



Search for the Dean of the College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

New Mexico State University (NMSU), a Minority-Serving, Hispanic-Serving, land grant, and space grant institution, seeks an experienced, creative, and strategic leader to serve as the Dean of the [College of Health, Education, and Social Transformation](#) (HEST). The Dean will join NMSU and HEST at a pivotal moment, as the college—formed in 2021 by uniting nine academic departments—seeks a new leader to guide it into its next chapter. The Dean will be joining NMSU at a pivotal time. In 2025, NMSU will have a [new President](#), Valerio Ferme, and become a Carnegie-designated R1 university, which will position the university for new levels of impact. New Mexico is also highly committed to providing for the educational and health needs of the state, recently contributing additional funds to HEST to ensure the pipeline of professionals needed to help solve these challenges. It is a vital time to respond to the health and educational needs of New Mexico, and the Dean will be at the forefront in helping to find socially transformative solutions through close collaboration with the HEST and NMSU communities and by building and sustaining partnerships in the Las Cruces community, New Mexico, the Borderlands region, and beyond.

NMSU is one of the most diverse land-grant universities in the nation, situated near the Mexican border on the Central and Latin American corridor. Rooted in its dedication to mobility, justice, and transformation, the university embodies this commitment in its geographical context. Twenty-three tribes have ancestral homeland ties to New Mexico, including 19 Pueblos, the Navajo Nation and the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Piro/Manso/Tiwa tribe, and the Fort Sill Apache Tribe. In addition to its main campus in Las Cruces, the institution includes community colleges across the state, cooperative extension offices in New Mexico's 33 counties, 12 agriculture research and science centers, and an expanding distance education program through [NMSU Global](#). NMSU is the institution of choice for more than 21,000 students from 49 states and 89 foreign countries, with approximately 14,800 students enrolled at the Las Cruces campus, with New Mexico residents comprising approximately 70% of the population. The institution's diverse student population includes many first-generation, Pell-grant eligible, part-time, and working adult students.

HEST currently serves over 2,700 undergraduate students, over 1,200 graduate students, and houses 186 faculty members. It is home to six academic departments and three schools: [Borderlands and Ethnic Studies](#), [Counseling & Educational Psychology](#), [Communication Disorders](#), [Kinesiology](#), [Public Health](#)

[Sciences](#), [School of Nursing](#), [School of Social Work](#), [School of Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership](#), and [Sociology](#). HEST faculty and staff take pride in NMSU's [Community Engagement Classification](#) and in its multiple nationally accredited programs. The college was established to enhance collaborations and to improve individual, societal, and policy outcomes by addressing systemic issues of access, quality, and equity within health, education, and society and to achieve a more financially sustainable future.

By joining this highly interdisciplinary college, the Dean has the opportunity to make a significant impact on the Borderlands region and its education, health, and socioeconomic outcomes while also contributing significantly to the teaching, service, and research efforts of the institution through thoughtful and strategic leadership and relationship building. The Dean will work closely with highly diverse communities within HEST, NMSU, and externally to catalyze a strategy and vision for the future that recognizes individual departments' strengths and histories, allows all voices to be heard, unifies across disciplines, encourages innovative thinking and community building, and builds on HEST's social justice mission. To achieve success, the Dean will need to be an experienced builder who can implement a robust and supportive infrastructure and inspire the HEST community for the future while ensuring the resources necessary to help fulfill the needs of their students and the workforce of New Mexico. The Dean will be expected to address a set of key opportunities and challenges:

- Unify the HEST community around a cohesive vision and identity that bridges disciplines, honors the diversity of HEST, and promotes social transformation
- Build the appropriate infrastructure to achieve a well-integrated and supported HEST community in support of HEST's goals and objectives
- Create and grow opportunities for transdisciplinary and community-engaged research, teaching, and scholarship within HEST and beyond
- Address health, education, and socio-economic outcomes through student recruitment, retention, and new programming in close partnership with external communities
- Champion, advocate for, and advance the aspirations of HEST in the community, including educational and health professional settings, for new resources and a greater impact

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Dean can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to provide background information and detail the key opportunities and challenges related to the position. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

#### **ABOUT NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY**

NMSU comprises five degree-granting colleges, including the [College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences \(ACES\)](#); [College of Arts and Sciences](#); [College of Business](#); [College of Health,](#)

[Education, and Social Transformation](#); and the [College of Engineering](#), which all report to the Provost. The university also houses the Honors College, the Graduate School, and the NMSU Library. NMSU currently offers over 180-degree programs, including more than 70 online programs through NMSU Global. The university has remained a strong provider of online education, with [multiple online programs ranked in U.S. News & World Report](#). Along with the main Las Cruces campus, the university has three branch community colleges: NMSU–Alamogordo, NMSU–Doña Ana Community College, and NMSU–Grants. The [Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine](#) operates on the NMSU Las Cruces campus. NMSU and Burrell undertake numerous joint academic initiatives and shared services and programs through academic agreements.

NMSU's success is largely due to a long-standing commitment to meeting the contemporary needs of its students by faculty dedicated to academic excellence. NMSU faculty have received numerous local and national awards for outstanding research and contributions to their fields of practice. They are frequently selected for recognition as experts in their fields by their colleagues as well as by national professional associations, including many faculty who are considered agents of institutional and societal change. In June 2024, the faculty approved the formation of a union, following approval from the state labor board. They are set to begin bargaining this fall, joining the university's staff and graduate students who are also unionized.

New Mexico's tuition-free college program, Opportunity Scholarship, is one of the most expansive in the nation. It was first implemented by the state's governor in 2020, and expanded in 2022 through the signing of SB 140 into law, which has broadened coverage to include various types of learners, including returning students. In summer 2024, NMSU Global launched an outreach campaign aiming at reaching over 300,000 adults in the state who have some college credits but no degree to inform them that they can return to complete their first undergraduate degree tuition-free.

NMSU's portfolio includes over 1,000 externally funded research projects, and annual research expenditures of over \$128.1 million. Research is funded from federal sources and agencies including the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Institutes of Health, and National Science Foundation; the New Mexico Departments of Public Education and Higher Education, and other state agencies; and numerous non-profit foundations.

The university is focusing on a number of grand challenges facing the state and communities around the globe. These include creating healthy borders, modernizing critical infrastructure, and transforming education in New Mexico. The university's current strategic plan, [LEADS 2025](#), outlines priorities that will continue to be underscored in the coming years when the university embarks on a new strategic plan under the new President.

## **ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

Founded in 2021, HEST is the second-largest college at NMSU, currently serving nearly 4,000 students, including over 2,700 undergraduate students and over 1,100 graduate students. It is home to six academic departments and three schools: [Borderlands and Ethnic Studies](#), [Counseling & Educational Psychology](#), [Communication Disorders](#), [Kinesiology](#), [Public Health Sciences](#), [School of Nursing](#), [School of Social Work](#), [School of Teacher Preparation, Administration, and Leadership](#), and [Sociology](#).

HEST was formed in July 2021 following a vote in favor of the new college by the NMSU Board of Regents in May 2021. It was created as a regional leader in identifying gaps leading to health, education, and socio-economic outcome disparities. The college combines the previous College of Education and College of Health and Social Services, as well as the Departments of Sociology and Borderlands & Ethnic Studies (BEST) from the College of Arts and Sciences. HEST intends to ensure a more sustainable future through efficiencies, shared resources, and innovative thinking around programming to support New Mexico's student, research, clinical, and workforce needs, all through a social justice framework. The HEST community is ready for a new era of innovation, social transformation, and renewed investment.

## **ROLE OF THE DEAN**

Reporting to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, the Dean is the chief academic and administrative officer for HEST and provides leadership for teaching, learning, research, community engagement and service learning, enrollment management, assessment, fundraising, marketing, and student success, with close alignment to NMSU's strategic goals. Additionally, the Dean has a large role externally, building and sustaining relationships with external stakeholders, such as industry leaders, community members in surrounding school districts and health enterprises, community leaders from the diverse communities that make up New Mexico, and prospective donors to support the academic and social impact mission of HEST. The Dean serves on the Academic Deans Council and works in close collaboration with the HEST community, other Deans, university leaders, and collaborative partners to determine and execute strategies for HEST. The Dean is responsible for the thoughtful and strategic management of an over \$20 million operating budget.

A current organizational chart for HEST is available in Appendix I.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN**

The Dean will be a strategic and collaborative leader and builder who will address a set of key opportunities and challenges:

***Unify the HEST community around a cohesive vision and identity that bridges disciplines, honors the diversity of HEST, and promotes social transformation***

Upon arrival, the Dean will be joining a community already united around a common vision for the College, and the main task for the Dean will be operationalizing that vision across a diverse array of disciplines. The Dean will ensure that the processes for goal setting are led in the spirit of shared governance for faculty, staff, and students to feel heard and that their ideas are reflected in a new strategy for the future. The Dean will unite the HEST community around their values rooted in social justice and will encourage interdisciplinary collaborations where possible to foster problem solving and innovation in setting a path forward. The Dean will rally HEST to think creatively around how best to align strategies and resources to deliver on a shared purpose that cohesively addresses the educational and health shortfalls of the state, prepares students for the workforce, promotes research and community engagement, inspires the passionate and dedicated faculty, staff, and students of HEST, and encourages future students, faculty and staff to join the community and stay. The Dean will bring a data-informed lens for ongoing assessment and to adapt strategy and priorities regularly. The HEST community is eager for a collaborative leader with new ideas to lead them into a more sustainable and impactful future.

***Build the appropriate infrastructure to achieve a well-integrated and supported HEST community in support of HEST's goals and objectives***

The Dean will have the opportunity to create a sustainable infrastructure for HEST, with an eye toward creativity, increasing efficiencies, equity, implementing new strategies, and supporting student, staff, and faculty success. Given HEST's history in merging separate colleges and departments, this will include determining an appropriate organizational structure to best support HEST in achieving their goals and ensuring faculty and staff feel well-supported in the process. The Dean will simultaneously assist with innovative solutions around faculty workload across disciplines to find better ways to support the service aspects of their work and to encourage large, interdisciplinary grants in support of NMSU's forthcoming R1 status. To successfully navigate the different needs of the diverse disciplines within HEST, the Dean will need to ensure all disciplines feel valued and supported in achieving HEST's social transformation goals.

***Create and grow opportunities for transdisciplinary and community-engaged research, teaching, and scholarship within HEST and beyond***

NMSU recognizes that to sustain a healthy community, multi-organizational initiatives are needed to address systemic, structural barriers in health, education and other sectors to support social transformation. The HEST Dean will also work with local nonprofit, community groups, public schools and hospital partners to support community-based problem-solving by connecting them with HEST and other university partners to learn from each other, work toward common goals, and elevate the work of southern New Mexico community organizations. Under the leadership of the Dean, HEST will provide leadership support to increase extramural funding to support such community-led and community-based

research initiatives. The Dean will also work to catalyze interdisciplinary research collaborations within HEST and across NMSU's colleges to augment these efforts while also ensuring the dissemination of this knowledge to a diverse and evolving population.

***Address health, education, and socio-economic outcomes through student recruitment, retention, and new programming in close partnership with external communities***

To help strengthen New Mexico's health, education, and socio-economic outcomes, a strong pipeline of inspired students and future professionals will be needed. The Dean will have the opportunity to work closely with faculty and staff to leverage the unique interdisciplinary nature of HEST and its social justice mission to connect with community partners and help find solutions. This will involve determining the appropriate research and academic programs to educate future leaders in policymaking through evidence-based practices and through new and innovative programming to attract and graduate students in these fields. The Dean will be expected to expand the reach of the college within the university and across New Mexico, including fostering new partnerships with other colleges and schools at NMSU and Burrell, while also finding new ways to leverage NMSU Global to expand access to HEST's programs and respond to workforce needs. The Dean will also work closely with faculty and staff to strengthen student advising and career development programs to support students' success and their holistic development across all programs, ensuring their diverse student body is well-prepared for the workforce and can assist with their social transformation aspirations upon graduation.

***Champion, advocate for, and advance the aspirations of HEST in the community, including educational and health professional settings, for new resources and a greater impact***

The Dean will share HEST's mission, values, and opportunities for a greater impact broadly to solicit new resources for HEST, including more actively engaging alumni, legislators, corporate leaders, professional entities, and regional communities in fundraising efforts. This will be a significant opportunity to unite HEST's alumni from different disciplines around their shared, social transformation identity, and the Dean will need to do so in a compelling way to galvanize their support. The Dean will also be involved in expanding grant writing activities, working closely with the other Deans and senior leadership to facilitate mutually beneficial partnerships for additional investment in HEST. New revenue generation may also be possible through strategic partnerships for student programming, such as NMSU Global programs or with Burrell. The Dean will also determine how to strategically allocate new investments from the state for new revenue and augmenting workforce development efforts. The Dean will be an unabashed advocate for the mission of HEST internally and externally to ensure the resources needed in support of students, staff, and faculty as they embark on fulfilling the many ambitions for HEST and New Mexico.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Dean will be a visionary and transformational leader with an earned doctorate, or other terminal degree, and a record in scholarship and teaching requisite for the appointment at the rank of full professor. The Dean will also bring most, if not all, of the following professional experiences and personal qualifications to this position:

- Strong administrative experience and skills, and the ability to make difficult decisions in a transparent and consultative manner;
- A deep commitment to the mission of a public, land-grant institution of higher education;
- A record of building and/or change management through the effective allocation of resources;
- Experience in determine appropriate organizational infrastructures for oversight, decision making, and increased efficiencies;
- A passion for students; the belief in the power of social mobility and research to change lives;
- A commitment to shared governance; a record of approachability and transparency;
- Experience with enrollment management, with a commitment to access and student success
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and student success, as well as working with broadly diverse communities;
- An understanding of educational and/or health policies and systems at the national and state levels;
- A record of leadership in promoting equity, inclusion, and diversity in all its forms;
- Excellent financial management skills, and demonstrated experience working with complex budgets; an astute understanding of university finances and the relationship between academic priorities, budgeting, and fundraising;
- Interest in and ability to be a successful fundraiser;
- A demonstrated ability to work effectively and build relationships with a full range of internal and external constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, media, community members, Indigenous nations, government officials, and leaders in the private sector;
- An ability to foster faculty and staff success in recruitment, retention, and promotion;
- Ability to thrive in the public sector with well-developed political and diplomatic skills.

## LOCATION

New Mexico is known as "The Land of Enchantment" or "Tierra del Encanto," because of its scenic beauty and rich history. New Mexico offers a wide variety of adventures, art, music and dance, breathtaking landscapes, and a multicultural heritage that cannot be found in any other state in the U.S. New Mexico has the highest percentage of Hispanic residents by State. It has the second-highest percentage of Native Americans as a proportion of the population and the fourth-highest total number of Native Americans. The major Native American nations in the state are the 19 Pueblos, Navajo, and three Apache peoples.



The community of Las Cruces is well known for its hospitality, its people, and its deep appreciation of a colorful past and enthusiasm for a future rich with possibilities. The geography, climate, demographics, and ambiance combine to offer a truly excellent place to live. Combined with the unsurpassed beauty of sunsets, purple mountains, and a climate that is warm and inviting, Las Cruces offers a very high quality of life.

The City of Las Cruces is the second-largest city in New Mexico, located in Doña Ana County, approximately 45 miles north of El Paso, Texas, and 225 miles south of Albuquerque. Las Cruces is the economic and geographic center of the Mesilla Valley, the agricultural region on the floodplain of the Rio Grande which extends from Hatch to the west side of El Paso, Texas. The Organ Mountains, 10 miles to the east, are dominant in the city's landscape, along with the Doña Ana Mountains, Robledo Mountains, and Picacho Peak. Las Cruces lies within a short driving distance of the Mexican border at Santa Teresa.

The historic downtown features an open-air plaza with an extensive farmers market where a variety of foods and cultural items can be purchased from local farmers, artists, and craftspeople. Las Cruces features multiple outdoor recreation areas including more than 100 parks covering over 700 acres. Throughout the year residents enjoy festivals celebrating local culture and food as well as local and national historical sites, national monuments, galleries, theaters, museums, and the symphony.

#### **APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS**

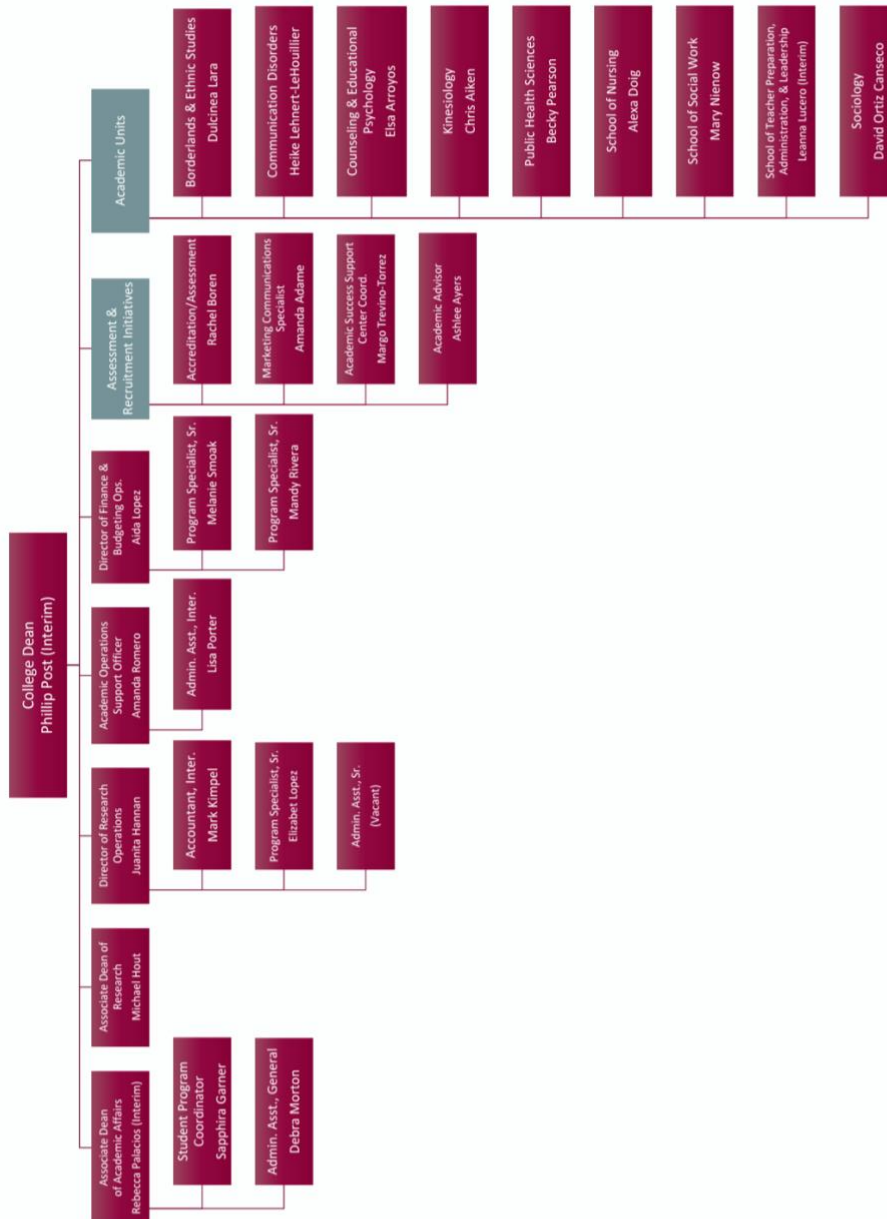
Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/new-mexico-state-university-college-health-education-and-social-transformation/dean>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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*New Mexico State University is dedicated to providing equal employment opportunities in all areas of occupation without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, mental or physical disability, serious medical condition, age, ancestry, sexual orientation, sexual identity, spousal affiliation, veteran status, or genetic information according to state and federal laws.*



## Appendix I: HEST Organizational Chart



**College of Health, Education, & Social Transformation**  
BE BOLD. Shape the Future.®