



The University of New Mexico

Department of Political Science

Convocation 2020

Every spring the Political Science Department hosts an on-campus convocation to honor Political Science graduates and their families and friends.

Unfortunately, this year's celebration was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we'd like to invite all 2020 graduates to our next in-person convocation, which we hope will be next spring. That event will be a joint celebration of 2020 and 2021 department graduates.

As that date gets closer, we will reach out to you via email, social media, and our department's webpage to inform you of the details. We hope that you'll be able to return to campus to celebrate with us at that time.

Video Messages

Message from Department Chair Timothy Krebs

Welcome to the 2020 political science department convocation. My name is Tim Krebs, and I am chair of the political science department at the University of New Mexico.

At this time, we celebrate the end of a number of things: the spring semester, the academic year, and your time as students at UNM.

But to think of this as only an ending is to miss something much more significant, which is that this is the beginning of something brand new, something for which your time at UNM has prepared you, but which might not be totally clear to you at this precise moment.

The one thing we can be sure of in life is that change is inevitable. As human beings we respond and adapt. We see opportunities to advance even in the midst of darkness and struggle. We are struggling right now at home and abroad, and you have struggled mightily this spring, but I have faith in the future of our country because you're coming up. The most tolerant and innovative generation in American history, you will soon be charged with leading our cities, our counties, our school districts, our states, and our nation, not only in government, but in all walks of life. I'm thankful for you, and I'm proud of you and your accomplishments. I know we're in good hands.

Although our focus is on our graduating seniors, M.A. and Ph.D. recipients, it is also important to celebrate those in your lives who have helped to make your graduation a reality.

I want therefore to recognize and honor the support of parents and guardians, grandparents, aunts and uncles, husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, partners, and other family and friends, without whose support, love, and encouragement, this day would not be possible.

Next, I want to recognize our outstanding political science department staff who you have no doubt gotten to know over the years, as they handled curriculum issues, scholarship and internship applications, advising concerns, and make up exams that have helped you achieve your goals and complete your degree program.

Ashley Banks is our department administrator, and Amaris Gutierrez is our graduate program director. Ashley and Amaris are critical to our department's success. And both stepped up in a big way this spring to keep the department and our students moving forward. I'd also like to recognize Sage Byrne who has been our department's in-house College of Arts and Sciences advisor, helping to keep students on track to graduation.

Having a talented, hardworking, and fun staff that always put the department's needs first is truly a blessing.

We also want to thank our alumni and donors on whose support we depend.

And last, but not least, I'd like to thank my outstanding faculty colleagues, who moved mountains to continue teaching this spring.

Dr. Sergio Ascencio

Professor Ascencio earned his PhD from University of Rochester. He is a specialist in comparative politics, with an emphasis on the politics of Mexico.

Dr. Lonna Atkeson

Professor Atkeson earned her PhD from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is an expert in voting behavior, political participation, and election administration. She is also Director of the Institute for Social Research at UNM.

Dr. Christopher Butler

Professor Butler earned his PhD from Michigan State University. He is an expert in international relations and research methodology, with a focus on conflict studies, political bargaining, and human rights violations.

Dr. Jessica Feezell

Professor Feezell earned her PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is an expert in political communication with an emphasis on how media exposure affects political engagement, citizenship, and identity.

Dr. Ellen Grigsby

Professor Grigsby earned her PhD from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is an expert in political theory, and is currently the director of the Fred Harris Congressional Internship program.

Dr. Wendy Hansen

Professor Hansen earned her PhD from the California Institute of Technology. She is an expert in international relations, public policy and methodology, with a focus on trade policy, reparations, and corporate political behavior in the U.S.

Dr. Mala Htun

Professor Htun earned her PhD from Harvard University. She is an expert in comparative politics, women's rights, politics of race and ethnicity, Latin American politics, and diversity and inclusion in the academy. She is co-PI and deputy director of [ADVANCE at UNM](#).

Peter Kierst, J.D.

Professor Kierst earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of New Mexico. He is an expert in Constitutional Law, and serves as the department's undergraduate advisor and the College of Arts and Science's pre-law advisor.

Dr. Deborah McFarlane

Professor McFarlane earned her Doctorate in Public Health degree from the University of Texas. She is an expert in public policy, health policy, and population.

Dr. Jami Nelson-Nuñez

Professor Nelson-Nuñez earned her PhD from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is an expert in comparative politics, comparative political economy, development, poverty and inequality, and water and health in Latin America.

Dr. Mark Peceny

Professor Peceny earned his PhD from Stanford University. He is an expert in International Relations and is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Dr. Kathy Powers

Professor Powers earned her PhD from The Ohio State University. She is an expert in international relations with an emphasis on transitional justice.

Dr. Michael Rocca

Professor Rocca earned his PhD from the University of California at Davis. He is an expert in American politics, with a focus on the U.S. Congress and campaign finance in U.S. elections. He also currently serves as our department's internship coordinator.

Dr. Gabriel Sanchez

Professor Sanchez earned his PhD from the University of Arizona. He is an expert in American politics with an emphasis on Race and Ethnic Politics. He also serves as executive director of the Center for Social Policy at UNM and is a Principal at Latino Decisions, the nation's leading survey firm focused on the Latino electorate.

Dr. William Stanley

Professor Stanley earned his PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is an expert in comparative politics and international relations with an emphasis on conflict and peacekeeping in Latin America, and environmental policy. He also serves as Associate Provost for Faculty Success.

On behalf of the political science department, it has been our pleasure and honor to serve you in your educational journey and we hope that you remain involved and interested in political science at UNM as ALUMNI. Congratulations! Stay safe in the days and months ahead.

It's now my privilege to introduce our 2020 student speaker, Lia Stefanovich. Lia is graduating with a B.A. in Political Science, with a Minor in International Studies. Her senior thesis draws on graduate coursework she completed while studying abroad in Estonia, and examines the relationship between aid allocation, corruption, and e-governance in developing countries.

Outside of her studies, Lia tries to stay involved in state and local politics. Through the Political Science department's internship program, she interned on Martin Heinrich's senate campaign

throughout her sophomore year. She has also served as Secretary and now Vice President of UNM College Democrats, helping to organize panel events, voter registration, and to provide volunteers/interns for local campaigns. Lia has previously worked for an immigration law firm in Albuquerque, and as an intern for Think New Mexico, a state policy think tank in Santa Fe. This fall, she will pursue an M.A. in Political Science at Central European University in Vienna. In the future, she hopes to pursue a PhD in Political Science.

Message from 2020 Class Speaker **Lia Stefanovich**

Congratulations, class of 2020! Not to sound like every single communication you've received these past couple of months, but I really do hope you're safe—and that you're able to take some time to celebrate your graduation. Obviously, this is not how any of us imagined things would go. I wish, more than anything, that I could say goodbye to you in person. It's also really difficult to know what to say under the circumstances. I wrote and rewrote this way too many times. (Don't get me wrong—it was not a net benefit to its quality.) I couldn't figure out if I should try to be serious or comical or uplifting; if I should ignore or acknowledge the cloud of uncertainty under which we are living. Anyway, it turns out I'm terrible at jokes.

The other day, on the poet Adrienne Rich's birthday, I found myself rereading her poem "In Those Years". I was struck, in particular by these lines: "we were trying to live a personal life / But the great dark birds of history screamed and plunged / into our personal weather". They remind me of a sad truth about politics that is especially salient now; namely, that public policy and political institutions can be invisible to many of us until they have dramatic, immediate effects on our lives. Of course, for those of us in this program, it should not come as a surprise just how much our health and safety depend on the decisions of our governments. It should also not be a surprise that the burdens of crises fall heaviest on those who have always borne the brunt of the injustices of our political and economic system. It was a frustration with inequality that made me choose this major. Maybe it was something similar for you.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about how to square the idealism that made me want to major in political science with the imperatives of the world in which we live. Sometimes I think that studying political science has expanded my knowledge of social problems and their causes without giving me the ready solutions I hoped to find. If asked to explain why things are a certain way, now my answer usually begins with "well, it's complicated." The real world is messy, it turns out, and knowing the right thing to do is not the same as knowing how to see it done. (Which is why, every once in a while, I find myself asking Google: "is it too late to be a doctor?") Figuring out how to invest your skills, time, and energy to have the greatest impact with your life is no easy task, and sadly no one has come up with an algorithm yet to do that for us.

If anything good has come of the past few weeks, it is that they have forced me to accept that we have far less control over the course of our lives than we may like to believe. I've also realized that I have been guilty of overlooking what I do have control over: how I show up and care for the people in my life. That I find myself here at all is because of the many people who, in various ways, have done that for me. I owe so much to the administrative staff, advisors, professors, and all my classmates in this program who have been so generous with their time and energy over the past four years.

I have been humbled and inspired most of all by you. I graduate a different person than I came in, in no small part because of conversations with classmates, who forced me to reconsider many of my assumptions about the world. I have made friends at UNM that I hope to have for the rest of my life. It was peers in this program that made me believe in my own potential, that went out of their way to connect me to internships and opportunities—even if it meant we would be competing for them. So many of you have supported me in some way throughout the past four years. (A few of you have even tolerated my anxious texts about writing this speech). I also know that, at the same time, many of you were juggling familial obligations, jobs, relationships, and even your own mental and physical health in addition to coursework. I want you to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Many of our greatest contributions to this community are not reflected on diplomas or resumes, but those are the ones which make everything else possible. I want to congratulate you on the many different achievements your degree may represent. Please don't take any of this to mean that I think you shouldn't stay politically active (I DO) or that you shouldn't aim for a career that will make the world a better place. I only mean to say that you can do that anywhere, and in some ways you have been doing it already.

I wanted to conclude by thanking a few people in particular: my family; Grace Werner (would be totally lost without you); my oldest friends, Josh Duran and Rachel Cuomo; all of my incredible friends from College Democrats (especially Julisa and Adam); my classmates in the junior honors seminar; my brilliant friends Josh Tise and Larson Fritz; Eric Anderson (who made me get things done); Dr. Christopher Butler; and my thesis advisor, Dr. Jami Nelson-Nuñez (I owe you so much). Most of all I want to thank my sister, Ollie, who was my very first teacher.

2019-2020 Graduating Class

Doctor of Philosophy

Spring 2020

Barbara Gomez Aguiñaga

Title of Dissertation: “*Hora de las Noticias: The Importance of Spanish-Language News Media for US Latinos*”

Committee: Gabriel Sanchez (chair), Jessica Feezell, Michael Rocca, and Matthew Barreto.

Colin Hannigan

Title of Dissertation: “*Four’s a Crowd? Side-taking and Strategic Intervention Decision-making among Networks of Third-party Actors*”

Committee: Christopher Butler (chair), William Stanley, Sergio Ascencio, and Cassy Dorff.

Summer 2020

Alexis Adams

Title of Dissertation: “*Addiction, Attrition, and Visualizations: An Exploration of Online Survey Panels*”

Committee: Lonna Atkeson (chair), Wendy Hansen, Cherie Maestas, and Mike Alvarez.

Maria Livaudais

Title of Dissertation: *“Understanding Opinions of Healthcare Reform: The Roles of Self-Interest, Linked Fate, and Racial Resentment”*

Committee: Gabriel Sanchez (chair), Michael Rocca, Jessica Feezell, and Francisco Pedraza.

Master of Arts

Spring 2020

Michael Flaherty
Dylan McArthur
Florent Nkouaga
Weidong Zhang

Summer 2020

Shahjadi Zaman

Political Science Honors

Summa Cum Laude

- Brendon Gray, Senior Thesis: “Explaining Turnout in New York City Participatory Budgeting”
- Emily Hartshorn, Senior Thesis: “Who Runs the World? Girls!: The Donation Gap Between Men and Women on Juice Committees in the U.S. House of Representatives”
- Lia Stefanovich, Senior Thesis: “Now I See You: E-Governance, Corruption, and Sectoral Aid Allocation”

- Erin Walsh, Senior Thesis: “The Nexus Between Political Repression and Forced Migration: How Repressive Regimes Predict Migration Levels”

Magna Cum Laude

- Grace M. Werner, Senior Thesis: “Non-State Violence and Proximity to Illicit Trade Routes”

Cum Laude

- Jenna Seaver, Senior Thesis: “The Mexico City Problem: How Restrictions in Foreign Health Assistance Impact Less Developed Countries”

Bachelor of Arts

Fall 2019

- Denicia Aragon
- Geoffrey Baker
- Catherine Campbell
- Angelo Champion
- Phillip Chavez
- Yoselin Cordova
- Zane Geller
- Madeleine Granath
- Erick Hernandez
- Jacob Marsh
- Alicianna Martinez
- Kevin Montgomery
- Rachel Montoya
- Milana Ortega
- Renee Quezada
- Elizabeth Rakes
- Emanuel Schneider
- Eva Silverman
- Hailey Suazo
- Mariah Thornton-Quintana
- Tara Vallabhan
- Dakota Waterson

Spring 2020

- Yasmine Alday
- Andrew Baker
- Wyatt Beymer
- Maimouna Bio Gado
- Ryan Brennan
- Adam Brugge
- Aaron Cecenas
- Jacob Chavez
- Natasha Cooke
- Adrian Cruz
- Willem Cushman
- Lane Cuthbert
- Tyler Dominguez
- James Escamilla
- Madison Gonya
- Libertie Green
- Nathaniel Grim
- Sanda Gugin
- Steven Hall
- Emily Hartshorn
- Wesley Hill
- Austin Horn
- Tierra Hudson
- Shadi Jawad
- Madelyn Lucas
- Jared Lucero
- Lucas Maestas
- Carlie Marquez
- Mason Martinez
- Pachely Mendivil-Aguayo
- Jordan Montoya
- Garret Moore
- David Nunez
- Jonathan Ordonez
- Victoria Pena-Parr
- Chance Pierce
- Brianna Price
- Alicia Reed
- Robert Reed
- Gabriel Remer
- Fernando Rios
- Taran Robinson
- Richard Rockett
- Brisa Rodriguez
- Jocelyn Ronquillo
- Gabriela Saavedra

- Jonathan Salazar
- Teton Saltes
- Liberty Sanborn
- Adrian Schmitt
- Ceryndipity Schoel
- Jenna Seaver
- Lia Stefanovich
- Marcus Sterling

- Kirstyn Valencia
- Jordan Velasquez
- Erin Walsh
- Moriah Warner
- Grace Werner
- Molly Wright
- Taylor Yates

Summer 2020

- Taylor Duree
- Adam Gammill
- Paloma Garcia
- Alexandra Garcia
- Shonn Greengrass
- Robert Grilley
- Jonathon Hood
- Michael Johnson
- Timoteo L'Esperance
- Austin Lujan
- Simone Nunez

- Kaely Poblano
- Tea Salazar
- Christopher Sanders
- James Schaeffer
- Julia Schneider-Montgomery
- River Shields
- Belle Thomas
- Randy Vargas-Lopez
- Pauline Wayland

Political Science Faculty

Sergio Ascencio

Assistant Professor

Lonna R. Atkeson

Professor & Director, Center for the Study of Voting, Elections, &
Democracy, Director of the Institute for Social Research

Christopher K. Butler

Associate Professor, Director, Political Science Honors Program

Jessica T. Feezell

Assistant Professor

Ellen Grigsby

Principal Lecturer, Director, Fred Harris Internship Program

Wendy L. Hansen

Professor

Mala N. Htun

Professor, Deputy Director, Advance at UNM

Peter S. Kierst

Principal Lecturer & Undergraduate Advisor, Pre-Law Advisor

Timothy B. Krebs

Professor & Department Chair

Deborah R. McFarlane

Professor

Jami G. Nelson-Nuñez

Assistant Professor

Mark J. Peceny

Professor & Dean, College of Arts & Sciences

Kathy L. Powers
Associate Professor

Michael S. Rocca
Associate Professor, Internship Coordinator

Gabriel R. Sanchez
Professor & Executive Director, Center for Social Policy, Graduate
Director

William D. Stanley
Professor & Associate Provost for Faculty Success

Faculty Emeriti

Edward K. Fuge
F. Chris Garcia
Fred R. Harris
Peter A. Lupsha
Neil J. Mitchell
Martin C. Needler
Karen L. Remmer
Harold Rhodes
Christine M. Sierra
Jay B. Sorenson
Gilbert K. St. Clair
Harry P. Stumpf

Adjunct Faculty

Yury Bosin
Michael Hess
Lucio Lanucara
Matthew Simpson
Robert Wright
Jerry Stermer



**The Department of Political Science
extends congratulations to our
graduates for a job well done, and
best wishes for continued success
in the future!**



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