

Organization, Information &  
Learning Sciences Faculty

Dr. Leo S. Lo, Dean

Dr. Mark Emmons, Associate Dean

Dr. Victor Law, Associate Professor and Program Director

Dr. Charlotte N. Gunawardena, Distinguished Professor

Dr. Amir Hedayati-Mehdiabadi, Assistant Professor

Dr. Sung Pil Kang, Assistant Professor

Dr. Stephanie Moore, Assistant Professor

Dr. Vanessa Svihla, Associate Professor

Dr. Oleksandr Tkachenko, Assistant Professor

Program Staff

Christopher Larrañaga, OILS Program Manager

Miguel Cortez, Administrative Assistant



ORGANIZATION,  
INFORMATION &  
LEARNING SCIENCES

...  
**OILS**  
**CONVOCAATION**  
**SPRING 2023**  
...

May 13, 2023 • 3:00 pm • Zimmerman Library

## CONGRATULATIONS!

I am so pleased we are all able to come together to recognize the academic achievements of this year's graduating class. OILS students are exceptional - they are creative and curious and bring much enthusiasm to the program. Their passion for learning is unmistakable, and they are the reason that OILS is so dynamic and successful. Today, we celebrate OILS students receiving their Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees. Your dedication and your desire to succeed has led to this moment - this is a life-changing accomplishment and certainly one that is well-deserved. We are very proud of your achievements and are thrilled to join you in celebrating your success.

Today is a special occasion not only for the students, but for the family and friends who have supported our graduates and been with them on their journey. Each one of our graduates has someone special who stood by them and was always there to listen and offer advice - someone who was a source of inspiration. That support is invaluable and makes such a difference. Thank You!

We are fortunate to have a faculty who are committed to our students and the OILS program. Thank you, faculty, for your dedication, your expertise, your life experience, and especially, your time as you guided our students through their programs. You have been excellent mentors.

In addition to our faculty, we have a wonderful group of Staff. These individuals support the OILS program daily, and they helped organize today's convocation. A special thanks to Christopher Larrañaga, Miguel Cortez, Victoria Brown and Sara Velasquez. Thank You for all that you do!

Graduation is a time for celebration and cheer. I hope that all of you will fully embrace this moment and reflect on all that you have done to get here. Take a moment to congratulate yourself and be proud of your achievement.

And while this is a celebration of your accomplishment, this is also a new beginning. You now have the opportunity to pursue new interests, set new goals, and take on new challenges. You have the opportunity to inspire others by sharing your time and your insights and you have the opportunity to make a difference in your community. Never underestimate your ability to do so. Each of you have the knowledge, the skills, and the confidence to make a positive impact, and I am certain that you will. I encourage you to follow your passion and to be open to the opportunities that come your way. I hope that your time in OILS will always be a great source of inspiration for you.

I would like to once again congratulate our graduates and thank you for giving us the opportunity to share this moment with you.



Leo S. Lo  
Dean and Professor  
College of University Libraries & Learning Sciences

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Christal Baca

I would like to thank my son Elliott and husband Jason for allowing me to take a hiatus on family happenings so that I can get an education. The support of my guys made this possible when it wasn't easy. Life for the past few years has been all about deadlines and stressing to keep my grades up. Goodbye to stressing about school and grades and hello to more outdoor activities and time with family.

To the rest of my family thank you for your support on my education journey and for being here to support me today!  
"None of us got to where we are alone. Whether the assistance we received was obvious or subtle, acknowledging someone's help is a big part of understanding the importance of saying thank you." - Harvey Mackay  
With Love and appreciation,

### Michelle Castro

First, I would like to thank my husband and best friend, John, for putting up with the craziness that comes with grad school, his graceful acceptance of being an academic widower (again), and his undying love and unconditional support. Thank you to all my friends, who have been like family to me, supporting me throughout this program despite my ghosting them during semesters. I would also like to thank all my OILS professors and group project partners in helping me learn so much about the instructional design field. Finally, I would like to give a special thanks for the extra support provided to me by my OG faculty advisor when I was in the Learning Officer concentration, Dr. Alex Tkachenko; my advisor when I switched to the Design for Learning Concentration, Dr. Victor Law - with an additional thanks to Dr. Law for guiding me towards two wonderful ID internships where I could test my chops; and to Mr. Christopher Larrañaga and Mr. Miguel Cortez for helping navigate the administrative ins and outs of the program with such patience and kindness.

When I was deciding in what field to get a master's degree in 2018, I had no idea the field of instructional design even existed. However, I feel it has been waiting for me all along. I am fascinated by the breadth and depth of what I have learned during the MA OILS program, and this has truly been a profound and transformative professional and personal experience for me. I am very much looking forward to this next chapter in my life.

### Abigail Ortiz

I would not be where I'm at without the love, support, and prayers of my family, friends and a few key individuals. First, I want to thank my amazing husband and two intelligent boys - your love makes me feel like I can accomplish anything and conquer any mountain. You three are my heart and I love you so much. Second, I want to thank my family, friends and work family for continually cheering me on, checking in on me, and giving me words of encouragement. Third, I want to thank Dr. Oleksandr Tkachenko, who took taught me invaluable lessons in classes then later took me under his wing as a baby researcher and helped me learn how to contribute back to the learning community, and my master's thesis committee members, Dr. Amir Hedayati-Mehdiabadi and Sarah Leister for answering all of my many questions and steering me the right way. Finally, I want to thank my OILS professors, Dr. Sara Frasch, Dr. Gary Smith and Dr. Vanessa Svihla, who have shared their pearls of wisdom and helped me develop as an educator, along with the OILS staff, Chris and Miguel, for their continued support. I am beyond grateful for each of you!

### Kristi Sanchez

I would like to thank the OILS faculty for supporting, guiding, and encouraging me through this journey. Your knowledge, wisdom, and ideas did not fall on deaf ears, and I will forever be grateful for you.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for constantly reminding me of my goals and keeping me on track. I am lucky to be surrounded by a huge support system, and without them, I would not have been able to do this. Lastly, I would like to thank my children. For looking at me like I'm a superhero, and giving me the strength to continue each and every day. I hope you remember that you can do anything that you put your mind to, regardless of obstacles that come your way. It doesn't matter how long it takes, as long as you finish what you started. I did this for us, and I will love you always.

### Theodosia Starling

"I would like to express my appreciation for the family that has supported me through this journey: My sisters Hailey and Mirah, my aunt Teresa, Grandma Lu, Grandpa Roger, and my biggest supporter Celeste. Thank you for believing in me and lifting me up when I didn't believe in myself. I love you and words alone cannot express my gratitude."

*Organization, Information & Learning Sciences Graduation*

**A celebration.....**

*A time for looking back on lessons learned, adventures shared, bright moments filled with special meaning*

**A farewell.....**

*A time for saying goodbye to old friends,  
to good times you've known...a time for packing away memories,  
treasures for tomorrow*

**A beginning.....**

*A time for looking forward, a time to set new goals,  
to dream new dreams, to try your wings and see what lies beyond*

*Congratulations Graduate!*

*May 13, 2023*

## **PROGRAM**

### **Welcome**

Dr. Leo S. Lo, Dean and Professor of  
College of University Libraries & Learning Sciences

### **Introduction of OILS Faculty**

Dr. Victor Law, Associate Professor  
and Program Director of OILS

### **Introduction of Student Speakers**

Dr. Victor Law, Associate Professor  
and Program Director of OILS

### **Student Speakers**

Christal Baca, B.S.  
*Against all odds - a dedication to Viola Marie Herrera*

Abigail Ortiz, M.A.  
*To Master's, and Beyond!*

Elvira Martin, Ph.D.  
*Thank you Speech*

### **Recognition of Graduates**

Dr. Mark Emmons, Associate Dean

**•• Reception ••**

## GRADUATES

### Bachelor of Science

Ivan Arellano	Sonja Perrault
Christal Baca	Marylinda Pineda-Levinson
David Carnes	Javier Resendiz +
Ricardo Carreon Santiesteban #	Kristi Sanchez #
Holly Hazelton	Katelyn Winter
Brandon Lewis	
Patricia Pacheco +	

### Master of Arts

Amanda Black	Zelma Medina
Michelle Castro	Abigail Ortiz
Ashley Garica	Tessa Rose
Peter Hackett	Rebecca Roybal
Tanya Kallan	Anthony Sanchez
Danita Lemley	

### Doctor of Philosophy

Elvira Martin

Austin Megli

+ cum laude | # magna cum laude | \*with distinction

## STUDENT SPEAKERS

### Christal Marie Baca, BS

Christal Marie Baca was born and raised in Albuquerque, N.M. After obtaining her General Education Degree in 2011, Christal started her first class at Central New Mexico Community College and eventually enrolled in fast-track program. While attending college, Christal worked full-time at the University of New Mexico Hospitals in various positions. In 2016, she earned her Associate degree in Business Administration with a minor in Accounting. Immediately after, the hospital recognized Christal's potential and promoted her to a leadership position in Patient Transport. In 2017, Christal had her first and only child, Elliott Jason Coriz. In 2018, Christal enrolled in the Organizational Information and Learning Science program at the University of New Mexico and in 2023, she has earned her bachelor's degree graduating with the highest honors, summa cum laude. Christal enjoys spending time with family, weightlifting and anything outdoors. Her areas of expertise are active listening, open-mindedness, presenting, collaboration, empathy, mentoring and managing.

### Abigail Ortiz, MA

Abigail fell in love with adult education when she filled in temporarily as an educator more than 9 years ago. That love of teaching turned into a passion with one primary driver - finding the best way to equip students to be the best they can be in their roles. Her Bachelor's of Science in Biology and Bachelor's of Arts in Journalism gave her the skills and knowledge to develop training resources and continually seek to understand her audience and their educational needs, but her Master's degree is where she was able to flourish and expand her wings as an educator, facilitator and presenter. With the education from the OILS program and teachers willing to share their knowledge and experience, she learned how to identify knowledge gaps, conduct learning needs assessments, develop meaningful activities, advocate on behalf of learners, and so much more. She took it a step further by not just learning and passing onto other educators everything she learned, but found ways to contribute to the educational and organizational development literature through her qualitative research. Her education and unwavering support from family, friends and OILS family makes her feel like the sky is the limit. She is now ready to soar and start her next adventure.

### Elvira Martin, PhD

Elvira Martin was born in Rehoboth, New Mexico. She is Navajo and her four clans are Tó'áhaní (Near the Water) and Kinlichii'nii (Red House), Tsi sikaadnii (Clamp Tree) and To'dichii'nii (Bitter Water). She attended the Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding School during the school year and spent summers herding sheep with her grandmother. When she was young, she always wanted to be a teacher. She did not complete high school. She had two sons to support at the age of 22. She went back to the same high school and obtained her GED. She and her sons moved to Albuquerque so she could attend the AAA Business College. She received her Associate of Arts Degree in Business and continued at the University of Albuquerque to get her Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. She married and had two daughters. She worked for P & M Coal Mine, Church Rock Mine, and the Navajo Nation. She also received a Post Bachelor of Arts Degree in Elementary Education from the University of New Mexico. She continued her education at Western New Mexico University and received a Master of Arts Degree in Education Administration. She started with the OLIT doctoral program in the College of Education, and successfully defended her dissertation research: "An exploratory study of how American Indian college students develop a sense of well-being as they pursue an associate degree in a rural community college" in the OILS program in the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences. She is currently an Associate Professor at the UNM Gallup Campus, and has NM state licensure to teach K-12 Business and Information Technology. She is a mother, grandmother, going to be great-grandmother, sister, and aunt. Her children and grandchildren live in Albuquerque, NM. She lives in Chichiltah, NM. She has had horses for half of her lifetime. In her spare time, she cuts weeds, mends barbed wire fences, and chops wood. She enjoys working with her hands. She used her DeWalt tools to build a 10x10 deck with rails, 2x8x8 wooden shelves, wood fencing around the house, and dog houses.