

# *IMPACT* UNC

Winter 2022 | UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO







## An Ongoing Commitment

UNC's 2030 strategic plan, *Rowing, Not Drifting*, focuses squarely on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) not as an aspiration, but as an ongoing commitment to the energy, justice and power of a diverse community. As faculty, staff, alumni and friends, we continue to prepare a broad and diverse group of students to lead and enrich a more diverse, more equitable and more inclusive world.

It is fitting that we have a distinguished UNC alumnus — Dr. Tobias Guzmán '94 — leading that effort as UNC's new vice president for diversity equity and inclusion. In this issue of *Impact*, you'll see some of the work we're doing as a campus led by Dr. Guzmán.

The community on and off campus is working together through programs like UNITE, thanks to the generous support of WeldWerks Brewing Company.

Our students, like Criminal Justice major Taw Paw, are supported by a caring community that mentors them and helps them find success on campus and professionally.

Annette Martinez '86, a newly appointed member of UNC's Board of Trustees, is part of that community. She generously supports resources and scholarships for the Cumbres program, which includes first-generation students who will become teachers and, in turn, empower and inspire tomorrow's leaders.

But as you know, UNC's diverse and growing community of alumni and friends have long supported the goals that are core to our commitment to DEI — to provide access and opportunity so that all students may thrive. Cultural centers began developing as hubs of support and resources for students on campus in the early 1980s. Many of our donors, diverse in ethnicity, gender identity, interests, abilities and religion, quietly lift the burden of financial struggle through scholarships and programmatic support. Thousands of donors contribute to hundreds of funds so that our students can focus on their education and the wonderful ways they will affect change in the world through their lives and careers.

Thank you for being part of this work we do, supporting our ongoing commitment to UNC's students through your purposeful and generous philanthropy.



*Allie Steg Haskett*

**Allie Steg Haskett '03**  
Vice President  
University Advancement

UNC's 10-year vision plan, *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030*, focuses on the following five elements. Look for these icons throughout this publication for stories that reflect these elements.



Students First



Empower Inclusivity



Enhance & Invest



Innovate & Create



Connect & Celebrate

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## Developing a DEI Roadmap

Standing up for equity and inclusion as a university is not enough. Modeling these principles is critical in our interactions with students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and other constituents. Without incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the University's overall structure, accomplishing the strategic goals of Students First and a university that supports and honors diverse perspectives may appear hollow and disingenuous to the community we serve.

The University is in the process of developing a DEI roadmap which will include initiatives focused on UNC's administrative practices and policies, an intentional focus on students and their experiences and meaningful action steps to enhance faculty and staff development. The key domains for this work will be:

- Education, learning and professional development for all faculty, staff and students
- Recruitment and retention of students and our workforce
- Culture and climate development
- Investment and infrastructure enhancement
- Partnership and external engagement opportunities

Beyond these priorities, UNC is making a concerted effort to build a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) model. HSI classification is an essential step toward ensuring the success of Hispanic/Latinx-identifying students and assisting more of them in completing and earning a UNC degree.

Thanks to donors like you, these efforts can become possible. UNC is unwavering in its commitment to a just, equitable and inclusive community.

**Tobias Guzmán '94**

*Vice President*

Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

➤ Learn more about the university's DEI efforts:  
[unco.edu/equity-inclusion/about-us](https://unco.edu/equity-inclusion/about-us)





# Honoring a Belief in Education



Annette Martinez '86,  
UNC Trustee

Although alumna Annette Martinez's parents, Leo and Gregoria Romero, may not have had the opportunity to go to college, they deeply believed in the importance of education.

"My mother did go back and get her high school GED," Martinez says. "My father did not. He was a business owner. He was on a school board for 13 years and when he was 80, I asked him, 'Do you have any regrets in life?' He said, 'My only regret was I didn't get to finish school.' And so that's the kind of environment I was raised

in, knowing that education was so important."

It's a value that remains with her, and one that she supports with her time and through gifts to UNC.

Martinez earned her Bachelor of Arts in Biology from UNC in 1986, and is a senior vice president at State Farm Insurance Companies, where she has worked since 1988. She was appointed to the University's Board of Trustees by Governor Jared Polis in late 2021.

Like her parents, who were active in the community, Martinez serves on several professional and community boards, including as a board trustee for the National Crohn's & Colitis Foundation and an executive member of the Latino Corporate Directors Association.

Born and raised in LaSalle, Colo., Martinez says UNC's location, size, quality and affordability all contributed to her decision to become a Bear.

"College was always the plan for me, and of course, having a great university right here in our backyard that was also affordable was really just a great option for me. I lived at home because I couldn't afford to move out," she says.

With Greeley so close to home, Martinez was able to transition to college without getting lost in the crowds of a larger university, and she was able to stay connected to her local community.

"The truth is, I didn't see many people that looked like me, and I knew people that came to UNC who looked like me but ended up staying a year or so, then leaving," she remembers. "I had the security and support to go home every day to my family and that made it extra special for me."

Recognizing the importance of community and the sense of belonging students need to succeed, Martinez generously supports UNC's Cumbres program, housed in UNC's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

Cumbres is a scholarship and support program that prepares educators skilled in culturally and linguistically diverse practices to serve as effective and compassionate teachers of English learners.

"Growing up and going to school, there weren't teachers who looked like me," Martinez says. "When I think about what Cumbres is doing... It is not only bringing together a group for support, a group of people who have an interest in doing such important work, it's also changing the next generation through education by being a teacher."

"I love the fact that Cumbres supports this group to continue moving forward because we have such a gap in our educational system for people of color. This was one way that I could be a part of something that was going to really make that difference."

Working for State Farm, Martinez was able to increase the impact she could make by using their employer matching gift program. The company matched up to \$4,500 annually, a benefit available to almost 57,000 employees at the company.

Martinez also makes a difference for Cumbres students through the Leo and Gregoria Romero Scholarship, named for her parents. This scholarship provides support to first-generation college students enrolled in the Cumbres program.

"I knew I wanted to do something in their honor," she says. "They made many sacrifices for me, not only to attend school, but to be able to complete my education. All four of us were able to attend college; that was a huge sacrifice for my parents."

As Martinez thought about how she could honor them, she knew that it had to reflect their belief in education, and that she wanted to help students who might not otherwise be able to afford college.

Several years ago, Martinez had an opportunity to meet with some of the students who received support from the scholarship she established. "These students were so grateful because the scholarship made a tremendous difference for them and helped them continue pursuing their dreams," she says.

Whether a donor is interested in providing scholarships or resources, she says it's important to know where you want to have an impact.

"Look at the faces of people you're making a difference for. (When making a choice about giving) I always say, 'What are the things that matter to me, and what are the things that I know matter to other people,'" she says. "I just feel like higher education should be open for everyone."

Understanding the importance of education, community and access have helped guide her philanthropic choices over the years. And, though her parents may not have gone to college, the lives of generations of students have been touched through the values and beliefs they passed on to their daughter.





## COSI BY THE NUMBERS

**\$4.2 million**

in funding since 2015

**375**

students enrolled

**\$335,000**

matched by UNC donors

Taw Paw, Criminal Justice  
and Criminology

## From Burmese Refugee to UNC Bear

As a high school student, Taw Paw almost didn't apply to UNC — she didn't think she'd get accepted. Born in Thailand, Taw and her family are Burmese refugees who left their home country due to ethnic cleansing. Although she has lived in Colorado since the age of five, Taw moved between different schools along the Front Range which negatively impacted her studies. She felt her grades weren't good enough for her to qualify her to apply to a four-year university.

With encouragement from her parents, Taw agreed to tour UNC and felt instantly at home. "I fell in love with the campus and I could see myself coming here," says Taw. "The school is so diverse, which was one thing I was really missing."

As an independent student, Taw was prepared to take out student loans on top of her four part-time jobs to help afford her college expenses. "I had applied to so many scholarships but wasn't hearing back and felt stuck," reflects Taw.

Then she applied to the Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative (COSI), a state-funded program that has been providing tuition assistance

and services to give students a path toward an affordable college degree and a career since 2014.

At UNC, 375 students are enrolled in COSI this year, which has provided \$4.2 million in funding since 2015.

In addition to state funds, generous UNC donors have given \$335,000 to the COSI program, providing dollar-for-dollar matches to the scholarship program for a total of \$670,000 since 2018.

"Receiving the COSI scholarship was completely unexpected," she says. While the financial support has been incredibly impactful, Taw lights up when explaining the relational benefits of the program.

Halfway through her freshman year, Taw's father suffered an accident. Nickie Archibeque, COSI Coordinator and Success Coach, immediately came to Taw's side. "Nickie was such a big support, giving me advice, guiding me, offering me rides when my dad was sick," says Taw. "That is another reason why COSI is so great. She was like a mom when I needed it."

COSI also provides what it calls "wrap-around support services" which includes resources like Bear Pantry, mental health services and weekly

workshops to help students succeed. The workshops help students address issues such as anxiety, exam preparedness, or impostor syndrome. "As a college student, you have stress, anxiety, mental health issues, so COSI's workshops help a lot," says Taw. "The topics they pick aren't random, they're things we can actually relate to and overcome."

Taw also has a community of support as a Reisher Scholar. Reisher scholars are paired with other recipients from their class into cohorts. "They pair us unexpectedly but the relationship I have with my group is amazing. Our connection is so strong and we always support each other."

With the help of her scholarships, Taw is pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology with a minor in Sociology. Every career she ever dreamed of having seemed to involve criminal justice. "When I was younger, I wanted to be a firefighter, then a cop, then an FBI agent," says Taw. "I want to help people, especially my people. I want to fight for women's rights and be their voice and benefit my community."





Jonathan Alcantar, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of Chicana/o and Latinx Studies, leads a UNITE discussion about UNC's journey to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

## A New Space for Conversations and Understanding

This past year, thanks to the generous support of WeldWerks Brewing Co., the UNC community had an opportunity to participate in workshops designed to create a space where students, faculty and staff could explore topics related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across a broad range of identities.

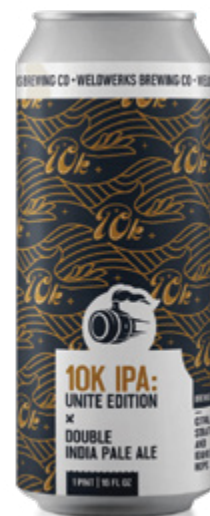
The Understanding and Navigating Inclusion Through Education (UNITE) program is led in-person and virtually by members of the UNC community and includes topics like: Disability and Accessibility, DREAMer Zone, Exploring Military Culture and Veterans Experiences, Sexism and Gender Justice, Race and Racism, Spirituality and Religious Identity Dialogues, Straight Facts About Queer Life, Becoming A Hispanic-Serving Institution, and Inclusivity in Mental Health.

"The UNITE program offered an amazing opportunity for us to target our support for diversity equity and inclusion in a more impactful and sustainable way," says Roy Van Anda, Community Engagement Manager for WeldWerks. "Having access to the education and space for community-wide discussions around DEI is so vital to the health of our communities and industry. Our support for the UNITE program also launched our 2021 Philanthropic beer series, the 10K IPA."

This beer series was designed to select one charitable partner or program each quarter and to provide \$10,000 to their organization. The UNITE Edition — a Double IPA with Citra, Strata, and Idaho Gem hops — was the first to be released. While this specific beer series will not be continuing in the same capacity this year, WeldWerks will continue to expand their philanthropic programs and giving strategies.

"We look forward to helping support UNITE so it can continue to be a growing resource in the future for UNC students, staff and the larger community of Weld County," Van Anda says. "We're also excited to be more involved in the program this year to learn first-hand all the benefits it has to offer," Van Anda says.

In addition to its continued support of UNITE, WeldWerks has also partnered with UNC to establish the WeldWerks Diversity Scholarship, an annual scholarship for students of color, with preference given to students who have an interest in brewing science.



➤ Learn more about the UNITE program: [unco.edu/equity-inclusion/unite](https://unco.edu/equity-inclusion/unite)





## César Chávez Cultural Center: Building Community

The César Chávez Cultural Center (CCCC) aims to support the academic success of Latinx students and is a resource for the UNC community to learn more about Latinx culture.

The CCCC staff support students and can direct them to various campus resources, such as tutoring and financial aid. The center also provides opportunities for students to explore Latinx culture and to cultivate a sense of community.

“Students who feel validated experience an increase in their sense of belonging on campus, which is critical for student retention and academic persistence. All programs and efforts contribute to opportunities for students to get involved and continue development toward their sense of belonging on campus,” said CCCC interim Co-Director Joél Orozco Almeida.

Students benefit from event programming throughout the academic year, featuring a keynote speaker who presents or performs in ways that affirm Latinx students. The CCCC also works closely with Latinx affinity groups on campus to enable students to connect and find community with them.

UNC’s generous donors make it possible to provide these resources for the campus’s cultural and resource centers. At the César Chávez Cultural Center, donors support annual Latinx Youth Leadership Conferences and make it possible for the center to provide one-time financial support to students who may be experiencing unexpected hardships.

Eight cultural and resource centers at UNC help give students a sense of community and belonging and provide resources to help them succeed in school and after graduation.

**Asian Pacific American Students Services:** Supports the emotional, academic and professional success of UNC’s Asian and Pacific Islander students.

**Center for Women’s and Gender Equity:** Advocates for equity with regards to gender and women’s issues.

**César Chávez Cultural Center:** Supports educational attainment and persistence of Latinx students and serves as a resource to the UNC community regarding Latinx culture.

**Gender & Sexuality Resource Center:** Uses education and advocacy to support and create feelings of belonging for UNC students across the spectrums of sexuality and gender identity.

**Marcus Garvey Cultural Center:** Focuses on advocacy, creating a community for and supporting the academic success of students of color and other marginalized groups.

**Native American Student Services:** Promotes the leadership, academic, cultural and career success of UNC’s Native American students.

**Stryker Institute for Leadership Development:** Supports the academic, social and personal success of women at UNC from underrepresented groups.

**Veterans Services:** Provides resources to empower and support UNC’s military-affiliated students.

➤ More about the Cultural Centers:  
[unco.edu/equity-inclusion/departments](https://unco.edu/equity-inclusion/departments)





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