.