

# ALBUQUERQUE BUSINESS FIRST

**Taking a new approach**  
NM real estate leaders enlist industry  
experts for continuing-ed courses  
**RON DAVIS, 6**



HIGHER EDUCATION

# FINDING YOUR WAY

Central New Mexico Community College President Tracy Hartzler navigates the school through a pandemic and other external challenges

**JULIANA VADNAIS, PAGES 4-5**



CNM | GETTY IMAGES

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### Teaching virtually

Pandemic forces professors, others to find new ways to provide quality coursework in an online setting.

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Here's where NM's universities and colleges stack up on U.S. News & World Report's 2021 Best Colleges list

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## THE LIST

## HIGHER EDUCATION

# Refining continuing education

**NM real estate leaders bring in industry experts for core courses**

The New Mexico Real Estate Commission requires brokers to complete 12 hours of continuing education classes over the course of a three-year license. That requirement equals one four-hour course per year, according to the real estate commission. Real estate leaders are trying to make it not so formal.

Commission officials approached Todd Clarke of NM Apartment Advisors Inc. to study the real estate community through an insurance prism after experiencing a spike in errors and omissions claims.

Clarke found those taking the core required real estate course were not engaged, and instead only wanted to keep their licenses.

Three years ago, Clarke helped shift the course into a new direction.

"We wanted to change that paradigm 180-degrees and have fun in the classroom," Clarke said. "That was the overriding goal: better-educated licensees and lower errors and omissions claims. ... It's been really fun to watch it grow and flourish."

Since errors and omissions claims are a trailing indicator, and likely don't appear until a few years after a deal is closed, Clarke said it's too soon to say if the approach works.

Real estate brokers are one of many New Mexico professions that require some level of continuing education in order to maintain licenses or credentials. The New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department regulates more than 500,000 individuals and businesses in 35 industries, professions and trades across the state.

When it comes time to pursue continuing education credits, there



Todd Clarke, CEO of NM Apartment Advisors Inc.

are several colleges and universities to choose from, such as Western New Mexico University or Central New Mexico Community College.

Western New Mexico offers options for early childhood programs, economic development and to be a wilderness first responder, among others. Through CNM Ingenuity, New Mexicans can be trained in culinary arts as well as business and management and computer technology, among others.

In developing a curriculum for the real estate commission, Clarke put together boot camps as a way to find instructors to teach courses. The boot camps helped brokers like Dave Hill – and more than 50 other real estate professionals – become instructors for the class.

Hill is a senior director at NAI Maestas & Ward, which ranks No. 2 on Business First's List of Largest Commercial Real Estate Firms with \$321.06 million in commercial

transaction volume in New Mexico in 2019. He has more than 20 years of experience in the industry, and is able to draw on past experiences.

Since it's a mandatory course for brokers, the experience level among the students varies. A big part of the learning experience is role playing different scenarios with one another. Clarke find the "what-not-to-do" scenarios particularly effective.

"Part of what we wanted people to take away is 'oh I came pretty close to doing something like that,'" Clarke said. "There's a very watchful eye on our industry and we need to police ourselves a little bit better."

Still, it's a time commitment for Hill, who said he spends about 12 hours preparing for his first four-hour course of the year. The change for Hill, who says he has a "kinetic" teaching style, is to replicate the fun, role-playing experience on Zoom courses as a result of the pandemic.

"The hardest part about Zoom is that there's just a screen and I feel like I'm shouting at them," Hill said. "It's just a hard way to interact with your classroom."

- Ron Davis

## A VIRTUAL CHALLENGE

**Higher ed forced to find new ways to provide quality coursework**

Just as local businesses have navigated the challenges of virtual meetings and reduced in-person contact, education programs that train potential workers have as well during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It's just a fact though that some programs require more in-person instruction than others. At Central New Mexico Community College, students in the Brewing & Beverage Management Program are still attending class in person.

"Fortunately, the brewing labs were already offered in a hybrid format with some content available online with hands-on lab activities offered in person," said Victoria Martinez, the program's academic affairs director. "The biggest changes of course were preparing and imple-



Fab Lab Hub Founder Sarah Boisvert

menting all of the safety protocols for the in-person labs."

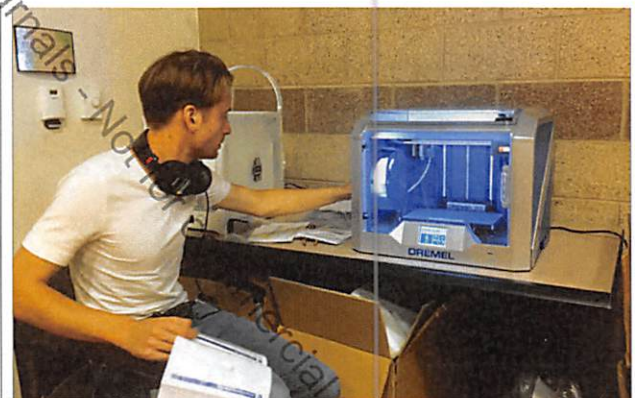
All in-person lab sessions at CNM can operate at no more than 25 percent of student capacity.

Students must complete a health assessment each day before coming to campus, and clean all lab equipment after each use, according to Martinez.

Classes focused on food safety, purchasing and cost control, hospitality law and operations, and most general education courses lend themselves to online instruction as they do not require "hands-on" activity, said Nick Jones, a brewing and beverage instructor at CNM. Lab courses focused on "sensory analysis" and the use of equipment require in-person instruction, Jones added.

Other organizations, like the Fab Lab Hub, are trying to help students use specialized equipment at home.

The Fab Lab Hub, a nonprofit digital manufacturing training center in Santa Fe, is considering partnering with California-based MatterHack-



SARAH BOISVERT

Fab Lab Hub intern Hank Wikle works with a Dremel 3D Printer.

ers, a supplier of 3D printers and supplies. The details of that partnership have yet to be worked out, said Mara Hitner, vice president of strategic partnerships at MatterHackers.

Sarah Boisvert, the founder of Fab Lab Hub, said having in-person experience with actual machines can be a necessity.

The organization teaches high school students, as well as individuals pursuing further education after

high school.

While virtual teaching presents some challenges, it also poses an opportunity to expand the reach of coursework.

Many of the participants in the Fab Lab Hub's virtual sessions are from outside New Mexico, Boisvert said. Expanding the reach of its classes could result in more income for the nonprofit.

- Collin Krabbe