

# UNM REGENTS SCHOLARS

Regents Scholars  
Scholarship

# Program Handbook



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## Program Overview and History

In 1989, the Board of Regents established the University of New Mexico Regents Scholars Scholarship. This scholarship currently attracts applications from more than 250 eligible students. However, each year, it is awarded only to approximately 20 students entering their first year of college. While some other scholarships are awarded automatically based on standardized criteria such as test scores, the Regents Scholars Scholarship is the largest award available to UNM undergraduates through a competitive application process.

The Regents Scholars Scholarship provides a financial award that may be applied toward tuition and fees, room and board, books, and other educational materials. The award is available for up to 8 consecutive semesters, provided that the student meets specific criteria each semester. Beyond its obvious financial benefits, the Regents Scholars Program offers access to a variety of academic programs and research opportunities as well as co-curricular and extracurricular activities. To expand these experiences, each student is assigned a faculty mentor, specially chosen from among UNM's outstanding faculty members, and completes one of three available degree options from UNM's nationally recognized Honors College.

In addition, Regents Scholars students expand their tools for effective interaction and collaboration through group activities and develop leadership skills by representing UNM at various community and university functions. They also are encouraged to engage in other volunteer service to the extended community and to their peers.

## Program Features and Resources

### **Regents Scholars Faculty Coordinator**

Dr. Leslie Donovan, a professor in the Honors College, is the Faculty Coordinator for the Regents Scholars Program. Dr. Donovan provides Regents Scholars with general academic support, information on opportunities, assistance with applications for internships and graduate school, and other activities to advance and enrich Regents Scholars' educational experiences. In addition, Dr. Donovan helps set up mentorship matches, organizes regular meetings and events for Regents Scholars, conducts the Regents Scholars New Student Orientation each August, and assists in the application selection process. Dr. Donovan may be reached at (505) 263-8161 or by email at [ldonovan@unm.edu](mailto:ldonovan@unm.edu).

### **Honors College Admission**

After submitting an Honors admission application, all Regents Scholars will be accepted automatically into UNM's Honors College, where they may benefit from priority course registration, special library privileges, interdisciplinary seminars, enrollment in small seminar courses for no more than 18 students, unique interdisciplinary research opportunities, and options for innovative international and experiential education. More information about the Honors College may be found at [honors.unm.edu](http://honors.unm.edu).

## Honors Student Residence Hall

UNM provides special residence hall accommodations for Regents Scholars in the Scholars Community LLC (Living Learning Community) in Hokona Hall. Only students admitted to the Honors College are eligible to participate in the Scholars Community housing plan.

Scholars Community is the only residence hall facility at UNM to have a specially selected faculty member who supports residents through special activities and services. Dr. Chris Holden, Associate Professor in the Honors College, is the current Scholars Community Faculty Coordinator. Services offered in Scholars Community include: personalized support, forums for open dialogues, study spaces, a student-edited newsletter, and specialized academic and social activities. In addition, Scholars Community residents are given the opportunity to live in an atmosphere that is conducive to serious study. **NOTE for Fall 2020:** *Dr. Holden's work in Scholars Community has been restricted in Fall 2020 until further notice, due to state public health requirements.*

Although the requirement that most Regents Scholars live in Scholars Community during their first year has been waived for public health reasons for the 2020-2021 academic year, external research suggests that living in residence halls may benefit students by allowing them to:

- Become a member of an active, supportive community;
- Participate in community activities, programs, and organizations;
- Experience personal growth with opportunities to gain independence;
- Gain new opportunities to display leadership;
- Earn a higher grade point average;
- Graduate more quickly;
- Transition more easily into college life;
- Make friends who share similar interests;
- Meet students with a diversity of life experiences;
- Enjoy a more convenient and less expensive living style;
- Learn principles of civility among roommates and neighbors.

## Mentorship

*Faculty mentors:* In addition to more general mentorship provided by Dr. Donovan, Regents Scholars are matched with a faculty mentor in their major or minor as often as possible. Among more general educational assistance, faculty mentors may advise students about selecting courses, skills building, internship options, research opportunities, career planning, professional networking, and employment possibilities. Regents Scholars are encouraged to initiate regular meetings with their mentors.

*Peer Mentors:* New Regents Scholars are assigned peer mentors through the Pathmaker program in the Honors College. Whenever possible, peer mentor matches are made with Regents Scholars and are based on students' majors or minors. Peer mentors may ease the transition to college by giving informal advice, helping improve study habits, suggesting extracurricular activities, and socializing with their peers.

## Meetings and Events

To foster community-building, 4-8 meetings or events for Regents Scholars are held each semester. Topics for these meetings vary, but may include guest speakers, workshops for improving academic or life skills, and focused or open discussions on a variety of subjects. In addition, Regents Scholars are provided opportunities for special extra- and co-curricular activities. Among others, Regents Scholars meetings and activities in the last few years have featured: tickets to TEDxABQ presentations; a reception for Regents Scholars to meet their UNM faculty mentors; yoga workshops; a speaker on bipartisan issues related to voting by college-aged constituents; a social gathering with Friends of Fulbright Argentinian exchange students to view the Winter Olympics Opening Ceremony on a big screen; a copy of a book to help high-achieving students succeed in college; self-defense workshops; and tickets to a film screening of *Allegiance*, a Broadway musical about the experiences of Japanese people in U.S. internment camps during World War II. Such meetings and activities encourage students in the program to connect with each other and to collaborate in ways that may allow them to form networks of professional colleagues and friends beyond college.

## Social Media

A closed Facebook group is available for Regents Scholars to interact with each other. Students must request access to it and non-Regents Scholars are not allowed to join. The group is at [www.facebook.com/groups/rscholars/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/rscholars/). In 2020-2021, Regents Scholars social media presence will be expanded to other platforms.

# Scholarship Requirements

## Credit Hours and GPA

To maintain the Regents Scholars Scholarship, students must complete 15 new credit hours and earn a 3.3 grade point average (GPA) each semester (Fall and Spring semesters). The summer session may be used to address credit hour and grade point deficiencies but the scholarship will not fund summer courses.

The following requirements also apply:

- Students may choose the Credit/No Credit option for no more than one class per semester. This does not apply to Honors College courses because the special grading system in Honors is required, rather than an option selected by students.
- Online courses offered by UNM count toward scholarship requirements and there is no restriction on the number of online courses students can take.
- Only one PE course (PE-NP) per semester, regardless of whether it is a one or two-credit course, is allowed to count as part of a student's required 15 credit hours. Most PE-NP courses also may be repeated in future semesters and still earn credit toward the scholarship's requirements.
- Except for courses marked as repeatable (most PE-NP courses, Honors College courses with different titles, and a few others), repeated courses taken to earn a higher grade do *not* count toward scholarship requirements.
- Students may not receive credit hours for scholarship purposes by participating in any correspondence courses.
- Students who earn a grade of F will *not* receive credit for scholarship purposes.
- Audit courses do *not* count toward hours or GPA.
- "T" courses (technical, vocational or special courses) do *not* count toward credit hours or GPA.

### Active Status and Degree Option in the Honors College

Regents Scholars must complete the requirements for one Honors degree option during their time at UNM: the Honors Scholars Distinction, Minor in Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts, or Major in Interdisciplinary Liberal Arts. Regents Scholars entering UNM in Fall 2020 or later may no longer complete the Honors Designation degree option. Students having difficulty meeting Honors requirements should consult with Dr. Donovan as early as possible. Failure to maintain active status in the Honors College and demonstrate progress toward an Honors degree option may result in cancellation of the scholarship. Dr. Donovan will verify active status and progress toward a degree option in the Honors College each year. To maintain active status in the Honors College, Regents Scholars must pass a minimum of one Honors course each year until they have completed requirements for their Honors degree option.

### Annual Report

All Regents Scholars are required to submit to Dr. Donovan an annual report on their progress and activities each year. In April, Dr. Donovan will email students a template to follow when compiling their annual reports. Annual reports are typically no longer than 2-3 pages and must be emailed to Dr. Donovan in a pc-readable format (docx, pdf, rtf) by June 1 each year.

### Community Activity Requirements

While at UNM, Regents Scholars are expected to participate in community activities, such as campus organizations, student government, departmental groups, local community groups, professional organizations, or volunteer activities. As students progress through the program, their community activities are expected to reflect increasing levels of engagement and commitment each year. It is further expected that by their senior year, most Regents Scholars will take on leadership roles in one or more community activities by the time they graduate. By the time they graduate, most Regents Scholars typically engage in substantially more community activity than is required for the program.

However, because of public health restrictions, the normal Community Activity Requirements have been modified for the 2020-2021 academic year. During this year, Regents Scholars may engage in as many community activities as they wish, but regardless of their year in school, they are required to complete only the following:

***Attend a minimum of 5 Regents Scholars or Honors College meetings, events, or activities each semester (5 in the fall and 5 in the spring). These may not be activities that take place during an Honors class, but they may be optional events that count toward requirements for a class.***

(Normal) Community Activity Requirements are:

- Year 1: 20 hours minimum per year;
- Year 2: 30-40 hours minimum per year;
- Year 3: 40-60 hours minimum per year;
- Year 4: 60-80 hours minimum per year.

It is up to each student to keep records of their participation in community activities each semester for their Annual Report. Students are advised to get into the habit of recording activities shortly after participating in them. While activities must be recorded clearly and accurately, extensive details are not required; students may record a note as simple as "HSA meeting, 9/14/18, Honors Forum, 1.25 hours." Keeping good records will make it easier to complete the annual reports.

To count toward this requirement, students may not include service activities for which they earn college credit or payment of any kind. Beyond these restrictions, activities may include, but are not limited to, participation in extracurricular groups, community organizations, UNM committees, and Regents Scholars activities. If you have questions about whether an activity qualifies as service for the Regents Scholars Program, consult with Dr. Donovan.

## Petition/Appeal Process

At the end of each semester, staff in the Scholarships Office will review each Regents Scholar's academic progress. Students may lose their Regents Scholars Scholarships for failure to meet any of the requirements stated earlier. In this case, students who do not meet eligibility requirements will be notified of their scholarship's cancellation by email. The Regents Scholars Scholarship allows students to appeal decisions regarding cancellation or the postponement of the award because of inability to complete eligibility requirements.

To appeal scholarship cancellation or postponement, students must submit a Scholarship Petition (available on the Scholarships website) and a written statement describing the circumstances surrounding their inability to meet requirements and explaining how they plan to avoid such deficiencies in the future. Submit any applicable documentation for review with the scholarship petition (i.e., medical or legal letters of support).

Scholarship petitions are reviewed and addressed as soon as possible. Students will be notified by email when a decision is rendered. Instructions about any stipulations or conditions imposed will be stated when students are notified of the decision. Examples of stipulations are: a) summer school enrollment; b) personal interview/meeting with an assigned mentor, faculty or staff member; c) one-semester-at-a-time funding; d) provisional status and/or a contract. If the scholarship is reinstated, students must meet all necessary requirements to maintain the scholarship going forward.

If students disagree with the decision of their appeal, they have the opportunity to have their case considered by a manager or director in the Student Financial Aid Office. If there is additional or new information not presented in the original appeal, students may request this final appeal by submitting a new Scholarship Petition and supporting documentation to the Student Financial Aid Office within 5 days of the original decision.

### ***Provisional Status***

When students lose their scholarship, they are placed on ***provisional status***, meaning they will not receive Regents Scholars funding and are responsible for paying their tuition and fees. However, provisional terms will continue to count as one semester of the 8 consecutive semesters of eligibility. Students on provisional status are still considered Regents Scholars.

Students on provisional status can have their scholarship reinstated by completing a minimum of 15 new credit hours with a 3.3 GPA in a single semester. Only courses taken at the UNM Main Campus during the semester(s) a student is on provisional status will be counted toward reinstatement of the scholarship.

## Leaves and Absences from UNM

### **Leave of Absence and Co-op Programs**

If students wish to interrupt their education for church missions, military service, co-op programs or medical reasons, they must submit a petition for a leave of absence to the Scholarships Office explaining the request with corresponding documentation. Students on an approved leave of absence, but still enrolled at UNM, must maintain a 3.3 GPA for all credit hours for which they enrolled during their leave. While taking an approved leave, students will not receive Regents Scholars funding; instead their scholarship will be held until they return. To reactivate scholarship eligibility after returning from an approved leave of absence, students must notify the Scholarships Office at least one month, but no more than two months, before the start of the semester in which they will be returning. A leave of absence request that has not been approved prior to a student's exit from UNM may not be approved.

### **National and International Student Exchange Programs**

Regents Scholars may participate in the National or International Student Exchange Programs or in the National Collegiate Honors Council Honors Semester and continue to receive the Regents Scholars Scholarship. Students who participate in the NCHC Honors Semester must also register for 3 credit hours of individual study in the Honors College or another department during that semester. Students may only use the Regents Scholars Scholarship for one semester of an NCHC Honors semester. If students attend a program that is *not* part of an affiliation agreement with UNM, other than an NCHC Honors Semester, they may *not* use the Regents Scholars Scholarship to fund it.

For students who attend another UNM-affiliated university under a national exchange program or study abroad program, the time spent away from UNM will be counted toward the 8 semesters of eligibility for the scholarship. A 3.3 grade point average and 15 new credit hours each semester are required for maintaining the Regents Scholars Scholarship during a national or international exchange experience.

### **Withdrawals/Transfers**

Regents Scholars who withdraw or transfer from UNM must notify the Scholarships Office in writing of their plans to discontinue participation in the Regents Scholars Program. Written notification should be submitted at least one month before actual withdrawal or transfer.

# Other Requirements

## Employment

While the Regents Scholars Scholarship is expected to provide enough financial support that students do not have to work for much of their college career, we know that working part-time while in school may help improve skills and build professional networks that often leads to valuable professional experiences. However, it is essential that employment does not interfere with the ability of Regents Scholars to maintain the high academic standards that allow them to meet the scholarship's eligibility requirements. Therefore, Regents Scholars are strongly encouraged to limit their employment to no more than 15 hours a week and preferably 10 hours or less a week.

## Unused Funding

Regents Scholars are entitled to a maximum of 8 semesters of funding as long as they meet the eligibility requirements. Once they graduate, whether in 8 semesters or fewer, the term of the Regents Scholars Scholarship are completed and students may not apply any unused semesters of the scholarship toward graduate school or other purposes.

## Graduation

When students graduate from UNM, they will be listed as a Regents Scholar in the UNM graduation program. To make sure their names and information are listed correctly, students must let Dr. Donovan know their plans to graduate as early as possible in that semester.

In the spring semester of their fourth year at UNM, Regents Scholars also will be expected to attend the dinner hosted by the UNM President that celebrates the achievements of Regents Scholar seniors. Even if students do not intend to graduate that eighth semester, they still will be invited to attend this dinner to celebrate with the cohort with which they entered the Regents Scholars Program. Students are recognized at this dinner for their accomplishments with a medallion to wear to any graduation ceremonies they attend.

## Conduct and Behavior

Regents Scholars are expected to conduct themselves according to the rules and regulations outlined in the *UNM Student Handbook*, accessed at <http://pathfinder.unm.edu>. Violations of any of those rules and regulations may result in discontinuation of the scholarship. Of course, Regents Scholars also are expected to obey state, city, and federal laws. Infractions of any stated laws may jeopardize continued funding from the Regents Scholars Scholarship.