



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW MEXICO®

General Counsel

Leadership Profile

Summer - Fall 2024



WittKieffer



Executive Summary

The [University of New Mexico \(UNM\)](#) is seeking nominations, inquiries, and applications for the position of General Counsel. The General Counsel will report to President Garnett S. Stokes and the Board of Regents and will provide strategic guidance, consultation, and support on a wide range of legal and related issues to the President, Regents of the University, and other senior executive and academic leadership across all University campuses.

The University of New Mexico was founded in 1889 as New Mexico's flagship institution. The University is the only R1 institution in the State and offers a wide variety of academic programs through 14 colleges and schools. These academic options include more than 215 degree and certificate programs, including 94 baccalaureates, 71 master's, and 37 doctoral degrees. The UNM Health Sciences Center includes UNM Hospital, the only Level 1 Trauma Center in New

Mexico, and offers over 40 health science degrees and residency programs. UNM is a Hispanic Serving Institution that takes pride in the extraordinary diversity of its students and in providing opportunities for students, regardless of socioeconomic background. UNM has 4 branch campuses across the state, which provide academic and vocational training, leading to certificates, associate degrees, and transfers to baccalaureate programs. The University enrolls over 26,000 students and employs over 10,000 faculty and staff.

The General Counsel will be stepping into a vibrant campus environment following President Stokes' launch of the [UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined](#) strategic plan. As a crucial member of the President's senior leadership team, the General Counsel will provide executive and administrative direction over the University's legal matters. This individual will act as the chief legal officer, offering legal support, advice, and guidance to the Board of Regents, the President, as well as senior leaders, faculty, and staff on all legal issues affecting the institution. The General Counsel's role will encompass a diverse array of legal, transactional, regulatory, compliance, and litigation matters and will involve the management of legal resources to align with the organization's overarching priorities. The position necessitates extensive experience in areas such as contracts, labor and employment law, intellectual property, research agreements, litigation and risk management. The General Counsel is expected to bring a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing the legal challenges associated with an innovative organization dedicated to reshaping the future of higher education and healthcare delivery.

The individual selected for this position will be a highly strategic, forward-thinking attorney who is well-versed in the business dynamics and regulatory environment of higher education and healthcare. The General Counsel will be innovative, capable of creating solutions that facilitate the University's initiatives to assure the success and growth of the organization. The successful candidate must have excellent academic credentials and a law degree from an ABA accredited school of law and at least ten years of broad legal experience in higher education, government, healthcare and/or other non-profit entities gained in-house or through working closely with higher education, healthcare or not for profit clients. The selected candidate should also be a member in good standing of NM State Bar, or eligible to become a member of the NM State Bar within one year after being hired. New Mexico has reciprocity with many other states, as outlined here: <http://nmexam.org/reciprocity/> New Mexico also permits attorneys for public entities to practice with a limited license, as outlined in Rule 15-301.1 of the New Mexico Bar Rules.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see [Procedure for Candidacy](#) at the end of this document.

Role of the General Counsel

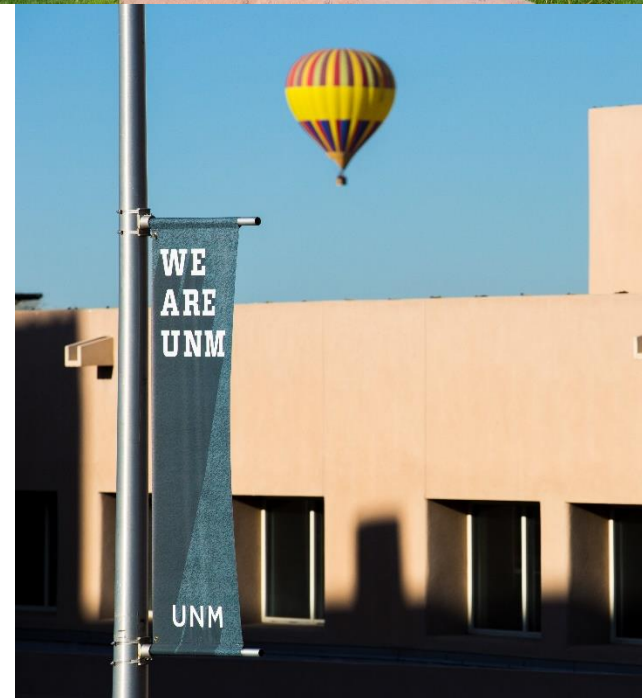
In the role of chief legal counsel at the University, the General Counsel is responsible for overseeing and managing the institution's legal affairs. They are tasked with advancing the University's missions and strategic goals by anticipating, understanding, and elucidating the legal implications of crucial issues in higher education and healthcare as well as their impact on the university.

The General Counsel directly reports to the President of the University and the Board of Regents. They provide guidance, consultation, and support to the University's regents, president, and other senior executives and academic leadership across all campuses to address a wide range of legal and related matters strategically.

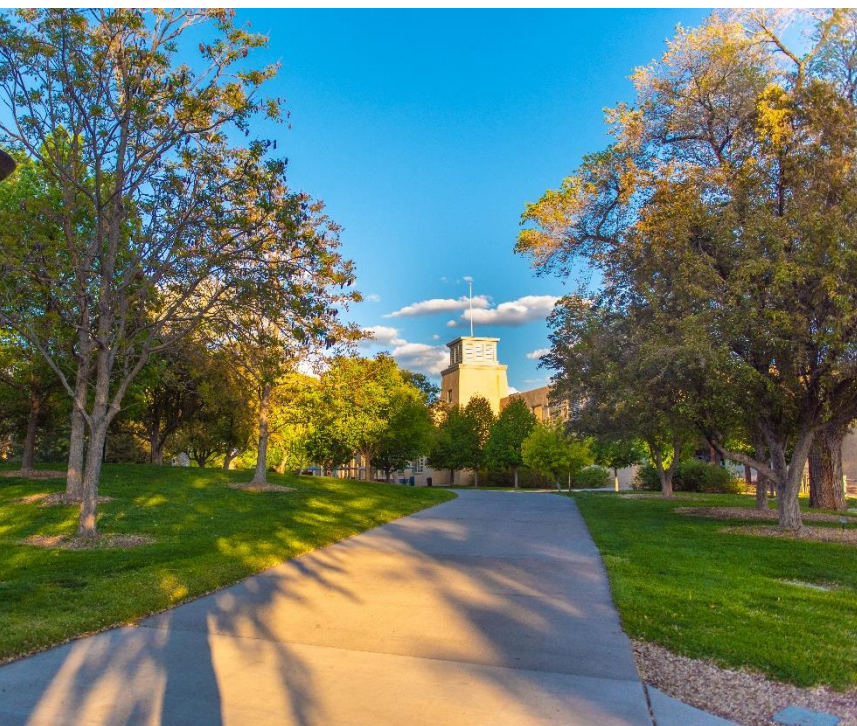
This position is responsible for overseeing and managing the provision of all legal services to the University to ensure the maximum protection of its legal rights and compliance with applicable laws. The General Counsel directs the operations of the Office of General Counsel (hereafter the Office of University Counsel) and supervises the legal staff, which currently includes 15 attorneys, along with paralegals and support staff. The operating budget for the legal office is \$4.9M. For more information, please visit: [Office of University Counsel \(OUC\)](#).

Essential Functions

- Provides legal counsel and guidance to the officers of the institution and other upper management on all legal matters relevant to a large public research institution, including personnel law, policies, procedures, rules, regulations, labor law, and laws pertaining to students, real estate transactions, contracts and grants, tax matters, worker's compensation, liability and insurance matters, litigation, public monies and purchases, affirmative action, and other laws and regulations.
- Anticipates and identifies legal issues and counsels officers of the institution and other upper management in order to develop legal strategies and solutions, often in situations of great political, public relations, or financial risk or significance, and with limited time for assessing alternatives.
- Reviews, researches, interprets and prepares both written and oral opinions on a wide variety of legal issues.
- Drafts, reviews, and approves policies and procedures, regulations, bylaws, and other legal documents.
- Reviews contracts, leases, and other legal documents; researches legal issues and recommends revisions as necessary.



- Represents or oversees the representation of the institution and upper management in judicial and administrative proceedings and in negotiations with the Risk Management Division other state agencies.
- Designs, establishes, and maintains an organizational structure and staffing to effectively accomplish the organization's goals and objectives; oversees recruitment, training, supervision, and evaluation of unit staff.
- Develops and manages annual budgets for the organization and performs periodic cost and productivity analyses.
- Selects and retains outside counsel, as required, to obtain legal opinions or to handle claims and litigation.
- Supervises legal work of other university attorneys, paralegals, and outside counsel; consults on difficult or sensitive issues.
- Provides training to the campus community on various legal issues through seminars and meetings.
- Maintains professional growth and development through seminars, workshops, and professional affiliations to keep abreast of latest developments in college and university law and in other related areas.





Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

In no particular order, the next General Counsel will be charged with addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Lead and empower the Office of University Counsel to achieve even greater success

The incoming General Counsel will assume leadership of the Office of University Counsel and continue to enhance the office's track record as a highly regarded business partner. The President and Board of Regents are fully committed to supporting a well-structured and thoughtful leadership strategy that can effectively

address the ever-changing landscape of higher education and healthcare. This approach aims to streamline processes further and promote the growth and professional advancement of the existing legal team. The General Counsel, in their role, will foster a culture of collaboration, working closely with various constituents, including faculty, staff, administrators, and external partners. This collaborative effort is key to ensuring the continued success and positive influence of the Office of University Counsel within the University community.

Act as a dependable advisor to the President, Board of Regents, and other senior leaders

As the General Counsel for the University, the individual in this role will play a pivotal part in building and upholding trust with the President, the Board of Regents, and other high-ranking administrators. Their responsibilities will include offering expert advice on the Board's legal and fiduciary obligations and duties. They will also assist the President and Board members address intricate and sensitive matters. Beyond these responsibilities, the General Counsel will have the opportunity to contribute to cultivating a culture rooted in transparency, integrity, and excellence, which is vital for the University's prosperity.

Establish a strong and effective presence at the University

Success in this position relies equally on interpersonal relationships as well as on specific expertise and experience. The new leader will need to invest time, energy, and passion in building strong relationships and earning the trust, respect, and credibility of senior leadership, the Board, faculty, and the wider community. The effective General Counsel will be known in The University of New Mexico community as a strategic thinker who is perceptive, responsive, collaborative, and approachable, with strong follow-through, sound legal advice, and expert and comprehensive counsel based on a thorough understanding of legal issues related to higher education and healthcare.



Support a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community

The State of New Mexico has a historically diverse population, and today stands as one of four states in the U.S. that can claim minority/majority status – that is where the minority population of the state outnumbers the non-minority population. Moreover, New Mexico is one in which diversity and cultural richness has been recognized through the centuries, and The University of New Mexico recognizes that diversity needs to be articulated, cultivated and made meaningful in its planning process. New Mexico has unique traditions, languages and a multi-cultural heritage which can provide inspiration for UNM to cultivate an important model for university diversity efforts. The new General Counsel will be expected to promote and model these values while enhancing UNM's commitment to serve and support a diverse community, to reject policies that have an adverse and disproportionate impact on people of color, and to achieve an anti-racist, nonbiased institution where all are truly welcome. The national and global contexts in which the new General Counsel takes on this role at UNM require attention and consideration. The General Counsel must be attuned to the complexities of views in the University and work to support in developing a culture that engages all members of the community in conversations and actions around anti-bias, diversity, equity and inclusion and advances the University's mission.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The University of New Mexico is in search of a resourceful and forward-thinking General Counsel with exceptional legal expertise to act as a strategic partner in advancing the University's mission as a nationally recognized public institution committed to providing educational opportunities, driving research, and enriching the community. The ideal candidate must have outstanding academic credentials, a law degree from an ABA-accredited law school, be a member in good standing of NM State Bar, or eligible to become a member of the NM State Bar within one year after being hired. New Mexico has reciprocity with many other states, as outlined here: <http://nmexam.org/reciprocity>. New Mexico also permits attorneys for public entities to practice with a limited license, as outlined in Rule 15-301.1 of the New Mexico Bar Rules. Additionally, the candidate should possess a minimum of ten years of directly relevant experience related to the duties and responsibilities of the position.

The ideal candidate will possess some or all of the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Experience

- An outstanding record of achievement with significant and broad legal experience in higher education, healthcare, government and/or other non-profit entities gained in-house or through working closely with higher education, healthcare or not for profit clients.
- Prior board governance experience, as well as significant understanding of and capacity for governance leadership, including knowledge of latest trends at a national level.
- Track record of ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations applicable to institutions of higher education.
- Experience with state and federal legislatures, regulatory and educational agencies, as well as community and professional organizations.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively analyze and balance legal issues, with a propensity for developing humane, practical, and legally appropriate solutions to issues and challenges.
- Record of service as a strong team player who works in a timely and collaborative manner with a highly professional team.
- Track record of building high performing teams, systems, and infrastructure, and of successful leadership in a mission driven organization.
- Experience with Title IX, Title VI and athletics compliance.



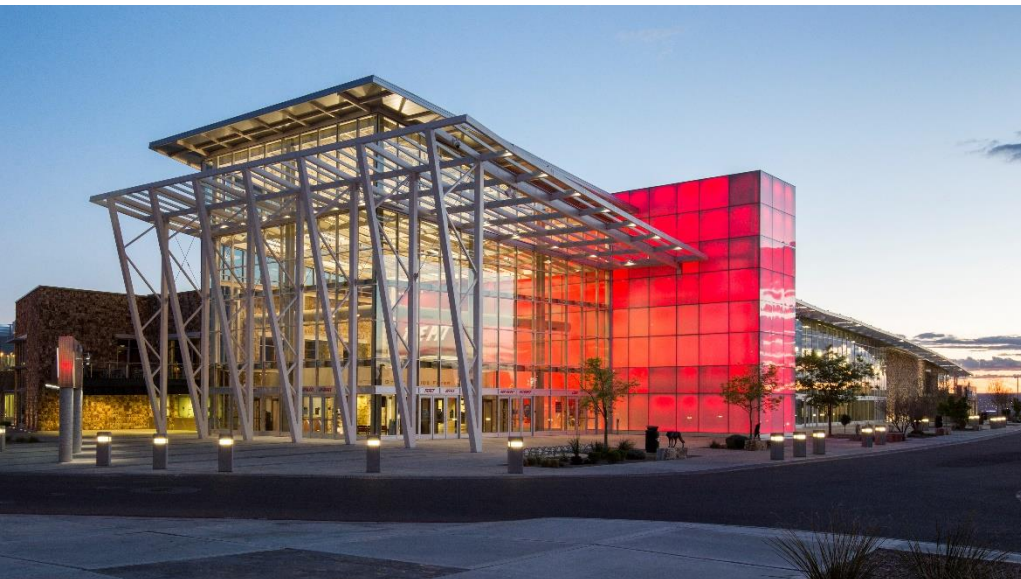
- Experience with bargaining and managing labor relations with unions.
- Successful experience managing outside legal counsel relations, as well as the ability to discern when the University can be served by its own legal department and when to bring in external expertise.
- Demonstrated legal and ethical stature, maturity, competence, and confidence to operate with credibility at the executive and regents level, as well as a professional history of maintaining objectivity while anticipating and understanding potential areas of vulnerability, driving appropriate outcomes, managing multiple constituencies' agendas, and promoting high client service standards.
- Experience working within complex mission-centered enterprises (higher education, healthcare, government and/or other non-profit entities and/or working within a complex for-profit organization with a similar decision-making culture (both settings should include experience advising a President or CEO, senior leadership team, and governing board).

Leadership and Management Behavioral Competencies

- Strong service orientation and responsiveness, and the ability to be accessible to the President, Board of Regents, senior leaders, and others; a track record of being perceived as a highly trusted advisor who is agile, creative, responsive, and thorough.
- Outstanding leadership and management skills; a builder of high performing teams, systems, policies and infrastructure; a record of driving results through effective team and individual performance, setting clear goals and managing accountability; business savvy and an understanding of complex strategic issues; an ability to manage ambiguity and to inspire confidence.
- Ability to create and convey a vision, gain support and buy-in, and execute strategies; to influence and gain commitment to strategies by building strong, collaborative working relationships; and to encourage meaningful and sometimes transforming dialogue within the team.
- Skill as a highly effective communicator; presence, stature and experience representing an organization to a variety of audiences; strong professional network who is sought out by peers for counsel.
- Resiliency to lead effectively in a dynamic environment; skill at anticipating a need for, and making, mid-course corrections; strong attention to detail, coupled with the ability to make decisions in a timely manner, and where appropriate, to communicate about the reasoning behind various decision points.

Personal Characteristics

- Capacity to serve as a highly-valued confidant and close advisor to UNM's leadership, Board of Regents, and community.
- Mastery of, and endless curiosity about, complex educational, business, and healthcare-based issues.
- A confident executive who values relationships with staff, peers, and superiors.
- A hands-on approach to performing duties, as well as the ability to keep strategic initiatives in focus.
- Secure and self-directed leadership with an ability to work effectively in a consensus-driven environment where direct feedback and constructive criticism is expected and admired.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion across multiple spectra.
- Unquestionable integrity and moral character.



About The University of New Mexico

Overview

Founded in 1889 as New Mexico's flagship institution, with a total enrollment of over 26,000 students (44 percent Hispanic and 14 percent Native American) across multiple campuses, the University of New Mexico now occupies nearly 800 acres near old Route 66 in the heart of Albuquerque, a city of more than 900,000 people. From the magnificent mesas to the west, past



the banks of the historic Rio Grande to the Sandia Mountains to the east, Albuquerque is a blend of culture and cuisine, styles and stories, people, pursuits and panoramas.

Vision

Be a global leader in realizing human potential, addressing critical community challenges, and demonstrating the power of inclusive diversity.

Mission

As the state's premier institution of higher learning and provider of health care, the University of New Mexico promotes discovery, generates intellectual and cultural contributions, honors academic values, and fosters an educated, healthy, and economically vigorous New Mexico.

Values

EXCELLENCE

We value excellence in all of our work, and we strive to perform and achieve at the highest levels.

INCLUSION

We respect and celebrate the differences of all persons and value working in a collaborative environment where diversity is cherished and there is a shared sense of belonging.

ENVIRONMENT

We are dedicated to the protection of our planet to ensure the health, well-being, and success of future generations.

INTEGRITY

We value fairness, honesty, and transparency. We are good stewards of the resources that have been given to us.

PLACE

We are dedicated to the peoples and places of New Mexico even as we reach for global impact for the benefit of all humanity.

The University has branch campuses in [Gallup](#), [Los Alamos](#), [Taos](#), and [Valencia County](#), plus an HSC extension campus in Rio Rancho, also home to the UNM Sandoval Regional Medical Center. [UNM's libraries](#), [museums](#), galleries, and performance spaces are rich cultural resources for the state. UNM is a federally designated Hispanic-serving institution.

As a [Minority Serving Institution](#), the University represents a cross-section of cultures and backgrounds. In Spring of 2023, [more than 24,000 students attended](#) the main, branch and HSC campuses and education centers.

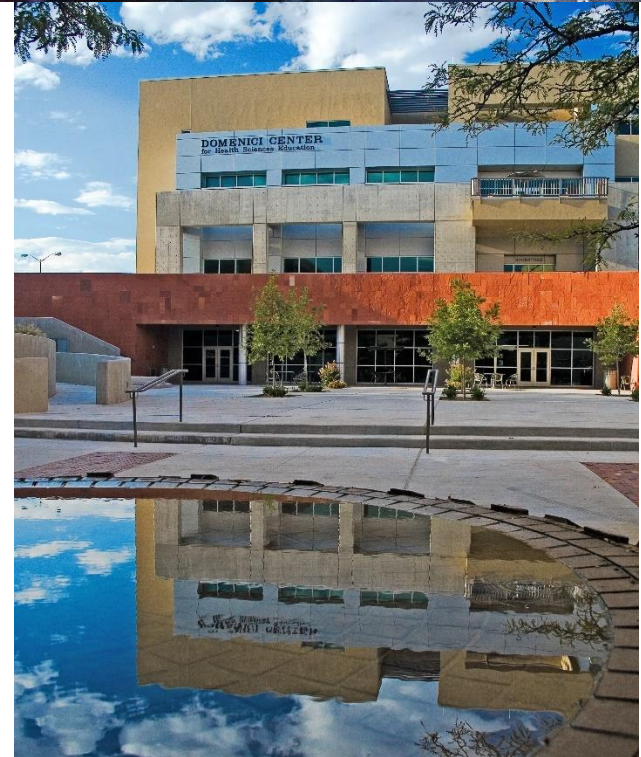
UNM boasts an outstanding faculty that has included four National Academy of Sciences/ Engineering Members, six National Academy of Inventors Fellows, 60+ Fulbright scholar program awardees, and several fellows of national and international associations and societies. Faculty publish in major refereed professional journals, including The New England Journal of Medicine, American Historical Review, and Nature, and with top-tier academic presses such as University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press. As publicly oriented scholars, UNM professors share their expertise in local and national media outlets from The Albuquerque Journal to The New Yorker.

UNM is the largest academic employer in the state, including employees of [University Hospitals](#). It has more than [200,000 alumni](#) with Lobos in every state and more than 2,400 alumni outside the U.S.

UNM offers 94 baccalaureate, 71 masters and 37 doctoral degrees. Home to the [Lobos](#) and contenders in the Mountain West Conference, UNM athletics draw fans from all over. The University Arena or “The Pit” is one of college basketball's most famous and recognizable buildings. In fact, The Pit was ranked 5th by the Travel Channel as one of the [best college basketball venues](#).

UNM is a place where cutting-edge research and creative endeavors flourish. [As a very high research activity \(R1\) institution](#), UNM research injects millions of dollars into New Mexico's economy, funds new advancements in health care, and augments teaching—giving students valuable hands-on training in state-of-the-art laboratories.

As an academic institution, UNM is ranked nationally as a “[Top Public School](#)”, “[Best Global University](#)”, and “[Best National University](#)” and the highest ranked for each within New Mexico.



UNM Health Sciences Center is the state's largest integrated health care treatment, research and education organization. In 2022, U.S. News and World Report ranked the [UNM School of Medicine](#) 16th nationally in “[2023 Best Medical Schools: Primary Care](#)”, 5th in “[Most Diverse Medical Schools](#)” and 7th in “[Best Family Medicine Programs](#)”. UNM’s [nursing-midwifery program](#) ranks 11th nationally for “[Best Midwifery Program](#)” and UNM’s bachelor of science in nursing is also recognized as the [67th best in the nation](#), placing it in the top 10% of ranked BSN programs. UNM College of Pharmacy ranks 43rd nationally for “[Best Pharmacy Schools](#)”.

[UNM School of Law](#) has been ranked [8th in "Best Clinical Training Law Programs"](#), in the top 5% nationally for this recognition. The photography program at [UNM College of Fine Arts](#) is ranked [8th in the nation](#) for “Best Photography Schools” and ranks within the top 30% of “[Best Art Schools](#)” across the U.S.. The [UNM School of Engineering](#) has been designated within the [top 100 "Best Engineering Schools"](#), along with six [top 100 national rankings](#) for programs including Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Nuclear Engineering. At [UNM College of Arts & Sciences](#) [13 programs rank in the top 100](#) in the nation—including Sociology, Biology, History and Earth Sciences.

Among the University’s many [outstanding research](#) units are the [Center for Advanced Research Computing](#), [Comprehensive Cancer Center](#), [COSMIAC](#), [Center for High Technology Materials](#), [Design Planning Assistance Center](#), [Innovation Academy](#), [Center for Quantum Information & Control](#), and the [Mind Research Network](#)—to name a few.





Leadership

President Garnett S. Stokes

Garnett S. Stokes was installed as the 23rd president of The University of New Mexico on May 12, 2018. She is the first woman to hold the post in the University's history.

A tireless advocate for a transformative student experience, an empowered faculty, and a campus culture of continuous improvement, Stokes brings to New Mexico's premiere R1 university more than four decades of experience and enthusiasm—as well as the unflagging energy needed to ensure the University of New Mexico thrives as a great place to work, live, and learn.

Shortly after taking office in 2018, Stokes journeyed on an unprecedented statewide listening tour, covering 4,300 miles as she travelled through all 33 of New Mexico's diverse counties. Her meetings with thousands of New Mexicans—hearing their stories and learning of their hopes and expectations—helped frame her immediate presidential priorities of promoting campus safety, supporting student veterans, and advancing the University's mission of world-class research. Stokes continues to hold regular office hours, routinely engaging with faculty, staff, and students for their input and commentary.

Under Stokes's leadership, UNM has embarked on a journey of academic excellence, self-reflection, and collaborative problem-solving to identify effective ways to make the University of New Mexico a better and more engaging place to learn, work, and live. Since her arrival, UNM has received the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, a designation that indicates institutional commitment to community engagement, and one of only 119 institutions to earn such a designation. UNM is also among the highest number of Fulbright awardees in the country.

Prior to her arrival at UNM, Stokes served as Interim Chancellor, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Missouri and was Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Interim President at Florida State University. She has also been a faculty member, Chair of the Department of Psychology, and Dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia.

A first-generation college graduate, Stokes earned her B.A. in psychology from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Georgia in industrial/organizational psychology. For nearly three decades, she served as a professor in the psychology department at the University of Georgia, including seven years as Dean of UGA's Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Albuquerque's affordable living, diverse dining scene, outdoor recreational activities, accessible day trips, and wellness options create a compelling environment for those seeking a balanced and engaging lifestyle. The city's cost of living is 4% lower than the national average, a benefit that extends to housing, where the median home price remains attractively below the U.S. average. This economic advantage is coupled with lower property and state income taxes, making Albuquerque an appealing place for professionals seeking a high quality of life without the high costs.

The culinary landscape in Albuquerque is a tapestry of flavors deeply influenced by Indigenous, New Mexican, and Spanish cuisines. Dining out can range from sampling the famed New Mexican Chile in red and green varieties to exploring innovative dishes at upscale restaurants. The city's love for its unique culinary culture is evident in its numerous food festivals and markets, offering an endless array of dining experiences.

For outdoor enthusiasts, Albuquerque's proximity to ski resorts, such as the nearby Sandia Mountains, provides a winter playground for all ages. The skiing opportunities here cater to both beginners and seasoned enthusiasts, making it a perfect family outing. Beyond the slopes, the city's numerous parks, bike trails, and the Rio Grande provide endless outdoor activities, from picnics to kayaking, fostering a healthy, active lifestyle.

Albuquerque is ideally located for memorable day trips. Destinations such as Santa Fe, with its historic adobe landmarks and vibrant arts scene, and the Jemez Springs area, known for its natural hot springs and beautiful mountain scenery, are within easy reach. These excursions provide a refreshing break from the urban environment and an opportunity to immerse oneself in the natural and cultural richness of New Mexico.

Destinations like the Petroglyph National Monument offer a glimpse into ancient history, while the Bandelier National Monument and the Valles Caldera National Preserve allow visitors to explore stunning natural landscapes and learn about the region's cultural heritage.

Wellness and relaxation are also a cornerstone of the Albuquerque experience, with a selection of spas that leverage the tranquil desert setting to provide a serene retreat. From luxury spa resorts offering a full range of treatments to more intimate settings incorporating traditional Native American healing techniques, there are ample opportunities for rejuvenation.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.visitalbuquerque.org/> or <https://www.newmexico.org/>



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. **In their cover letter, candidates are encouraged to showcase their strong dedication to UNM's mission, values, institution, and state.**

WittKieffer is assisting UNM in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **September 14, 2024**.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Werner Boel, LL.M. or Luis Bertot

UNMGeneralCounsel@wittkieffer.com

The University of New Mexico is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer, making decisions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or any other protected class.

The University of New Mexico requires all regular staff positions successfully pass a pre-employment background check. This may include, but is not limited to, a criminal history background check, New Mexico Department of Health fingerprint screening, New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department fingerprint screening, verification of education credentials, and/or verification of prior employment. For more information about background checks, visit <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/3000/3280.html>. Refer to <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/3000/3200.html> for a definition of Regular Staff.