

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

Sativa Cruz



Many students embark on their college education with ambitions to achieve high grades and take away a great experience, but for Sativa Cruz it is evident that meaning and purpose has guided her ambition. Originally from Santa Fe, and the eldest of three girls, Sativa has been active in the local and international community as a volunteer and leader. Most recently, Sativa returned to Colombia in March to work on a collaborative installation project of a water irrigation system, as part of the *Young Leaders Innovating for the Reinvention of an Agricultural Sustainable Region* exchange project between NMSU and the University of La Salle-Utopia Campus.

Sativa's impressive resume of community service while enrolled in the Environmental Science Program is more than outstanding. Her academic success can be attributed, in part, to the scholarships and financial aid that she received, including the Norma Bellows Ulery Outstanding Woman in Soil and Environmental Sciences Scholarship, NIH MARC Fellowship, Sundt Honors Scholarship, and a New Mexico Water Resource Research Institute Student Grant.

During Sativa's free time, she engages in cultural activities including performing violin with Mariachi Fuego Del Sol, serving as troupe leader for Tribal Storm dance group, and encourages sustainable living through community outreach with the Office of Sustainability. Sativa has served as President of the Environmental Science Student Organization, and has led the club in local community events such as citywide cleanup efforts, Recycle Mania, The Southwest Environmental Center Wildlife Gala, and the Organization of Aggie Students Inspiring Sustainability Earth Day celebration.

Sativa's mother, Victoria Cruz, resides in Santa Fe.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

College of Arts and Sciences

Angela Bischof



Of 140 applicants, many nominated from the best colleges in the world, Angela Bischof was the highest ranked candidate selected with full funding to attend the Doctoral Graduate Program at Duke University. Her acceptance to such a prestigious graduate program is a direct reflection of the high academic standards she upholds for herself.

Angela is a clear, gifted writer and a creative, independent thinker. Her professors and peers in the College of Arts and Sciences have the upmost respect for her, and she received the Faculty and Alumni Scholarship, awarded annually by the Philosophy Department to the strongest philosophy students, two years in a row. Her hard work and exceptional focus on her studies is the outcome of her professors' collective passion for teaching and cultivating a world class educational experience for their students.

While attending NMSU, Angela received Dean's List recognition, was named a Crimson Scholar, and she received the NMSU Regents Scholarship.

While serving as Vice President of Sophia, NMSU's undergraduate club, she led club activities and events, despite a heavy workload. In addition to her service, she was selected to be a peer-learning assistant for lower and upper division philosophy courses, while being the only undergraduate to give access to lead workshops within the NMSU Philosophy Department.

Angela's parents, Hans Bischof and Patricia Bischof, '91, reside in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

College of Business

Kyla Elkins



Since the beginning of her first year at New Mexico State University, Kyla Elkins has been working relentlessly to achieve her goals. Full time enrollment in the College of Business Accounting program at NMSU was ambitious to start, but Kyla did not stop there. She chose to expand her opportunities by working in addition to her academic studies. Keeping focused on school she worked as an intern with Farm Credit of New Mexico and Beasley Mitchell & Co., CPA's., LLP as a student intern, and she currently works with New Mexico Businessman's Team Roping Association.

Kyla has earned several honors and scholarships including the NMSU President's Associates Scholarship, Continental Divide Electric Company Scholarship, and Lionel D. Haight Accounting Scholarship. Kyla is a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and, since 2012, has made the Dean's List for seven consecutive semesters.

As member of Beta Alpha Psi since Fall 2015 Kyla was part of the presentation team that placed third in the 2015 Beta Alpha Psi Regional Meeting in the Effective Operation category, and she represented the chapter at the 2015 Regional Meeting in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Service to the community has been an extremely important aspect of Kyla's academic career. Through her membership with Beta Alpha Psi she has participated in many events and program to help her community such as Relay for Life, The Big Event on campus, Project Linus in Dallas, Project Literacy, and Junior Achievement at Sonoma Elementary School.

Kyla's parents are Carl and Shawnda Elkins from Grants, NM.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

College of Education

Zoe Dinger



Zoë Dinger is characterized as one of the brightest students majoring in communication disorders. She is the recipient of several student awards, including the Dean's List, Crimson Scholar, and has received several scholarships within the College of Education, including the Hunter and Lewis Scholarship and the Ryan Hyatt Memorial Scholarship. She was selected in fall 2015 to participate in the ASPIRE program at the University of Illinois Urbana- Champaign and recently received a fellowship to continue her graduate studies there.

Besides actively participating in research Zoë has conducted a small study, which she presented as first author at the 2015 ASHA Convention in Denver. Zoë was invited back to participate in the 2015 ASHA Promoting the Next Generation of Researchers Participants program.

Zoë has demonstrated her desire for personal enrichment by participating in the studies abroad program in Seville, Spain where, in addition to her studies, she volunteered at a local high school, teaching English for two days a week. Zoë has also demonstrated her commitment to leadership by participating with numerous campus organizations, such as NSSHLA, Student Aggies for Sustainability, and the International Club serving as an international student ambassador. She has acted as a student mentor for incoming freshman along with volunteering in the local community with Casa de Peregrinos, and has been a part of Earth Day for the past three years.

Proud Aggie parents precede Zoë, Peter Dinger '84, '85 of Las Cruces and Elaine Gil '85 of Brooklyn, NY.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

College of Engineering

Randy Clay Andrews



Many skills and lessons acquired in the pursuit of an academic degree do not reach their fullest value until one can find a way to use their knowledge to benefit others. By designing projects and leading outcomes through teamwork Randy Clay Andrews has certainly discovered the unique gift of taking knowledge and skills and turning them into a benefit for others. His academic success has attributed to the fact that he is a member of the top 5 percent of the strongest engineering physics majors in the past five years at NMSU.

Randy finalized his degree in eight semesters, which is very rare for his degree, in fact only two out of 34 graduates have been able to accomplish such a feat. During his enrollment at NMSU he has received academic honors as a Crimson Scholar and has held a position on the Dean's List four consecutive years. He has also been a member of the Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor's Society and recipient of the H. Bartel and D. Williams Memorial Scholarship Award.

In addition to receiving a Bachelor of Science, Randy will receive a minor in theater. His academic goals and creative vision will lead him to peruse entrance into University of New Mexico's Graduate Architecture program.

Aside from his rigorous academic studies Randy has participated in many outreach and recruitment activities with the Society of Physics Students and the Society of Engineering Physics Students, in addition to activities with the NMSU Outdoor Leadership program.

Terri and Charles Andrews, Randy's parents, both live in Albuquerque, NM.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016
College of Health and Social Services

Ada Salazar



Being a traditional student comes with inherent struggles, even with support offered, but as a nontraditional student the privileged responsibilities of marriage and managing a family makes the pursuit of higher education a notable accomplishment. This can be said for Ada Salazar who is happily married to husband Jose Salazar and mother to Jose Antonio Andrea and Esteban. In addition to her academic and personal accomplishments she will proudly represent her family at commencement as the first to graduate college.

While balancing school and family life Ada has maintained outstanding grades and made times to engage in leadership activities in the college and community. She serves as one of the officers for Phi Alpha Kappa Omega Honor Society, treasurer of the College of Health and Social Services Student Council and an ambassador for the college. She is involved with the Veterans Theater and was involved in writing a proposal presented at the 2016 National Association of Social Work Conference in Albuquerque in February. Her service also involves the local community with involvement in different agency drives, such as Community of Hope, La Pinon, and La Casa. She is a committed professional advocating for community need, emphasizing social justice and advocating equity in the community.

She was the first social work intern at Fabens Independent School District working closely with migrant students. Ada is an outstanding Aggie who has set the bar for academic excellence for other students. She is a recipient of scholarship opportunities such as the Hispanic Scholar Fund and the NMSU College of Health and Social Services Scholarship.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

Graduate School – Master’s Degree

Sudhir Singla



Upon entering, the College of ACES Sudhir Singla was an exceptional student, and because of the support and confidence from his peers and professors he has been able to achieve academic success far beyond anyone’s expectations. Sudhir has excelled in teaching and demonstrated superior instructional skills during his teaching assignments. As an example of his commitment to leadership while focused on personal research and course work, Sudhir welcomed the opportunity to take ownership of a teaching a course when called upon short notice due to the unexpected absence of a faculty member.

In addition to all of his personal academic commitments, Sudhir remained active in volunteer events that benefited local causes such as a participant in the NMSU Big Event, volunteer judge in the Southwestern New Mexico Regional Science and Engineering Fair, volunteer organizer of La Semilla annual Rootin’ Tootin’ Rib Cook Off, and volunteer with the Salvation Army. During his time at NMSU he was awarded the Graduate Research Enhancement Grant Award and the Merit Based Enhancement Graduate School Award.

As a graduate student, Sudhir has performed extremely well and has clearly demonstrated he is well ahead of his peers as NMSU. Based on his academic and research excellence, demonstrated teaching commitment, ability in leadership and serving the university and broader community at NMSU, he has earned the Outstanding Graduate award.

Outstanding Graduate Spring 2016

Graduate School – Ph.D.

Kelsey Quinn



Kelsey Quinn has earned the professional and personal respect of her professors, colleagues, and friends through her unwavering work ethic and personal integrity. Without a doubt, all of her academic accomplishments are well deserved. Regardless of the obstacles faced during her academic discovery at NMSU, Kelsey continued to keep a balanced approach to academic life, personal growth, and the exploration of possibilities.

Kelsey has received numerous accolades from her professors, and is thought of as one of the most productive students in the Animal and Range Sciences department. During her time as a doctoral student, Kelsey has earned numerous awards and honors that speak to her ability to deliver knowledge, and demonstrate her exceptional skills in the laboratory. Her accomplishments are honored with scholarship opportunities such as the Marine Biological Laboratory Student Support Scholarship, NMSU Jack Ruttle Graduate Endowment Scholarship, NMSU AL and LP Neumann Endowment Scholarship, NMSU Pruett Family Scholarship, NMSU Graduate Student Enhancement Award, and NMSU Jack Hayes Scholarship.

As a swimming coach with the NMSU Aggie Outlaw swim team and as a teaching assistant, her commitment to mentoring and helping others learn through a supportive approach demonstrates an institutional held value of connecting the individual with knowledge. Aside from high marks, academic successes, refined laboratory skills, and earned respect, the personal commitment Kelsey has towards the learning process, and the care she demonstrates in teaching others, is indicative of the values she learned at NMSU.