Due to our great sense of community, the UNM School of Law is often fortunate to enjoy camaraderie and frequent collaboration between faculty and students, graduates and donors and our many friends and visitors.

Recently, the law school has welcomed a number of new and dynamic professors from around the country to our own faculty. Most recently, we have congratulated our colleague and former Dean, Kevin Washburn, on his noteworthy federal appointment. We have also come together as a community to share our thoughts and feelings about the continued leadership of our law school and to ensure its continued success.

Together we are working to bring a shared focus to what I have begun to refer to as our “3 Cs” – Curriculum, Community and Communication. In the spirit of this outlook, I hope you will enjoy this fall’s brief look at some recent news and events from our law school community.

Barbara E. Bergman
Interim Dean & Professor of Law

"So many people are committed to our law school through their teaching, engagements and generous support. We are thankful every day, sometimes many times in one day, for each and every one of them."

— Interim Dean Barbara Bergman
UNM LAW CLINIC REMODELED

Open House Celebrates Clinic's Collaborative Learning Remodel

The clinical law faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law hosted a festive open house and conducted tours on Oct. 5 to celebrate the remodeling and upgrading of the school’s clinical classroom.

The new classroom has been designed with an emphasis on collaborative learning. Every UNM clinical student handles their cases from their own fully equipped workstation, which is clustered with other workstations in an open design oriented toward a supervising faculty member’s separate workstation. Each professor is supported by an interactive whiteboard, also known as a SMART board.

In addition, digital recording is available in the interview rooms and conference rooms. Interviews can be replayed on faculty computers and projected on the whiteboards. The conference room is also equipped with computer projection.

The remodeled clinic reflects the clinical program itself. When the clinic opened its doors in 1971, it consisted of a single client interview room, a hallway desk where one all-purpose support staff member did her work and a couple of used trailers parked in a lot next to the law school that clinical students shared with the local rodent population. Building on decades of hard work by the faculty, staff and students, the law school’s clinical program now enjoys a national and international reputation for excellence.

The open house preceded the 2012 Mountain West Regional Clinic Conference, on Oct. 6. Legal clinical educators from the region spent the day focusing on the importance of connecting and collaborating in clinical teaching, across organizations and across the region.
Professor George Bach Passionate About Public Interest Law

It was New Mexico’s natural beauty that first captivated Professor George Bach (’02) when he was a 15-year-old Boy Scout at Philmont Scout Ranch. A native of Kentucky, he knew then that he would return to the Land of Enchantment.

After his first summer working at Philmont in 1988 as a backpacking guide, he returned for five more summers, eventually holding the position of chief ranger, a year after earning his bachelor’s degree from Centre College of Kentucky in 1992.

Bach joined the UNM law faculty in 2012 as an assistant professor. He teaches constitutional law, employment law, evidence, federal jurisdiction, clinic and practicum.

In between summers at Philmont, Bach was a ticket office supervisor at Keystone/Arapahoe Basin Ski Resort in Colorado for two years. He moved to Albuquerque in 1994, where he worked at Double Rainbow, now Flying Star Café.

During law school, Bach clerked for Lee Peifer (’77) and joined him in practice after earning his J.D. Three years later, he went to work for the ACLU of New Mexico, first as staff attorney and then as managing attorney. For the next four-and-a-half years, he handled a variety of civil rights case and enjoyed memorable successes and equally memorable losses. He also served as president of the New Mexico Lesbian and Gay Lawyers Association.

He left the ACLU in 2009 to open Bach & Garcia with Matt Garcia (’05). He remains of counsel with Garcia Ives Nowara.

In 2010, Bach was invited to co-teach employment law at the UNM School of Law. He returned the following year as a visiting professor. He enjoyed the experience so much that he decided to shift his focus and join the academic arena. He interviewed at Albany Law School and the UNM School of Law. He was delighted to get to stay at UNM.

“I love working with students one-on-one and in the classroom,” said Bach. “It’s exciting to find ways to present difficult material in a clear manner and to stimulate students to think critically. I want students to leave a lecture with a good understanding of the law and how it works. And I want everyone to pass the bar exam.”

Outside the classroom, Bach donates his time teaching evidence and constitutional law for a bar prep course for recent graduates. He also serves as a member of the ACLU of New Mexico’s Legal Panel and is a volunteer Big Brother.

Bach has two poorly behaved dogs, Boswell and Ladybug.
Professor Yael Cannon
Committed to Children's Issues

Professor Yael Cannon was on a study-abroad semester in Cape Town, South Africa, working with gang-involved youth when she found her calling. She was an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, not far from her hometown of Rockville, Md., outside of Washington, D.C.

“My experience made me think about many of the kids in Washington, D.C., in the shadow of the nation’s capital, who were also living in extreme poverty and had many of the same issues as children living in the townships of South Africa,” she said.

Cannon returned from that semester with two things: a commitment to work on behalf of children living in poverty and a plan to do that through the legal system. She earned her J.D. from Stanford Law School with honors and joined the faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law as an assistant professor in fall 2012. She teaches in the Community Lawyering Clinic.

Even before law school, Cannon was involved: she worked in one of the nation’s largest community kitchens and taught teenagers in a low-income neighborhood about the history of the civil rights movement. During law school, she advocated on behalf of youth offenders in a variety of settings.

As an Equal Justice Works Fellow, she joined the Children’s Law Center in Washington, D.C., where she was involved in a medical/legal partnership.

She was an on-site lawyer in a pediatric clinic in a tough neighborhood. She trained the clinic’s physicians and nurses to flag legal issues and encouraged them to refer patients to her. Often, the child had an unidentified or unaddressed disability. With Cannon’s assistance, the child would receive the help they needed.

Cannon taught in the Disability Rights Law Clinic at the Washington College of Law at American University before coming to New Mexico.

At the UNM School of Law, she is involved in the Medical-Legal Alliance for Children, a collaboration with the UNM School of Medicine.

“I love teaching and mentoring students, watching them grow over the course of the clinic and seeing the transformation when they went out into the community as student lawyers with their own cases,” she said. “There is no substitution for interacting with a real client and advocating directly for someone with real and important needs.”

Outside of the classroom, Cannon and her husband, Curtis, a nonprofit administrator, enjoy taking their dog for hikes and exploring the restaurants and hidden foodie gems of New Mexico.
Professor Aliza Organick Brings Inspired Teaching to Clinical Program

Professor Aliza Organick ('96) was immersed in her clinical rotation at the University of New Mexico School of Law when she found her calling. During her third semester in law school, she and classmate Leslie Mansfield initiated an advocacy project on behalf of coal and uranium miners in New Mexico, Arizona and southern Colorado. Shortly before graduation, they received grants to establish the Miners’ Legal Resource Center and continued that work for two more years.

“The clinical experience itself – the connection of bringing together the doctrinal teachings with real-life cases – crystallized all the things I wanted to explore as a lawyer,” she said.

In the fall 2012, Organick returned to the UNM School of Law as a tenured professor, completing a circle that is packed with inspired clinical accomplishments. She is teaching in the community lawyering and law practice clinics.

A citizen of the Dine Nation, born to the Tsenijikini Clan (Cliff Dweller Clan), Organick always wanted to teach in a law clinic, and in 2004, she joined the faculty at Washburn University School of Law. She created the first clinical law program in Kansas focused on tribal court practice. She also created and developed the course curriculum for three seminar classes: Tribal Court Practice Seminar, International Law of Indigenous Peoples and Comparative Law: Understanding Method and Theory.

“One of my goals at Washburn was to expose students not only to practice in local tribal communities, but also to underscore the critical need to consider how colonialism affected indigenous peoples worldwide, and to think about those issues in the broader context of international human rights,” she said.

In the late 2000s, Organick taught in the UNM School of Law’s Southwest Indian Law Clinic during the summer.

She is the co-founder and co-organizer of the Indian Law Clinics and Externship Symposium, which takes place in Indian country and she is currently serving on the board of the National Native American Bar Association.

With her scholarship, Organick has focused on the Indian Child Welfare Act in Kansas, the rights of indigenous people and tribal court practice. She is co-author of the TRIBAL COURT PRACTICE HANDBOOK, forthcoming from Carolina Academic Press.

She earned a bachelor of university studies at UNM in 1992 and graduated from the Pre-Law Summer Institute at the American Indian Law Center in 1993.

“I am excited to be back in New Mexico, to be back enjoying the sunshine and green chile,” she said. But mostly, Organick is excited to be working with UNM law students. “It’s always rewarding watching students become lawyers.”
Professor Anthony Renzo Driven by Commitment to Fairness

Professor Anthony Renzo has carried around an abiding sense of justice his entire life. As long as he can remember, he has been the person who brought a deep-seated commitment to fairness in any situation, from playing games as a child to his law practice.

Renzo now brings that sense of fairness to the classroom. He joined the faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law in 2012, after 11 years as a professor of law at the Vermont Law School. At UNM, he is teaching elements of legal argumentation.

Growing up in Iowa, the son of Italian and Cherokee parents, Renzo loved school; the more he learned, the more he wanted to know. When he enrolled at the University of Iowa, he was the first in his family to attend college. He was attracted to a career in the law for the choices it offered: he could work for a firm, go on his own or become a law professor. In fact, he has done all of those during his career.

After earning his J.D. from the University of Colorado School of Law in 1971, Renzo clerked for the chief justice of the Colorado Supreme Court and then went into practice. On his own time and for no money, he began accepting civil liberties cases, which became his specialty.

In 1988, he took a break from practice and accepted a position as director of the California Bar Examination where he worked to increase the minority pass rate on the California bar exam. He also developed an ethics exam for lawyers who had been disciplined, as a requirement to reinstate their license.

Renzo missed the courtroom, and in 1992, he returned home to Iowa to a new law partnership. Everywhere he went, Renzo continued to teach, and in 2001, he joined the law faculty at Vermont Law School. “I followed my passion rather than my pocketbook,” he said.

At UNM, Renzo looks forward to contributing to the school’s legal writing program. He also plans to continue to pursue his scholarly interests in the intersection of national security law and civil liberties, especially as it relates to the constitutional limits on the military detention of civilians.

He is excited to be a part of the UNM School of Law’s richly diverse community. “More than anything, I look forward to the students at New Mexico and what they will bring to the classroom,” he said.

Outside of the classroom, Renzo enjoys cycling, hiking, live music, movies, theater, baseball and travel, often with his wife, Tamara. They have three grown children.
Professor Alex Ritchie Brings Oil & Gas Experience to the Faculty

After taking his first business law class as an undergraduate at Georgetown University, Professor Alex Ritchie knew he one day wanted to be a transactional lawyer. Although he enjoyed his first career as a public accountant, that wasn't enough for him. “I wanted to be intricately involved in transactions, negotiating the terms, drafting the contracts and seeing the deals close,” he said.

After earning a bachelor’s degree, he worked as an accountant to save up for law school. “When I finally got to law school at the University of Virginia, I loved every minute of it,” he said.

Ritchie joined the University of New Mexico School of Law faculty in 2012, returning to New Mexico 23 years after graduating from high school in Albuquerque.

After graduation from UVA law school, Ritchie didn’t have to wait long for his first transaction. In his first job with a Dallas law firm, he worked alongside a firm partner on the sale of the Dallas Mavericks NBA basketball team to current owner Mark Cuban.

But despite the excitement of the job, he missed the Rocky Mountains, and after a year, joined a Denver law firm. For the next 10 years, he was immersed in billions of dollars of transactions, eventually developing a focus in oil and gas and mining transactions.

In 2009, Ritchie became a senior in-house counsel at Suncor Energy. “My work at Suncor highlighted the important balance between production and sustainability and the hard work that is required to use and protect natural resources at the same time,” he said.

Just as accounting proved to be an excellent foundation for a career in transactional law, working in the natural resources field prepared Ritchie to take his expertise into the classroom. In addition to the reward of seeing students turn into lawyers, he looks forward to connecting the school’s oil and gas program with the state. “I want to help provide new opportunities in the industry for our graduates through education.”

Ritchie also harbors a passion for music. He began his singing career in middle school with the Albuquerque Boys Choir and, at Georgetown, Ritchie directed an a cappella singing group. He even sang the national anthem at his 1993 Georgetown commencement ceremony.

Ritchie and his wife, Amy, enjoy cooking and remodeling together, and spending time with their two daughters, Allison, 9, and Anna, 7.
Professor David Stout Brings Career Expertise to the Classroom

Professor David Stout (’82) had just earned a master’s degree in history from the University of London and was looking forward to becoming a history professor when the uncertainty of life showed up. His father had been diagnosed with cancer and he wanted to return to his hometown of Albuquerque to help with his care.

Once he was back, Stout began rethinking his life plan.

“I wanted control over what I did and where I lived, and a career in academia seemed like the best choice,” he said. “But law had always been in the back of my mind and I thought Albuquerque would be a good place to raise children.”

Stout applied only to the University of New Mexico School of Law, where he was accepted. In the fall 2012, after practicing for 28 years, he returned there to join the faculty in the school’s Legal Analysis and Communication Program, ready for the academic life he first envisioned many years ago.

After earning his J.D., Stout clerked for U.S. District Judge Santiago Campos (’53) and then moved to San Francisco where he taught legal writing and also worked for a Bay Area law firm. In 1987, he returned home and shortly thereafter joined Bill Carpenter (’66) and Joe Goldberg, his former law professor, in practice.

For the next 25 years, Stout was a contributing member of a firm that focused mostly on personal injury and insurance related cases. Clients came from across New Mexico, often with difficult complex cases. Along the way, Stout built his own reputation as one of the state’s most highly respected lawyers.

As much as he enjoyed his law practice, Stout retained his interest in teaching. In the early 1990s, he co-taught a course in which UNM law students taught a legal component in high school civics classes across Albuquerque. Then, in the early 2000s, he began teaching as an adjunct professor at the UNM School of Law. He co-taught insurance law and ethics with Maureen Sanders (’79) and then taught ethics on his own before joining the faculty full time in 2012.

When he’s not working Stout enjoys playing tennis, hiking, backpacking and baking cookies. He and his wife, Mary, have five adult daughters between them in their blended family. Stout’s daughter, Kelly, was a 2009 graduate of the UNM School of Law. ♦
Professor Kevin Tu Combines Business & Law Interests

By the time he was in high school, Professor Kevin Tu knew he wanted to be a lawyer. His father had studied law in Vietnam before immigrating to the United States, and Tu's curiosity about law was piqued at a young age. As an undergraduate student at the University of Washington, he developed a passion for business and commerce, majoring in business administration. Instead of leaving behind the law, Tu found a way to combine the two interests.

"Early on, I was fascinated with how powerful law can be and how access to that knowledge can affect people and communities in a positive way," he said. "As I became interested in business, I could see how, as a business lawyer, I could help my clients and others come together to achieve their shared goals."

Tu joined the faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law in fall 2012. He teaches secured transactions, regulation of banking and other business law courses.

After earning a J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law in 2006, Tu, a native of the Seattle suburb of Bellevue, joined an international law firm at which he had interned during law school. Right away, he plunged into a wide range of business transactions. His clients included entrepreneurs and startups, as well as national banks and large technology/software companies with a strong presence in Seattle.

Tu also developed a strong regulatory practice advising banks and other financial institutions on a host of compliance issues primarily relating to new and emerging payments systems, including credit/debit cards, stored value, e-commerce and mobile payments.

After five years of law practice, he was asked to teach contracts as an adjunct faculty member in his alma mater’s LL.M. program. He jumped at the opportunity. "I always thought teaching would be a perfect blend: to combine my legal interests with mentoring and teaching," he said.

He spent the following year as a visiting professor at the University of Oregon School of Law with a goal to pursue an academic career.

At the UNM School of Law, Tu is continuing to develop his academic interests, which lie at the intersection of commercial law, financial regulation and technology.

Outside the classroom, Tu pursues sports photography, which initially gave him something to do when he accompanied his wife, Carly, a competitive triathlete and cyclist, at her races. He also enjoys cooking and likes to think he could be a winner on the MasterChef television show. For now, he is enjoying exploring Albuquerque's restaurant scene and growers' markets.
“The more you are given, the more you must give away.”

— Donald Montoya ('74)

From the time she was a little girl, A. Elicia Montoya ('99) remembered her father, Donald Montoya ('74), emphasizing the importance of helping others. “The more you are given, the more you must give away,” he told me,” Elicia said during this year's scholarship luncheon at the University of New Mexico School of Law. “His cases were causes.”

Elicia had been a lawyer for less than a year when her father and mentor passed away after a struggle with heart disease. Shortly after his death, the family established the Donald D. Montoya Endowed Memorial Scholarship at the UNM School of Law, and the scholarship has been carrying on Donald’s legacy ever since.

Also speaking at the September luncheon that honored scholarship donors and connected them with their recipients were Christopher Lucero ('09), a former recipient of the Donald D. Montoya Scholarship, and Judge Judith Herrera of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico. Herrera was a family member of Donald’s and learned much from him when she was starting out in law practice.

“Scholarships are both a recognition of the hard work a student has put forth up to that point in their life and an expectation or belief that, with support, that person can accomplish so much more. With that support, I was able to spread my wings and pursue the legal career I had always dreamed of,” said Lucero.

In what is becoming a popular and moving law school tradition, the scholarship luncheon brought together donors and the recipients of their life-changing generosity in an elegant yet relaxed setting on the school’s back patio.
UNM LAW ADVISOR DIRECTORY: 
AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Members of the New Mexico legal community are invited to register with the University of New Mexico School of Law’s new UNM Law Advisor Directory.

This new initiative is designed to connect UNM law students and alumni with their single greatest source of opportunity: an interactive, alumni and friend-based professional network. By participating, you will be asked to share your insight a few times a year in brief 30-minute sessions with UNM law students and alumni.


For more information, please contact Heather Harrigan, assistant dean for career services, at 505.277.1001 or harrigan@law.unm.edu.

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“This initiative will make a meaningful impact on the professional development of our students by increasing their marketability and the likelihood of their establishing a satisfying career. We sincerely hope you will join us.”

—Heather Harrigan
Assistant Dean for Career Services