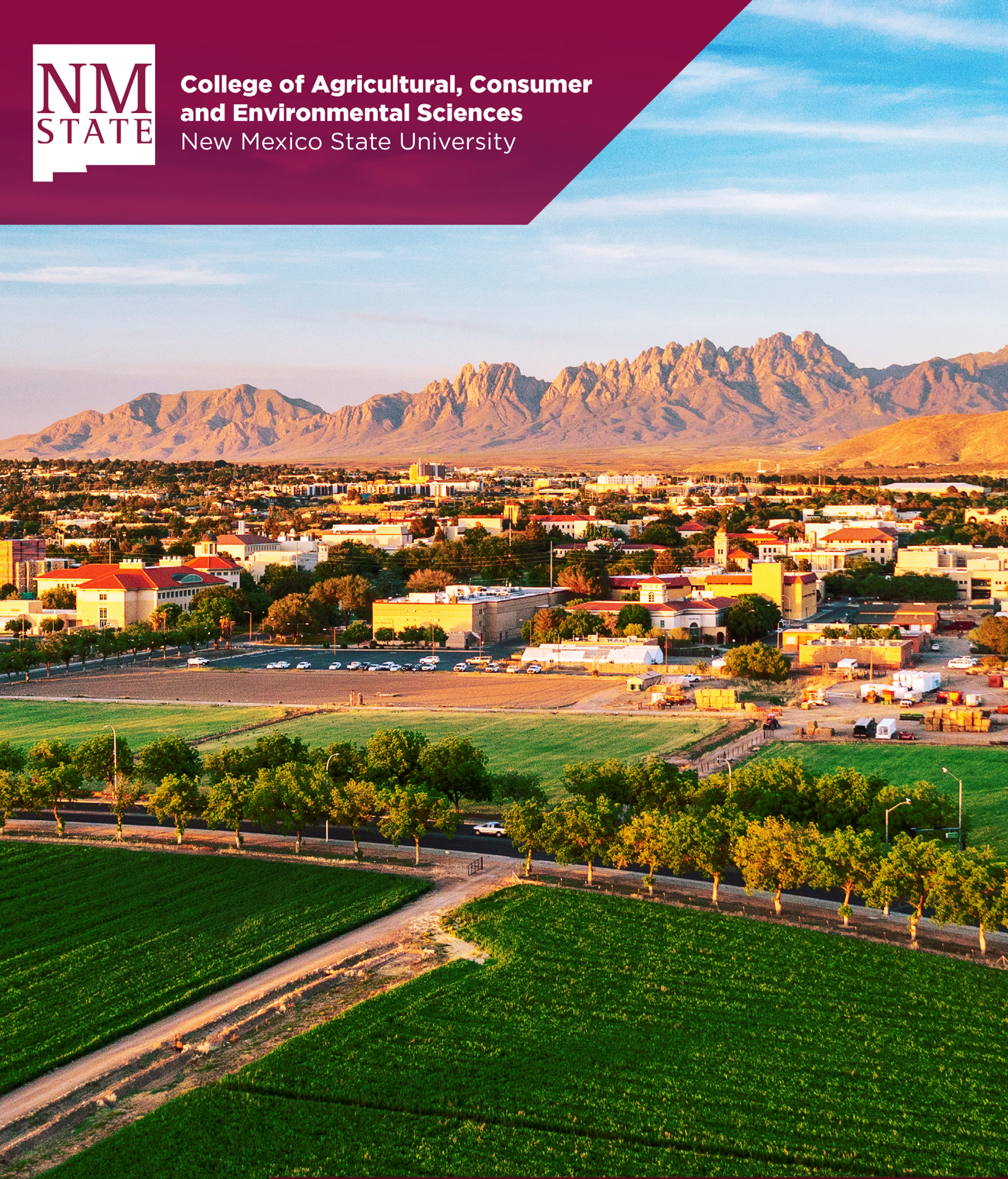
NM STATE

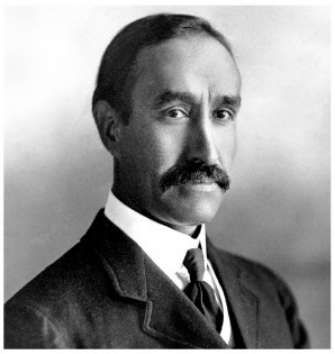
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences
New Mexico State University



2025 Annual Report

NM STATE

College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences



Preamble

We are pleased to offer you our 2025 annual report. Please take this opportunity to read about the work we do, our initiatives, partnerships, courses of study, and research accomplishments.

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) is an engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through research, teaching, and extension. As New Mexico's land-grant institution, we serve the state at our main campus in Las Cruces and in each region of the state at our agricultural science centers, our county Cooperative Extension offices, and as participants in community events. The faculty, staff and students of ACES are committed to making a difference in the lives of New Mexicans.

As I look forward to my retirement on August 31, 2026, I am grateful for the privilege of serving as Dean and Chief Administrative Officer of the College of ACES in this chapter. I am proud of the resources and new programs established during my term, including the Center of Excellence (CESFAS), three new PhD programs, and enhanced facilities for Animal Science and Food Science and Technology, the Feed Mill, the Student Learning Center, value-added food products for New Mexico, and international partnerships for recruitment, trade, and research.

Warmly,

Rolando A. Flores Galarza
Dean and Chief Administrative Officer
College of Agricultural, Consumer
and Environmental Sciences
New Mexico State University

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ACES Mission

The ACES College is an engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through research, teaching and extension.

Special Thanks

We gratefully acknowledge the combined efforts of the College of ACES, faculty, staff and students, as well as the 2026 ACES Annual Report Committee, including: Amy Muise, Cherylin Atcitty, Claire Montoya, Emily Harris, Heber Lara, John Campbell, Julie Hughes, Karim Martinez, Laura Bittner, Marcus Krohn, Omar Holguin, Peyton Mosher, and Yesenia Palma.

ACES Executive Summary, 2025

In 2025, our college continued a strategic focus on its core mission areas, organized around the ACES Pillars: Food and Fiber Production and Marketing, Water Use and Conservation, Family Development and Health of New Mexicans, and Environmental Stewardship. The college prioritizes engaging with communities, addressing local challenges, and identifying areas for partnership and collaboration in New Mexico food and fiber supply chains.

Academic programming is part of this mission, with an emphasis on student recruitment, retention, graduation, preparation and placement, development of new academic programs and scholarships, and enhancing co-enrollment and global opportunities. The agricultural science centers that are the heart of the NMSU Agricultural Experiment Station provide critical infrastructure for students and researchers to conduct research in real-world settings that reflect pressing challenges in water resources, crops and rangelands, animal health, food systems, and rural economic development.

Programs and initiatives focus on opportunities to make a difference. The New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service serves communities around the state and supports economic, educational, and community development in collaboration with community organizations, state and federal agencies, other universities, and thousands of volunteers. Indian Resource Development, which increased its footprint in 2025, helps to cultivate future tribal leaders, strengthen land stewardship, and build pathways into higher education and economic opportunity. Through the Anna, Age 8 initiative, the college provides frameworks, research, and technical assistance at the county level to help organize access to the vital services essential for families to thrive. Through its Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems (CESFAS), ACES supports industry partnerships, student development, research, entrepreneurship and outreach. CESFAS brings together stakeholders to develop new opportunities that strengthen New Mexico's agricultural economy, communities, and intellectual property, and provide hands-on learning
opportunities to support a skilled, innovation-driven workforce.

Through its educational, outreach and research missions, the college serves students, families, communities, and all New Mexicans. ACES prioritizes openness and participation, with the goal of helping people of all ages engage in learning opportunities, participate in outreach, and feel a sense of belonging as individuals and members of our communities.

2025 ACES Awards

The ACES Awards Selection Committee voted on the 2025 faculty and staff nominations that were submitted for our distinguished awards. The award winners are listed below.

Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Diversity in Extension Award
Pamela N. Martinez

ACES Team Award
NMSU Plant Diagnostic Team (Leslie Beck, Srijana Dura, Phillip Lujan, Joanie King, Jacqueline Beacham, and Marisa Thompson)

Charles Tharp Farms Distinguished Service Award
Laura Bittner

Distinguished County Extension Agent Award
John Garlisch

Distinguished Cooperative Extension Service Award
Tomilee Turner

Donald C. Rousch Award for Teaching Excellence
Wiebke Boeing

Malone Farms Distinguished Staff Award (non-exempt)
Off Campus: **Carlie Gatlin**

Mobley Family Endowed Distinguished Research Award
Research Early/Mid-Career: **Santiago Utsumi**
Advanced Career: **John Idowu**

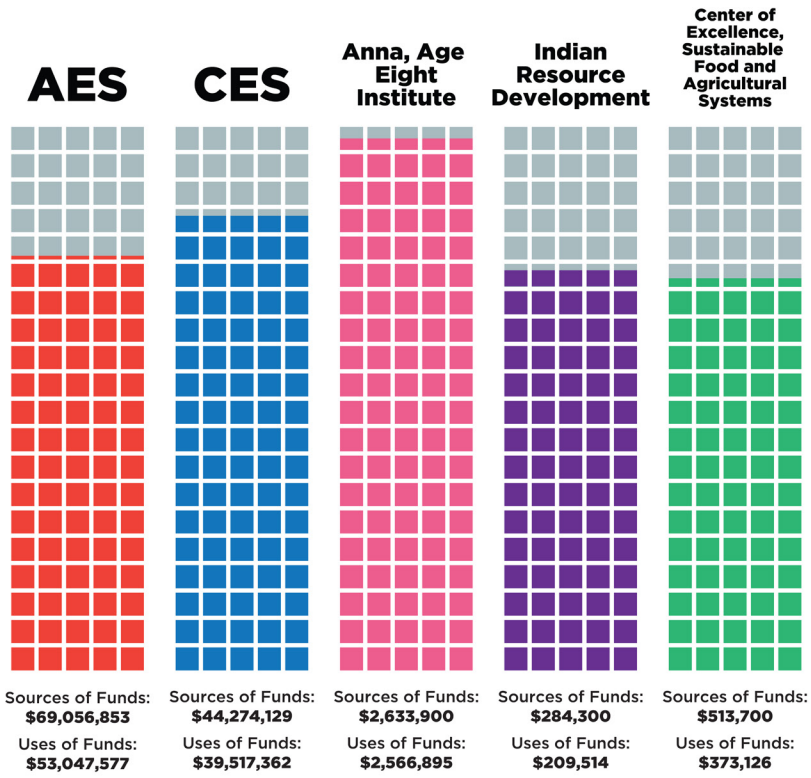
Outstanding Global Work Award
Bernd Leinauer

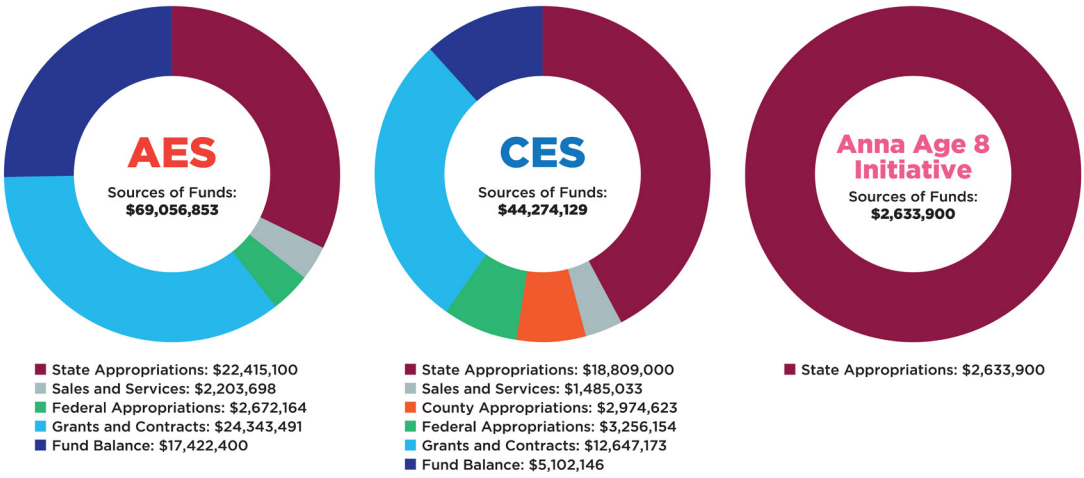
Awardees selected by the Departments:

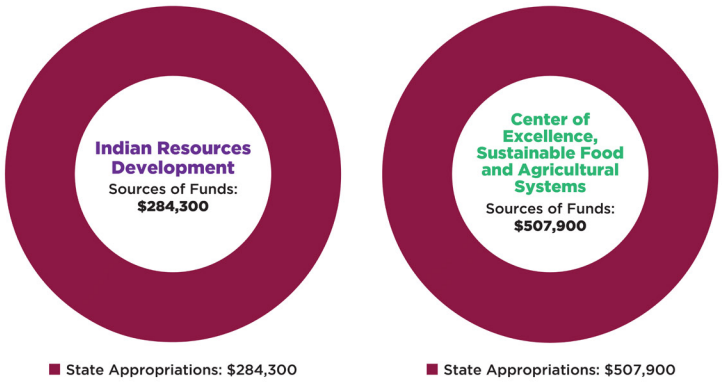
Outstanding 4-H Agent Award
Emily Bruton

College of ACES

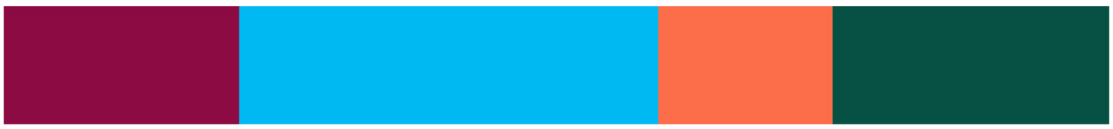
Report of Actuals
Las Cruces Campus FY2024-2025







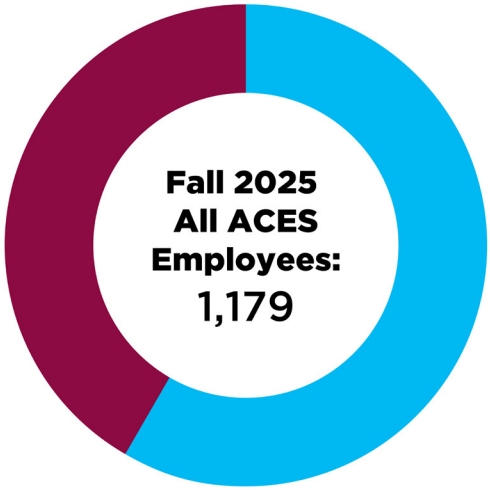
College of ACES
Employee Demographics



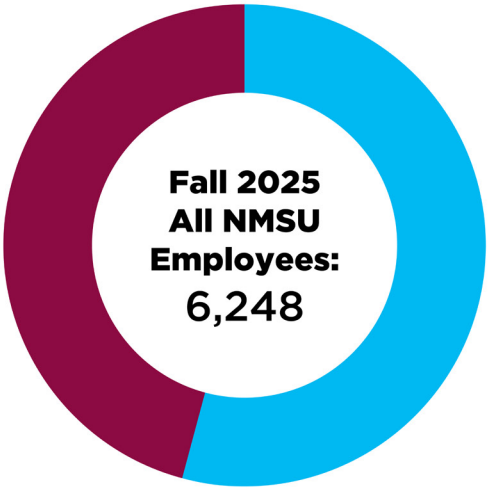
Faculty: 251 (21.29%) | Staff: 447 (37.91%) | Graduate Assistant: 186 (15.78%) | Student Employee: 295 (25.02%)

NMSU
Employee Demographics

Faculty: 1,200 (19.21%) | Staff: 2,508 (40.14%) | Graduate Assistant: 937 (15%) | Student Employee: 1,603 (25.66%)



Female: 703 (59.63%)
Male: 476 (41.37%)



Female: 3,416 (54.67%)
Male: 2,831 (45.31%)

College of ACES
Employee Demographics

American Indian: 34 (2.88%) | Asian: 22 (1.87%) | Black / African American: 19 (1.61%) | Hispanic: 467 (39.61%) | Non Resident Alien: 138 (11.7%) | Two or More Races: 31 (2.63%) | Unknown: 7 (0.59%) | White: 461 (39.1%)

NMSU
Employee Demographics

American Indian: 64 (1.02%) | Asian: 162 (2.59%) | Black / African American: 108 (1.73%) | Hispanic: 2,317 (37.08%) | Non Resident Alien: 653 (10.45%) | Two or More Races: 97 (1.55%) | Unknown: 36 (0.58%) | White: 1,968 (31.50%)

Executive Summary

In 2025, the College of ACES Academic Programs Office (APO) made significant strides in building a student-centered operation under new leadership, with the appointment of Associate Dean Dr. Robert Torres and a full team of specialists in recruitment, retention, scholarships, communications, and degree certification. The college strengthened student pathways through a co-enrollment initiative with Doña Ana Community College, expanded online offerings via NMSU Global — doubling enrollment year-over-year — and secured state approval for a new Ph.D. program in Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology. Across departments, enrollment growth was broadly positive, with several programs reporting increases of 8–27%, and the APO's targeted retention outreach helped hundreds of students remain enrolled. Looking ahead, the office is committed to continuous improvement in recruitment, retention, instructional excellence, and faculty support.

Dr. Robert Torres
Associate Dean &
Director of Academic Programs

Selected Accomplishments

1. New Academic Program Leadership and Staff

The College of ACES is pleased to announce the continued development of the Academic Programs Office (APO) through the addition of new leadership and dedicated staff focused on student success. Dr. Robert Torres joined the college as Associate Dean and Director of Academic Programs in June, providing strategic leadership to strengthen recruitment, retention, and overall academic support services. Beginning July 1, the APO expanded its student-centered efforts by hiring Leandra Barreras as Recruitment Specialist and Helena "Lené" Löest as Retention Specialist, both of whom will lead targeted outreach and support initiatives to enhance the student experience. Building on this foundation, the office further strengthened its operations later in the academic year with the addition of Peyton Mosher (Events and Communications), Daniel Garcia (Degree Auditing and Certification), and Amber Wetzel (Scholarship Coordinator). Together, this team advances a coordinated approach to student engagement, academic progress, and financial support, reinforcing ACES' commitment to student success at every stage of the academic journey.

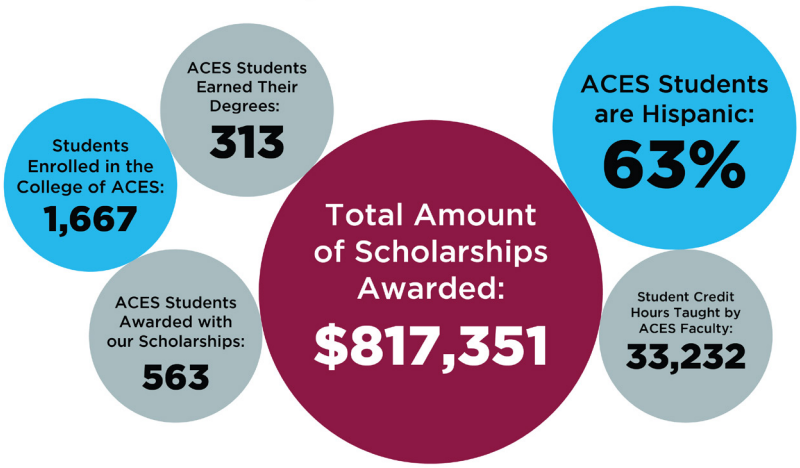
2. Student Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment pipelines were further expanded through strategic partnerships with county 4-H extension agents, strengthening Land-Grant connections through state conferences, award ceremonies, and the State Fair. ACES also participated in the 98th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, supported by the College of ACES Ambassadors. The booth, featuring a restored 1955 vintage truck, a hot air balloon display, Pistol Pete, and energetic ambassadors, showcased NMSU spirit and the culture of Las Cruces. This high-impact approach will continue to shape future outreach efforts. In addition, ACES provided a welcoming experience for prospective and admitted students and their families through the Aggie Welcome Orientation sessions, Aggie Experience events, and campus visits.

Retention initiatives prioritized proactive student engagement and strong campus-wide collaboration. Efforts included targeted classroom visits, coordination with student support offices from across campus, and hosting signature events such as 'ACES Night Out', where students locate their classes and connect with student organizations, and 'Welcome Home Aggies' street festival. The annual Heritage & Horizons celebration introduced incoming freshmen to the Sam Steel Society, fostering early connection and a sense of belonging. Community-building

efforts also included the "Pie Your Professors" fundraiser, which raised more than $600 for additional student scholarships. The semester concluded with the Sam Steel Society Induction Ceremony for Fall 2025 graduates, recognizing student achievement, leadership, and commitment to the college community. Direct student outreach delivered significant results: of 223 students at risk of disenrollment due to outstanding balances, 213 remained enrolled for Fall 2025 following personalized contact. Similarly, 198 students were engaged for Spring 2026, all of whom reduced their balances to maintain enrollment.

By the Numbers



3. College of ACES/DACC Co-enrollment AGGIE Pathway Initiative

In April 2025, ACES academic leaders met with Doña Ana Community College (DACC) counterparts, under the leadership of Dean Rolando Flores Galarza and Chancellor Dr. Monica Torres, to explore new ways to attract, retain, and support community college students. While several transfer and 2+2 Pathway agreements already existed, the discussion expanded toward a broader goal: engaging students on the main campus early to help them build meaningful connections before transferring. From this discussion, a co-enrollment initiative emerged, allowing students to enroll simultaneously at DACC and ACES while protecting their financial aid eligibility. Implementing this model required new infrastructure for enrollment, advising, tracking, and financial aid.

In parallel, ACES and DACC faculty and department heads collaborated to design 13 Co-enrollment Pathways, with more in development, along with a process for listing them in the

DACC catalog and tracking participating students. Recruitment and marketing efforts are now underway. The first cohort of co-enrolled students began Fall 2025. This milestone marks a significant step in the ACES-DACC partnership, expanding opportunities for student recruitment and success.

4. New ACES Ph.D. Degrees

A new Ph.D. program in Wildlife and Fisheries Ecology has received full state approval and obtained authorization from the Higher Learning Commission, with plans to accept applications for Fall 2026. The program will prepare skilled scientists to address New Mexico's ecological and economic priorities through applied conservation and resource management, supported by partnerships with federal, state, and tribal wildlife agencies, NGOs, and industry partners. In addition, the Agricultural & Extension Education department is revising its proposed Ph.D. program, now titled Agricultural Education, and Communications, based on feedback from the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED). HED noted that the original program name did not clearly align with related career pathways. The revised proposal will be resubmitted this spring. This fall, the Applied and Agricultural Biology program, approved in 2024, welcomed its first cohort of three students.

5. ACES NMSU Global

In 2025, the College of ACES experienced significant growth within NMSU Global, with student enrollment in ACES courses and programs doubling over the previous year. As of January 2024, the College has offered eight degree programs and two undergraduate minors through NMSU Global, providing accessible, high-quality academic options that serve a diverse student population.

The College also advanced development of a Master of Family and Consumer Science in Human Nutrition and Dietetic Sciences and a Graduate Certificate in Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Management, while continuing to explore additional degree programs and strategic partnerships.

To expand ACES commitment to workforce development and lifelong learning, Extension and academic departments launched 12 Microlearning courses in partnership with NMSU Global during 2025. An additional 23 courses are in development or scheduled for release in 2026.

6. Refresh of College Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

The College has initiated a comprehensive review and refresh of its Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Guidelines to ensure alignment with NMSU's Administrative Rules and Procedures and to clarify processes that have created confusion.

Because Promotion and Tenure is addressed in the pending faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement, no new provisions can be implemented until that process concludes. However, the

College is moving forward with the essential groundwork—reviewing current guidelines for alignment with existing policies and identifying areas that would benefit from greater clarity or updates.

To inform this effort, a survey will be distributed this spring to all faculty covered by the P&T Guidelines. Their feedback will help ensure the revised guidelines are clear, equitable, and supportive of faculty at all stages of their academic careers.

Selected Academic Updates

Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Business (AEAB)

The Department continues to experience enrollment growth. Undergraduate enrollment grew by 7%, while graduate enrollment increased by 6%. The Department began offering a new Master of Agriculture–Agribusiness program online through NMSU Global. In addition, the Department maintains some of the highest retention and graduation rates, reflecting strong academic support for students.

Animal and Range Sciences (ANRS)

Enrollment of undergraduates increased by 8.5% in the Fall of 2025, the highest number since 2020, with Range Science increasing undergraduate enrollment by 27%. ANRS ' fall-to-fall retention rate is 70%, and its 6-year graduation rate is 52%, above the NMSU average. Completed Quality Matters for the Master of Agriculture in Domestic Animal Biology, and the program has 19 students enrolled. Increased student employment (or professional school acceptance) rate upon graduation by 20%.

Agricultural and Extension Education (AXED)

After expanding its graduate program offerings to the NMSU Global Campus, the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education saw an increase in graduate student enrollment, contributing to a 10.3% rise in graduation completions from 2024 to 2025.

Entomology, Plant Pathology and Weed Science (EPPWS)

EPPWS opened the doors to its approved Ph.D. program in Applied and Agricultural Biology for the 2025-2026 academic year. EPPWS houses one of NMSU's premier courses EPWS 325V (Insects, Humans, & Environment), whose class projects led to a collaboration with the University Art Museum and installation of the 'Insects in Art' wall in Skeen Hall.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS)

Launched the iEndeavors Virtual Reality Project, a USDA-funded initiative, for the graduate program in dietetic internship. Coursework across the Community Nutrition, Food Systems and Policy, and Applied Nutrition Research was enhanced, and a key instructional expansion included partnering with Southern New Mexico Diabetes Outreach Warriors Camp.

Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology (FWCE)

The department also saw strong growth and engagement, with undergraduate enrollment rising 8%, student credit hours increasing more than 20%, and a new recruitment and outreach program reaching over 7,000 individuals across 34 events in New Mexico and the El Paso area.

Plant and Environmental Sciences (PES)

The Program Alignment and Restructuring Committee undertook a comprehensive review and revision of the curriculum, incorporating key instructional requirements and assessing opportunities to consolidate majors. These efforts contributed to increased student enrollment and improved student success in 2025. Compared with the previous four years, total student enrollment increased by approximately 12%.

School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management (HRTM)

Successfully proposed a 12-credit Graduate Certificate – HRTM program. Seven faculty completed Course Development Institutes and Quality Matters certification for thirteen courses. Increased NMSU Global undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, including establishing a partnership with Isleta Resort and Casino. Eleven students received industry association scholarships, and nine attended national industry conferences.

Other Programmatic Updates

Agricultural Education and FFA

New Mexico FFA reached more than 5,200 students across 93 chapters, introducing members to a wide range of career pathways. Flagship statewide events consistently engaged 600-1,400 participants, demonstrating the organization's significant impact on youth leadership and career development.

NMSU Rodeo

The NMSU Rodeo team is hitting big milestones while keeping their noses in the books! Brad Moreno brought a national title back to NMSU for the first time since 2011, winning the men's all-around as well as 3rd in the bull riding. Other notable finishes were Cassidy Bradshaw, 6th in the nation in the breakaway, and Nathan Clark, 7th in the steer wrestling. The team is academically tough as well, earning a cumulative Team GPA of 3.5 for the fall semester!

Looking Ahead

With a new and energetic team in place, the Academic Programs Office aspires to operate as a student-centered service hub grounded in the Kaizen philosophy of continuous improvement. Through stronger processes and clearer communication, the office will intentionally deliver reliable, responsive support to students, faculty, and staff. Priorities include advancing strategic recruitment and retention through sustained 4-H and FFA pipelines, expanded community college and out-of-state outreach, and cultivating a culture of recognition and connection across the college. Using baseline data as a guide, the office has set ambitious targets and continuously work toward exceeding key metrics for student recruitment, retention, and graduation. Instructional excellence will remain a central focus, supported through increased access to resources and professional development. The office will also seek to strengthen faculty success by fostering a transparent, well-aligned promotion and tenure process. Alumni engagement will continue to expand through the Sam Steel Society Council, deepening mentorship and advocacy.

Executive Summary

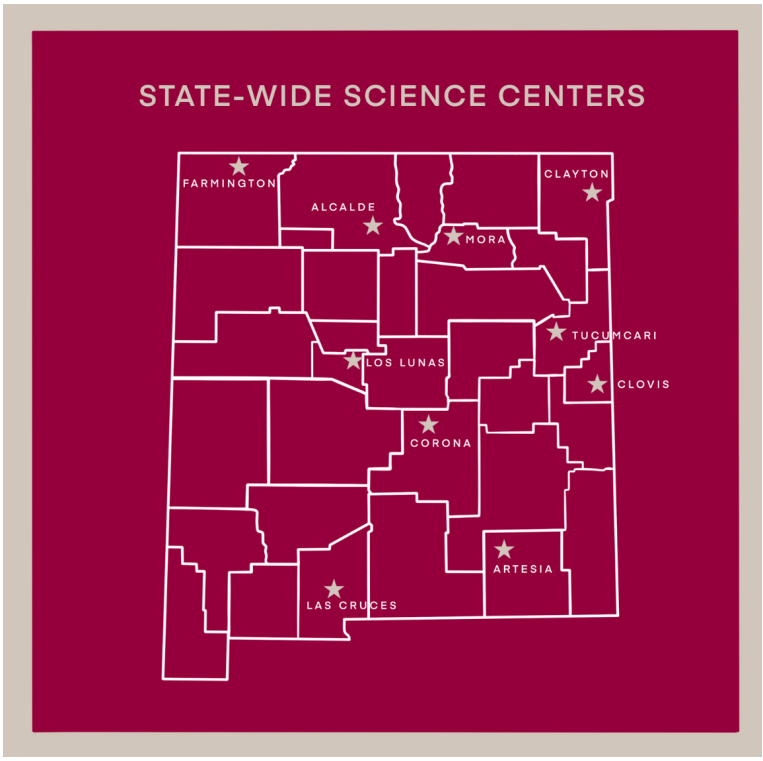
The Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) advances science-based solutions that strengthen agriculture, natural resource stewardship, and community resilience across New Mexico. As the research arm of the College of ACES, the AES is fundamental in serving the land-grant mission. Agricultural Experiment Station researchers conduct applied, regionally relevant research that addresses the state's most pressing challenges water resources, climate variability, rangeland and crop sustainability, animal health, food systems, and rural economic development.

Dr. Jay Lillwhite
Associate Dean of Research and
Agricultural Experiment Station Director

The Agricultural Experiment Station encompasses scientists from NMSU's main campus and 12 agricultural science centers (ASCs) across the state. These centers serve as outdoor research facilities that reflect New Mexico's diverse geography and environment.

The Agricultural Experiment Station supports more than 370 full-time equivalent positions, made up of faculty, support staff, professional positions, and students. Faculty researchers conduct research on NMSU's main campus or one of the off-campus science centers. The science centers provide critical infrastructure for researchers and students to conduct agricultural experiments in real-world settings that reflect the agricultural and natural resource diversity that is found in New Mexico.

AES Research Locations



Agricultural Science Centers

Sustainable Ag Science Center at Alcalde: Located in north-central New Mexico to serve as a resource for small-scale producers. Most farms in the area are under 100 acres. Research programs focus on native and high-value crops for sustainable, climate-smart agriculture including jujube cultivars, saffron, cover cropping in winter and spring, and acequia irrigation.

Artesia Ag Science Center: Located in the heart of ag production for southeast NM, the Artesia ASC plays an instrumental role in solving issues facing producers in the area. Research is focused on soil issues such as fertility, water salinity, and pest infestations. In the near future, the ASC plans to add irrigation and water management as an additional focus.

Chihuahuan Desert Rangeland Research Center: The facility is utilized by NMSU faculty, students, and collaborators for conducting research in the use of novel ranching technologies, rangeland management, and ecosystem health. With a focus on providing knowledge from research to livestock producers and natural resource managers for the improvement of ranching operational efficiencies, rangeland monitoring, and ecosystem services.

Clayton Livestock Research Center: Sustainable beef production focusing on health and profitability through harvest. One of the largest university feedlots in the nation with group and individual animal intake capability.

Clovis Agricultural Science Center: The research at ASC Clovis focuses on multiple conservation and regenerative farming practices that improve soil health and water use efficiency in various crops and cropping systems while meeting the needs of local dairy and grain crop producers.

Corona Range and Livestock Research Center: A working ranch research facility with a focus on sustainability. Thirty-nine (39) wind turbines are installed and operational in partnership with Pattern Energy. New equipment and lab facilities for precision livestock management are enhancing research capabilities.

Farmington Ag Science Center: Weather in the Four Corners region is variable due to a high elevation of >5,600 ft, intermountain climate. Research at this center focuses on the adaptability of crop varieties and cropping systems to fit its shortened growing season. A unique partnership with the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry (NAPI) provides a strong connection to local agricultural producers and regional cultural values.

Fabian Garcia Research Center: The Center supports a variety of agricultural research focusing on sustainability, water-wise agriculture, and advanced agriculture technology for chile peppers, onions, alfalfa, viticulture, algae for biofuel, and many other crops.

Leyendecker Plant Science Center: Using precision agricultural management, this high-tech research hub focuses on precision irrigation of horticulture and field crops, agrivoltaics in vegetable production, soil health and weed management, plant diseases, and breeding of crops for higher yields and environmental resilience.

Los Lunas Agricultural Science Center: Near Albuquerque in central New Mexico and within the middle Rio Grande agricultural region, this location allows for specialized programs in small farming and urban horticulture. Research focuses on tomatoes, chile peppers, cover crops, fruit trees, forage crops, and wine and table grapes.

John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center at Mora: The only research center in the southwest US focusing on forest nursery technologies, tree improvement, and ecophysiology of young forest trees to facilitate forest restoration.

Rex E. Kirksey Ag Science Center at Tucumcari: One of the few centers with the capability to conduct both crop and livestock research. Research focuses on irrigated and dryland cropping systems, including the use of treated municipal wastewater for agricultural irrigation, and beef cattle efficiency testing to improve regional beef herd genetics.

Agrivoltaics: These three ASCs have been selected for installation of solar panel arrays. The goal for agrivoltaic systems is to maintain and enhance agricultural productivity and environmental benefits, while providing renewable energy and diversified income opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

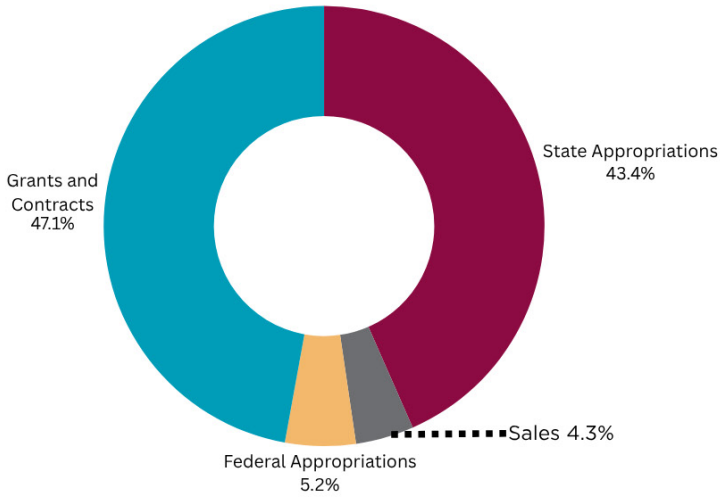
Connected Center: These centers are building Wi-Fi capabilities out in the field or throughout rangelands to support and increase digital ag and AI research.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Digital Agriculture: These ASCs are integrating AI with sensors and data to improve crop, livestock, and rangeland management by improving efficiency, sustainability, and decision making.

Precision Livestock Management: These ASCs have capabilities to monitor livestock in real time to improve health, productivity, and sustainability through informed decisions.

AES SOURCES OF REVENUE

The total amount of operating revenue for AES for FY25 was $51.6 million. AES continues to expand the ACES research portfolio with grants and contracts, ensuring that New Mexico's investment in agricultural research is matched by more than a 1:1 ratio.



ACES UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Launched in the 2023–2024 academic year, the ACES Undergraduate Research Scholars program emphasizes undergraduate research by providing students with hands-on research experience under the guidance of a faculty mentor. The program is directed by Dr. Jennifer Hernandez Gifford. In its inaugural year (FY24), the program supported eight student participants and six faculty mentors. Participation more than doubled in FY25, with 18 students and 13 faculty mentors. **The 2025–2026 academic year represents the program's largest cohort to date, funding 19 students and engaging 14 faculty mentors.**

To learn more about the program and review research summaries from 2025-2026, visit https://aes.nmsu.edu/research/aces-ug-research-application.html or use the QR code.

AES RESEARCH PERFORMANCE METRICS

$53.3 Million
Amount Awarded in Grants and Contracts

633
Total Field Day Contacts

236
Academic Journal Articles Published

$71.2 Million Amount of Grants and Contracts Submitted

5 Patents

25 Professional Journal Articles Published

67 Outreach Presentations

123
Number of Grants and Contracts Submitted

101
Number of Grants and Contracts Awarded

Research Impact Highlights

New Mexico State University's College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES) has a mission to improve the lives of New Mexicans, the nation, and the world through research, teaching, and extension. AES research programs are organized by four critical issues facing New Mexico. These critical issues are represented by the ACES Pillars, which help guide planned programs and overall research focus. The pillars are Food & Fiber Production and Marketing, Water Use and Conservation, Family Development and Health of New Mexicans, and Environmental Stewardship.

To view all recent AES impacts visit: **impacts.aces.nmsu.edu** or use the QR code.

Food & Fiber Production and Marketing

Proactive Communication Strategies to Mitigate New World Screwworm Threat in New Mexico – Dr. Madison Dyment (AXED)

This initiative strengthens New Mexico's preparedness against the reintroduction of the New World Screwworm by addressing critical crisis communications needs. Through a two-part study, researchers will identify knowledge levels, perceptions, and preferred information channels among livestock producers and other key stakeholder groups. These insights will inform strategic, proactive messaging strategies that enhance stakeholder engagement and adoption of preventative measures and ensure key audiences remain informed of the scenario as it evolves. Researchers intend to develop multiple Extension workshops and publications through the project. Findings will be presented at interdisciplinary conferences for knowledge mobilization. By improving communication effectiveness, this initiative helps maintain the screwworm situation at a manageable threat level, protecting the state's livestock industry, food supply, and economy while complementing national response efforts with locally relevant initiatives and building strategies and knowledge for future agricultural threats and crises.

Strengthening New Mexico's Local Food System: Evidence of Double Up Food Bucks Benefits for Producers and Consumers – Dr. Alwin Dzouza; Dr. Madhav Regmi; Dr. Ram Acharya; and Dr. Michael Patrick (AEAB)

This first-of-its-kind, multi-year study, analyzing both producer and consumer DUFB data (2016-2021), demonstrates that continued program participation creates sustainable benefits for New Mexico's food system. Small-scale producers increased their profits and sales through direct-to-consumer marketing, while low-income consumers significantly increased their purchases and consumption of fruits and vegetables, with the strongest effects observed among

frequent users. The research reveals that nutrition incentive programs can effectively address food insecurity in food deserts while supporting local agriculture and economies. These findings inform policy decisions on program funding, expansion, and design, providing evidence-based recommendations to enhance participation and maximize community impact across underserved regions.

Strategies to Improve Beef Heifer Reproductive Success – Dr. Eric Scholljegerdes (ANRS) (Corona Range and Livestock Research Center)

This research addresses a critical challenge facing the U.S. beef industry: maintaining and rebuilding the cow herd during periods of drought while controlling production costs and preserving reproductive performance. By evaluating protein supplementation strategies and the use of low-potency growth implants in developing heifers, this work provides science-based guidance for producers managing heifers under extensive rangeland and dry-lot conditions with variable forage quality. Results demonstrate that strategic protein supplementation, particularly rumen undegradable protein (RUP), can support growth, metabolic function, and aspects of reproductive efficiency without impairing ovarian development. The use of a second low-potency growth implant at weaning did not negatively affect ovarian morphology or reproductive potential, alleviating concerns about fertility loss when growth technologies are used appropriately. Additionally, higher RUP supplementation showed promise for improving embryonic development, which may translate into greater pregnancy success and cow longevity. These findings offer producers flexible, cost-effective heifer development strategies that reduce reliance on high-quality forage while safeguarding reproductive outcomes.

EWE Matter: How Sheep Help Us Improve Pregnancy Outcomes in Animals and Women - Dr. Ryan Ashley (ANRS)

This research uses the sheep model to uncover how the placenta develops and why some pregnancies succeed while others fail. Researchers focus on chemokines that guide embryo implantation and early placental formation, examining how disruptions in these signals contribute to impaired pregnancies and placental insufficiency. By integrating agricultural and biomedical perspectives, this work identifies mechanisms that are relevant to both livestock and human health. The goal is to improve reproductive outcomes by advancing strategies that prevent pregnancy loss, fetal growth restriction, and related complications. Ultimately, this research provides new pathways to support healthier pregnancies and stronger food systems.

Using Biodiesel-Derived Crude Glycer into Support Growth, Wool Value, and Timely Puberty in Rambouillet Replacement Ewe Lambs – Dr. Jennifer Hernandez Gifford (ANRS)

NMSU researchers are testing whether 5% dietary crude glycerin (a biodiesel co-product) can provide a cost-effective energy supplement for growing Rambouillet lambs without harming intake, health, or fleece quality. The project established an IACUC-approved feeding and sampling platform at the West Sheep Unit, including individual feeding management, wool sampling for SEM/OFDA analysis, and progesterone-based puberty determination using RIA with blood sampling every three days. These outcomes build NMSU's capacity to evaluate alternative feeds that may help producers manage feed-cost volatility and improve replacement-ewe readiness. Results will inform practical recommendations on using crude glycerin to support growth, protect wool value, and promote on-time puberty in forage-based sheep systems while advancing sustainable use of biodiesel co-products.

From Lab to Glass: Advancing Sotol Cultivars Through Multidisciplinary Research – Dr. Sara Fuentes-Soriano (ANRS)

This project launched a first-of-its-kind, cross-border effort to transform sotol from a wild-harvested plant into a sustainable, cultivated crop supporting New Mexico's growing craft spirits industry. By integrating genomic, transcriptomic, and metabolomic research, the initiative generated foundational data to guide cultivar selection, improve crop performance, and protect wild populations. A landmark organizational meeting united scientists from New Mexico State University, the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, and New Mexico industry investors, formally establishing an international research–industry partnership. The project strengthened workforce development through hands-on training for graduate students and early-career researchers, while aligning scientific innovation with commercial and conservation goals. Collectively, these outcomes position sotol as a viable arid-land crop, advance sustainable agriculture, and reinforce New Mexico's leadership in applied plant science and craft spirits innovation.

Water Use

International Work on Aquifer Protection – Dr. Frank Ward (AEAB)

Ongoing challenges from population growth and climate that stress access to water in the world's aquifers raise the importance of finding economically sustainable aquifer use patterns. Much work has been conducted on the impacts of water supply fluctuations, climate change, and population growth on economic access to water resources. An NMSU research project filled a gap by which few works to date have comprehensively investigated the sustainable economic performance of additional infrastructure development or policy design in many of the aquifer basins internationally for handling ongoing challenges of drought, increased economic activity, and climate water stress at the basin scale.

Impact of Seasonal Sunlight Use Patterns on Winter Canola Water Use Efficiency and Yield – Dr. Sangu Angadi (PES) (Clovis Agricultural Science Center)

Located on the tail end of the Ogallala Aquifer, researchers at the ASC Clovis are focused on conserving and improving the water use efficiency of declining water supplies, which is extremely important for producers, the general public, and many other institutions in East Central New Mexico. Abundant solar radiation in the region has a significant role in how plants use water, but very little attention is given to the assessment of solar radiation absorption and water use by the crops. This study is assessing the water use efficiency of winter canola, which has three unique growth stages: 1) Green large leaves in the fall, 2) A yellow blanket of flowers early in the spring, with smaller leaves hidden underneath and 3) A green mat of pods in late spring. The roles of these growth stages in light interception and water use can open up new ways of thinking about water use and management to improve water use efficiency. A better understanding of the role of plant growth stages in photosynthetic uptake of carbon and transpiration of water will help us better manage water during crop growth to improve cropping system efficiency and improve water management for the Ogallala Aquifer.

Line quantum sensors installed at different heights in winter canola field during peak flowering stage at Clovis, NM.

Rio Hondo Water Quality Assessment: Heavy Metal Concentrations 2023-2025 – Dr. April Ulery (PES)

Rio Hondo is a significant waterway located in northern New Mexico, which flows through mountainous terrain and feeds into the Rio Grande. It provides drinking water for local communities and sustains a diverse array of aquatic species and wildlife. Due to various natural and human stressors, there have been concerns about the presence of contaminants in the water, which can adversely affect human health, aquatic life, and the environment. Natural processes such as erosion and wildfires can also contribute to water quality issues. Researchers collected water samples bi-monthly from May 2023 to March 2025. All metals tested, including arsenic, cadmium, lead, zinc, and copper, were below the EPA drinking water limits. Iron exceeded aesthetic guidelines one time each at 3 sites during the sampling period.

Family Development and Health of New Mexicans

Professional Development for New Mexico Agricultural Education Teachers – Dr. William Norris (AXED)

The Agricultural Science Teachers' Industry-Aligned Education and Development (AGRI-TED) program is strengthening agricultural education in New Mexico by directly addressing one of the profession's greatest challenges: early-career teacher confidence and retention. Designed for New Mexico agricultural educators, AGRI-TED provides a year-long, industry-aligned professional development experience that builds content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and professional support networks. The 2025 animal science cohort completed extensive training in nutrition, reproduction, genetics, and artificial insemination, earning industry certification and gaining practical, classroom-ready skills. Survey data collected across five timepoints showed a statistically significant increase in participants' ability to teach national animal science standards, rising from 2.94 at program entry to 4.12 by April 2025. By improving teacher competence and confidence, AGRI-TED enhances program quality, supports educator retention, and strengthens agricultural education statewide. The AGRI-TED program has resulted in one peer-reviewed journal article, four peer-reviewed conference presentations, and impacted fifteen New Mexico agricultural educators and thousands of New Mexico secondary-level students.

Exploring Perceptions of Career Growth and Employability Skills Outcomes Among Career and Technical Education Program Graduates – Dr. Jamie Molina (FCS)

Family and Consumer Sciences–aligned Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways play a critical role in supporting the family development, health, and economic well-being of New Mexicans. Yet, these programs are often misunderstood as limited or non-academic, which can restrict enrollment, funding, and long-term program sustainability. FCS researchers are examining how Career and Technical Education programs aligned with Family and Consumer Sciences support career readiness, employability skills, and long-term workforce alignment. Results from over 1,000 graduates showed strong career alignment, particularly when industry certifications were involved, and consistent development of social-emotional and employability skills. These outcomes demonstrate CTE's contribution to family economic stability, workforce preparedness, and community well-being, directly supporting the ACES Pillar of Family Development and Health of New Mexicans.

Environmental Stewardship

Recycling Manure Nutrients – Understanding and Expanding the "Manureshed" Concept – Dr. Maryfrances Miller (AEAB)

The "manureshed" research project uses participatory action research to identify barriers and find opportunities to increase recycling of manure nutrients to the croplands producing the feed. This interdisciplinary project connects the research tools from USDA, NMSU, Colorado State University, and the University of Minnesota to the research participants to leverage and capture their expertise from prior and ongoing involvement in manure management. The research moves beyond characterizing the barriers and opportunities into collaboratively fostering solutions and expanding manure nutrient recycling. Ultimately, this reduces environmental challenges, improves the financial profitability of livestock farmers through reduced manure management expenses, reduces crop nutrient expenses for crop farmers, and creates rural economic development opportunities for entrepreneurs specializing in improving manure logistics.

Improving Climate Resilience through Improved Soil Carbon Management: Assessing Understanding and Knowledge of Producers and the Public – Dr. Brian Hurd (AEAB)

Stewardship of New Mexico's productive farmland is found to be highly valued by its farmers, ranchers, and citizens; often considered by these stakeholders to be an important component of New Mexico's environment and natural resources. Improved carbon management assists both mitigation and adaptation to long-term climate and weather extremes. This project is discovering how well New Mexico agriculturalists and citizens understand soil-carbon-food-environment concepts and connections. The research identifies approaches that improve soil carbon conservation and sustainable soil management, while maintaining farm and ranch incomes and profit reliability. Further research is underway to examine and document methods to assist

agricultural and climate program development by providing important feedback on information sources and flows, and program perception. These results can aid in assessing program and policy effectiveness, particularly those concerning climate policy and natural resource conservation within the context of food and fiber production.

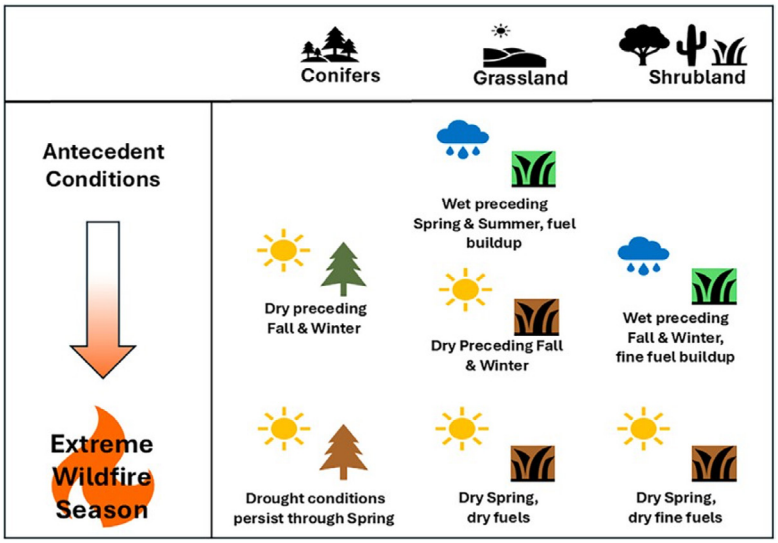
Translating Scientific Research into Programs for K-12 Students and Teachers – Stephanie Bestelmeyer (AXED)

More than 20,000 K-12 students and 1,000 K-12 teachers each year learn about science discoveries from the New Mexico-based Jornada Experimental Range and Jornada Basin LTER. They participate in hands-on and standards-aligned classroom lessons, field trips, and unique data communication competitions. All programs use data, methods, and results from current, local research being conducted at the Jornada. The K-12 programs, available through the nonprofit Asombro Institute for Science Education, increase students' science content knowledge and excitement about science. All students gain scientific literacy that helps them become critically thinking citizens able to make informed decisions. Furthermore, by highlighting local research done by diverse New Mexico scientists, some students will begin to consider science as an exciting career option, increasing the pool of talented future scientists in New Mexico.

Understanding Ecosystem-Specific Fire–Climate Dynamics Across the Southwest – New Mexico and Arizona – Dr. Hatim Geli (ANRS)

This study examines how climate change is reshaping wildfire behavior across the Southwest, in particular New Mexico and Arizona. It reveals that fire–climate relationships differ substantially among conifer forests, shrublands, and grasslands. Using wildfire records and seasonal climate

data from 1984 to 2021, the authors show that increasing atmospheric aridity and prolonged drought are the dominant drivers of larger and more severe fires in forested ecosystems. In contrast, grassland and shrubland fires are strongly influenced by wet-then-dry climate sequences that promote fine-fuel growth, a process increasingly amplified by the spread of invasive grasses. These ecosystem-specific dynamics explain why wildfire risk is expanding across the landscape, including areas historically considered less fire-prone. The study highlights that wildfire risk in New Mexico is now shaped by both long-term warming trends and short-term seasonal climate variability, with growing consequences for communities in the wildland–urban interface. By clarifying these relationships, the research provides critical guidance for adaptive, ecosystem-specific wildfire management and community preparedness in a changing climate.



Conceptual model of seasonal fire–climate relationships across fire–vegetation groups in the Southwest United States https://doi.org/10.1175/EI-D-25-0001.1

Development of Microbial and Molecular Tools to Conserve New Mexican Amphibians – Obed Hernandez-Gomez (FWCE)

Tadpole experimental units used to assess probiotics and stress tests

New Mexican amphibians are experiencing declines due to habitat loss and disease. Recent wildfire events complicate conservation, as the negative effects of ash exposure and disease can be cumulative. Conservation programs in New Mexico will benefit from tools to combat disease and assess animal health. Researchers are developing microbial probiotics that can be used to bolster the immunity of Chiricahua and Plains Leopard Frogs. In addition, they are validating and testing tools to measure stress hormones released from these animals when experiencing disturbance events. These results will provide state and federal agencies involved in conservation with

1) antifungal probiotics and
2) recommendations on reintroduction site selection.

The New Mexico Reforestation Center (NMRC)

The New Mexico Reforestation Center (NMRC) is a multi-institutional center hosted at New Mexico State University, established to produce climate-adapted native seedlings at the scale required for post-fire recovery, watershed restoration, and long-term forest resilience across New Mexico and the broader Southwest. The Center's production target is five million seedlings annually by 2030, a mandate that positions reforestation as water and climate infrastructure for the state. Contracting of Phase 1 capital construction is currently underway, funded through prior state appropriations and federal disaster relief; Phase 2, a $17.65M general obligation bond authorized by HB 248, will go before New Mexico voters in November 2026.

NMRC's institutional architecture brings together NMSU, New Mexico Highlands University, the University of New Mexico, and the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division under a shared governance structure. The Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) in Mora, an NMSU College of ACES facility, serves as the operational hub for Phase 1. This configuration places ACES at the center of a state-significant initiative that draws on the complementary strengths of three universities and a state agency, and that is responsive to the priorities of the State Forester, the Legislature, and federal land management partners.

Operationally, the past year has moved NMRC from authorization to execution. The Center will hold its Phase 1 groundbreaking ceremony at the Mora AES on April 27, 2026, with participation from state, federal, tribal, and institutional leadership. A multi-institutional intergovernmental agreement is in development, with formal negotiations among the partner institutions scheduled for later this summer; this IGA will establish the Reforestation Center's long-term governance and operational framework. Financial architecture, including revenue modeling, buyer engagement, and economic scenario analysis, is in active development through a coordinated contractor team.

External engagement during this period included a Director presentation at the New Mexico Water Leaders Workshop on April 21, 2026, convened by the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, framing NMRC to state legislators, federal agencies, tribal partners, and NGOs as water infrastructure for New Mexico. A Congressionally Directed Spending request was submitted to Senator Heinrich's office for FY27. Outreach to Picuris Pueblo, Taos Pueblo, Jemez Pueblo, and other tribal partners is ongoing, alongside coordination with the U.S. Forest Service on seedling demand and partnership pathways.

NMRC has also invested in education and community engagement across multiple levels. Elementary students at Rio Gallinas School contributed an art sculpture connected to the Reforestation Center's mission, integrating reforestation themes into local arts and place-based education. At the post-secondary level, NMRC convened a regional university logo design competition that drew submissions from student designers across partner institutions; the winning design now serves as the Reforestation Center's visual identity.

Looking ahead to FY27, NMRC's priorities are the successful Phase 1 buildout at the Mora AES site, negotiation and execution of the multi-institutional IGA, securing committed volume purchase agreements with federal and state buyers, and the November 2026 bond campaign that will determine Phase 2 capital availability. The Center's directorship was established in November 2025; the work described here reflects the first operational period under that structure.

Rio Arriba County Extension Program Director Donald Martinez shared information with President Valerio Ferme during the summer Extension Tour.

Executive Summary

The New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has served communities across the state for more than a century, delivering practical, research-based knowledge that strengthens families, economies and natural resources. Its mission – rooted in a federal, state and county partnership – remains steadfast as Extension adapts to evolving community needs. With staff in all 33 counties and many Tribal areas, and partnerships with more than 1,000 organizations and 10,000 volunteers, CES continues to broaden its reach and impact. Its priority areas in 2025 included agriculture and natural resources, positive youth development, community development and the health and wellness of New Mexico families. These programs reflect Extension's commitment to collaboration and responsiveness as agents and specialists work to secure resources and expand diverse outreach efforts statewide.

In summer 2025, CES's long-standing commitment to community connection took to the road. New Mexico State University President Valerio Ferme launched a 13-day, 3,685-mile road trip, From Campus to Community: The NMSU Cooperative Extension Service Impact Tour, to visit every county in the state. The tour aimed to deepen the university leadership's understanding of local needs and strengthen relationships between campus and communities.

Traveling in two vans from county to county, Ferme, academic deans, regents and staff met with Extension faculty, volunteers, local leaders and residents. These encounters provided eye-opening insights into regional challenges, successes and opportunities, particularly in agriculture, youth development and community engagement.

Extension staff expressed appreciation for the visibility and support the tour brought. Agents shared their pride in serving their counties and emphasized the importance of strong partnerships with NMSU academic units. The conversations helped reinforce recruitment initiatives, including collaboration between Cooperative Extension and Undergraduate Admissions to connect youth and families with higher-education pathways earlier in their educational journey. Early outcomes included stronger engagement during the 2025 4-H State Conference, where NMSU academic colleges welcomed youth participants, affirming that they have a place at the university.

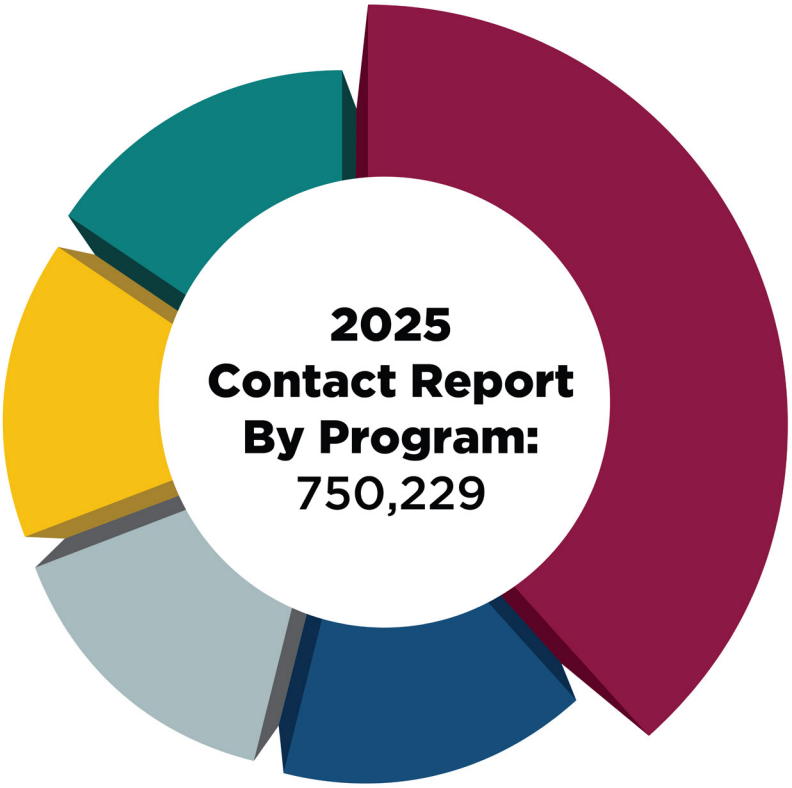
While the road trip highlighted Extension's statewide impact, one of its most distinct and culturally significant areas of work remains the Tribal Extension Program. For 17 years, Tribal Extension agents have lived and worked in Navajo, Jicarilla Apache and Pueblo communities, delivering hands-on education rooted in local traditions. Their programs address agriculture, youth development, food sovereignty and family wellness. Whether teaching sheep shearing, supporting community gardens, or offering nutrition classes delivered in English and Navajo, Tribal Extension strengthens cultural preservation while advancing health and economic resilience.

The program reaches more than 7,000 people annually and is guided by advisory councils to ensure community voice remains central. Its efforts became even more critical during and after COVID-19, when disruptions to food access renewed the urgency of local food production, preservation skills and sustainable agriculture. Through initiatives like the Master Food Preserver program and 4-H clubs grounded in Native values, Tribal Extension empowers youth, families and producers while honoring cultural identity.

Cooperative Extension Service Director Jon Boren talks to students in Luna County during the summer Extension Tour.

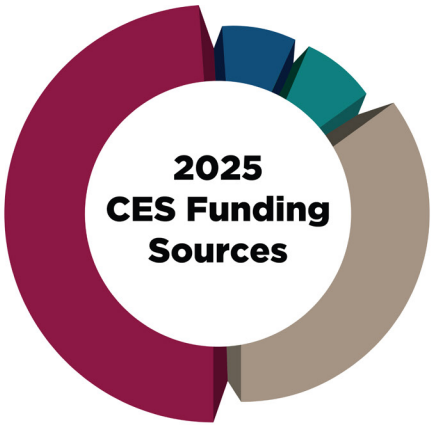
Cooperative Extension Service

Reaching our Clientele



- 4-H and Youth: 405,393 (38.3%)
- Animal Sciences & Natural Resources: 165,281 (15.6%)
- Community & Economic Development: 162,519 (15.4%)
- Family & Consumer Sciences: 162,185 (15.3%)
- Plant Sciences: 162,106 (15.3%)

*Contacts can be assigned more than one program area. As a result, the numbers above may overlap.



- State: 49%
- Grants & Contracts: 35%
- County: 8%
- Federal: 8%

- Female: 49,437 (60%)
- Male: 32,442 (40%)
- Non-binary: 105 (0.1)

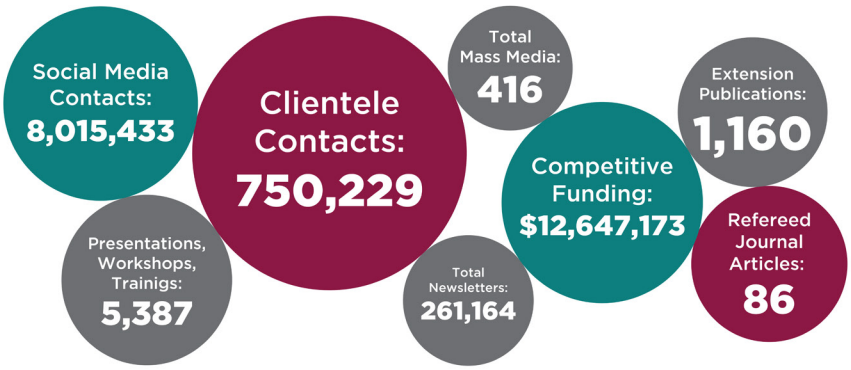
Cooperative Extension Service

Extension Personal Contact by Ethnicity

- Asian: 2,968 (3%)
- Black / African-American: 1,606 (2%)
- Hispanic/Latino: 30,758 (33%)
- Middle Eastern: 238 (0.3%)
- Native American: 9,191 (10%)
- White: 38,944 (42%)
- Other: 8,700 (9%)

*All demographic data only reflects those who chose to self-report

CES by the Numbers



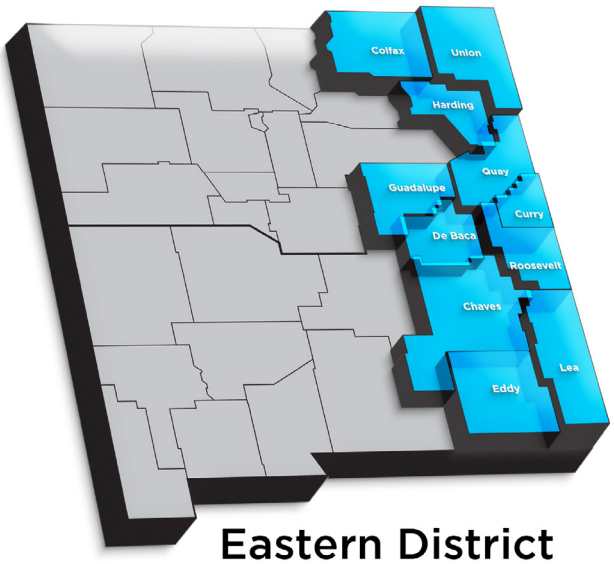
- Youth: 144,849 (46%)
- Adult: 172,410 (54%)

Reaching New Mexicans Across the State

The Cooperative Extension Service has faculty and staff in all 33 counties and many Tribal areas in New Mexico who provide communities with effective leadership and collaboration to foster economic, educational, and community development. Each county has unique programming to tackle emerging issues for their communities, with annual and one-time programs offered in many different modalities to reach a variety of audiences, from traditional youth programs and workshops for producers to family and lifestyle programs.

Eastern District

The Eastern District is served by 18 agents across 11 counties who work to meet community needs through Community and Economic Development. This year, the district reached 177,558 individuals through direct, in-person education.



Eastern District

Eastern District educators delivered impactful programs that strengthened community health, youth development, agricultural resilience, and public safety. Family and Consumer Sciences agents addressed rural aging challenges by equipping more than 270 participants with tools related to aging in place, estate planning, and long-term wellness. Seventy-five percent of participants rated the information as extremely helpful, leading to a follow-up workshop featuring professional panelists.

Diabetes prevention efforts in Chaves County supported long-term lifestyle improvements, with participants collectively losing 35 pounds and several reducing A1C levels below the prediabetic range.

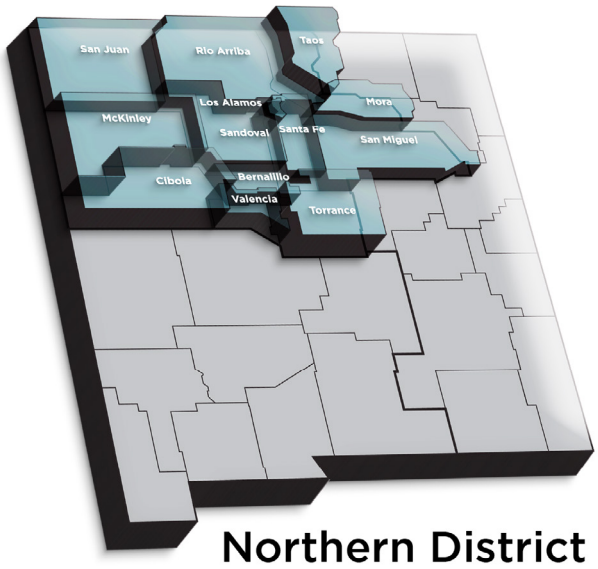
Mental Health First Aid trainings increased adults' confidence in recognizing and responding to mental health and substance use crises, with all participants reporting they could apply the ALGEE action plan. Interest in food preservation also continues to grow, prompting additional workshops. One participant noted, "If you can follow a recipe, you can do these techniques."

Youth development programs expanded hands-on learning opportunities through camps and project exploration days for ages 5–18. These initiatives strengthened confidence, critical thinking, and leadership. Participation in Cloverbud exhibits increased by 252%, reflecting strong family engagement and program growth. Parents reported meaningful impacts, sharing that their children "love making their own food and learning about it" and are now eager to help cook at home.

Agricultural programming enhanced producer knowledge and operational readiness. Ranchers reported increased confidence in value-added programs, biosecurity practices, and Beef Quality Assurance standards. Additionally, Lea County's vector control training saved local governments more than $27,000 while expanding certification access and strengthening public health capacity.

Northern District

In 2025, the Northern District Cooperative Extension Service delivered focused, research-based programming that strengthened agricultural sustainability, youth development, and family health across diverse New Mexico communities. The district's 34 agents reached 168,819 individuals through direct in-person education.



Northern District

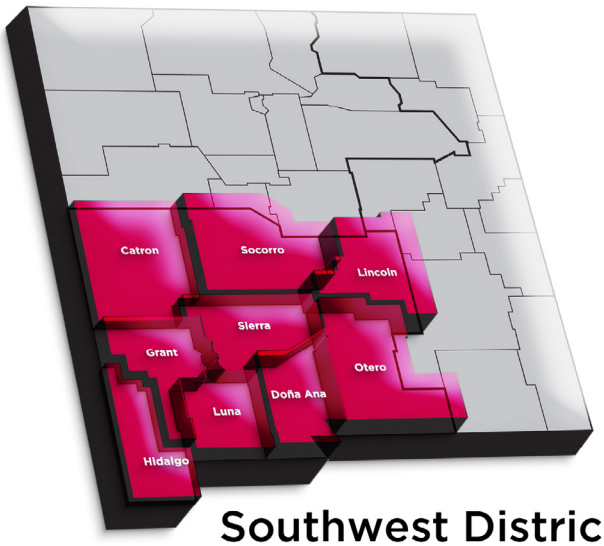
Agriculture programs addressed regional needs through livestock education, predator management, gardening initiatives, and climate resilient practices. Producers participated in workshops covering grazing, integrated pest management, irrigation, and backyard poultry, while community partnerships expanded agricultural awareness through Growing Forward Farm tours and county-level gardening series. Key outcomes included the removal of 210 coyotes threatening livestock, an increase in Taos County orchard pest control participation from 28 to 96 homeowners, and doubled yields in soil health grant projects.

Youth development programs reached thousands of students through hands-on STEM learning, agricultural literacy, and culturally responsive 4-H initiatives. The Egg-to-Chick program engaged 3,864 students across 130 classrooms, strengthening literacy, math application, and scientific observation skills. Additional 4-H programs supported youth with disabilities, Navajo Nation families, and urban Title I schools through STEAM activities, shooting sports, welding and trades exploration, and leadership development. These efforts improved student engagement and attendance, strengthened teamwork and communication skills, expanded interest in STEM careers, and supported new events such as Wingate High School's first Agriculture Day, which reached over 200 students.

Family and Consumer Sciences programs advanced public health through chronic disease prevention, financial literacy, and physical activity initiatives. More than 350 residents participated in diabetes cooking schools, Mediterranean-style eating classes, and senior strength training programs. Participants reported healthier eating habits, increased physical strength, reduced fall risk, and improved financial confidence. Programs such as Walk With Ease helped older adults establish regular walking routines, while large community outreach events – including the San Juan Healthy Living Expo with 849 attendees – expanded awareness of health resources and prevention strategies.

Southwest District

The Southwest District of the NMSU Cooperative Extension Service delivers community-driven, research-based programs that strengthen the economic, social, and educational foundations of southern New Mexico. In 2025, the district's 15 agents reached 198,092 individuals through direct, in-person educational contacts, expanded outreach with 1,213,460 social media engagements, and utilized 48 mass media outlets to extend Extension education across the region.



Southwest District

Youth development continues to be a core focus, preparing young people to become safe, capable, and engaged citizens. Experiential programs such as Shattered Lives, 4-H livestock education, leadership development, and agricultural literacy reach thousands of youth each year. These initiatives promote responsible decision making, leadership, financial literacy, and career awareness. One educator summarized the impact by noting, "My students were able to see first hand the effect agriculture has on their lives." From raising livestock to understanding the consequences of impaired driving, youth gain practical skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Agricultural and livestock programs provide targeted support to ranchers and producers by improving herd health, reproductive efficiency, regulatory compliance, and overall profitability. Hands on workshops, cattle producer meetings, Beef Quality Assurance certification, and reproductive clinics deliver timely, science-based information that reduces production risk and strengthens rural economies. These efforts also reinforce trust and engagement between producers and Extension, underscoring Extension's role as a responsive and dependable resource.

Health and family programs address essential quality-of-life issues facing rural communities. Suicide prevention and stress resilience efforts increase mental health awareness and encourage early intervention. Aging-in-place education and succession planning initiatives help older adults remain independent while preparing for the future. Together, these programs demonstrate the Extension mission in action – translating research into practical education that improves lives, supports agriculture, and strengthens communities throughout southern New Mexico.

Extension Specialists Deliver Research-Based Information

Extension Specialists provide research-based information on important and relevant topics that affect individuals, families, and communities. Specialists work directly with County Agents and provide educational programs to numerous commodity and special interest groups throughout New Mexico. They also conduct regional and state workshops, and demonstrational and short-term research projects. Often these Extension faculty represent the single state-wide or regional source for research-based information on a particular topic.

Animal Sciences and Natural Resources

The Department of Extension Animal Sciences and Natural Resources (EASNR) continues to advance New Mexico's agricultural and natural resource sectors through research-based, practical, and community-driven educational programming.

In 2025, EASNR recorded more than 39,000 contacts, delivered 342 presentations, and expanded its educational library by publishing 17 new Extension guides and revising 22 existing ones. The department also strengthened its capacity by hiring an Extension Policy Specialist to support policy-focused outreach and engagement.

Since 2008, the U.S. Dairy Education Consortium has been a model for practical education with 70 participants in 2025.

A key highlight of 2025 was the continued success of the U.S.–Indonesia Dairy Partnership (USIDP), led by Extension Dairy Specialist Robert Hagevoort. This international initiative supports the development of small- and mid-sized Indonesian dairy farms as part of a broader effort to enhance local milk production and contribute to the Indonesian government's Free Nutritious Meals Program. Over the past year, the team conducted three international trips, supported four MOU-signing academic seminars, delivered 48 farmer training events, and completed 1,700 on-farm visits. These efforts directly improved the management capacity of 96 farmers responsible for 238 lactating cows producing a combined 96,000 liters of milk per month.

EASNR also played a central role in the continued decline of Trichomoniasis (Trich) incidence in New Mexico cattle herds.

Due to long-term leadership from Extension Veterinarian John Wenzel, quarantined premises decreased from 35 to 27, and statewide incidence fell to 0.311%, a dramatic improvement from the 6.5% rate documented when control efforts began. This progress supports the economic viability of New Mexico's cattle industry, a sector generating over one billion dollars annually.

Through annual programs such as the U.S. Dairy Education Consortium and the U.S. Beef Academy, EASNR continued its commitment to workforce development, training hundreds of students from across the country in hands-on, science-based livestock production and management.

Extension Economics

The Department of Extension Economics provides objective, timely, and research-based information that supports decision making in agribusiness and rural communities, fostering economic development and long-term sustainability. The department delivers both established programs and innovative initiatives that respond to evolving agricultural and community needs.

Navajo Sustainable Agricultural (NSA) Project: Serving farmers and ranchers across the Navajo Nation, this project includes four agricultural specialists, a field coordinator, and an administrative assistant residing within the Nation. From 2012–2025, it reached more than 8,000 participants through workshops and nearly 1,500 through individualized assistance.

Extension Economics Specialist Jason Banegas presented at the 2025 Annie's Project retreat, which helps farm and ranch women strengthen risk-management skills.

Crop and Livestock Enterprise Budgets: In 2025, Extension Economics updated 161 crop budgets across 16 counties and developed five regional livestock budgets. Data from county agents and producers ensure these tools reflect local practices, costs, and production conditions, supporting decision making for producers, lenders, and policymakers.

Path to Plate: This online marketplace connects New Mexico farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs with institutional, wholesale, and retail buyers. In 2025, the platform expanded to over 70 users, including 46 producers, 25 buyers, and five distributors.

Value-Added Agriculture Programs: In collaboration with the New Mexico Association of Meat Processors and state agencies, Extension Economists hosted the 2025 NMSU Meat Processor Summit and BizSprint. Seventeen processors – representing nearly half of the state's industry – participated in targeted training and site visits, collectively preparing more than $3.5 million in facility upgrade applications to strengthen competitiveness and environmental compliance.

Together, these initiatives empower producers, strengthen rural economies, and advance sustainable agricultural development across New Mexico.

Extension Family and Consumer Sciences

The Department of Extension Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) delivers research-based, current information that supports the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities across the state. Specialists and Associate II's collaborate closely with County Extension Agents to provide evidence-driven education for both local and statewide audiences. Program areas include health and wellness, family life and child development, personal finance, nutrition and cooking, diabetes education and prevention, disaster preparedness, and food safety and technology.

Support for Emergency Family Assistance and Resource Center: Following the March 21, 2025, incident at Young Park in Las Cruces, the Doña Ana Office of Emergency Management established a Family Assistance and Resource Center to coordinate support for affected individuals and families. Through partnerships with local organizations, the center delivered emotional support, financial resources, and access to community-based services.

On the Road to Living Well with Diabetes (OTR): Roughly 201,000 New Mexico adults – over 12% of the population – have diabetes. A grant from the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation enabled continued statewide delivery of OTR, with 188 participants completing the program. Thirty-nine percent entered with elevated blood sugar levels; 78% reduced their A1C in post-assessments. Among participants with elevated but nondiabetic A1C levels, 94% achieved reductions.

Skin Cancer Awareness and Prevention: To address rising skin cancer risks in rural communities, the Extension Health & Wellbeing Specialist provided sun safety education to more than 3,000 New Mexicans. This outreach strengthened awareness, improved preventive practices, and expanded early detection capacity among both youth and adults.

Extension FCS specialists and interns supported community health and family fairs statewide, offering research-based information to strengthen families and communities.

State 4-H and Youth Development

In 2025, New Mexico 4-H strengthened educational pathways, workforce readiness, and positive youth development through strategic partnerships and experiential learning statewide.

Through a 19-year collaboration between NMSU and Las Vegas City Schools, the Youth Agricultural Science Center (YASC) and Cooking with Kids integrated garden-based learning with classroom instruction and nutrition education. Results show strong impact: 91% of participating youth reported developing life skills such as mastery and independence; 86% reinforced academic skills in reading, math, and science; and 89% were more likely to eat fresh fruits and vegetables after harvesting produce they grew. These efforts advance agricultural literacy and healthy living in a state with significant child poverty challenges.

A middle school student brazes copper pipe during a hands-on visit to the DACC HVAC R program as part of the Aggie Next Step College Experience.

The Aggie Next Step College Experience (ANSCE) hosted seven campus visits, engaging 204 youth from eight counties across 34 academic departments and programs. Postexperience surveys indicated 69% identified new career interests, 68% felt better prepared to pursue educational goals, and 86% were more likely to attend NMSU or DACC. ANSCE expands college awareness and strengthens pathways to postsecondary education.

Seventeen agents enhanced program quality and risk management through the State 4-H Shooting Sports Agent Training, with 81% reporting increased readiness to manage county programs and uphold safety standards.

The FCS School of RealLife Skills served 140 youth in a three-day immersive experience. Eighty percent increased problem-solving confidence, 81% gained new practical skills, and 82% expressed interest in returning as Junior Instructors, demonstrating leadership development and program sustainability.

Collectively, these initiatives advanced life skills, academic readiness, agricultural literacy, leadership development, and career pathways – promoting healthier families, stronger communities, and a more prepared New Mexico workforce.

Innovative Media Research and Extension

In 2025, Innovative Media Research and Extension reached 6.8 million people through extension and outreach efforts delivered via games, learning modules, apps, videos, animations, and social media engagement. The team released the first two virtual reality programs for NMSU Extension – one illustrating the microbiological life beneath diverse surfaces at White Sands National Park, and another preparing dietetics students for emotionally complex patient counseling scenarios.

Educational Technology Specialist Matheus Cezarotto tests an innovative Virtual Reality program, bringing cutting edge technology to Extension learning.

They produced 80 media projects, including four new games highlighting biotech careers for 4-H members, food safety for farmers' market vendors, and water aquifer management; 10 educational animations; and 36 videos, many offered in both English and Spanish. Additional outputs included five interactive programs focused on food, agriculture, and early childhood development, along with support for 17 educational apps. The department also expanded its digital presence through 63 educational social media campaigns utilizing coordinated posts, graphics, photos, and videos.

Faculty advanced research on the effectiveness of educational media and developed design frameworks to improve future tools. They shared their work locally and internationally, presenting in the United Arab Emirates, Brazil, and Canada. Through Learning Games Lab activities, design summits, and tours, they engaged hundreds of youth, strengthening digital literacy and promoting careers in media.

Extension Plant Sciences

The mission of the Extension Plant Sciences (EPS) Department is to deliver research-based knowledge and technology that support improved quality of life and strengthen the agricultural, economic, environmental, and social wellbeing of New Mexico.

In 2025, Viticulture Specialist Geraldine Diverres enhanced a 10-day sparkling winemaking bootcamp by adding viticulture instruction and coordinating a vineyard site visit with CNM Ingenuity and the NMSU viticulture extension program. This collaboration provided students with practical skills linking vineyard management to winery operations and deepening their understanding of the full production cycle.

Workshop participants look on as pecan wood trimmings are fired in the kiln, witnessing biochar production in action.

Soil Health Specialist John Idowu demonstrated the economic and environmental value of biochar. Converting 300 tons of pecan wood waste into biochar offsets carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to those from roughly 70 gasoline-powered cars each year and improves soil health by increasing moisture-holding capacity and reducing irrigation needs.

EPS also prioritized improving the Extension publication process. At a departmental retreat, Lee Martinez outlined updated procedures for University Marketing and Communications, and a streamlined internal review system was introduced to shorten turnaround times. The department produced 21 publications in 2025, including Guide H-151, Leaf Curl Plum Aphid, coauthored by Joanie King and Phillip Lujan, which provides practical guidance for fruit growers and home orchardists managing a significant insect pest.

Executive Summary

The Center of Excellence in Sustainable Food and Agricultural Systems (CESFAS) at New Mexico State University connects faculty across disciplines and colleges, bringing together research, teaching, Extension, and industry partners to develop value-added agriculture and strengthen New Mexico's food systems. CESFAS uses targeted research investments, internships, and infrastructure to support university efforts toward real-world challenges, while providing industry with a clear entry point to engage with NMSU.

During 2025, CESFAS focused on moving research from the lab into field testing and pilot-scale use. Projects were evaluated not just on scientific merit but also on whether they could operate under real-world conditions and support the required capital investment. This reflects agriculture in the Southwest, where water limits, environmental variability, and regulatory complexity require solutions that work in practice.

Statewide Impact and Strategic Importance

CESFAS serves as a statewide resource for advancing agricultural innovation, workforce development, and economic growth in New Mexico. By connecting research, Extension, and industry, the Center helps move new technologies and business models into practice, supporting producers, processors, and rural communities. This work expands value-added agriculture, builds in-state processing capacity, and strengthens the competitiveness of New Mexico's food and agricultural sectors. In doing so, CESFAS improves the effectiveness of public investment and supports more resilient regional supply chains.

Key Impacts (2025)

In 2025, CESFAS-supported work resulted in measurable outcomes across research, extension, and economic development. Examples of work include coordinated efforts to drive approximately $3.5 million in state-funded wastewater infrastructure investments, technical assistance for roughly $3 million in rural food access funding through the New Mexico Food Pathways initiative, and supported submission of approximately $1.11 million in interdisciplinary research proposals. Faculty and partners delivered more than 1,000 industry consultations statewide, engaging producers, processors, lenders, and public agencies.

CESFAS Model: Integrating Research, Extension, and Infrastructure

CESFAS moves projects into use by reducing fragmentation across research, Extension, and industry and aligning efforts around implementable outcomes. This includes industry-embedded internships, targeted internal grant programs that align faculty and external partners prior to proposal submission, strategic investment in shared infrastructure, such as the Sustainable Solutions Laboratory and the Food Safety Laboratory, and Extension and workforce partnerships that support industry groups and public agencies new to food and agricultural systems. Projects are evaluated not just on scientific results, but on regulatory requirements, capital needs, operational constraints, and market potential, increasing the likelihood of field testing, pilot-scale implementation, and real investment.

Applied Research and Innovation

CESFAS advances applied research across specialty crops, food systems, biomass utilization, alternative proteins, and natural products, with a focus on real-world performance and industry adoption.

In 2025, research showed that mushroom-derived inputs and integrated cover-cropping systems can suppress key chile pathogens while improving soil health, offering growers practical options to reduce reliance on synthetic inputs. Additional work on postharvest storage of fresh-market jujube extended shelf life from five weeks to nine weeks or longer, improving marketability and supporting diversification of specialty crop production.

Additional efforts supported food safety systems, product and process validation, and processing technologies, extending this work into laboratory, field, and commercial applications.

Extension, Infrastructure and Workforce Development

CESFAS connects industry challenges with university resources, bringing real-world problems into applied research and Extension while coordinating across departments to streamline engagement with NMSU. Efforts include technical assistance, training, and feasibility assessments that support decision-making and investment.

CESFAS also invests in targeted infrastructure that supports direct engagement with industry. This includes the Wine Analysis Laboratory, which provides analytical services to the state's wine industry, and the Container Farm Living Laboratory, which supports evaluation of modular controlled-environment production systems under real-world conditions.

'Dongzao' jujube fruits after nine weeks of cold storage (–0.6 to 0 °C; 31–32 °F) at the NMSU Agricultural Science Center in Los Lunas (2025). Control fruit (left) show visible decay, while fruit treated with the fungicide Scholar (right) exhibit reduced mold and improved quality, supporting extended storage life.

Workforce development is supported through undergraduate and graduate students working in applied research, laboratory operations, and industry-facing projects. This builds practical skills in technical evaluation, feasibility analysis, and systems development.

Economic Development and Future Directions

CESFAS serves as a coordinating hub that aligns research, extension, industry, and public agencies to support investment and innovation in New Mexico agriculture. By integrating technical validation with economic feasibility, the Center helps ensure that projects are viable prior to deployment, reducing risk and improving long-term outcomes.

In partnership with the New Mexico Economic Development Department, the New Mexico Department of Agriculture, the Arrowhead Center, and industry stakeholders, CESFAS continues to support the development of new value-added markets, processing capacity, and supply chains. Key areas include meat and pecan processing, food access infrastructure, and emerging specialty crops in which New Mexico enjoys a competitive advantage.

Looking ahead, CESFAS will continue to strengthen its role as a statewide platform that connects research, infrastructure, workforce development, and industry engagement, with a continued focus on building systems that are technically sound, economically viable, and scalable for long-term impact.

Rebecca Thistlethwaite, Extension Specialist at Oregon State University and Director of the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network, speaks about the challenges and opportunities facing small and mid-sized processors across the U.S.

Executive Summary

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) serves as the engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through research, teaching, and Extension. To best serve the needs of all New Mexicans, ACES is committed to creating an environment that enables all students, faculty, and staff to fully engage in the educational, outreach, and scholarly pursuits. Dr. Laura Bittner, Extension Health and Well-being Specialist, and Dr. Karim Martinez, Extension Family Life and Child Development Specialist, currently serve as co-directors of this initiative. Their duties include coordinating and managing strategic activities on behalf of ACES while serving as a liaison to related campus-wide initiatives.

Presentations

As part of Dr. Bittner's and Dr. Martinez's co-director roles, they were invited to present "*Inspire and Include: Strategies for a Thriving Workplace*" at the National Extension and Research Administrative Officers Conference (NERAOC) in Reno, Nevada, on April 3, 2025. The objectives of this training included (1) defining a thriving organizational environment, (2) discussing the benefits of a thriving environment, (3) identifying strategies for improving communication, connection, and collaboration, (4) discussing the role of leadership and accountability, (5) exploring techniques for motivating and encouraging colleagues, and (6) sharing resources for participants to use in their own workplaces.

The presentation was well received by Extension professionals attending the NERAOC conference, and positive feedback led to the training being provided three times for the College of ACES, reaching 117 participants. The first was provided to ACES administrators, a second to ACES administrative assistants and program staff, and a third to Extension professionals during the Family and Consumer Sciences portion of a statewide Cooperative Extension Service In-Service.

Advisory Committee

Dr. Bittner and Dr. Martinez established an advisory committee comprising 13 ACES faculty and staff members representing 9 departments to inform the ACES Connections & Engagement Initiative. The rationale for establishing a committee is that current belonging and engagement initiatives exist across departments but can benefit from increased coordination and visibility. A centralized committee will enhance consistency, highlight effective practices, and ensure that welcoming and community-building efforts are intentional, equitable, and aligned with the college's goals. Strengthening a sense of community is essential for recruitment, retention, and overall climate.

The committee developed an action plan to create and enhance efforts that build meaningful connections, fostering a culturally informed, welcoming environment where all students, staff, and faculty feel a strong sense of community and belonging.

The committee's action plan includes identifying and organizing current community-building and belonging practices across departments and supporting onboarding and welcoming practices for students and employees.

Student Statements

From February 23rd to 27th, 2026, I attended the XIII Latin American Congress of Herpetology in San José, Costa Rica. During the congress, I presented an oral talk titled "Effects of wildfires on the skin microbiota of three terrestrial salamanders". This research was designed and developed by the OHG Lab (Wildlife Disease Ecology). This trip was a meaningful opportunity to represent our lab and NMSU within an international scientific community, and it marked my first time presenting at an international conference. Additionally, I participated in the post-congress workshop "Herpetofauna Movement Ecology", led by Dr. Daniela Pareja Mejía (Stanford University) at La Selva Biological Station (Organization for Tropical Studies). Attending the congress was an enriching experience that allowed me to learn from and exchange knowledge with students, researchers, and colleagues dedicated to the study and conservation of amphibians and reptiles across diverse countries. I gained a deep understanding of how sharing strategies, results, and challenges are essential to achieving global ecology and conservation goals. I encourage all ACES students to make the most of ACES Global Initiatives. These programs support students in attending international conferences and accessing international research

and academic opportunities. In my case, ACES Global Initiatives provided funding for flight tickets, which was crucial in making this opportunity possible.

Blanca A. Cabrera Cuellar
Master's Student, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Conservation Ecology
Traveled to San Jose Costa Rica, 2026

Aggies Go Global gave me the opportunity to discover new things in a completely different country. I was able to learn not only about their traditions and customs, but also about how agriculture plays such an important role in their daily lives. Seeing the way their values, morals, and knowledge guide them in their work truly inspired me and helped me grow both personally and academically.

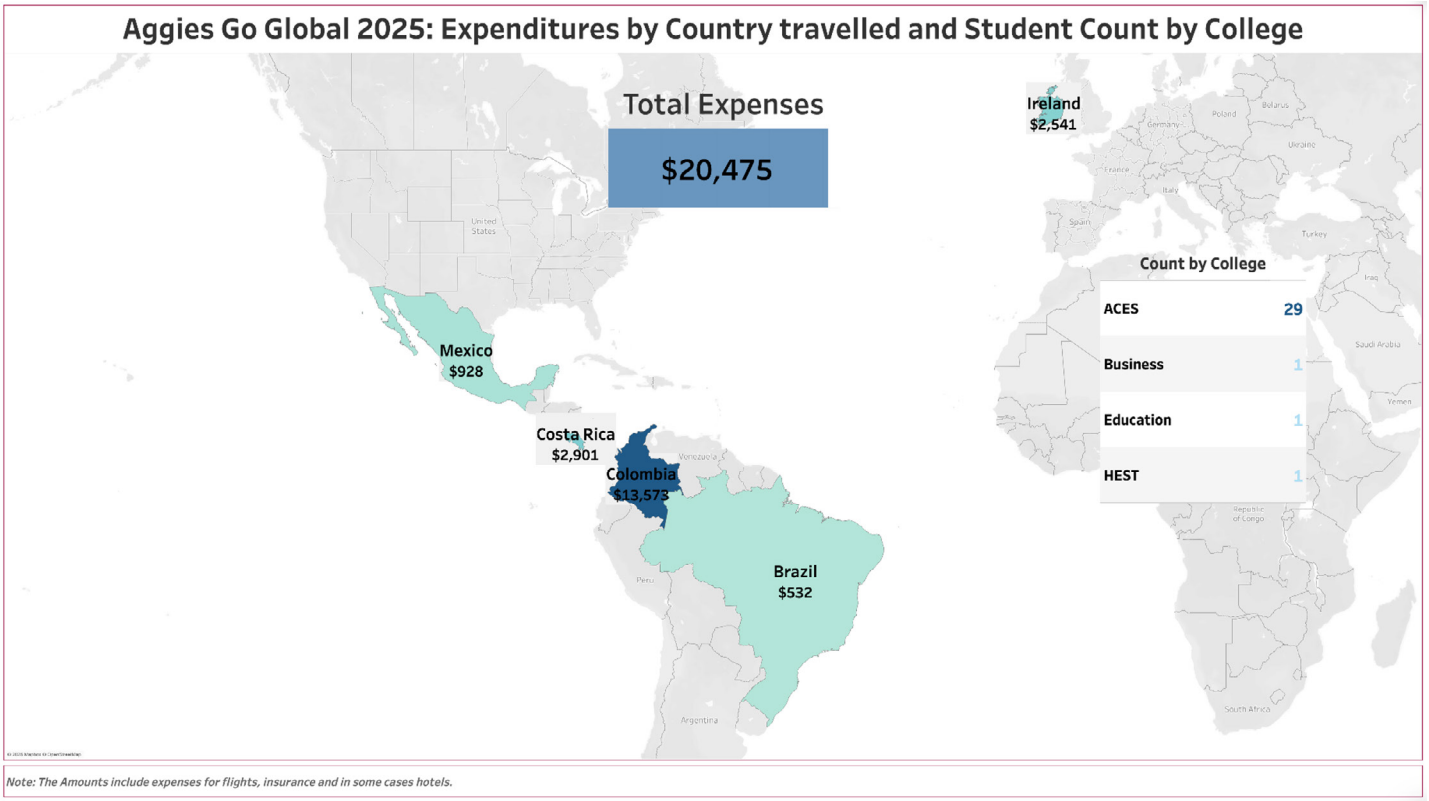
During my time in Utopia, I met people who were incredibly knowledgeable, welcoming, and proud of what they do. They received us with open arms, and their kindness made me feel happy to be there—like I never wanted to leave. Being surrounded by such dedicated individuals showed me how meaningful global experiences can be.

This program also allowed me to make new friendships that I will carry with me for years to come. The connections I formed and the lessons I learned abroad gave me a broader perspective on my studies in animal science and on the world as a whole.

Overall, Aggies Go Global has been an important part of my journey. It opened doors I never imagined and reminded me of why exploring other cultures is so valuable.

Ana Villar Licon,
Undergraduate student, Animal & Range Sciences, traveled to Colombia in 2025

Expeditures



International Involvement/Collaboration

The College of ACES, through its Global Initiatives, helped host the *Foro Binacional de Jóvenes Ganaderos*, a conference organized by the Unión Ganadera Regional de Chihuahua, Ciudad Juárez chapter. As a newly established event, the organizing committee aims to make it an annual gathering.

As part of the first session, up to 22 ACES students visited Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, on Friday, October 29, 2025. The forum is designed for young cattle producers, the next generation of industry leaders as well as future professionals in animal science and veterinary medicine from Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, and New Mexico State University.

Chihuahua is the leading Mexican state in cattle exports to the United States, making price fluctuations a significant economic concern for producers. The conference addresses these challenges and opportunities, with presentations conducted in Spanish.

The second session took place at the College of ACES, where nearly 75 students from Mexico were welcomed to campus, further strengthening binational collaboration and engagement.

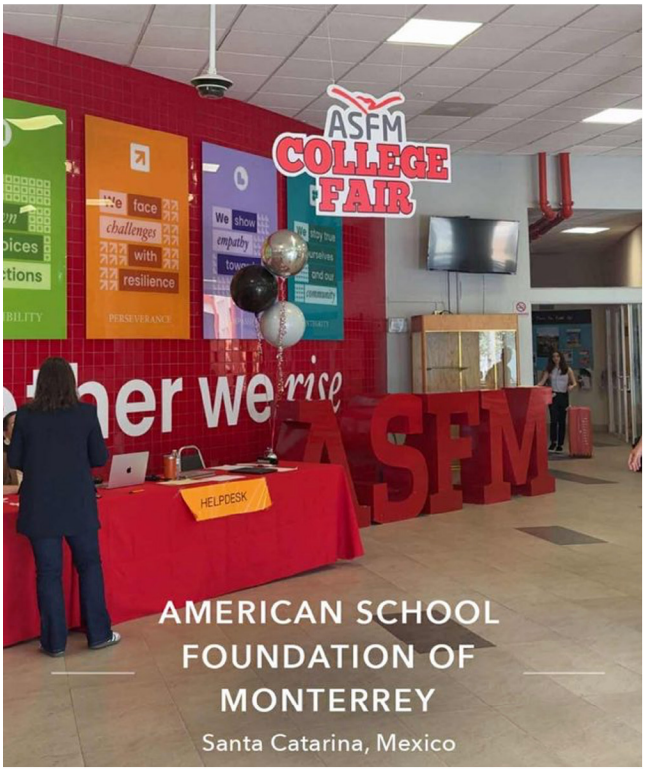
UACH and NMSU Sign Dual Degree Agreement

On October 18th, during the binational basketball game between the Dorados and the Aggies, the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua (UACH) and New Mexico State University (NMSU) signed an academic agreement to offer dual degree programs in agricultural fields, including Animal Science and Horticulture.

The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Valerio Ferme, NMSU President; Dr. Rolando A. Flores Galarza, Dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES); and Mtro. Luis Alfonso Rivera Campos, UACH Rector, along with college and faculty representatives from both institutions.

This partnership strengthens international collaboration and provides new academic opportunities for students from UACH's Faculty of Animal Science and Ecology and Faculty of Agrotechnological Sciences, as well as NMSU's College of ACES.

For more information, click on the following link:
Firman la UACH y la New Mexico State University convenio para la doble titulación



Heber J. Lara, Sr. Program Specialist in the ACES Dean's Office, traveled to several cities across Mexico to participate in the 2025 Mexico College Fair Tour and EducationUSA International Fairs, in collaboration with David Cota from Undergraduate Admissions.

From September 17 to September 29, they visited eight cities, engaging with students from private schools interested in studying abroad. The tour yielded excellent results, allowing them to promote New Mexico State University and its colleges, while connecting with students, parents, teachers, and academic advisors.

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
14	15	16 Mexican Independence Day	17 Colegio Americano de Puebla	18 John F. Kennedy School Querétaro	19 The American School of Tampico	20 Colegio Americano de Torreón (pending)
21	22 American School of Puerto Vallarta	23 The American School Foundation Guadalajara	24 The American School Foundation Monterrey	25 Greengates (morning) and Edron Academy (afternoon) CDMX	26 ASF (morning) and Eton (afternoon) CDMX	27 TAE CDMX

Leaders convening for the 2025 team training

Executive Summary

Major Growth at our Fifth Anniversary

The year 2025 was a highly productive and strategically significant period for the Anna, Age Eight Institute, marked by major advancements in the implementation and expansion of the 100% New Mexico initiative. Since its inception, the initiative has grown from three counties to eighteen, now including Bernalillo County with the full support of county government.

2025 Accomplishments

Child and Family Services System Blueprint Project

A project proposed by House Majority Floor Leader Gail Chasey and funded by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the institute was asked to create a blueprint for Child and Family Services based on the voices of New Mexicans that defines what comprehensive array of services

and opportunities need to exist for children and youth to thrive in their communities. After numerous town halls, the institute delivered seven reports to the project sponsors and reviewed the results with the surveyed communities. A statewide report with recommendations will be available in late February.

County (Quadrant)	Town Hall (n)	Focus Groups (n)	Demographic characteristics for Focus Group participants			
			Age	**Gender**	**Race**	**Ethnicity**
Northwest (Quad 1)	8	14	(18 – 24) 14% (25 – 44) 14% **(45 – 54) 57%** (55 – 64) 7% (65 – 74) 7%	**Female, 93%** Male, 7%	**Asian, 50%** White, 36% Black, 7% Native American, 7%	**Not Hispanic, 71%** Hispanic, 29%
Northeast (Quad 2)	19	21	**(25 – 44) 67%** (45 – 54) 14% (55 – 64) 10% (65 – 74) 10%	**Female, 71%** Male, 29%	**Asian, 52%** White, 33% Other, 10% Multiple, 5%	**Not Hispanic, 90%** Hispanic, 10%
Southeast (Quad 3)	28	24	(18 – 24) 13% **(25 – 44) 38%** (45 – 54) 25% (55 – 64) 21% (65 – 74) 0% (75+) 4%	**Female, 79%** Male, 21%	**White, 42%** Other, 21% Asian, 17% Multiple, 12% Black, 8%	**Hispanic, 54%** Not Hispanic, 42% Not Reported, 4%
Southwest (Quad 4)	24	35	(18 – 24) 3% **(25 – 44) 40%** (45 – 54) 23% (55 – 64) 23% (65 – 74) 6% (75+) 6%	**Female, 86%** Male, 14%	**White, 40%** Other, 31% Multiple, 14% Asian, 6% Not Reported, 6% Native American, 3%	**Hispanic, 80%** Not Hispanic, 20%
Total	79	94				

Participant demographics for the Child and Family Services System Blueprint Project

Launch of a New Version of 100% Family Services Directory

The Institute completed development, user testing, and statewide rollout of this online family resources directory, which connects families to local services without cost barriers. Built using artificial intelligence tools and reviewed by county leaders, the directory prioritizes accuracy, user-friendliness, and ease of updating.

Five-Year Institutional Review

In collaboration with an external evaluation team, the Institute conducted a comprehensive review of progress during its first five years. The evaluation identified key achievements, implementation challenges, and emerging opportunities for strengthening the social determinants of health (SDOH) framework statewide.

Statewide Data Dashboard Development

A centralized data platform was designed to house reports, surveys, and evaluation metrics, enabling counties and policymakers to identify service gaps and support evidence-based decision-making. The dashboard, currently in testing, is scheduled for launch in Spring 2026.

Initiative Leaders Program Redesign

The program was reimagined to emphasize capacity building and leadership development, facilitated by evaluators and researchers with expertise in SDOH and systems-change strategies.

Formation of the Initiative Action Team Leaders Cohort

This new statewide network supports county action teams through in-person training and web-based facilitation to encourage knowledge sharing and diffusion of innovative practices across regions.

Support for 100% Family Resource Center Cohort

The Institute continued to assist counties in developing one-stop service hubs for families, focusing on sustainable funding strategies and implementation models in both community and school settings.

Website Redesign and Online Education

The 100% New Mexico website underwent a full redesign to improve accessibility and functionality. The platform now hosts two online courses: one on preventing adverse childhood experiences and another on designing and managing one-stop service hubs.

Ongoing Technical Assistance

The Institute provided continuous support for counties implementing the 100% County Survey, a key tool for assessing barriers to essential services such as healthcare, housing, food, transportation, and behavioral health.

Support for Public Education and Branding

Through ongoing graphic design and social marketing assistance, the Institute enhanced public outreach, initiative branding, and communication materials across participating counties.

Social Marketing and Media Production

The Institute developed a series of videos highlighting innovation and local success stories within the counties, as well as documenting capacity-building activities across the state.

Local Capacity-Building Support

A mini-grant program was launched to strengthen local initiative efforts. Technical assistance was also provided in identifying funding sources, developing grant proposals, and building long-term financial sustainability.

Exploration of New Partnership Frameworks

The Institute began integrating community-based participatory action research and related strategies to deepen local collaboration and expand service networks.

Research Repository Development

Work continued on developing an accessible repository of research focusing on the social determinants of health, the social-ecological model, and transformational pedagogy to support evidence-based planning and education.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

The Institute contributed to ongoing academic dissemination with articles such as:

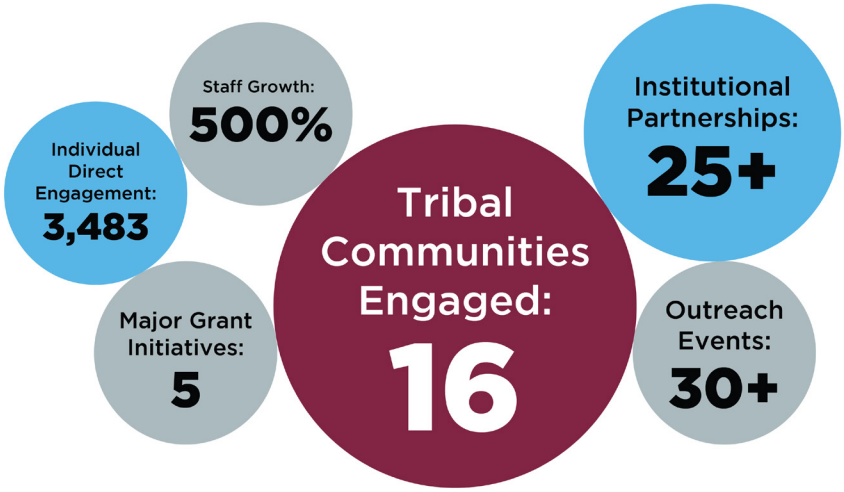
- "Operationalizing the Social Determinants of Health Across a County: Exploring the 100% Community Framework"
- "A Machine Learning Approach to Healthcare Needs and Barriers Using the 100% Community Survey of Access to SDOH Services"
- "Transportation Insecurity as a Critical Social Determinant of Health"
- "100% Community Survey of Social Determinants of Health: Results from New Mexico Parents."

A complete list is available on our website.

Together, these efforts demonstrate the Institute's continuing commitment to advancing the well-being of New Mexico families through data-informed action, intersectoral collaboration, and innovation in addressing the social determinants of health.

Executive Summary

In 2025, Indian Resources Development (IRD) expanded its statewide footprint, strengthened tribal partnerships. IRD's work centers on cultivating future tribal leaders, strengthening land stewardship, and building pathways into higher education and economic opportunity.



This year marked measurable growth in:

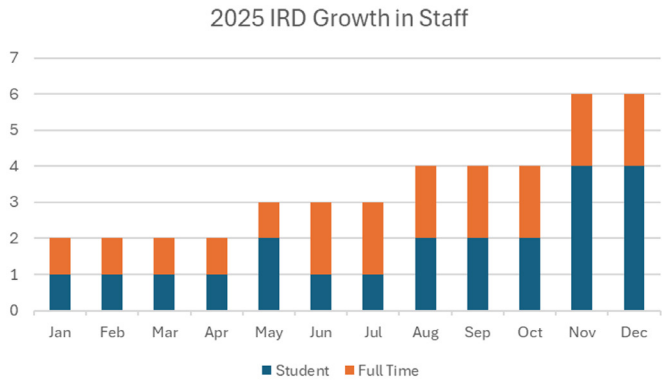
- Direct Tribal Engagement
- Youth Outreach
- Institutional Collaboration
- Grant Development
- Staff Expansion

IRD was established in 1978 in response to the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, with a purpose of strengthening tribal capacity by advancing their economic development goals in agriculture, natural resources, engineering, energy, business, workforce development, and education.

Year in Review

One of the most remarkable changes for Indian Resources Development was the increase in staff (see chart). At the start of 2025, the Director was the only full-time staff with the student worker. This time was spent developing a strategic plan to effectively reach out to partners and communities with priorities and related to:

- Entrepreneurship
- Professional development
- Experiential learning

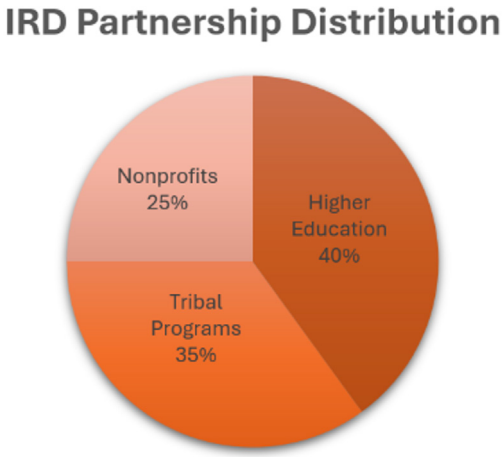


Outreach and Community Engagement

Outreach is a central component of the mission of IRD and remains essential to strengthening relationships between higher education institutions and tribal nations. Sustained engagement ensures that IRD initiatives are aligned with tribal communities.

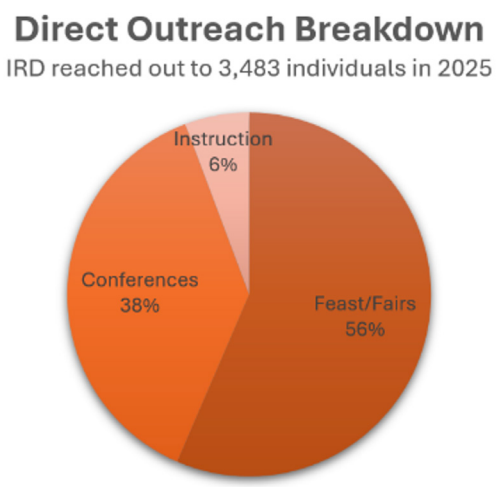
Throughout 2025, IRD expanded its outreach efforts across tribal fairs, feast days, youth programs, educational conferences and professional gatherings. These engagements served multiple purposes:

1. Increasing awareness of IRD programs.
2. Sharing information on academic pathways.
3. Workforce opportunities.
4. Gathering insight directly from students, families, educators, and tribal leadership.



IRD recognizes that meaningful outreach requires preparation and coordination. While 2025 marked significant growth in engagement, the program also identified events and communities where participation was limited due to staffing capacity and scheduling constraints. With expanded personnel and earlier

planning, IRD is making strategic arrangements for 2026 to ensure broader participation and sustained engagement across tribal communities.



Equally important, IRD's outreach approach emphasizes listening and learning. The program is committed to engaging with tribal nations in a matter that reflects respect, cultural awareness, and collaboration. Outreach is not undertaken solely to promote institutional initiatives, but to build relationships grounded in mutual understanding and shared objectives.

As the chart labeled "Direct Outreach Breakdown" shows, the majority of our individual outreach occurred at tribal fairs and feast days. The event with the highest engagement was on the Navajo Nation, with over 800 contacts, and the next was Pueblo of Laguna Feast Day at 250 contacts.

IRD Focus Areas

Agriculture

IRD supports tribal agriculture by sharing information with producers and connecting them to university expertise, educational resources, and technical assistance. Efforts focus on increasing awareness of available tools and programs that strengthen operational sustainability, financial management and land stewardship.

Business

IRD connects tribal entrepreneurs and students to university resources, business developments partners and financial literacy programs. Through collaboration with Native based organizations and innovation centers. IRD promotes entrepreneurship pathways that support tribal economic resilience and community-based enterprise growth.

Workforce Development

IRD strengthens career pathways by connecting tribal youth and college students to internships, experiential learning and professional development opportunities. Engagement with statewide consortia and industry partners expands across emergency career sectors in New Mexico.

Natural Resources

IRD works alongside tribal programs, educators, and researchers to promote sustainable land management practices rooted in science and traditions. Efforts include rangeland education, wildlife conservation, water resources, and land retention strategies to protect tribal assets for future generations.

Energy

In 2025, IRD expanded its focus into renewable energy workforce development through participation in regional energy consortia and academic partnerships. The goal is to prepare tribal students for careers and energy systems for tribal planning.

Engineering

IRD promotes STEM and engineering pathways by coordinating outreach events, campus visits, and partnerships with Native STEM programs. These efforts introduce tribal students to engineering careers that align with infrastructure, water systems, energy, and environmental management priorities in tribal communities.

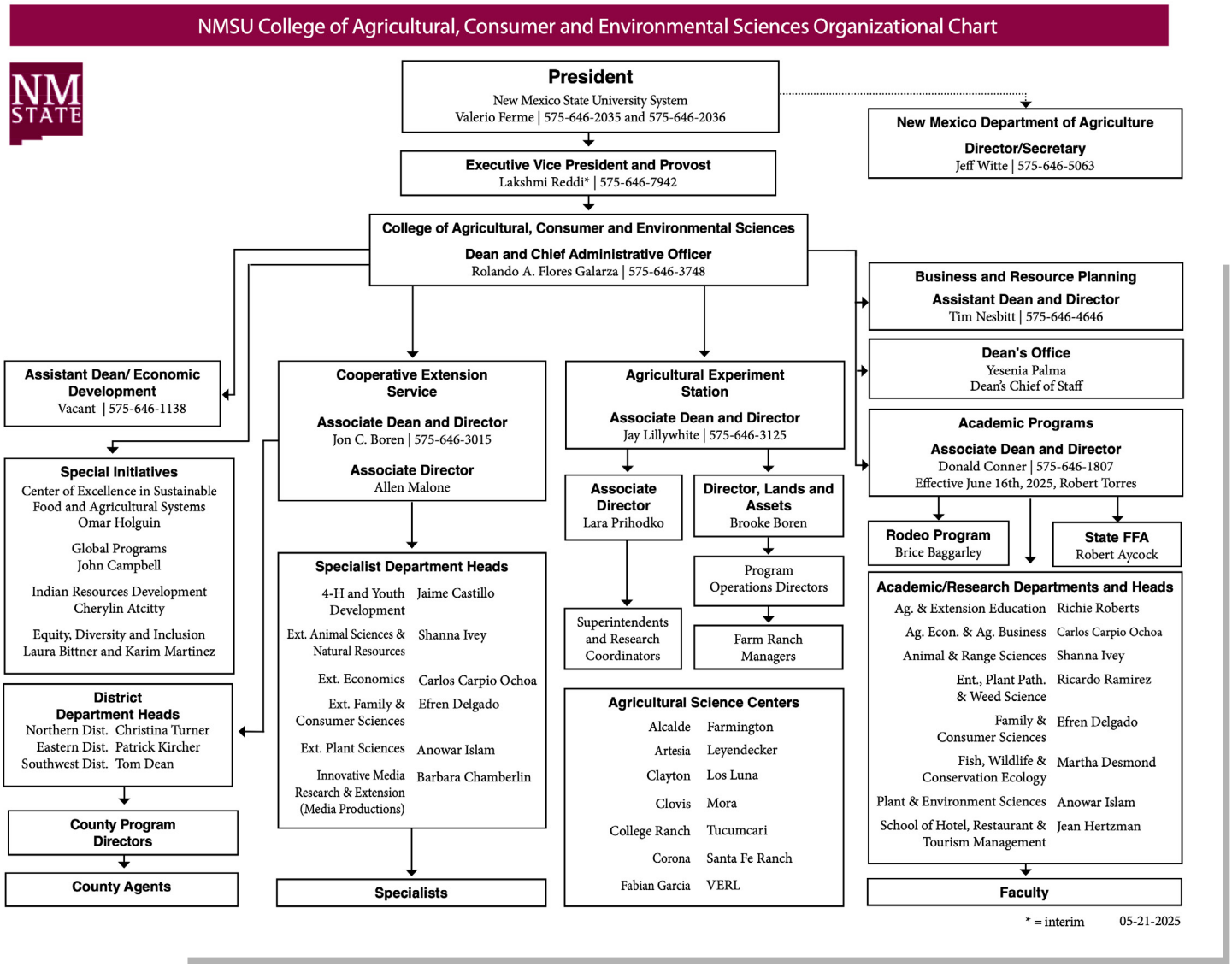
Education

IRD builds bridges between tribal communities and higher education institutions. Through youth engagement, campus visits, scholarships coordination, and institutional partnerships, IRD supports native student enrollment, retention, and leadership development across agriculture, science, business and technical fields.

Conclusion

Indian Resources Development is building an integrated system that strengthens tribal economies, develops future leaders, and supports sustainable stewardship of land and resources.

College of ACES Organizational Chart



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