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# UNM Law Connect

December 2020



Wishing you Happy Holidays and a prosperous & healthy New Year from everyone at the UNM School of Law!

## Message from Dean Sergio Pareja

**How You Can Help Students & Double Your Donation!**



Dear faculty, staff, alums, and friends of UNM School of Law,

I write to you with an update on our efforts to raise money for a mental health counselor. As you know, an anonymous member of our faculty agreed to donate up to \$30,000 to the law school as a matching gift to encourage others to give in support of our students' mental health. This money is to be used to pay for a half-time mental health counselor at the law school. Since we started just a few weeks ago, we have already raised about \$18,000 of the \$30,000 that will be matched. **This means that we just need to raise**

another \$12,000 to ensure that we will have a mental health counselor at the law school for the next two years.

Our goal is to raise the full amount by December 31. Please join me in supporting this important cause. **If you would like to give, please click on the button below.**

[Donate Here](#)

Alternatively, if you prefer to pay by check, please make your check payable to UNM Foundation and write "Law Student Mental Health" in the memo. Mail your check to

UNM Foundation  
Two Woodward Ctr  
700 Lomas NE, Ste 108  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

For questions concerning contributions, contact Nickie Vigil at [nickie.vigil@unmfund.org](mailto:nickie.vigil@unmfund.org).

Thank you once again to those who have already given, and thank you to those of you who will now give in response to this request. Stay safe, everybody.

Sergio Pareja, Dean  
UNM School of Law

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## Student News

### Law Students Impact Thousands of New Mexicans



(Left-Right) Jessica Arreola, Kateri West, Kate Girard

#### **Students and alumna help change policy for childcare assistance that affects thousands of NM families**

When 3Ls Jessica Arreola and Kateri West sought to help fellow parents in Law School receive support for childcare, they had no idea they would be a part of changing a



Christopher Hall

#### **Advocacy to stop thousands of New Mexicans from losing power during pandemic**

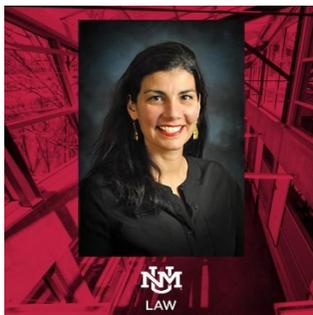
3L Christopher Hall has been working with Professor Gabe Pacyniak for several months on legislative and regulatory approaches to help New Mexicans at risk of

policy that would help thousands of families throughout New Mexico. With UNM Law staff, they raised the issue to UNM Law alumna Kate Girard ('07), General Counsel at the NM Early Childhood Education and Care Department. With her help, an amendment was created to expand childcare resources to graduate students and others having trouble due to COVID-19. Although the policy change will help families during the pandemic, it is intended to continue indefinitely. To read more, please [visit here](#).

utility disconnection during the pandemic. Currently, more than 44,000 New Mexicans are at risk of losing their utilities. Governor Lujan Grisham issued an executive order establishing a public health emergency moratorium on disconnections. In late October, Christopher testified before the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission to suggest improvements and support for making the moratorium permanent for the duration of the crisis. To read more about Christopher's and Professor Pacyniak's advocacy efforts, [read here](#).

## Faculty News

### UNM Law Professors Recognized for Teaching and Expertise



Maryam Ahranjani



Christine Zuni Cruz



Barbara Creel

We are proud to see our faculty's expertise and commitment to justice and legal education recognized.

**Professor Maryam Ahranjani** recently received two prestigious awards. On Nov. 19, she received the **ABA Criminal Justice Section's 2020 Raeder-Taslitz Award**. In late October, she was selected as the **2019-2020 New Teacher of the Year** by the UNM Center for Teaching Excellence.

**Professor Christine Zuni Cruz** was also recognized by the UNM Center for Teaching Excellence and received the **2019-2020 Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award**. She was also recently awarded a **Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law and Governance** at McGill University, 2020-2021.

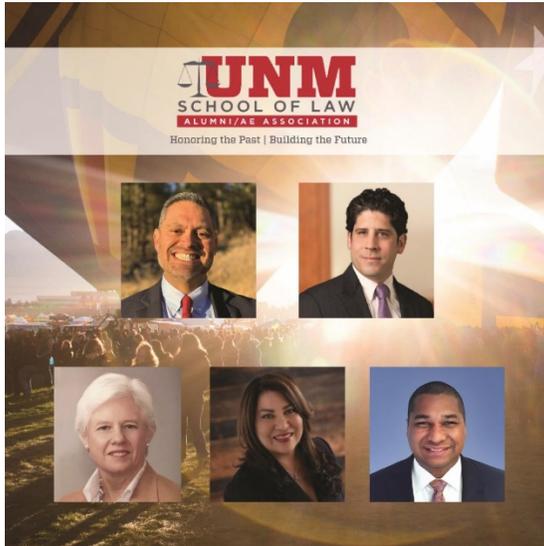
**Professor Barbara Creel** was recently announced as a **2021 ABA Spirit of Excellence** Honoree. She was selected for her work in Native American rights and individual civil rights and has been dubbed the "Indian Civil Rights Guru." Creel also recently received the **Sarah T. Hughes Civil Rights Award** from the Federal Bar Association. She was the third Native American in the award's history to receive the honor.

**Congratulations to our award-winning faculty!**

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## Alumni News

### UNM Law Alumni Association Board Welcomes New Members

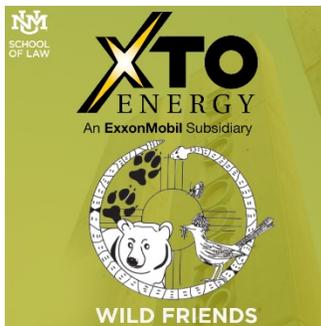


The UNM Law Alumni Board welcomed 5 new members into its ranks at the end of October: Michael Aragon ('99- Las Vegas, NM), Mark Barron ('06- Denver, CO), Ann Claassen ('89- Albuquerque), Connie Flores ('08- El Paso, TX), and Craig Williams ('14- Washington, DC). They will join 30 other members of the Law Alumni Board whose efforts facilitate alumni connections to the Law School and each other, recognize alumni contributions to the Law School and greater community, as well as provide approximately \$75,000 annually in scholarships to law students. Welcome aboard!

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## Donor News

### XTO Energy Provides \$50,000 Grant to Wild Friends



XTO Energy presented a \$50,000 grant to Wild Friends, an award-winning conservation and civics program through the University of New Mexico School of Law. This grant expands the Wild Friends program to southeast New Mexico and enables all eighth-grade students enrolled at Carlsbad Intermediate School to participate. Thanks to the generous grant from XTO Energy, Wild Friends was able to start in the 2020 fall semester. For more information on XTO Energy's grant and partnership with Wild Friends, [visit here](#).

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## Upcoming Events

### Free CLEs



Need to get in your CLEs before the end of the year?

The UNM School of Law is happy to offer the following FREE Immigration CLEs thanks to the generosity of the Jacqueline Leaffer Foundation.

#### **Fri., Dec. 11 from 12 PM - 1 PM**

"Ethical Considerations and the Duty to Advise II: Don't Panic! Surviving A Crimmigration Mistake"

This program has been approved by NM MCLE for **1.0 Ethics** credits.

**Fri., Dec. 18 from 12 PM - 1 PM**

**12 PM - 1 PM**

"The Weed Update: Marijuana Offenses and Immigration"

This program has been approved by NM MCLE for **1.0 General** credits.

To sign up for any of the above CLEs, please email [burbank@law.unm.edu](mailto:burbank@law.unm.edu).

**You can find our full FREE CLE library [here](#).**



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