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Media News



CBP Border Patrol Agent Kenneth Reza, left, NMSU Criminal Justice Department Head and professor Dennis Giever, center, and CBP officer Adriana Caranza, right, stand for a photo at Breland Hall, Room 127. Courtesy Photo/NMSU



New Mexico State University Borderlands and Ethnic Studies graduate certification students stand with Dulcinea Lara, Associate Professor in the Department of Criminal Justice and Director of Ethnic Studies. From left, Reymond Manuelito, Dulcinea Lara, Stevie Paz, Natalia Martinez, Carlos Avila, Haley Stewart, Delia Torres. Not pictured: Teaching Assistant, Cynthia Wise. (NMSU Photo by Amanda Adame)



Be Bold. Shape the Future.
College of Arts and Sciences
 Department of Criminal Justice

Message from the Department Head

Alumni and Friends of the Department of Criminal Justice

It has been an exciting semester in the department. We have been able to welcome back three distinguished alums to our department who were able to meet with and mentor our current students.

Rachel Mangas '97, who currently serves as an attorney with the National Security Law Division of the U.S. Army Office of the Judge Advocate General after a distinguished career in the U.S. Navy serving as both a Judge Advocate and Naval Flight Officer, visited campus over the Homecoming weekend (please see Rachel's story).

Rachel met with over 200 students during her visit and was able to attend a number of homecoming activities (including the football game). She also participated in the Celebration of Traditions Memorial Service on Saturday morning and read a letter written by a NMSU student serving in the European theater during WWII. Correspondences between hundreds of former NMSU students and Daniel Jett (Dean of the College of Engineering) and have been memorialized in a book entitled "The Whole Damned World: New Mexico Aggies at War 1941-1945." It was a very moving ceremony, which touched all those in attendance. In fact, it was difficult to leave after the presentations – folks lingered to reminisce and reflect on NMSU legacy.

The following week Stephen Smith '74 visited campus and was able to present a guest lecture along with his wife, The Honorable Kathryn Villa-Smith, and host a luncheon with students. Students were able to ask questions about his career and seek his advice and counsel. Stephen has had a distinguished 40+ year career in Law Enforcement in a number of differing agencies in New Mexico and Oregon. He has retired from active duty law enforcement, but has remained active in helping with cold cases and other administrative needs in the Eugene Oregon Police Department.

In November David Bowdich '91, the Deputy Director for the FBI, returned to campus to meet with students and faculty in the department. Yes, the Deputy Director of the FBI is an alum of our program. David made a formal presentation in the HSS auditorium and met with a number of students one-on-one during his visit.

Like the other alumni, David has had an interesting career (please see his story in the pages that follow). After graduating from NMSU's Department of Criminal Justice, David became a police officer with the Albuquerque Police department and later accepted a position with the FBI. His distinguished career is an impressive one. The department recognizes all such distinguished alumni for the contributions they have made, and we are proud for the part that we played in their careers. With our proud history as a department, we have so many alumni that have made outstanding contributions to the field.

As many of you know, I accepted the position of department head two short years ago. I am proud to lead this department and will try to have a positive impact on the next generation of alumni. For those of you that do not know me, I am an alum of the program receiving my undergraduate degree in '90 and masters in '92. I served as a faculty member in the department for a brief period between 1995 – 1998 after receiving my Ph.D. from Indiana University of PA (IUP) in '95. I grew up in Las Cruces having close ties to NMSU my entire life.

My father was a faculty member in the math department for over 20 years. After my short stint as a faculty member at NMSU, I accepted a position back in Pennsylvania at IUP serving in a number of positions including chairperson (for 9 years) and graduate coordinator for the FBI programs.

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David Bowdich, deputy director of the FBI, gave a talk to 120 New Mexico State University criminal justice students, faculty and local law enforcement and fielded questions from students at the Health and Social Services Auditorium on a visit to campus. (NMSU photo by Josh Bachman)



NMSU criminal justice professor Mike Tapia, author of a book on the history of gangs in the El Paso-Juárez border, spoke at a symposium on gangs on April 18, 2019, at UTEP.

Daniel Borunda/El Paso Times

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Message from the Department Head continued

When the opportunity presented itself to return to NMSU and the Department of Criminal Justice as Department Head, I jumped on it, retiring from IUP after a 20-year tenure.

My history with NMSU and the department has been an interesting one. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many of our alumni and have been in awe of their accomplishments. I have also had the pleasure of being a student and colleague of many of the faculty that have been a part of this department since its inception in the early 1960s.

I first entered the program in 1976 when Dick Lease, Ed Farris, and Ron Pincomb were faculty members, and the department was the Department of Police Sciences. In fact, my first class was in Hardman Hall with Ed Farris (Police Science 101 – I still have the textbook for that class). I stayed for two years before taking a management position in the hotel industry. When I returned about 10 years later to finish my undergraduate degree, the department had changed its name to the Department of Criminal Justice and many of the faculty had retired (Ron Pincomb was still around, but both Dick Lease and Ed Farris had retired).

New faculty members included Larry Mays and Tom Winfree among others. Those faculty members and others at NMSU helped to shape my career, and it was with their support and encouragement that I obtained my Ph.D. in Criminology. I know that I have met or at least crossed paths with so many of you.

As an example, while a student in the 80s I had a least one class with David Bowdich and was an instructor for Rachel Mangas (Intro to Corrections) in the mid 90s. Sorry Steve Smith, but I was still in high school when you graduated, but our paths might have crossed when you were a police officer in Las Cruces. Another example, just last week I received a request for a reference check on one of our graduating students. After the reference check, he reintroduced himself as a student of mine from about 22 years ago (I remembered him as Wil, not William). He is now working for the Farmington Police Department. We

enjoyed a nice talk about his career and what he remembered about his time at NMSU.

My purpose in writing this letter is two-fold; first to reintroduce myself to our alumni and friends, but more importantly to reach out to each of you and ask that you touch back to us and let us learn about your career and what you have done since you graduated. We have alumni all over the world, doing outstanding things and contributing in so many positive ways to the field of criminal justice.

Please send a short note or email briefly describing your careers. We might include these in future Newsletters or on our website. It would be nice for our alumni to hear from others and what they have been doing since they left NMSU. After all, we shared some interesting times in our classes working collaboratively on projects and such. If you are brave, please send along a picture as well.

If you are ever in the area, we would love to have you visit our campus. Having you meet with our faculty and students would serve as an inspiration. Our department's reputation and legacy is derived from our alumni and what they have accomplished in their lives. We want to help celebrate your careers, and more importantly highlight your accomplishments. Sincerely

Dennis Giever
dgiever@nmsu.edu

Welcome New Faculty

Ahram Cho, Ph.D.



[Ahram Cho](#)

Assistant Professor
Courtesy Photo/NMSU

Ahram Cho, Ph.D. joined the Department of Criminal Justice at NMSU in Fall 2019.

She is originally from South Korea, where she obtained a bachelor's degree in law before taking her academic journey to Texas. She earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Criminal Justice and Criminology from Sam Houston State University in 2019.

Her primary research agenda centers on quantitative methods to facilitate the study of corrections and crime and justice as related to gender. Specifically, her research provides complex, theoretical perspectives on criminal justice decision-making outcomes, institutional behaviors and experiences, and gender stereotypes by unpacking the nuanced forms disparity can take. Her most recent work examined the institutional rule-breaking behavior of inmates with a history of mental health problems and assess various aggravating and mitigating factors of prison misconduct by focusing on a growing population of inmates with mental health issues.

With her extensive working experience with large-scale grant projects, she has strived to build

research-practitioner partnerships in efforts to promote evidence-based practice in corrections and serve the greater Las Cruces and New Mexico community. Since she joined the department, she has engaged in collaborating with the problem-solving courts in Las Cruces, NM.

In addition to her research, she has a strong commitment to teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Taking her research into the classroom, she developed courses on American Correctional Institutions, Research Methods, Women and Justice, and Advanced Girls, Women, and Justice.

She is highly devoted to working closely with students and providing quality mentorship. She is currently supervising an undergraduate student for an evaluation project as they have been accepted for a college-wide undergraduate scholarship program.

She is excited to be a part of NMSU and looking forward to working with students, colleagues, and local agencies.

One last personal fact about her is that she is an enthusiastic fan of Astros and has an adorable Shih Tzu (Harriet).

Welcome New Faculty

Hyunin Baek, Ph.D.



[Hyunin Baek](#)

Assistant Professor

Courtesy Photo/NMSU

I have dreamed to work at a University since 2000. In 2000, I started my academic journey at Kyonggi University in Korea. By the time I finished my new semester, I desired to stay in academia as my career.

However, I did not anticipate that the journey was longer than others were.

When I completed my military service (1996 to 1998), South Korea was in the 1997 financial crisis. Under these circumstances, I should find a stable job instead of exploring a new world. Thus, I was necessary to change my major from the Arabic Language (1995 to 1996) to the Police Administration (2000 to 2003).

However, not everything was done as I thought and planned. After the first semester of my new major, a new challenge was coming to me.

Professor Yoon Ho Lee asked to work in his laboratory and I began to access a variety of research papers and research projects. I have been exposed to many research projects. The laboratory was my turning point toward the academic journey, which I could continue to explore a new world.

Particularly, Dr. Dae-Hoon Kwak, who worked at the laboratory, always encouraged me to extend my academic journey to America.

Nonetheless, I could not make it and I should return to my mundane life (looking for a job in Korea).

However, the research experience in the laboratory has been chasing me. Within 10 years (2004 to 2015) as an HRD consultant, I did not give up to study. Eventually, I earned my Ph.D. in the University of Louisville in 2018 and I am a new faculty in NMSU.

Now I am composing a new story with my excellent colleagues. While I am writing this essay, I get a letter from a peer-reviewed journal. My 16th publication is accessible online. Without the support of my colleagues at NMSU, my next journey is not going well. Thanks to NMSU CJ, I am dreaming again toward a new journey.

Hyunin Baek

Emeritus Faculty

Tom Winfree, Emeritus Faculty



[Tom Winfree](#)

Professor Emeritus

Courtesy Photo/NMSU

Tom Winfree arrived on campus in the fall of 1987, retiring in 2012.

Department head Dr. G. Larry Mays tasked Tom with overseeing the new Master of Criminal Justice degree. In the early years, there were few students, as it took nearly a decade for enrollments to grow into double digits.

Tom's grant work consumed more than 15 years.

In the 1990s, a colleague asked Tom to serve as Las Cruces coordinator for the National Evaluation of Gang Resistance Education and Training. For five years, NMSU students participated in this study, many using the data for their theses and more than a few publishing articles that remain important to the gang literature.

At the end of the 1990s, another research opportunity presented itself, as Tom conducted a multi-year study of a local drug court. This project, too, provided Masters-level students with invaluable research experience and publications.

Simultaneously, the department of criminal justice, along with the department of engineering technology, began a unique program in security technology.

Started by Dr. Dennis Giever and Dr. Jeffrey Beasley, professor of engineering technology, Tom worked with Dr. Beasley to implement this unique program combined criminal justice and engineering. For nearly a decade its graduates went on to private and public sector jobs, including work in national defense and for the state department.

In the end, it was students at all levels that drove the department's mission. While there is not space here to recount all their achievements, Tom feels that a few can represent the many.

For example, Jim Breckenridge, an academic all-America football player at NMSU, received a Masters degree in the late 1990s, and went on to a career with first the U.S. Secret Service and then the Department of Energy's Office of Inspector General. Jim worked on the drug court evaluation and the security technology program.

Several NMSU BCJ and MCJ students can be found in academia, besides the obvious example of Dr. Giever. Dr. Dana Peterson, an MCJ student, worked on the National Evaluation of G.R.E.A.T. She received a Ph.D. in criminal justice from the University of Nebraska and is currently an associate professor in the School of Criminal Justice at the State University at Albany (NY). Dana continues to study youth gangs and is also widely recognized for her work on gender and crime.

Dr. Angela Gover received the BCJ degree from NMSU and a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland. Angela, an internationally recognized victimologist and gender studies expert, is professor of criminal justice at the University of Colorado, Denver.

Two MCJ students stayed closer to home. Danette Brown is an Investigator Supervisor with the Investigations Bureau of the New Mexico State Police. Danette has worked many high-profile criminal cases in New Mexico over the past 20 years.

Noreen Purcell, whose MCJ program included biochemistry, was director of the New Mexico State Crime Lab in Santa Fe for more than a decade. Her -1980s thesis work on DNA evidence in criminal cases is still cited in the literature.

Tom is equally proud of the students who, while majoring in criminal justice, sought careers well afield of those typically associated with the degree.

Thousands of CJ students between 1987 and 2012 found employment in dozens of federal, state and local criminal justice agencies. But Tom is equally proud of those who tell him that they were well-prepared for a career in pharmaceutical sales, private security administration, food and beverage management, and a host of other career avenues.

It was, Tom notes, a very rewarding career, largely because of the students.



Criminal Justice Alumni Featured



Rachel Mangas,

Bachelor of Criminal Justice, 1997



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College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Criminal Justice

David Bowdich,

Bachelor of Criminal Justice, 1991



Ms. Rachel Mangas, is an attorney with the National Security Law Division of the U.S. Army Office of the Judge Advocate General where she provides Privacy and Civil Liberties Legal Advice to the Army Insider Threat Program. Rachel specializes in operational, intelligence, cyber and national security law.

Mr. David Bowdich is an American law enforcement officer currently serving as the Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Prior to his current post, Bowdich served as the associate deputy director of the FBI from April 2016 to April 2018, while serving as the Acting Deputy Director from January 29, 2018 until his promotion on April 13, 2018.

Mr. Bowdich talked to students about applying for jobs with the FBI and answered questions about everything from the Las Cruces Public Schools computer hack to how working in the FBI can affect families, including how the organization supports the families of agents. He responded to one student's question about the length of the process to get hired by stating that it took him a year.

Bowdich also discussed the organization's progress in diversity. "We're trying to better mirror our communities. We recognize the need and I'm seeing great progress on the hiring side. In the senior rank side we still have some work to do, but it's a process that has to happen."

One important lesson Bowdich learned along the way is the value of teamwork.

(NMSU Press Release by [Minerva Baumann](#))



David Bowdich, CJ Alumnus, deputy director of the FBI, met with New Mexico State University senior criminal justice majors Joseph Linares and Albert Renteria at the mentoring center at Breland Hall. (NMSU photo by Josh Bachman)

Please touch back to us and let us learn about your career and what you have done since you graduated. Please send a short note or email briefly describing your careers. We might include these in future Newsletters or on our website. It would be nice for our alumni to hear from others and what they have been doing since they left NMSU.

Please visit the [CJ Giving Page](#) to see how you can contribute to the future success of Criminal Justice Students.