



WESTERN
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY



NATIONAL SEARCH PROSPECTUS
PRESIDENT

THE POSITION

Western New Mexico University (WNMU), is searching for a dynamic, effective, and forward-thinking leader to serve as its next president. The President serves as the institution's chief executive officer and reports directly to the WNMU Board of Regents. The President provides overall leadership for academic, operational, fiscal, and community missions, guiding the university's identity and sustainability in a rapidly changing higher education landscape.

THE UNIVERSITY

Since 1893, WNMU has provided a transformational educational experience in an unparalleled natural and cultural setting. Founded as New Mexico's normal school, WNMU is an open-access Hispanic-Serving Institution and is state-designated as the public Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences university and home to the N.M. Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Education. Accredited by the Higher



Learning Commission, WNMU offers a foundation of liberal arts education with quality professional programs and career and technical preparation in an inclusive and supportive environment. The university serves over 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students and empowers them to be inventive, critical thinkers, prepared to succeed professionally and to serve



as conscientious citizens. With classes offered face-to-face at the Silver City main campus, Deming, and Gallup, as well as fully online, WNMU meets students where they are, whether they're first-generation college students, working adults or learners seeking flexible, affordable pathways. The university offers more than 70 fields of study, ranging from accounting to New Mexico's only zoology program, with dozens of degree options available 100% online. From workforce training certificates in welding and construction to nationally ranked graduate programs, WNMU equips students to succeed in their careers and affects positive generational change in communities throughout the southwest and beyond. The university's wide range of academic and training programs are organized through the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Professional Studies, the Graduate School and Community & Workforce Development.



Western New Mexico University **At a Glance**



- School of Social Work
- School of Business



- Applied Liberal Arts & Sciences University
- N.M. Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Education



Mission

An open-access Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and New Mexico's Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University, Western New Mexico University combines a foundation of liberal arts education with quality professional programs and career and technical preparation in a diverse, inclusive, creative, and caring community of learners empowered with the essential skills and knowledge for lifelong success in work and life.

Vision

Western New Mexico University is a premier and innovative Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University in combination with internationally recognized professional programs and career and technical preparation. Its students achieve career goals, become conscientious citizens, practice social and environmental responsibility, and impact their communities and their futures as independent thinkers who know themselves within the changing context of a global, digital world. Embracing its identity as a Hispanic Serving Institution, WNMU is the central contributor in its region for public service, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

Core Values

Innovation/Creativity: In every obstacle we see opportunities to provide practical solutions to problems, addressing and redefining them to match our institutional strengths. We embrace continuous improvement, encourage invention, and continually seek better, more efficient ways to achieve our goals. We reward creativity and support actions toward positive changes for society.

Integrity: We operate ethically, and hold ourselves accountable to our students, the community, and all who serve WNMU's mission. We uphold standards of honesty, confidentiality, trust, respect, and transparency. We recognize that we are individually accountable and collectively responsible for living and encouraging the highest of ethical standards.

Intellectual Curiosity: We seek the advancement of knowledge, critical thinking, inquiry, and discovery through our teaching, service, and research. We continuously learn from our achievements and our challenges. We encourage our students and colleagues to challenge each other in the support of academic freedom: inquiry, pursuit of ideas, and creative activity.

Personal Responsibility: We recognize our responsibilities to the students, to each other, and to the community. Individually, and collectively, we strive to exceed our students' and our colleagues' expectations, achieving teaching and service excellence and creating a welcoming, positive learning environment.

Service to University and Community: We are good neighbors and a positive force for change. We foster communities of caring, respect, and civility. We engage with our communities, serve society, and build capacity for relating to one another.

Student Success: We provide our students with the tools essential to build their futures and succeed in life as productive, educated citizens who can think critically about, adapt to, and change the world around them.



Strategic Plan

Click [HERE](#) and scroll to the bottom of the page to download the WNMU Strategic Plan

Student Life

Student life at WNMU is centered around its proximity to the Gila National Forest, offering outdoor experiences and activities for students. WNMU offers free outdoor gear rentals for students to explore

local landmarks like the Catwalk Recreation Area and the Gila Cliff Dwellings. WNMU also emphasizes a student-centric approach to life on campus.

- **Campus traditions:** The university holds a long-standing tradition called "The Great Race" each spring. Student teams compete in go-kart races during this week-long event.
- **Student engagement with nature:** Many WNMU programs, including zoology, integrate the surrounding natural environment into academic studies. Students are encouraged to explore and document the local wildlife and climate. From the Natural Sciences to field studies such as Philosophy, the Gila serves as an essential extension of the classroom, offering students unique opportunities for hands-on learning and reflection.
- **Inclusive community:** WNMU is known for embracing diversity among the student population, inclusive of international, first generation and nontraditional students, balancing work and education.



Academics

WNMU offers more than 70 programs divided among the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Professional Studies and Community and Workforce Development. More than 30 programs can be completed 100% online through WNMU|Online, providing flexibility and accessibility for learners of all ages.

College of Arts and Sciences

Home of fundamental programs like English and math as well as unique offerings like sustainable development, the WNMU College of Arts and Sciences is where students delve into some of the most human aspects of our world while also exploring concrete subjects. WNMU expressive arts students learn from accomplished sculptors, mariachis and ceramicists while gleaning inspiration from the Gila National Forest and the thriving local creative community. Some WNMU natural science degree programs are the only of their kind in the region, preparing students for careers in National Parks and aquariums as well as hospitals and research settings.

College of Professional Studies

Dedicated to preparing people to work with and support others, the WNMU College of Professional Studies offers a wide range of programs in health, human services, business, education, and nursing. Its popular business and nursing programs consistently graduate leaders who excel in their professions. The nationally recognized WNMU School of Social Work is known for its rigorous curriculum and community impact, while graduates of the School of Nursing have achieved a 100% pass rate on the NCLEX exam.

College of Education

This college continues the institution's celebrated tradition of preparing the next generation of teachers and leaders in education. As the historic foundation of the university, the College remains dedicated to training educators who are not only highly skilled in the classroom but also deeply committed to the success of their students and communities.

At the heart of this mission is the New Mexico Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Education. This statewide hub for innovation develops strategies, curriculum and best practices to prepare tomorrow's educators with the knowledge, tools, and compassion needed to make a lasting impact in the lives of young learners. Through research, training, and hands-on experiences, the Center strengthens the pipeline of well-prepared teachers who will shape the future of education in New Mexico and beyond.

Community and Workforce Development

Preparing citizens for expedient employment and advancing their training for more lucrative careers, the WNMU Community and Workforce Development Department offers a variety of certificates suited to those who enjoy tangible trades, from welding and construction to health sciences programs, including pharmacy tech and phlebotomy.

Athletics

The Western New Mexico University Mustangs compete in NCAA Division II athletics as members of the Lone Star Conference (LSC).

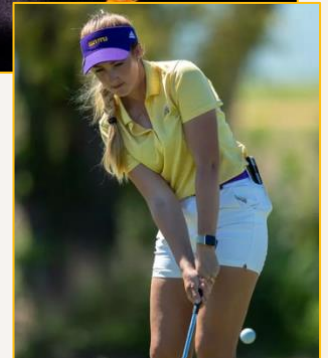


Men's Sports:

- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Football
- Golf
- Tennis
- Track & Field

Women's Sports:

- Basketball
- Cross Country
- Golf
- Softball
- Tennis
- Track & Field
- Volleyball



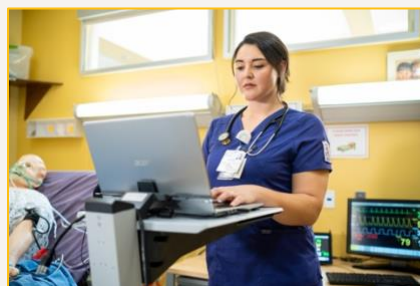
Campuses

The main campus of WNMU is located in Silver City, New Mexico, bordering the Gila National Forest. It is a mix of historical and modern buildings spread across 83 acres. The campus environment is known for its scenic views and access to outdoor activities.

Campus features:

- **A blend of past and present:** The campus has historic buildings alongside modern, LEED-certified facilities.
- **Outdoor access:** Students can explore the Gila National Forest, which offers extensive trails and outdoor adventures just minutes from campus.
- **On-campus facilities:** The university offers a variety of resources and amenities, including:
 - Four residence halls
 - The Fine Arts Center Theater is the largest venue in the region, seating nearly 1,000 spectators.
 - Division II football and softball fields as well as an arena for basketball and volleyball.
 - A fitness center and a swimming pool for student use
 - The WNMU Child Development Center for students with children
- **Outdoor leadership resources:** WNMU is designated as a Tree Campus by the Arbor Day Foundation. The university provides an outdoor rental shop and classroom for its outdoor leadership minor program. Students can rent gear at no cost for use on excursions into the Gila National Forest.
- **Rural location:** Despite its suburban character, WNMU is situated in a rural area.

- **Hispanic-Serving Institution:** WNMU is recognized as one of the nation's original Hispanic-Serving Institutions.



The campus in Deming, New Mexico, is officially known as the **John Arthur and Janette Smith Educational Center**. It serves students in Luna County and the surrounding region and provides access to higher education through a variety of formats and programs:

- Online courses
- Face-to-face classes
- Teleconferencing (ITV) to participate in classes at the main campus in Silver City
- A computer lab for student use

The university maintains a presence in Gallup, New Mexico. The center there offers master's degree programs in counseling and educational leadership. It also provides courses for teaching endorsements, including bilingual education and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. Courses for alternative teaching licensure in New Mexico are available as well.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

As President, there are many opportunities to elevate WNMU. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

Rebuilding Trust & Institutional Reputation

Western New Mexico University has faced challenges in recent years that eroded confidence both internally and externally, including leadership challenges and a cybersecurity incident. The next

President must restore credibility, transparency, and pride by leading with humility, integrity, and fairness. This is a moment to unify campus culture and rebuild community trust through shared governance, consistent communication, and visible presence.

Mission-Driven & Student-Centered

As an open-enrollment institution, a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), and New Mexico's only Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University, WNMU plays a vital role in providing access, equity, and opportunity to first-generation, rural, and Hispanic students. The President will champion student retention and success, ensuring that services — from advising to mental health — are strengthened, and that institutional policies remain student-first.



Navigating Online & Traditional Identities

WNMU is predominantly an online university within a traditional historical structure. This duality presents both opportunities and tensions: balancing the need for flexible, technology-enabled learning with the traditions of a small comprehensive, place-based campus. The next President must embrace this challenge as an innovator and creative architect - shaping what it means to be a successful small comprehensive university in an era of enrollment decline, workforce accountability pressures, AI and technological disruption, and the politicization of higher education.

Culture of Collaboration & Transparency

Departments have slowly over time become somewhat siloed, with perceptions of favoritism and cliquishness. The next President must model collaboration, break down barriers, and instill a culture of “we” over “me.” This includes fostering clear role definitions, cross-training, and accountability to strengthen institutional resilience and morale.



Advocacy, Funding, & Sustainability

WNMU faces systemic challenges common to New Mexico's higher education landscape, with over 30 institutions competing for limited resources. As a small comprehensive, sustainability depends on bold advocacy for equitable state funding, as well as resource diversification through fundraising, alumni relations, and industry partnerships. The President will be expected to make WNMU's case in Santa Fe, while also developing philanthropic strategies and building external support.

Infrastructure & Institutional Renewal

WNMU's facilities and IT infrastructure reflect years of deferred maintenance, ADA compliance, and underinvestment. The President must address these urgent concerns while planning for long-term modernization. Visible improvements in the campus environment and event management (e.g., commencement) will demonstrate responsiveness and set the tone for renewed institutional pride.

Responsibilities

The President is responsible for providing transformative leadership, focus, and strategic vision for WNMU in collaboration with the university's executive leadership team, and the Board of Regents. The primary duties and responsibilities of the President position include the following:

- Provide visionary leadership that rebuilds trust, restores morale, and unifies the university community
- Champion WNMU's mission as an open-enrollment, Hispanic-Serving Institution and New Mexico's Applied Liberal Arts and Sciences University, serving first-generation, rural, and Hispanic students
- Address the dual challenge of WNMU's identity as both a predominantly online institution and a traditional, small comprehensive institution, shaping a sustainable future
- Lead efforts to improve retention, student services, advising, and mental health resources, ensuring that success and completion are prioritized alongside enrollment
- Advance a culture of shared governance, transparency, and accountability across faculty, staff, and administration
- Strengthen external partnerships with community colleges, K–12 schools, employers, and civic organizations to expand pipelines and workforce relevance
- Advocate effectively with legislators and policymakers for equitable state funding and institutional investment
- Cultivate alumni, donor, and philanthropic relationships to diversify revenue and support strategic initiatives
- Address critical infrastructure challenges, including deferred maintenance, ADA compliance, housing, and IT systems
- Serve as a visible and engaged presence on campus and in the Silver City community, modeling relational and accessible leadership

Desired Leadership Attributes

Attributes that are key to the success of the President include:

- **Innovative Architect** – willing to rethink and redesign what a small comprehensive university can and must be in today's environment
- **Student-Centered Leader** – committed to equity, access, retention, and long-term student success

- **Transparent & Collaborative** – a bridge-builder who models openness and shared decision-making
- **Visible & Relational** – accessible, present, and engaged with both campus and community
- **Resilient & Courageous** – ready to face systemic challenges head-on with honesty and creativity
- **Advocate & Connector** – politically savvy, externally focused, and able to secure funding and partnerships
- **Grounded & Authentic** – invested in WNMU and Silver City for the long term, not as a stepping stone



Required Qualifications

WNMU seeks an innovative and visionary leader with the following:

- Demonstrated success in leading complex organizations with integrity, humility, and vision
- Experience serving a diverse student population, particularly first-generation, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students
- Proven excellence in developing and executing strategic enrollment strategies that improve recruitment, retention, and completion
- Experience at a small- to medium-sized comprehensive university or comparable mission-driven institution
- Familiarity with shared governance structures and demonstrated ability to work effectively in unionized staff environments
- Strong financial and operational acumen, with experience in budget oversight, resource management, and long-term planning
- Exceptional communication skills and ability to engage internal and external stakeholders across diverse constituencies
- A terminal degree or equivalent record of significant achievement
- Unquestioned commitment to equity, transparency, and student-centered leadership
- Ability to thrive in a small-town, rural environment and engage deeply with the community
- Commitment to faculty development, shared governance, and academic excellence

Preferred Qualifications

- Senior leadership experience in higher education (e.g., dean, provost, vice president, or president)
- Success in fundraising, donor stewardship, and cultivating external partnerships
- Demonstrated ability to lead transformational change in the face of demographic, technological, and political challenges
- Experience advancing institutional identity and reputation in competitive higher education environments

SILVER CITY

Nestled within the 3.3 million-acre Gila National Forest, the Town of Silver City is a crossroads of cultures and history. First home to ancient Indigenous communities and later shaped by Hispanic explorers and pioneers, today it thrives as a vibrant, artistic community of just under 10,000 residents. Silver City boasts a charming historic downtown, museums, art galleries, and lively community festivals. With hundreds of miles of trails, nearby historic monuments, and natural springs, it also offers endless opportunities for outdoor adventure.



KEY ATTRACTORS TO THE ROLE

A Mission with Measurable Impact: Lead an HSI that serves first-generation, Hispanic, rural, and underserved students—where decisions translate directly into retention, completion, and life-change.

Career-Defining Turnaround: Step in at a true inflection point to elevate trust, unify the campus, and be instrumental in bolstering pride and reputation.



High-touch, visible leadership: A right-sized university where the president is known—present with students, faculty, and staff; accessible enough to model shared governance and close the feedback loop.

Community anchor & regional influence: Be the civic face of an institution the region cares about—rebuild K–12, employer, and nonprofit partnerships and shape workforce and economic development.

Nimble scale to move fast: Small, tight-knit environment enables cross-functional collaboration and quick implementation of ideas without big-system bureaucracy.

Advocacy with tangible wins: Real opportunity to secure equitable state funding, attract capital for facilities/IT, and modernize infrastructure—high visibility with legislators and funders.

Quality of life in Silver City: Scenic mountain/desert setting, temperate climate, vibrant Southwestern culture (e.g., Fiesta Latina), strong community feel, outdoor recreation, and a reasonable cost of living.



NOMINATIONS & APPLICATIONS

The Search Committee invites letters of interest and nominations to be submitted directly to the search firm, Anthem Executive. Correspondence should include a curriculum vitae and a letter of interest describing relevant experience and interest in the position. Submit materials to Michael Ballew, Scott Watson, JR Wheless, or Florene Stawowy at:

WNMUPresident@AnthemExecutive.com

While applications and nominations will be accepted until a president is selected, interested parties are strongly encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible to assure consideration. Anthem and the University reserve the right to end or extend the application and nomination process at any time. Expressing interest is the first step in receiving consideration and does not make one an applicant for the position.



Anthem

Executive

AnthemExecutive.com

AnthemAcademics.com

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