Message from the Dean

Welcome to the Spring 2024 School of Engineering Convocation ceremony. I am honored and excited to be part of this important milestone in your lives.

Since becoming dean a little over a year ago, 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.

Donna Riley
Jim and Ellen King Dean of Engineering and Computing
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
Victor Reyes, Student Regent

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Message from the Dean........................................1
Board of Regents ................................................2
Convocation Program........................................3
Platform Party .....................................................4
Keynote Speaker .................................................5
Breece Award ......................................................6
Student Speakers ...............................................7-8
Degrees Awarded .................................................9
Civil, Construction & Environmental Engineering ..........10
Computer Science .............................................11
Electrical and Computer Engineering .................12
Mechanical Engineering ........................................13
Nuclear Engineering ...........................................14
Chemical and Biological Engineering ......................14
Interdisciplinary Programs
  Biomedical Engineering ..................................15
  Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering ...............15
  Optical Science and Engineering .......................15
Information for Alumni ......................................16
Convocation Program

Processional

FACULTY MARSHAL
Tang-Tat Ng, Professor Emeritus, Gerald May Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

BANNER CARRIER
Nicole Bingham, Gerald May Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental 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, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Community Engagement

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Sal B. Rodriguez, Ph.D. Nuclear Engineering

STUDENT SPEAKERS
Kevin S. Garcia, B.S., Nuclear Engineering
Joseph Erwin, M.S., Mechanical Engineering

PRESENTATION OF BREECE AWARD
Presenter: Steven Graves, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
Luke M. Lucero, B.S., Chemical Engineering

PRESENTATION OF DEGREE CANDIDATES
Charles B. Fleddermann, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Community Engagement

RECESSIONAL
Platform Party

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING ADMINISTRATION

Donna Riley, Dean, School of Engineering
Charles B. Fleddermann, Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Community Engagement
Eva Chi, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs
Steven Graves, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation
Nicholas Carroll, Associate Chair, Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering
Susan Bogus Halter, Interim Chair, Gerald May 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
Osman Anderoglu, Associate 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
Keynote Speaker

Sal B. Rodriguez
Ph.D., Nuclear Engineering

Even early on, and in an environment where many shine brightly, Sal Rodriguez's first manager at Idaho National Laboratory called him a “rising star.” Four decades later, Rodriguez continues his upward journey, being described as “Rocketing to the Top” in a front-page article in the *Albuquerque Journal* last fall.

Now a principal member of the technical staff at Sandia National Laboratories, he has experienced a series of amazing career milestones of late. Last year, he received Sandia's highest award for technical excellence for his research in refractory high-entropy alloys. Also in 2023, he received the Scientist of the Year Award by Great Minds in STEM, which was the first time that any U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory has ever received the award. This is also the first time that New Mexico received this prestigious award.

Rodriguez is also proud of his work last year with UNM’s Lobo Launch rocket team to incorporate a passion of his — dimples, like that on a golf ball — into the design of the nosecone of the rocket. He explains that the dimples increase the aerodynamics of the rocket (40% more, in the case of the UNM rocket). He is a believer that dimples have a huge potential in a variety of other applications, including transportation and more environmentally sustainable energy. “I sleep, dream and breathe dimples,” he said.

All the career success he is experiencing now might not have been predicted from his humble beginnings. The Calexico, Calif., native spoke only Spanish until first grade, and he was raised by parents with grade-school educations. He said he traces his true passion for STEM to his sophomore year in high school, when students from nearby UCLA visited, distributing marketing material about careers in engineering. “That instant changed my life,” he said.

Rodriguez earned several degrees over his life: a bachelor’s degree in nuclear engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara; a master’s degree in mechanical engineering from University of Idaho; a master’s degree in applied mathematics from UNM in 2004; a scientific and engineering computation interdisciplinary graduate program degree from UNM in 2000; a Ph.D. from Trinity College and Seminary; and finally, a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from UNM in 2011, which he earned while working at Sandia. He was proud that both his parents were able to see him graduate as a “Dr.”

He undoubtedly has an insatiable curiosity and passion for learning that continues to this day. “There is so much we don’t know yet.” Rodriguez said that he is an advocate of lifelong learning, no matter where you are in life. “If you work hard, the education you have, that is your superpower.”

In the latest development, he continues working with Sandia National Laboratories while also serving as chief science officer for Applied Surface Engineering. This is an Albuquerque business that his children started for the development of more efficient energy and aerospace systems.

In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife and three children (including a current mechanical engineering student at UNM), cooking seafood dishes, and metal detecting on the beach. “I like to keep busy,” he said. “I’m enjoying the ride.”
Luke Lucero was born and raised in Albuquerque (a graduate of Albuquerque Academy), and while some natives can't wait to leave the city or state for college, he felt differently. For him, attending UNM School of Engineering was a calculated choice. “It was close to home, a great engineering school, as well as close to industry and Sandia National Laboratories,” Lucero said. “There were great opportunities if I stayed.”

And he made the most of those local opportunities while earning his degree in chemical engineering. He completed an internship with Sandia in nanoscale science department. And he recently completed an internship with the Kansas City National Security Campus in Albuquerque, which he discovered thanks to the School of Engineering’s Corporate Affiliate Program that allowed a representative from KCNSC (operated by Honeywell) to have a part-time office in the School to recruit students like Lucero.

He said he worked most closely with Steven Graves, professor in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, and learned a lot from classes by Sang Eon Han and Andrew Shreve, now a professor emeritus. Although he undoubtedly always excelled academically in everything he did, Lucero said his hardest course was partial differential equations (which he took as part of his math minor). Although it was challenging, he said he took it to improve his knowledge of how partial differential equations work in heat transport.

Lucero said some of his favorite memories at UNM were of working with other students, either studying or in group projects, like the senior capstone design he has been working on this semester. “Everyone is going through the same thing and learning together,” he said. “It’s stressful, but we’re doing it together.”

Lucero said that one of the most tasks that made him a better student was teaching others, something he started in high school as a tutor. “If you’re able to teach, you know you understand.”

After graduation, he will begin a full-time job at Intel in Albuquerque. “I want to spend some time working in the ‘real world,’ then I might consider going to grad school,” he said.

His hobbies include snowboarding, hiking, playing classical guitar and spending time with friends and family.
Kevin S. Garcia remembers how he first got the idea to pursue engineering. The Tampa, Fla., native was still in his home state of Florida, working as head of reception at a radiologist’s office. He had earned an associate degree in arts at Hillsborough Community College and was helping to put his wife through the University of South Florida for her bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering.

“It was time to figure out what I wanted to do after she graduated” he said.

Then Garcia’s path started to take shape after his wife accepted a job at Los Alamos National Laboratory. The move to New Mexico, a state with a strong nuclear history and current industry, helped to push him into pursuing his degree in nuclear engineering, along with a growing curiosity about fusion technology.

His curiosity drove him to cold email Dennis Whyte, former director of the Plasma Science and Fusion Center at MIT and a foremost expert in nuclear fusion. Encouraged, he started taking some nuclear engineering classes at UNM, doing some research into nuclear engineering on his own, then after meeting with Hank Lee, chair of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at UNM, that sealed the deal.

“Dr. Lee convinced me. He is a very good salesman,” Garcia said.

Although the degree was challenging, he enjoyed the “mutual stress” with fellow students in the department. Garcia said he has enjoyed the “small, tight-knit community” that is UNM’s Department of Nuclear Engineering, as well as all they have accomplished through the student chapter of the American Nuclear Society (including the fact that UNM will be hosting the 2025 student national conference).

In any free time, he has between working and studying, he enjoys woodworking, music (he has performed as a percussionist specializing as a Conguero and Bongosero playing Latin Jazz), and spending time with his wife and two young children (soon to be three). “I like to stay busy.”

After graduation, Garcia will be starting a position as an associate research nuclear engineer at the Air Force Research Laboratory.
Joseph Erwin

M.S., Mechanical Engineering

Joseph Erwin, a Portales, N.M., native, considers himself a bit of a “black sheep” in his family in terms of his interests and aspirations.

Born to an English professor mother and a musician father, Erwin is the only STEM inclined member of his immediate family. He was attracted to the field because he was good in math and science, and also has always been interested in the application of math and science to solve real world problems.

Erwin said he chose UNM because it was close to home, affordable (especially with the academic scholarships he received), but also offered advantages that other schools lacked, such as proximity to Sandia National Laboratories and other such facilities.

Erwin has focused his research in the Department of Mechanical Engineering on additively manufactured metals, the behavior of threaded fasteners under multiaxial loading, and crack tip plasticity zones, working with Pankaj Kumar and Tariq Khraishi.

“Since it is an R1 institution, UNM offers levels of research that other institutions do not, even for undergraduates,” he said. “I’m thankful for the research opportunities.”

Erwin also participated in the shared-credit program, which allowed him to make progress toward a master’s degree when he was still earning his bachelor’s degree.

He said that if he could impart wisdom to younger students, he would advise that they develop strong relationships with professors. Also, “Core classes may not seem all that interesting, but learn everything you can from them because you will need that knowledge later.”

In his free time, he enjoys hiking the trails, biking, playing guitar and cooking. He also likes to cook chicken piccata and a dish not expected in landlocked New Mexico: “I’m good at mussels.”

Erwin said the next chapter of his life will involve working at Sandia, and possibly eventually pursuing opportunities in the space industry.
Degrees Awarded

Order of Presentation
Gerald May 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.
Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Ahmed H. Al Saedi
David Aragon
Jack H. Dugan
Logan Fairhurst*
Erica E. Gamblin
Duncan G. Gardner
Astrid C. Gonzaga
Ethan B. Kapp
Jesus A. Moncada
Joshua D. Morgan
Alexandria M. Morrow
Nicole J. Nimeh
Syanna P. Padilla
Savannah A. Tapia
Victor S. Valles
Christopher J. Vreeland
Zachary R. Weaver
Lonnie L. Wilhite
Nathaniel Winters-Hilt

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Saul Bencomo
Irvin O. Rubio
Dillon R. Sala
Geena M. Villasenor
Logan C. Whitaker

MASTER OF ENGINEERING

Amabilis G. Baca
Derrick L. Brown
Matthew J. Gonzales
Ryen D. Gonzales-Martinez
Bradley D. Torres

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CIVIL ENGINEERING

Alan J. Barney*
Dominica J. Bennett*
Travis B. Broadhurst*
Yully T. Chaves Lasso*
Arian Golrokh Amin*
Fatemeh Hamidi
Sara Rassa*
Ossiris E. Sanchez Rodriguez+
Brittney D. Seaburn
Kritan Subedi*
Odey H. Yousef+
Daiquiri D. Zozaya*

MASTER OF CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Robel Mesfin

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

Md Mehedi Hasan
Md Amanul Hasan
Zafrul Khan*
Muhammad Saeed Zafar*

*Summer 2024 Graduate  †Graduating with Distinction
Computer Science

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Adrian J. Abeyta
Ester Aguilera
Alexander P. Alvara
Danial F. Anwaar-Maximo
Joseph E. Barela*
Elektra Caffrey
Sean Davies
Althea R. Denlinger
Abhinav Dev
Caleb Frisch*
Christopher R. Frost
Andrew V. Geyko
Ricardo A. Gonzales
Brian J. High
Vincent Hilario
Sebastian L. Hoang
Thomas J. Hynes
Del B. Jones
Kelsey N. Knowlson
Tristan J. Larkin
Victoria M. Lien
Utsav Malla
John Augustin A. Materum
Erin K. McClure
Luke E. McDougall
Spoorthi Menta
Michael A. Millar
Ryan L. Mills
Jerry M. Nieto
Atah B. Omar
Diego Ornelas
Michael A. Pacheco*
Bryce R. Palmer
Franklin Pezzuti Dyer
Thinh M. Pham
Andrei Popa-Simil

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Mari A. Aoki
Mike T. Dinh
Christopher A. Leap
John E. Leonard+
Praneeth Marri
Benjamin T. Ogden
Bennett G. Poulin
Jason R. Stewart

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

Andisheh Dadashi
Humayra Tasnim *

*Summer 2024 Graduate  †Graduating with Distinction
Electrical and Computer Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Rena L. Berdine
Gregory M. Brown
Aaron D. Catanach*
Ian D. Cornwell
Andrew Gilbert
Joseph V. Likar
Juan Diego A. Montoya
Anna R. Moore
Vishnu V. Nampoothiri
Elmer Ramos

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Imane Bahji
Lawrence R. Calais
Phat G. Chu
Yaniksa Mata
Dorothy Mberile*
Sankalpa Regmi
Logan Ricketts
Muhammad Shuja Saleem

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Anindya Bal
Sasi Kumar Bondila
Michael Calzadillas
Neeraj Chityala
Ugesh Egala
Pavan Kumar Kantu
Navya Kasarla
Nitish Kota
Adrian J. Lewis
Sai Surya Kumar Meesala
Zachary L. Montoya
Vamsi Krishna Naolabolu

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Asad M. Abdullahi
Mohammad Abedi
Robert J. Beattie-Rossberg
Michael D. Crabtree
Darren M. Kressaty
Ken V. Le
Nolan Rebernick
Beatrice Sabatella

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Harsh Kumar+
Daniel Manu
Jean-Elie Pierre
Liangkun Yu

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Maren W. Hatch
Andre M. Chavez+
Raul E. Gutierrez
Sajay Krishnan Paruthiyil

*Summer 2024 Graduate
†Graduating with Distinction
Mechanical Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Tobechukwu Agu
Ryan J. Alford
Hussain Alhasan
Richard Armijo
Jared E. Banteah
Ryan D. Bingham
David A. Boese
James B. Brining
Adrian C. Campbell
Hyein Choi
Giovanni Cordova
Patrick Kyle E. Delos Reyes
Shawn W. Devore
Brandon T. Doehne
Daniel J. Emrick
Samuel K. Fisher
Joshua P. Gabbard
Olivia E. Garcia
Cody T. Henry
Shawn C. Johnston
Nicholas B. Jones
Auron D. Joyner
Patrick J. Kingsbury
Helio Lopez
Aidan C. Lott
Morgan A. Lucero
Antonio B. Martinez
Lucas J. Muller
Collin T. Nesbit
Kien T. Nguyen
Sophia I. Orona Yang
Cesar I. Ortega
Ryan A. Patricelli
Cameron N. Reeder
Brennan B. Roberts
Daniel J. Romero
Antonio M. Rubio
Dominic A. Sanchez
William D. Sands
Gabriel A. Serrano
Kayla B. Singer
Christopher R. Solis
Max J. Tafoya
Joshua T. Tarantino
Isaac M. Viramontes
Jacob A. Whisenhunt
Nathan P. Wolff

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Ahmed Mohamed Ahmed
Mohamed
Zully T. Avila
Jacob R. Barry
Maren S. Baur
Trevor J. Bird
Felicia Brimigion
Zachary J. Casias +
Joseph C. Erwin +
Nicholas J. Garcia
Matthew A. Garrett
Kevin Kim
Joseph N. Kjeldsen
Hannah Klopstock
Alexandra P. Kozai
Evan R. Lucero
Madison T. Lund
Anthony M. McMaster
Clayton D. Milla
Evan A. Paskow
Nicholas Phelps
Christopher N. Rice-McClure
Kevin C. Simms
Cameron L. Thomas
Tristin M. Zimmer
Samuel G. Zsiga*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Rubel C. Das
Kaveh Malek*

*Summer 2024 Graduate
+Graduating with Distinction
Nuclear Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NUCLEAR ENGINEERING

Xavier S. Angus  
Lauren S. Bailey  
Erik R. Boldt  
Antonio M. Connelly  
Maxwell A. Dimsha  
Maggie C. Friemel  
Kevin Garcia  
Jomanah J. Khudabakhsh  
Daniel E. Levario  
Josephine R. Lewis  
Courtney B. Mace  
Alexandra D. Martinez  
Richard J. McDonald  
Bao H. Nguyen  
Alana C. Pankopf  
Gibson D. Prall  
Thomas K. Smith  
William A. Todd

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUCLEAR ENGINEERING

Dennis M. Ahorlu  
Phat D. Doan  
Christopher L. Hooper  
Roberts E. Ituah  
Julia E. Minton-Hughes  
Ahmad N. Shaheen

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

Kyle S. Beling  
Rowdy Davis†  
Yuqi Liu  
Cain Manzira*

Chemical and Biological Engineering

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Carina N. Anastasio  
Abdulrahman A. Bahri  
Francesca C. Chioda  
Lillian N. Elam  
Angelina M. Encinias  
Ezekiel Garcia  
Cynthia M. Guerra  
Benjamin D. Harvey  
Luke M. Lucero  
Jenna N. Marek  
Tristan L. Martinez  
Daniela M. Mendez Banda  
Joshua A. Olguin  
Gracee M. O’Toole  
Marelessis Palomino  
Dhruv V. Patel  
Raphael Angelo A. Reyes  
Mikayla D. Romero  
Alix A. Rule  
Patrick C. Survis  
Ciara N. Wright

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING

Alexander J. Baten  
Kristen Batt  
Crucifício G. Caputo*  
Cielo Gonzales Kirkpatrick

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGINEERING

Mary Louise Gucik  
Sleight Halley+  
Angelea M. Maestas-Olguin  
†Graduating with Distinction

*Summer 2024 Graduate
INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

Biomedical Engineering
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Esteban M. Baca  Lauren A. Ostermann  Kali A. Wolf
Matthew P. Justus  Ashley N. Tafoya
Aidan L. Leyba +  Alexander S. Torres

Nanoscience and Microsystems Engineering
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Melvin D. Foster  Chanida S. Yoo
Margaret M. Turpin

Optical Science and Engineering
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Mega Frost*  Hosuk Lee*  Johnathan V. White*
Amilcar Jeronimo Perez*  Meagan Parker*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Arjun Aryal*  Fatih F. Ince
Dominic F. Bosomtwi*  Mingyang Zhang*
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. Keep us posted at engineeringinfo@unm.edu or at goto.unm.edu/alumniupdate