UNM-OVPR Zancada Graduate Fellowship Program

The UNM Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) seeks applicants for the 2024-2025 cohort of Zancada Graduate Fellows. The Zancada (Spanish for "stride") program will create a cohort of future leaders in science, technology, humanities, and the arts who are well-prepared and committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful solutions to global problems. Zancada Fellowships recognize the remarkable accomplishments of the selected graduate students and provide a valuable training opportunity to develop professional skills and encourage interdisciplinarity and community engagement among Fellows.

Applications Due April 1

Selection Criteria and Process. A cohort of ~10 Zancada Fellows will be selected who best meet the eligibility requirements and selection criteria outlined below. The cohort of selected students will begin their fellowship in August and conclude in June of the following year. Although activities will be organized primarily around the academic year (AY, 2 semesters), there will be additional opportunities during the summer for both new and immediate past students.

Further questions on the program or the application procedure may be addressed to Assistant Vice President for Research Melissa Emery Thompson, memery@unm.edu.

Program Benefits.

Financial Support. Each Fellow will receive $2500/year in scholarship funds, which will be deposited into the Fellow's bursar account, paid out across the two semesters (i.e., $1250/semester) of participation. The second semester of funding is contingent on participation in Fellows program activities during the first semester.

Travel Support. Fellows will be eligible to apply for up to $1000 in travel support to participate in a professional conference or training program during the period of the fellowship. Funding is dependent on active participation in program activities and justification for the contribution of the activity to professionalization.

Engagement and Leadership Activities. Each Fellow will participate in collaborative engagement activities via co-curricular programming designed to help them expand their skills and explore career options. The Zancada Program will consist of biweekly professional development programs, along with a curated list of ad hoc activities that are designed to build on the skills developed in these programs. Students will be required to engage in ~75% of the available programs.

Students will:

- Meet prominent figures in UNM's leadership and research community, along with community leaders and legislators to learn how the University research enterprise functions and how research intersects with the world around us.
- Learn about the diversity of research-related career pathways and identify and market their strengths on the job market.
- Develop broadly-applicable skills for effective communication, networking, and collaboration.

- Discover the practical skills and knowledge needed to effectively transition from graduate researcher to early career investigator.
- Invest in developing the broader impacts of their research program, including community engagement, public impact, standards of research ethics, and promotion of a diverse work environment.
- Practice new skills through engagement in rewarding, resume-building service activities across campus and in the broader community.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Current graduate students from all UNM colleges and campuses are invited to apply. We seek candidates representing diverse field of study across UNM (i.e., arts, sciences, business, education, engineering, environment, health, humanities, law, medicine, policy, etc.).
- Applicants must be enrolled full-time throughout the 2024-2025 academic year in a graduate degree program and must have completed at least one academic year of graduate studies at UNM prior to the fellowship period. Applicants with projected graduation dates prior to May 2025 will not be considered.
- Candidates must (1) be in good academic standing and (2) secure their advisor or Department Chair's approval for participation prior to applying for the program.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Strong history of engagement with research and/or professional activities extending beyond candidate's immediate degree requirements.
- Clearly articulated professional goals that involve research. We welcome broad interpretations of this criterion, to include not only traditional academic and non-academic careers in research, scholarship, or creative works, but also careers that support such activities (e.g., legal, financial, or administrative careers that support research) or rely on research expertise (e.g., science communication, NGO careers).
- Compelling case for how the Zancada program will contribute to the candidate's professional development and goals, including specific target area for professionalization.
- High potential for success, both in the current degree program and in transitioning to a research-related field.
- Capacity to function well in a cohort environment. This may include strong communication and/or leadership skills, a history of performing well in collaborative environments, or a well-articulated motivation to develop these skillsets.
- Contribution to cohort diversity in personal and academic background, perspectives, disciplines, or skillsets.
- Preference will be given to candidates who have not previously received formal professional development training at the graduate level.

Nomination Procedure and Materials: Nomination packages may be submitted by the student or by an advisor/mentor. Nomination packages should be submitted in InfoReady Review: (https://unm.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1933309) and include the following required materials:

1. Student's Statement of Intent, summarizing your graduate experience at UNM, expressing what you hope to get out of the Zancada program, and portraying your future aspirations. The statement must identify a proposed area of focus that will form the basis for a individual

development plan (e.g., STEM outreach, community engagement, research communication, public policy, industry). You may optionally choose to address elements of the evaluation criteria using creative media (e.g., video, music, artwork, or verse). Please limit written materials to 3 pages and/or recorded materials to 5 minutes.

2. Curriculum vitae (CV) describing research and professional experience, as well as broader engagement in University, disciplinary, and community activities.
   (For CV help: https://grad.unm.edu/resources/student-resources/professional.html)

3. One letter of support, describing the writer's experience with the student, the student's strengths and weaknesses, and student's potential for success in the Zancada Fellowship program, as per the Evaluation Criteria. The letter of support may be provided by any academic advisor, research mentor, or other mentor (e.g., advisor of a student organization) with the capacity to provide a fair evaluation of the candidate. The letter need not be from a faculty member or UNM affiliate. The letter of support may be submitted together with the application package in InfoReady or may be forwarded separately by email to memery@unm.edu.

4. A brief statement of eligibility from the candidate's department chair or graduate program director confirming the student's good standing in their academic program. If the letter of support has been obtained from the student's current faculty advisor, this statement is not necessary.

Tentative Timeline for first year:

- March/April 2024: Competition and selection process
- May 2024: Notification of selected Zancada Fellows. Welcome event and presentation of engagement activities
- August 2024: Start of new VPR Zancada Fellows cohort
- August 2024 - May 2025: Monthly Zancada cohort activities and other opportunities for participation
- November 2024: Cohort participation in Shared Knowledge Conference
- May/June 2025: Welcome/Farewell networking event for new and outgoing Zancada cohorts
- June 30, 2025: Zancada Fellows report to OVPR