



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:  
CONTACT:

Thursday, June 4, 2015  
Patrick Riccards  
[riccards@woodrow.org](mailto:riccards@woodrow.org) | (703) 298-8283

### **NEW MEXICO TO OFFER CUTTING-EDGE EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROGRAM TO PREPARE STATE'S, NATION'S NEXT GENERATION OF EXCEPTIONAL SCHOOL LEADERS**

***New Mexico State University, University of New Mexico to Offer Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowships in Education Leadership in 2015***

LAS CRUCES, NM (June 4, 2015) – Building on the state's ongoing efforts to improve educational opportunities for all learners and to close the persistent achievement gaps faced by students for decades, New Mexico today announced that it was partnering with the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation to create a new MBA school leadership program designed to prepare aspiring school principals and superintendents with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully lead New Mexico schools.

The Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership blends transformational education coursework and a tailored business curriculum with intensive clinical experience in schools, corporations, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as involvement with innovative schools abroad. One of the first programs of its kind, the Woodrow Wilson program is a model for next generation, results-focused school leader preparation.

"To close our nation's achievement gaps – whether between school districts, states, or the United States and the world – we need more than just excellent teachers in our classrooms. We also need superb school leaders supporting those educators and building an environment that produces high student achievement," Woodrow Wilson Foundation President Arthur Levine said. "Today, too many of our nation's education programs fail to prepare prospective school leaders for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st-century school. They lack the rigor, relevance, selectivity, and clinical experience school leaders require to thrive. The Woodrow Wilson MBA program is specifically designed to provide a new generation of school leaders, equipped to transform our schools into high performers."

New Mexico joins Indiana and Wisconsin as the first states to offer the Woodrow Wilson MBA. Indiana's and Wisconsin's inaugural MBA cohorts will graduate in summer of 2015. New Mexico's first cohort will be selected in the spring of 2015, with New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico both offering the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership for the coming academic year.

"Every classroom needs a great teacher, and every school needs a strong principal," New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez said. "This program will help our state's best educators lead a school that needs their help. Every child deserves a quality education, and this is yet another effort to make this a reality."

“Effective teachers and school leaders are critical to providing our kids with the education they deserve,” New Mexico Public Education Department Secretary Hanna Skandera said. “This program allows districts to pick their brightest stars and encourage them to take their career to the next level: leading a school.”

Under the Woodrow Wilson model, Fellows take 18-24 months of MBA courses with a specific focus on the education context. Offered through business schools, collaborating with education schools, the program is designed to prepare leaders who will drive innovation, expand the use of analytics and evidence-based practices, raise student performance to international standards, and improve the quality of school systems and teaching over time.

Unlike programs that recruit career changers from other fields to work in schools, the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship is intended for education professionals nominated by their school districts or charter school leaders. In essence, those school systems will partner with participating universities to establish internal pipelines and cultivate new leaders. Fellows selected will have demonstrated effective leadership and will use their knowledge of school culture to help transform schools from within. Each will receive a stipend, which covers full tuition, materials and associated program expenses. In exchange, each Fellow agrees to serve in an approved school or district leadership role within the state for at least three years, with Foundation-supported mentoring.

“New Mexico’s schools face enormous challenges, yet exceptional school leaders find ways to deliver excellent educational opportunities to our children,” said Dr. Craig White, Interim Dean of UNM’s Anderson School of Management. “We at the Anderson School look forward to working with the State’s Public Education Department, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, school districts, and UNM’s College of Education to provide these leaders the management skills necessary to fully maximize the outcomes from their efforts. It is exciting to be at the forefront of this new MBA program.”

“New Mexico State University has been working closely with school districts in southern New Mexico as we craft this innovative program,” said Steven Elias, director of NMSU's Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship Program and interim associate dean for research in the NMSU College of Business. “By engaging with the education community throughout the process, we’ve been able to understand the unique challenges for educators in this region and develop a business curriculum that will help these professionals think more strategically about how they run their schools and districts.”

The WW MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership program addresses twin problems in American education: On the one hand, well-resourced U.S. schools still rank below schools in countries such as Finland and Singapore on measures of student achievement. On the other hand, too many of the nation’s high-need urban and rural schools still fall too far below domestic benchmarks for student achievement.

Funding for the Woodrow Wilson MBA’s New Mexico initiative was initially provided by a grant from the New Mexico Public Education Department. At the announcement today, Levine thanked the Daniels Fund for seeing the promise the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship offers to New Mexico schools and school leaders and for awarding the program a \$2.112 million grant to expand the number of individuals in the MBA Fellowship program in the state.

Both NMSU and UNM are partnering with a variety of area school districts and charter schools to develop partnerships that will sustain clinical placements—or in-school learning arrangements—and mentoring opportunities for the WW MBA Fellows.

The inaugural class of Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellows at NMSU was also announced today. Educators selected for the highly competitive program include:

- Vangie Barela, Valley View Elementary School
- Estella Becerra, Gadsden Independent School District
- Torrance Gilpin, Gadsden Independent School District
- Toni Hull, Mesa Middle School
- Gabriel Jacquez, Mesa Middle School
- Colette Martinez, Las Cruces Public Schools
- Wendi Miller-Tomlinson, Las Cruces Public Schools
- Latisha Montoya, Sonoma Elementary School
- Frederick Parker, Hillrise Elementary School
- Amber Perry, Hatch Valley Middle School
- Lydia Polanco, Las Cruces Public Schools

The first class of WW MBA Fellows at UNM will be announced later this summer.

The WW MBA in Education Leadership draws on the Foundation's experience with its state Teaching Fellowship, which recruits very able candidates to teach math and science in high-need schools, and also works to transform teacher education. The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship is currently offered in five states—Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio—through 28 partner universities.

Applications to the WW MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership are available by nomination only, with nominations and applications for the first class now open. To learn more about the WW MBA in Education Leadership, visit <http://woodrow.org/fellowships/ww-ed-mba/new-mexico/>

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#### **About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation**

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation ([www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org)) identifies and develops the nation's best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.

#### **About New Mexico State University**

A comprehensive land-grant institution of higher learning, [New Mexico State University](http://www.nmsu.edu) is dedicated to teaching, research and service at the undergraduate and graduate levels. NMSU is a NASA Space Grant College, a Hispanic-serving institution and is home to the very first Honors College in New Mexico.

#### **About University of New Mexico**

Founded in 1889 as New Mexico's flagship institution, [the University of New Mexico](http://www.unm.edu) (UNM) represents a cross-section of cultures and backgrounds. In fall of 2013 28,644 students attended the main campus with another 7,609 students at branch campuses and education centers.

In 2014, *Hispanic Business Magazine* ranked four UNM schools among its top 10, including the Anderson School of Management, the School of Law, the School of Medicine, and the School of Engineering.

Among the University's outstanding research units are the Center for Advanced Research Computing, Cancer Center, New Mexico Engineering Research Institute, Center for High Technology Materials, Design Planning Assistance Center, and the Mind Research Network.

*Forbes Magazine* consistently names Albuquerque among the best places for business and careers in the country, and *Kiplinger's* calls Albuquerque one of the smartest places to live.

**About The Daniels Fund**

Bill Daniels, a pioneer in cable television known for his compassion for people and unwavering commitment to ethics, established the Daniels Fund to provide grants and scholarships in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. For more information, please visit [www.danielsfund.org](http://www.danielsfund.org).

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