

The Department of the Present and the Future

Chris Duvall

Professor and Chair,

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Greetings! Retreats and trainings are an annual tradition at the start of each academic year at UNM. The week before classes start is filled with all-day meetings for various groups—department chairs, new faculty, graduate students, program directors, teaching assistants, and others. The first week of classes is often less demanding than the week before, perhaps contrary to what many might think.

In the department, we hold a two-day retreat for all faculty during which we plan for the coming two semesters, and envision the department's future trajectory for several years. We had a productive retreat this year that helped us understand where the department stands now and where we want it to go.

As far as where we stand now, the department's renaissance continues. We have the largest faculty the department has ever had—seventeen professors and lecturers, up from the dark days of the early 2000s, when we had just four faculty following more than a decade of shrinkage. During the 1990s, the university chose not to replace retiring professors, in part because the geography faculty of the mid-1980s decided not to establish a Ph.D. program. We finally did establish a Ph.D. program in 2020, a move that has strengthened our longstanding M.S. program by adding highly trained graduate students to our community. Our Ph.D. students have also helped advance faculty research projects by providing excellent research assistance—of course, our M.S. students serve capably as research assistants too, but Ph.D. students each stay with us for more years.

Overall, we have great students, in our undergraduate major and minor programs and graduate programs. Our enrollments have increased every semester since the pandemic's low point in Spring 2021. Last academic year (2022-23), our enrollments were the highest since 2017-18. The university as a whole experienced a decline in the number of students from about 2011 to 2021, but has seen increases since then. We have outperformed the university as a whole, which shows that geography remains interesting and engaging to many students.

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We have room for improvement, though, which leads us to think of the future. First, our faculty has grown, but we are missing a couple key areas of expertise. With the retirement of Prof. **Scott Freunds Schuh** in 2022, we are without a cartographer. We hope to hire a replacement in the next year or two. This is our highest priority when we ask the university for permission to hire faculty, but we're also seeking to add a faculty member who researches and teaches about indigenous geographies.

Second, our enrollments are increasing and our graduate programs are flourishing, but we need more undergraduate majors. We serve many UNM students through our large, entry-level courses—including introduction to human geography, introduction to physical geography, world regional geography, and introduction to maps and GIS—because these earn credits for students in any major. However, we're not pulling as many students into our B.A. and B.S. programs as we would like. We're addressing this issue in a number of ways, through active participation in recruitment and outreach events and curriculum development initiatives. Stay tuned—we're hoping to establish a B.A. degree in environmental studies, and a B.S. pathway focused on GIScience.

Finally, we're excited to keep working with "The GES Alumni Chapter of the Future!", which our past graduates have pioneered. Indeed, one thing I missed above in thinking about the department's current standing is all the great things that our alumni continue to do. As befits a group of geographers, our alumni have pursued a wide range of professions, and are doing outstanding work with their degrees. Through them, we have connections across the U.S. and in several other countries, and we are hoping to develop networking opportunities for future students (and a pool of new employees for our alumni who are seeking to hire new professionals).

There are many good things happening in the department now, and we look forward to making good things happen in the coming years, with our faculty, students, and alumni.

**PLEASE contribute
photographs for our
future issues.**

**Else, be prepared for more
photos of our more-than-
human neighbors. ;-)**

Please email photos to:
unmGESalumni@gmail.com



reference photo



Find the [Pika](#) (*Ochotona princeps* ssp. *saxatilis*)
Rocky Mountain National Park
photographs by Laurel Ladwig

Manager's Report

Robert Mallory (BA '90), *GES Alumni Chapter Manager*

It is the fall of 2023, and this is our sixth Alumni Chapter newsletter. Over the past 3 years a small group of us has been formally working to build "The GES Alumni Chapter of the Future!" But our big vision, started back in 2018. The big vision was to create an Alumni Chapter that was about more than Lobo athletics and green chili roasts. Our big vision was to create a chapter that would help the UNM Geography and Environmental Studies Department and its Alumni thrive.

So, just what is "The GES Alumni Chapter of the Future!?" It Is a Positive Feedback Loop of goodwill. The goodwill generated, in turn, can provide our department with a bounty of rich connections and positive support that are otherwise very difficult to achieve without the help of Alumni. I used the word "Our" very purposefully because, if you are an alum, the GES Department is partly yours as it certainly helped craft the professional you have become.

What does a Positive Feedback Loop do? A positive feedback loop—is a self-perpetuating pattern of behavior where the end result is reinforced by the initial act. The initial act in our case was graduating with a degree in GES. The overwhelming response from fellow alumni is how important the degree has been and how wonderful the department was when they were in school. I agree wholeheartedly. My degree is by far the best degree for me to have earned.

- We are planning our first Fall Event, which is set for October 28th. This is a meet 'n greet type of event where alumni, current students and GES faculty can enjoy free munchies provided by The UNM Alumni Association and tours of the wonderful [Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge](#) in Albuquerque's south valley, while we think of how to continue our quest for a great Alumni Chapter. Hopefully an event like this can help reinforce the Positive Feedback Loop of our dreams.
- Our LinkedIn Group has grown from 11 people to 41 people. Hopefully others will start posting to this group. My hope is that it becomes a useful forum for GES Alumni and part of our feedback loop of goodwill.
- Please consider writing a short article/blurb about what you have done with your degree. We have two in this newsletter, and it is part of building our community. Part of building the "Family" around this department is by telling others how important your degree has become.

Building our Alumni chapter has been a learning experience. We have tried different initiatives over the past few years and some have worked well, like our newsletter, and some fizzled on the launch pad. By taking a minimalist approach to govern our chapter by working with a Manager/Clerk model instead of a cumbersome board of directors model, we have been able to reduce the time it takes to try out ideas.

We have wonderful help from UNM. Our Alumni Relations Officer, **Britney Choy**, has been a wealth of insight and knowledge and is doing yeoman's work to help us grow and build. **Diana Martinez**, Arts & Sciences Director of Development, has provided indispensable knowledge, contacts, strategy and assistance throughout this year.

This newsletter would not be possible without the work of **Laurel Ladwig**, MS '20. We must be on the right track, because we did not have to pull any teeth this time for newsletter content. I have retired my dental extraction equipment for the time being as all who have contributed to this newsletter did so in a timely manner. What a great thing not to have to badger busy people for content. To have newsletter content delivered on time makes this so much easier. **Jake Wolff**, MS '17, chapter Clerk, has been steadfast as a strategist, as he works on his Ph.D. at Temple University, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Please help us build our chapter and please attend our Fall Event. This is a family-friendly event and children are welcome as hopefully they will become UNM GES Alumni someday. Thank you to everyone helping to build "The GES Alumni Chapter of the Future!" We could not do what we are doing without the steadfast support of so many in the department and at UNM as a whole.

If you like our newsletter, please forward it to as many people you know who would be interested in it.



Sustainability Studies Field Study Experience

Sustainability Studies Director **Andreas Hernandez** led 16 students to Brazil in from May 15th-June 2nd. This group deeply investigated meanings and practices of sustainability, through experiences in the “living laboratories” of social movements and communities. The group was based in the Caminho do Meio Buddhist ecovillage and stayed with families for five days in the Landless Community, which is at the core of what may be the world’s most elaborated, democratically-run, agroecological food system. The group also spent time with the Guarani peoples, professionals in health clinics, and an extraordinary womens cooperative that makes organic clothing. Students gained transformative insight from these communities on how to weave new social fabrics which are resilient and regenerative in the face social and ecological change.



Photo from the Filhos do Sepe Landless Movement Agroecological Settlement

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY GEOGRAPHY

By Maria Lane, *Professor*
and Ramona Malczynski, *Center for Community
Geography Doctoral Honors Fellow*

The spring 2023 semester was very busy for the R.H. Mallory Center for Community Geography. In February, we hosted a major symposium on Indigenous Cartographies, and in April/May we again served as the UNM campus coordinator for the worldwide City Nature Challenge event. In addition, we ended the semester by awarding funding to multiple professors and students to develop community-engaged project in their classrooms and research. To learn more about these activities, please review the highlights below or visit www.communitygeography.unm.edu.

The Center's goal is to build strong partnerships, foster durable community engagement, and develop new resources to address environmental problems and information gaps important to stewarding the places we love. We encourage GES Alumni to reach out if interested in helping us deepen this work. We would to hear your project ideas, community-partner suggestions, or support requests. (Contact us at communitygeography@unm.edu.)

SPRING 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Indigenous Cartographies @ UNM symposium:

The R.H. Mallory Center for Community Geography hosted five leaders in the domain of Indigenous cartography for a public panel event on 27 February 2023. Panelists discussed projects and ideas relevant to research and teaching across campus, and especially for community engagement. The public panel drew dozens of attendees from different departments across campus as well as many community members from off campus. In addition, the five panelists joined the UNM "Critical Cartography" course to engage in conversation with students. This open classroom also drew dozens of community members from outside of the course as well. The Center wishes to extend sincere thanks to our amazing Indigenous Cartographies @ UNM presenters: **Christine Ami**, **Deana Dartt**, **Rudo Kemper**, **Annita Lucchesi**, and **Reuben Rose-Redwood**. We hope GES alumni will take some time to learn more about the work of these



*Professor Maria Lane &
PhD Student Ramona Malczynski*

cartographers. You can also watch a recording of the public panel on our YouTube channel here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lm91G2PPLyw>.

City Nature Challenge: As we have done for the last several years, the Center for Community Geography again served as the UNM campus coordinator for City Nature Challenge 2023. This worldwide community-science event requires participants in urban areas to take photos of wildlife and upload them to a major database where experts and AI algorithms identify and catalog each observed species. To support and encourage participation from UNM students, faculty, and staff, Center staff organized a competition between the GES Department, the Biology Department, and the School of Architecture + Planning. The geographers avenged their 2022 loss to Biology and took home top honors with the most observations (7,028), most species observed (911), and most participants (93). Congratulations to our standout Team GES performers, who won \$50 gift cards for supporting the team: **Sami Stroud** won the "Most Geographical" award for covering 2,233.67 square miles with her observations; **Anni Hanna** won for the "Most Species" observed, with 194 species; **Ramona Malczynski** won for "Most Observations" with 543 uploaded photos; and **Blair Mirka** won "Most Unique" observation with a stunning photo of a [Cooper's hawk](#).

Student funding awards: We are excited to announce three students as Community Geography

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Fellows for 2023-24: **William Tatman** (pursuing a B.S. in Geography), **Taressa Nield** (pursuing a B.S. in Geography), and **Ramona Malczynski** (pursuing a PhD in Geography). The fellows will work on community-based projects throughout the year and will support Center events and initiatives.

Faculty funding awards: In addition, we awarded two faculty members with funds from our Classroom Fund for Community Engagement: **Dr. Yolanda Lin** will use Center funds in her spring 2024 course "Information Design in Science and Society." She plans to work with her students to develop promotional graphics, infographics and organize outreach for the 2024 City Nature Challenge event. Our second recipient, affiliated faculty member **Silas Grant**, will use Center funds to develop experiential learning opportunities for

a field-based course in the Four Corners area. The course will focus on community governance and environmental change and is slated to be offered for the first time in late spring 2024.

PLANS FOR 2023-24 ACADEMIC YEAR

In fall 2023, we will again host high school students on campus for Geography Awareness Week, and we will launch a new partnership in the International District focused on community mapping for foodshed awareness and planning. In spring 2024, we will: host a speaker and panel on community-engaged pedagogy, support coordinate the City Nature Challenge, and announce/distribute funding awards to students and faculty. **Be sure to follow @nmcommunitygeog on Instagram and Twitter to see our work in real time.**

Indigenous Cartographies @ UNM classroom event participants, from left to right: moderator Jolene Manus, and panelists Reuben Rose-Redwood (on screen), Rudo Kemper, Annita Lucchesi, and Christine Ami.



Dr. Tiffany Lee, chair of Native American Studies at UNM, introduces panelists at our Indigenous Cartographies @ UNM classroom event.

GES Faculty Update

Natasha Howard is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies with a secondary appointment in the Africana Studies Department. Natasha first joined Geography in the Fall of 2020. Her research interests are broadly organized around the study of race and place, with a particular focus on theorizing the spatial production of antiblackness. She does comparative work on race and race relations in the United States and Latin America.



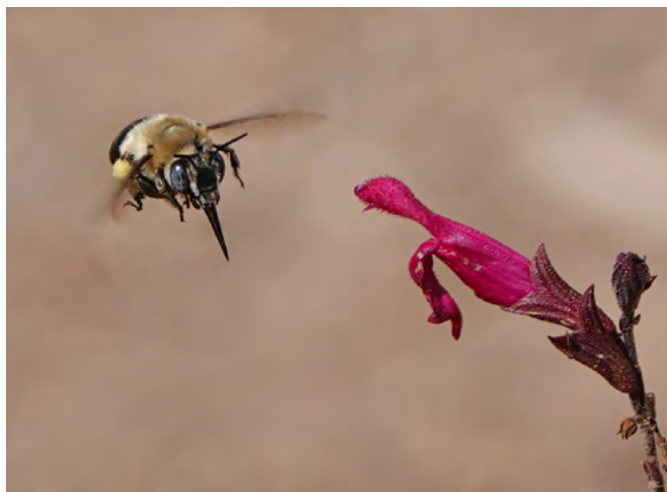
Assistant Professor Natasha Howard

Natasha teaches courses in the Geography and Environmental Studies Department on urban geography; law, place and space; race and geography; and geographies of the southwest. Her courses focus

on how racial ideology is structured in place and its consequences. She has written about anti-black misogyny in popular culture of the United States and Latin America. Additionally, she has published work on the historical struggle over Blacks Studies at the University of New Mexico. Currently, she is working on her first book-length manuscript exploring how thoughts on blackness and antiblackness have appeared in the formation of New Mexico. This project is unique in that it examines not just the presence of Black people in the state but rather will unpack how thoughts about blackness have factored into mythologizing New Mexico.

In Spring 2023, Dr. Howard was the recipient of the Library of Congress--Connecting Communities Digital Initiative Higher Education Grant. Through the grant, she will work with students in the UNM IFDM program to digitally recreate Albuquerque's first predominantly Black community--historic South Broadway. The digital project will be an interactive learning space utilizing photos, an oral history collection, maps, and other digital sources through the Library of Congress.

<https://blogs.loc.gov/ofthepeople/2023/08/2023-ccdi-higher-education-recipients-university-of-new-mexico/>



*female Common Digger Bee (Genus Anthophora)
at Autumn Sage (Salvia greggii)
photograph by Laurel Ladwig*

**Please share articles, updates, and
photographs for the next issue!**

**Email contributions to:
unmGESalumni@gmail.com**

GES Faculty Play Key Roles on Campus

Did you know that in addition to their work in the GES Department, our faculty are active in leadership across campus? They are raising GES's visibility not only at UNM but in the wider community.

Andreas Hernández is serving as President of Faculty Concilium, the governing body for UNM's Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI). **Maria Lane** was named as Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and also is currently a member of the UNM Budget Leadership Team. **Caitlin Lippitt** is Chair of the Faculty Senate Teaching Enhancement Committee (TEC), which among its many charges also plays an advisory role to the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). **Chris Lippitt** is Associate Dean for Research in the College of Arts & Sciences and as well as Director of the Center for the Advancement of Spatial Informatics Research and Education (ASPIRE). In 2023, **Melinda Morgan** assumed the directorship of the Intermountain West Transformation Network, a partnership between eight Western U.S. universities with over 50 partner organizations representing Tribal partners, governmental and non-governmental organizations, public utilities, conservation districts, irrigation districts, and municipalities. **Marygold Walsh-Dilley** creates opportunities for geography and sustainability studies students alike as the Faculty Advisor for Lobo Gardens.

Information Design in Science & Society

GES Assistant Professor **Yolanda C. Lin**'s Spring course GEOG 2115 "Information Design in Science and Society" featured a research-teaching mashup that led to the publication of a student infographic. Dr. Lin used data from GES Associate Professor **Marygold Walsh-Dilley**'s research with the UNM Basic Needs Project as part of the final assignment for the class. Students were asked to use Tableau software to generate interactive infographics that



*Assistant Professor Yolanda C. Lin
and Associate Professor Marygold Walsh-Dilley*

featured these real-world data. With guest lectures and feedback on their progress from Dr. Walsh-Dilley, students generated impressive graphics, sometimes with novel analyses not yet explored by the research team. After seeing some of the resulting infographics, Dr. Walsh-Dilley asked if she could include one particularly strong one in an upcoming publication about the research project. The [infographic](#) by undergraduate student **Anna Marklin** (Sustainability Studies minor) was featured in The Scholar-Practitioner, which disseminates emerging research findings related to hidden college student populations

to scholars and practitioners who support them. GEOG 2115 is a new offering in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, satisfying the Communication Gen Ed requirement. This research-teaching mashup was implemented by Dr. Lin with the support of UNM's Expanding Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences (ECURE) program.

[Infographic on page 9](#)

Basic Needs Insecurities are Linked to Anxiety and Depression Among College Students

By Anna Marklin, undergraduate at the University of New Mexico

A basic needs survey conducted at the University of New Mexico found that food and housing insecurity is prevalent among college students, and that students who are food or housing insecure are more likely to experience anxiety and depression.

Food Insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the inability to acquire those foods in a socially acceptable manner.

Housing Insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of and access to stable, safe, adequate and affordable housing, or the inability to acquire that housing in a socially acceptable manner.

Food Insecurity at UNM

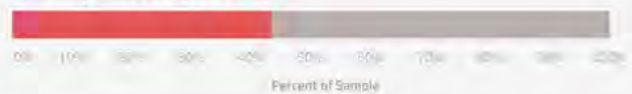


Food Insecurity
Food Insecure Food Secure

1 in 4 students at UNM are food insecure



Housing Insecurity at UNM



Housing Insecurity
Housing Insecure Housing Secure

Almost half of all students at UNM are housing insecure



Food insecurity is linked to anxiety at UNM



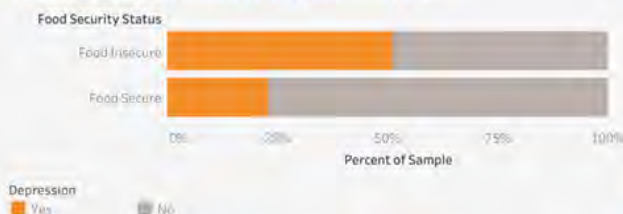
Food insecure students are **4.35 times** more likely to be **anxious** than food secure students.
95% CI: 2.99, 6.34

Housing insecurity is linked to anxiety at UNM



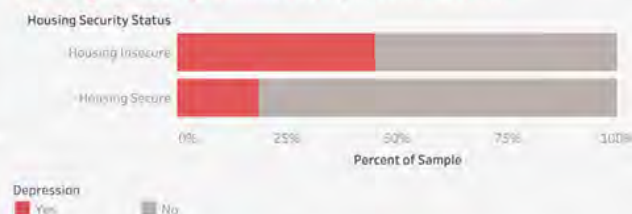
Housing insecure students are **3.43 times** more likely to be **anxious** than housing secure students.
95% CI: 2.50, 4.69

Food insecurity is linked to depression at UNM



Food insecure students are **3.18 times** more likely to be **depressed** than food secure students.
95% CI: 2.35, 4.50

Housing insecurity is linked to depression at UNM



Housing insecure students are **3.16 times** more likely to be **depressed** than housing secure students.
95% CI: 2.29, 4.35

References:

Coakley, K. E., Cargás, S., Walsh-Dilley, M., & Mechtler, H. (2022). Basic Needs Insecurities Are Associated with Anxiety, Depression and Poor Health Among University Students of the State of New Mexico. *Journal of Community Health*, 47(3), 454-463. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10990-022-01025-9>

NCHP
NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR
HIDDEN STUDENT POPULATIONS

To sign up for ongoing email updates about the 2024 national conference and/or for archives of *The Scholar-Practitioner*, go to: <https://risforthursday.okstate.edu>

© All rights are reserved by the R is for Thursday Network, Oklahoma State University, the NCHP, and the research author(s).

Infographic by undergraduate student Anna Marklin in Dr. Yolanda C. Lin's GEOG 2115 "Information Design in Science & Society" using data from Dr. Marygold Walsh-Dilley's research with the UNM Basic Needs Project.

You're invited!

The 2023 ASPIRE Open House is scheduled for November 9, 2023.

This year's Open House will be will feature a Keynote Speaker, **Dr. Xiaoyang Zhang** from South Dakota State University, a student research poster session, and public reception as part of UNM's Research & Discovery Week. Times for the events will be shared on our website: aspire.unm.edu. The Center for Advancement of Spatial Informatics Research & Education (ASPIRE) is a collaborative, interdisciplinary center for spatial data acquisition, representation, and modeling at the University of New Mexico with faculty from the departments of GES, Earth and Planetary Science, and Biology.

The GES Alumni community is also invited to join the regularly occurring **ASPIREational Talks and Social Hour** series, which are scheduled to occur from 4-5pm at **Draft & Table** (located in the SUB on UNM's main campus) on the following Tuesdays this semester:

September 12, October 3, October 24, November 14, and December 5.

ASPIREational Talks feature a short 10-15 minute research talk followed by a social hour to get to know the ASPIRE community. We hope to see you there!

We are extremely proud to announce that Chris Lippitt was promoted to full professor in Sept of 2023. Send him an email of congratulations.

Geography Awareness Week

Members of the Student Association of Geography & Environmental Studies are busy working on Geography Awareness Week (GAW) and to look forward to announcing events in the next several weeks. This year, GAW will be held the week of Nov. 12th (13-17), with GIS day on Wednesday the 15th and the Annual Murphy Lecture on Friday, the 17th.



earthobservatory.nasa.gov

Annual Murphy Lecture - November 17th

The Annual Murphy Lecture will be held at the end of Geography Awareness Week on Friday, November 17, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The speaker is: [Professor Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux](#), of the University of Vermont, where she is also the state climatologist. An applied climatologist by training, Dr. Dupigny-Giroux's research interests intersect a number of interdisciplinary fields including hydroclimatic natural hazards and climate literacy, geospatial climate and land-surface processes, all within the context of our changing climate.

In addition to her research, she founded the Satellites Weather and Climate (SWAC) project in 2008 to provide professional development for K-12 teachers to promote climate literacy and interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) careers.



CONGRATULATIONS!



**CHRIS
DUVALL**

**MIRIAM
GAY-ANTAKI**

**ANDREAS
HERNANDEZ**

**MARIA
LANE**

GES Rock Stars 2023!!

The Teaching Enhancement Committee, The Center for Teaching and Learning, The Office of the Provost, and the College of Arts and Sciences celebrated UNM's outstanding teachers at the annual Teaching Excellence Awards Ceremony held on Friday, May 5th. Four GES educators were honored:

2023—2025 Presidential Teaching Fellow

Maria Lane, Professor & Director, R.H. Mallory Center for Community Geography

College of Arts & Sciences Teaching Excellence Award for Lecturers

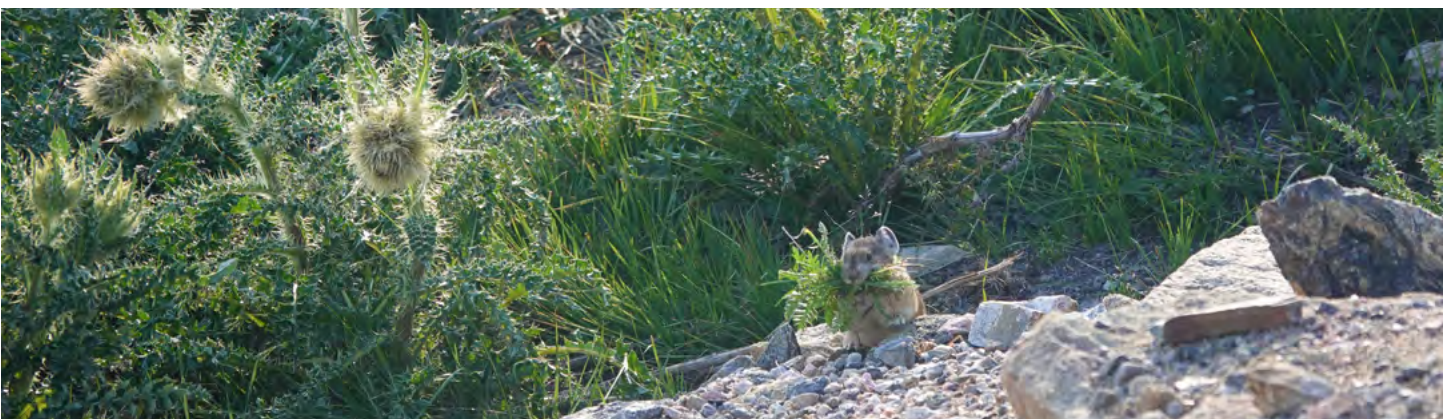
Andreas Hernandez, Lecturer III

New Teacher of the Year

Miriam Gay-Antaki, Assistant Professor

Golden Paw Recipient

Chris Duvall, Professor & GES Department Chair



Pika (*Ochotona princeps ssp. saxatilis*) collecting vegetation to dry and store for winter at Rocky Mountain National Park
photograph by Laurel Ladwig

Oaxaca and Mezcal in the Twenty-First Century Marketplace

Rhonda Brulotte

Associate Professor and Associate Department Chair

"Mezcal, that's bootleg tequila, isn't it?" That was the response I used to get from people ten years ago when I began conducting research on mezcal production in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. Now, I'm more likely to hear, "I love mezcal! There's a bar downtown that makes a great cocktail with it."

It is precisely this shift that I set out to document through my research, which examines Oaxacan mezcal as a newcomer to the global market. Mezcal is an alcoholic spirit made by distilling the fermented juice of the agave, the same plant used to produce tequila. But whereas tequila has enjoyed vast commercial success since the 1970s, until the late 1990s mezcal remained a regional drink; it was produced on a relatively small scale for local consumption by indigenous and other rural Oaxacans, and was virtually unknown outside of Mexico. Today, not only is mezcal Oaxaca's fastest-growing rural industry, it connects the region to a network of producers, brokers, and consumers across the world. Mezcal may be joining more commonplace food products of Mexican origin in foreign markets (corn, chile, chocolate), but its popularity is distinctly tied to a new class of global consumers who prize mezcal as a "craft" beverage within the artisanal food movement. At the same time, mezcal's popularity is prompting questions about the sustainability of the industry as well as its potential as a driver of economic development in one Mexico's poorest and most ethnically diverse states. My work grapples with these critical issues, providing one of the first ethnographic accounts of the growth of the how mezcal market impacts people who occupy different positions along its value chain.

Ronda L. Brulotte is Associate Professor of Geography & Environmental Studies and her research focuses broadly on craft economies in Mexico. Her book *Oaxaca and Mezcal in the Twenty-First Century Marketplace* will be published by the University of Texas Press in 2024.



Photo courtesy of author



Love in a Cup a story of blue corn and place

PhD student Cassidy Tawse-Garcia, whose research interests include Sovereignty Movements, Mutual Aid, Food Justice and Equity, writes for the Edible New Mexico magazine. See her latest work here: <https://www.ediblenm.com/love-in-a-cup/>

Message from the new Dean of Arts & Sciences

Dear Geography Alumni,

It is a sincere honor for me to introduce myself to you as the new dean of The UNM College of Arts & Sciences. I am thrilled to join the Lobo community and look forward to advancing the research, education, and service mission of the largest academic unit at UNM. As the College's first official alumni group, I'm looking forward to hearing from you about what it means to be an alum of this extraordinary community. I also want to take this opportunity to share a little about myself and my goals ahead.

Getting to Know Me

Prior to coming to UNM, I was the Associate Vice President of Development for Virginia Commonwealth University which is a Minority Serving Institution with a very high research activity (or R1) ranking – just like UNM. I also bring with me years of leadership experience as the Dean of the College of Humanities and Sciences at VCU as well as Associate Dean and Divisional Dean for the Social



Dean of Arts & Sciences Jennifer Malat, Ph.D.

Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Cincinnati. I have dedicated my career to community-engaged research and fostering interdisciplinary approaches to inclusive education, and I can't think of any better place to advance this work than at the UNM College of Arts & Sciences. You can learn more about me and my background by clicking [here](#).

Getting to Know the College

Over the course of the next few months, I will be reaching out to our various stakeholders to do one of the things that I find most meaningful as a leader: listen to your stories. Learning about how the College has inspired our faculty, staff, students, and alumni is going to be vital as we embark on a plan for the College that aligns with UNM's strategic framework, [UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined](#). The feedback provided from these conversations will help define the next trajectory forward for the College, and expand upon our enduring legacy as the heart of UNM's campus.

Getting to Know You

As one of our nearly 80,000 alumni of the College, you are not only a piece of our 134-year legacy, but a vital part of our future. Every single one of you has an important story to share about what drew you to the Department of Geography & Environmental Sciences, the opportunities you were provided with as a student, and how those opportunities have propelled you in your current careers. While I look forward to meeting those of you who reside near Albuquerque, I realize that many of you live throughout the country – and the world – so I invite you to share these stories at ASAnnouncements@unm.edu.

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*If you like this newsletter,
please forward to a friend, Help us build.*

Getting to Know Us

If you haven't been to campus in a while there are a number of ways that you can stay up to date on the incredible things happening here. By registering with [UNM Alumni Connect](#), you can be sure that we have your current contact information in order to reach out to you. You can also check out the number of events happening at the College by visiting the [UNM Events Calendar](#). Finally, I encourage you to check out our most recent [impact report](#) which highlights the amazing scholarship of the College's faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

I look forward to getting to know you, and thank each of you for the impact you make on our students and communities each day.

Best,

Jennifer Malat, Ph.D.

Dean and Professor

UNM College of Arts & Sciences



Where and in what year was this picture taken? Write in and tell us.

UNMgesAlumni@gmail.com

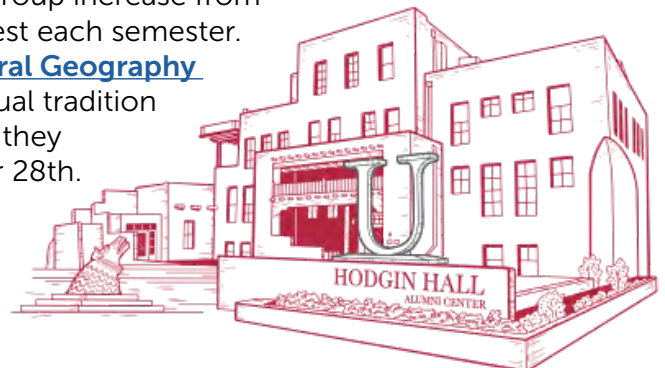
Message from Britney Choy, Alumni Relations Officer

It's been nine months since I began my position as Alumni Relations Officer and I have enjoyed being part of this growing process with the Geography Alumni Chapter. We want to create meaningful, beneficial connections between alumni and the University. I believe that is what the Chapter is now experiencing as their outreach has seen the Geography Alumni LinkedIn group increase from 11 to 40 members and the Newsletter gaining more interest each semester.

I am very excited for the upcoming [October 28th inaugural Geography Chapter event](#) and my hope is that it will become an annual tradition that Geography students look forward to attending when they become alumni. I look forward to seeing you on October 28th.

Stay Informed,

Britney Choy



Update from GES Alumnus Jesse Sprague

Before founding a company and venturing into the world of technology and business, I was a student filled with curiosity and passion at the University of New Mexico's Geography and Environmental Sciences (GES) Department. Those years were transformative in shaping my worldview, and helping me achieve the career I have today.

At UNM's GES Department, I didn't just learn; I gained a fresh perspective and new experiences that blended cutting edge technology with a profound respect for the environment and our responsibilities as its stewards. The dedicated advisors, the firm support, and the collaborative atmosphere of the GES community all played pivotal roles in molding my aspirations and ambitions.

It was here that I was introduced to the infinite possibilities that spatial technologies and remote sensing data have to offer. This academic grounding not only prepared me for a career but also instilled a responsibility to approach technology with an environmental conscience.

While a student, I was able to learn about this technology through hands-on application with what is now the ASPIRE laboratory. I was able to get valuable industry knowledge by participating in the NSF's i-Corps program. This comprehensive approach to creating new technologies was unique to any experience I have had anywhere else.

Fast forward to today, and our company stands as a testament to those formative years. Our use of remote sensing data science and geospatial technologies to better protect our nation's critical infrastructure, and better protect our environment and communities, is a nod to my academic roots at UNM. It's more than just technology; it's a commitment to our planet.

I'm thrilled to see how the GES Department continues to evolve, becoming a beacon for students and researchers alike. I genuinely believe it's on the path to national recognition, and I'm proud to be one of its alumni. My journey from a student to founder can be encapsulated in one simple insight: The experiences, values, and mentorship at the GES Department are unparalleled and will guide and inspire you, every step of the way.

Best regards,

Jesse

Jesse Sprague, Founder and UNM GES Alumnus



Update from GES Alumnus Bryan Kinworthy

My favorite part of Geography, aside from just how fascinating it can be, is that it demands fluency in diverse skill sets. I graduated with a masters from GES in 2013, and I have never felt trapped in one specialty or type of employment like others I know - quite the opposite. Today, I am a Geospatial Analyst with the City of Calgary's Imagery Group, a geospatial science role. The group is responsible for aerial imagery products such as LiDAR, orthophotos, oblique photographs, drone flights, and several LiDAR- or photogrammetry-derived datasets for urban infrastructure. Before that, I was with the State of Missouri's Department of Natural Resources managing environmental projects, enforcing and helping to create regulations, and using GIS as a tool for researching environmental problems. Before that I was researching glacier/permafrost interactions at the University of Calgary and ended up camping for a few weeks atop a glacier on an uninhabited Arctic island.



I studied plenty of technical ideas of Physical Geography and Geospatial Science at UNM. The science courses look great on a resume, but courses like Geographic History and Methods (GEOG 501) and Approaches to Geographical Research (GEOG 502) were invaluable. They seemed silly at times - how am I supposed to use Feminist Geography to understand temperature change in ice? Mathematics does not care about Critical Geography, right? It turns out anyone coming from a university science program can measure temperature change or press the button to calculate values. But it is rare and exceptional to find staff with technical backgrounds also with skills to critically evaluate reports and projects. I do caution Geography graduates about specialization in the job market though; it can be difficult to get a foot in the door with an interdisciplinary degree like Geography.

I cherish my time at GES, and I am thankful to the faculty for supporting my unique research ideas. My advisor and thesis committee brought me well outside my comfort zone in the best possible way, and undoubtedly did the same for them. I am grateful for the amazing students with unique stories I was privileged to help in the labs. I can still remember their faces and comments; one showed me glacial moraines in his hometown, another taught me about growing up in a Mexican bordertown, and two girls cared enough to write on my evaluation that I need to not drink so much soda (I cut it out entirely, girls). The place is too unique to not learn about yourself, yet extraordinarily competent. In one of my favorite discussions with my advisor, **Chris Duvall**, he told me that he had only seen one thesis not come back with comments. "...Was it yours?" He uncomfortably responded, "well, yes." One afternoon after a meeting with Chris, we mounted our bikes and rode off, but not before he jumped into a bunch of loose rock outside Bandelier. How can someone so smart and kind also be so cool? Maybe the previous sentence should be the Department motto.

**Share articles, updates, and photographs
for the next issue!**

**Email contributions to:
unmGESalumni@gmail.com**

**Saturday
October 28, 2023
1 PM
FREE**

JOIN US

UNM Geography Alumni Chapter at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge



**An Alumni Welcome Reception
Followed by one of the following
activities: Hiking in the Bosque,
Birding, or Biking the Trails of The
Wildlife Refuge**



Geographers out and about...at Valle de Oro NWR

Our first chapter event will be held on [October 28th at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge!](#)



ABQ Backyard Refuge Program Sustainability Studies Intern, Rae Bennu, helping with water quality testing at the VdONWR visitor center pond.



Center for Community Geography Doctoral Honors Fellow Ramona Malczynski during the Bernalillo County Open Space Master Naturalist Herpetology class.



GES Master's Student Laura Paskus holding one of the yard signs created as a fundraiser for the [ABQ Backyard Refuge Program](#) that feature her poems.

Alumni Communications

At the Department's website geography.unm.edu under the "Keep in Touch" pull down menu there is a list of three Listservs which you might find interesting.

Colloquia & other department events:

publicgeo-L@unm.edu

Job announcements:

GEOG-JOBS-L@LIST.UNM.EDU.

General updates from our chapter:

GEOG_ALUMNI-L@LIST.UNM.EDU

These Listservs are a great way to stay in contact with current events and goings on at the department.

To sign up, follow these steps:

Send an email to listserv@list.unm.edu

Leave the subject line blank

In the body of the email type:

"subscribe (name of the listserv) and your first name and last name" ONLY.

You will receive a confirmation email right back.

These listservs are very easy to unsubscribe from and instructions for that are listed not eh "Keep in Touch" page as well.

Please post to the GES alumni listserv whenever you have news or events that might be of interest to fellow alumni. The alumni listserv is an expedient way to get timely information to our community. This newsletter will be published a two times per year and we look forward to this being a forum for sharing articles about both academic and professional work. Please contribute articles about your professional and community projects or applications of geographic research. You can send articles to UNMgesAlumni@gmail.com. We are working to keep our alumni connected and would appreciate more alumni to join us in this effort!

Chapter Business

Help us keep your contact information accurate:

On the UNM Alumni Association Website:

www.UNMALUMNI.COM

Under "Chapter & Groups" navigate to:

"UNM Geography & Environmental Studies Alumni Chapter"

About half way down on the page you will see at red bottom marked "Membership Form"

Please click on that and fill in your information.

This will provide the most accurate information to the Association for distribution of *The Mirage*, our newsletter and any other alumni-related information.

Support our Department!

For many alumni, there is a strong desire to make a difference in our world by supporting future generations of students. If you have been touched by your experience with the Department of Geography at UNM, and would like to support our work, please consider contributing to one of the following funds.

[Elinore Barrett and Robert Campbell Endowed Scholarship in Geography](#)

[R.H. Mallory Center for Community Geography:](#) _

[Brad Cullen Geography Grad Student Fund](#)

[Richard Murphy Memorial Scholarship in Geography](#)

[Friends of Geography Fund](#)

[Department of Geography and Environmental Studies Chair's Fund](#)

Our sincerest thanks go to all of you who have already donated.

If you would like more information about contributing to the Department of Geography, please feel free to contact Diana.Martinez@unmfund.org.

[Please visit the UNM Foundation website.](#)



Backyard Refuge Habitat Garden at Valle de Oro NWR (restoration in progress)— find the Monarch! photograph by Laurel Ladwig