



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW MEXICO®

## **Controller** Leadership Profile

June 2025



***WittKieffer***

## Executive Summary

The [University of New Mexico \(UNM\)](#) is seeking nominations, inquiries, and applications for the position of controller. This pivotal role offers the opportunity to lead the financial operations of a nationally recognized public institution committed to providing educational opportunities, driving research, and enriching the community.

The University of New Mexico was founded in 1889 as New Mexico's flagship institution. The University is the largest 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 the state's only NCI-Designated Cancer Center. It also 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.



Reporting directly to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration (EVPFA), the controller will oversee a team of 176 which includes budget management, treasury functions, and audit compliance, while developing and implementing creative financial strategies that align with UNM's mission and strategic goals. The controller will engage closely with senior leaders, including the President and the Board of Regents, providing strategic financial insights and fostering a collaborative environment. The ideal candidate will bring a forward-thinking approach to financial management, leveraging new technologies and data-driven strategies to enhance financial operations and [outcomes](#).

This role requires a strong commitment to inclusive excellence; promoting and modeling these values to support a diverse community. The controller will focus on sustainability initiatives, ensuring that financial decisions support long-term institutional goals and environmental responsibility. Effective communication and collaboration are crucial, as the controller will engage with various stakeholders, including making presentations to the Board of Regents and providing quarterly financial updates. The ideal candidate will have outstanding academic credentials, a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Management, or a related field, and at least 10 years of experience directly related to the specified duties and responsibilities. Certification as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) is preferred. Experience in higher education, healthcare, government, or other non-profit entities is highly desirable.

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 Controller

As the chief accounting and reporting officer, the controller reports directly to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration (EVPFA) and assumes overall responsibility for the University's controllership functions. This role is responsible for leading a team consisting of 176 employees; directing, coordinating, and overseeing the institution's various financial, budget, accounting, payroll, and treasury operations. The Controller establishes financial policies, standards and oversees the operations of the following areas: the Budget Office, the Bursar's Office (including student accounts receivable and cashier), Unrestricted and Restricted Accounting, Property Accounting (UNM inventory), Finance Systems Management, Payroll, Procurement services (purchasing, Pcard, records management, and university services), Treasury, Risk Services, Mailing, Shipping and Receiving, Copy Center, Chemical and Research Laboratory Supplier, Surplus Property, Accounts Payable, Plant Fund Accounting, and working capital investments. Additionally, the controller develops and manages annual budgets and collaborates with senior leaders across the institution, including the Health Sciences Center (HSC) and UNM Hospital (UNMH), providing centralized support to UNM, its branch campuses, the HSC, and UNMH.



### Essential Functions

- **Supports UNM's 2040 One University Goal:** Identifies gaps and prioritizes areas to streamline, integrate, and improve across all reporting units to provide coordinated, efficient, and high-quality services.
- **Mission and Goals:** Establishes and carries out the mission statement of the University's Finance Division; formulates goals and objectives for the division in alignment with the institution's overall mission and goals.
- **Audit Oversight:** Oversees internal and external audits and the preparation of audit reports.
- **Policy and Standards:** Establishes University financial policies and transactional standards, ensuring consistency with the University's mission and strategic plans and compliance with Board of Regents' policies, State and Federal fiscal management laws and regulations, and generally accepted accounting standards.
- **Organizational Structure:** Designs, establishes, and maintains an organizational structure and staffing to effectively accomplish the division's goals and objectives; directs and oversees the hiring, development, management, and evaluation of divisional staff.
- **Strategic Financial Issues:** Works with the Board of Regents through the EVPFA and University Presidents on identifying and resolving strategic financial issues impacting the University; negotiates the indirect cost rate for the University.





- **Contractual Obligations:** Reviews and analyzes major contractual obligations to ensure consistency with financial goals, objectives, and plans, and compliance with University financial policies, procedures, and standards; reviews and approves contracts, grants, and awards.
- **Leadership and Direction:** Provides leadership and direction to units reporting to or part of the division, establishing goals and objectives for Financial Services.
- **System Development Projects:** Oversees major system development projects impacting financial reporting.
- **Asset and Fund Management:** Directs activities associated with the security and investment of the University's assets and funds.
- **Institutional Planning:** Participates with the President, EVPFA, and other senior officers in institutional planning, policy development, and problem resolution, including collaboration with HSC and UNMH on health sciences and hospital matters.
- **Legislative Representation:** Represents the University at State legislative sessions, before State bodies, and Federal agencies in support of institutional goals and objectives.
- **Branch Campuses Oversight:** Directs and oversees the financial management and maintains fiscal oversight of the University's branch campuses and education centers.

## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

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

- **Provide innovative leadership to strategically align the division with the university's strategic plan**

The University of New Mexico (UNM) controller will have significant leadership and innovation opportunities. The controller will engage closely with senior leaders, including the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, the President, and the Board of Regents, providing strategic financial insights and support. This includes fostering a

collaborative environment by engaging with campus leaders and making presentations to the Board of Regents. This leader will be innovative and creative and understand the concepts of improving services to meet the need of the customers. Enhancing financial processes to meet the needs of the university community is a key opportunity, involving streamlining operations, enhancing efficiency, and ensuring a seamless experience for students and staff. The controller will also focus on sustainability initiatives, ensuring that financial decisions support long-term institutional goals and environmental responsibility. The controller is expected to bring innovative and creative solutions to the financial management of the university, leveraging new technologies and data-driven strategies to enhance financial operations and outcomes.

- **Build and nurture effective communications**

A top priority for the controller will be communicating significant needs and opportunities to internal and external constituents to support UNM's one university goal. A strategic thinker with a clear vision of the bigger picture is needed to help others understand the value and impact of the finance team's day-to-day operations. As the lead finance point person, a critical part of the role is translating the technical aspects of the department into language that all stakeholders can grasp. The controller is someone who will seek out opportunities to listen and learn in order to better integrate financial knowledge into the University's functions and operations. The controller will have the ability to see "the forest through the trees," get out in front of far-reaching challenges and create opportunities for the controller office to proactively support UNM at large. This leader will ensure that the user communities are well-informed about current systems and solutions. This way user communities will apprise the controller of remaining gaps and alert them for future strategies to be put in place.

- **Collaborate with multiple partners across the campus**

The controller works closely with many strategic partners across the campus, including UNM's Health Sciences Center (HSC) and UNM Hospital (UNMH) to ensure compliance with State regulations and to devise ways for UNM to better serve institutional priorities. The incumbent is responsible for maintaining solid relationships with local government, community, and on-campus stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes



and strong local partnerships. The controller will carry responsibility for continuing efforts to analyze and improve accounting to meet and anticipate student and campus needs. This will mean using a collaborative, relationship-based approach to understand shifting needs and behaviors and responding in ways that ensure campus buy-in.

- **Leverage technology**

The controller will take the lead on leveraging existing technologies that will streamline transactions and increase efficiency. This will allow staff to engage in more critical thinking and offer decision support. The controller will also have the opportunity to enhance and expand technology use. The controller will assess and examine the current data warehouse and reporting tools in an effort to identify and implement new strategies. The controller devises ways to perfect the communication between all of UNM that increases automation and consistency between all entities. At this time, the University fully anticipates the replacement of its current ERP Systems.



- **Support a welcoming and inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and equitable opportunities**

- 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 – where the minority population of the state outnumbers the non-minority population. Moreover, New Mexico is a place where diversity and cultural richness have been recognized through the centuries, and The University of New Mexico (UNM) acknowledges that diversity needs to be articulated, cultivated, and made meaningful in its planning process. New Mexico's unique traditions, languages, and multicultural heritage provide inspiration for UNM to cultivate an important model for university diversity efforts. The new controller must meet the high standards of their staff and colleagues by setting an organizational vision that values and respects these priorities, in addition to investing in programs and other expenses that will further inclusive excellence. The controller will exemplify a strong commitment to diversity, not just in terms of values but also with specific results and outcomes.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities



The University of New Mexico is in search of a resourceful and forward-thinking controller with exceptional financial 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 successful candidate will be an innovative, proactive, and entrepreneurial thinker and have a collaborative style with excellent strategic, leadership, and team-building skills. The candidate will have demonstrated success in progressively responsible leadership roles and relevant management experience

with business, accounting and financial teams and systems at large, matrixed and complex research-oriented organizations.

The ideal candidate must have outstanding academic credentials, a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Management, or a related field, and at least 10 years of experience directly related to the specified duties and responsibilities. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certification that is active and in good standing is preferred. Completed degrees from accredited institutions above the minimum education requirement may be substituted for experience on a year-for-year basis.

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

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to work effectively with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse community.
- Knowledge and understanding of the mission, goals, organization, and operational/financial infrastructure of a public university and affiliate health system.
- Highly developed and comprehensive financial management skills gained in a large, multifaceted public institution.
- The ability to work in a highly complex business environment and a commitment to provide excellent customer services.
- Strategic planning skills.
- Proven, seasoned leadership success across broad and decentralized environments of comparable size and complexity, with the energy and passion to work with all divisions of a major research university with a health system.
- Ability to develop, plan, and implement short- and long-range goals.
- Knowledge of investment strategies and techniques.



- Demonstrated ability to establish credibility with all constituencies – executives, board members, deans, faculty, staff, and students – based upon unquestioned integrity, critical thinking, outstanding operational performance, and excellent interpersonal skills and political acumen.
- Ability to review and assess the operational and financial viability of new and existing contractual arrangements and grant proposals.
- Ability to foster a cooperative work environment.
- Strong human resources development and management skills.
- Knowledge and understanding of institutional policies and procedures and the regulatory environment within which they operate.
- Knowledge of assets and funds management principles, methods, and techniques.
- Strong analytical, critical thinking, and decision-making skills.
- Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Federal and State financial laws, regulations, and operating guidelines as they pertain to public institutions of higher education and academic medical centers.
- Organizational planning, structuring, and staffing skills.





## 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.

The University represents a cross-section of cultures and backgrounds. In Spring of 2025, [more than 25,000 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 peer reviewed 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](#) 16<sup>th</sup> nationally in “[2023 Best Medical Schools: Primary Care](#).” UNM's [nursing-midwifery program](#) ranks 11<sup>th</sup> 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 43<sup>rd</sup> 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 [8<sup>th</sup> 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. To ensure full consideration, candidate materials should be received by **August 4, 2025**.

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

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Werner Boel, LL.M. or Ashlee Musser

[UNMController@wittkieffer.com](mailto:UNMController@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.*