

The latest news from Luna Community College

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Randall Krutsch introduced as Luna's new athletic director

Randall Krutsch is Luna Community College's new athletic director. Krutsch is also the college's softball coach. The following is a one-on-one interview with Krutsch.

First of all, how is it leading Luna's athletic department?

I feel that it is a privilege to be the athletic director for Luna. I think there are a series of objectives to achieve to make Luna athletics one of the best.



Randal Krutsch will be in his third year at Luna, his first as athletic director.

How many years do you have here at Luna and what were your job titles?

This is my third year at Luna. I started as the assistant softball coach and was promoted to head coach in December of my first year and that is where I remain now along with the duties of athletic director.

How many years experience do you have in athletics?

I started coaching at San Gabriel High School in Southern California in

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Luna welding students Marco Salinas, Jaime Olivarez and Elijah Romero are part of a Saturday class taught by instructor Gene Martinez (second from the left). In the second photo, Jaime Olivarez shows his metal flowers as part of an ornamental class project.



FREE



Nursing Summer Camp

Open to high school students entering 10-12 grades who are interested in a nursing career
30 slots available

Camp Courses Include:
Medical terminology
Simulation Lab
CPR

Monday, July 10 - Thursday, July 13, 2023
8:30 am to 1:00 pm

Luna Community College
Allied Health Building
366 Luna Drive, Las Vegas NM 87701

Learn about nursing school from current nursing students.

Contact Yvonne Piña at 505-454-2525 or ypina@luna.edu to sign up



Nearly 100 people attend Luna Adobe workshops

Over 1,500 adobes made

Nearly 100 people participated in Luna Community College's adobe workshops on Saturday, June 17 and Saturday, June 24.

Luna Community College partnered with Las Vegas Citizens Committee for Historic Preservation and Cornerstones Community Partnerships to have the workshops. Santa Fe Community Foundation and McCune Foundation grants provided financial support to Cornerstones and Rocky Road Gravel Products of Las Vegas donated the soil materials for the adobes.

"We found the experience in Las Vegas was one of the most profoundly appreciated as well as one of the best we've ever done," said Jake Barrow of Cornerstones Community Partnerships. "We had enthusiastic feedback, all positives. The Luna campus turned out to be an excellent location; it was ideal for what we were doing. The proximity to Mora and San Miguel county was an essential location to draw people from around the area. We had people from Las Cruces, Taos and Albuquerque."

Approximately 1,500 adobes were made.

The adobes will benefit properties affected by the fire and floods in San Miguel and Mora Counties.

Participants learned about the materials being used, the process of forming of the bricks along with the sun drying and stacking aspects.

Luna employees also participated in making ado-

bes and assisted in setting up material for the adobe workshops.

Luna attracted nearly 100 people to its two adobe workshops, recently. In the bottom right photo, Luna President Dr. Edward Martinez welcomes participants to the workshop. (Bottom, left) A little over 1,500 adobes were made.



Luna receives \$3 million grant from USDA

Luna Community College is implementing a Wildfire Resiliency Training Center to support recovery, mitigation and planning for communities impacted by natural disasters. A \$3 million USDA grant will provide support for training professionals to increase the workforce required to restore, re-build and re-invigorate forests, farm/range lands and waterways catastrophically damaged during the worst wildfire in New Mexico history.

The project will provide support for students pursuing academic degrees or noncredit training programs in Agriculture and Natural Resource Development. This Luna Initiative for Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Human Sciences Training and Education Project, will address recruitment, enrollment and retention. The project will be funded for a period of five years.

“We are thankful to the USDA for providing Luna this grant and we are excited about the opportunities it will create for students in our communities and beyond,” said Luna President Dr. Edward Martinez. “The wildfires and flooding in 2022 was devastating to our service area. We’re excited to implement this project.”

While the nation, the state and the local communities in Luna's service area are in need of professionals in the STEM fields, the predominantly minority and low-income population of northeastern New Mexico faces significant obstacles in pursuing both credit and non-credit STEM education and training. The recent wildfires and subsequent flooding have served to exacerbate the need for STEM professionals in areas of study that include natural resource improvement and conservation, wildland resiliency, forestry, fire protection, farm and range management, nutrition and food science, rural development, economic mobility, poverty, sociology and rural demography, and ecology studies.

“This grant will allow us to train future leaders who will work in northern New Mexico communities rehabilitating our land and forests,” said Dr. Martinez.

In order to ameliorate the barriers for minority and low-income students and to increase the numbers of STEM professionals, Luna will develop stackable credentials that will allow students multiple opportunities to enter and exit the education system, from short term workshops that can lead directly to land recovery and/or a paying job, to transferable degrees that complete the first two years of a baccalaureate.

Recruitment and delivery will be informed by faculty training and wraparound, comprehensive, research-proven services for increasing student success. Additional student support will be available in the form of internships and financial aid. Luna's project will engage, attract, enroll, retain, and graduate students in current and innovative areas of study appropriate for both local, immediate and long-term

disaster recovery needs and USDA mission critical workforce needs.

As part of the objectives, Luna plans to use proven programs in community outreach, tutoring and mentoring, academic and career advisement active learning pedagogy and asynchronous online coursework.

Luna will also expand its training to increase the workforce required to restore, re-build and re-invigorate forests, farm/range lands, and waterways catastrophically damaged during the worst wildfire in New Mexico history,

which occurred in Luna's service area during the summer of 2022.

Luna's grant comes from the recently announced U.S. Department of Agriculture \$262.5 million investment in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. This program is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to lower costs for American families, expand access to markets to producers from all backgrounds and communities, build a clean energy economy and strengthen American supply chains.

“Each generation of agricultural professionals faces new challenges as we feed our world's growing population, and the future generations give me hope that we will rise to the occasion to meet these challenges with opportunity,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We need to ensure our youth have the education and training they need to accelerate the development of an agricultural system that is climate-smart, sustainable, profitable and equitable. This historic investment from the Biden-Harris Administration in our nation's Minority-serving Institutions brings us closer to building a workforce that represents the richness and diversity of all the communities we serve.”

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) *From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation*

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Luna receives \$3 million...



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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of *Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program* (NextGen) will enable eligible institutions, from New York to the Northern Mariana Islands, to build and sustain the next generation of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce. This includes efforts to strengthen USDA's workforce through enhanced educational support, experiential learning and exposure to early career opportunities. Eligible institutions include: 1890 Land-grant Universities, 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSI), Alaska Native-serving and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions and institutions of higher education located in the insular areas, as well as their partners. The \$262.5 million investment will provide training and support to more than 20,000 future food and agricultural leaders through 33 project partners.

"The vision we have at NIFA is to feed and nourish all Americans and create economic opportunity for more American families. Equity and diversity are the two central elements in this vision. One goal of the NextGen program is to identify, inspire and prepare our youth, particularly in underrepresented communities, to be the next generation of hunger fighters and agricultural problem solvers. This is the right thing to do and the right time," said NIFA Director Dr. Manjit Misra. The NextGen program is part of USDA's commitment to equity

across the Department and steps it has taken under Secretary Vilsack's direction to improve equity and access, eliminate barriers to its programs for underserved individuals and communities, and build a workforce more representative of America. Earlier in the year, the USDA Equity Commission, which is comprised of independent members from diverse backgrounds, released its interim recommendations to remove barriers to inclusion and access at USDA, including by strengthening research, extension, and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences at all minority-serving institutions.

The NextGen program is also an important component of the Department and President Biden's vision to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government. USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

Emily Ulibarri, from Luna's Santa Rosa Satellite, said that a film crew from "On the 10th Day" used the satellite recently for a couple of scenes. The film crew used Ulibarri's office and the lobby area to recreate a Texas bank scene.



Randall Krutsch...

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1991 after my playing days were behind me and I coached baseball for a number of years before moving to Women's Fastpitch. All together I have been coaching for about 16 years.

Where would you like to see Luna athletics in the next few years?

I would love to see Luna grow into other sports. In the post pandemic world, colleges have been hit very hard with in person learning. Sports are a great way to attract more students to campus and get stu-

dents directed toward a degree or trade which will then grow into careers that they will be able to contribute to society in a positive way.

Luna was very competitive in both baseball and softball this year, what are the keys to keep the momentum going into next season?

Yes, both baseball and softball had record seasons in many regards. I believe there are a number of factors that we need to address to continue the growth trajectory that we have worked hard to build. First is program management. The programs need to be strong and stable to attract the top athletes and continually attract New Mexico athletes. Second is recruiting. College recruiting is a year-round event and both programs have done a great job at attracting strong talent especially in New Mexico. Third, we need to become more aggressive with our fundraising campaigns.

Most college programs rely heavily on fundraising to support their efforts and now that we are building quality programs, we need to maximize these opportunities. Fourth is facilities. We are



Randal Krutsch, (right) will begin his third season as coach of the Lady Rough Riders.

moving out of Highlands University fields and onto Rodriguez fields this year which is a huge step forward and very attractive for recruits. Our new building is a great step forward, but to make it the showcase piece for current and prospective athletes, we will need to improve the facility.

We need to fix some exterior aspects and give it a fresh coat of paint to make it blend into our beautiful campus. Fifth is we need to make sure our student-athletes are all on a graduation path and grades are meeting a higher expectation than the minimum requirement to participate. I would like Luna athletics to have some Academic All-Americans and Athletic All-Americans. A strong academic base is foundational to everything we do athletically.

When you are out recruiting, what do you tell a potential student-athlete about the reasons for playing and coming to school at Luna?

We tell recruits about our class size, reasonable tuition rates, our outstanding faculty that are committed to the students' success and of course our athletic programs being competitive in our re-

gion. Both teams starting to develop more wins is always attractive to athletes.

Female athletes in particular want to be part of a program that they are integral in its success. In softball, we spend a lot of time and energy in areas other than softball. For instance we put on free clinics for the Las Vegas Little League and we do a camp in Albuquerque that is free of charge to all New Mexico High School softball players. We do a lot of team events to have fun and enjoy being a

college athlete besides just playing and practicing softball.

We try to give our student athletes a full college experience that will be fun and energetic. There is an extremely low chance of playing after college for female athletes, so our athletes want to get the most out of the experience as they can. Having a female coach is also a great incentive to play at Luna. Coach Jess is a former college athlete that brings playing experience and her solid education to the team for their benefit. Another selling point for Luna is that we are a teaching-based program. Both programs work many details at teaching the game to our athletes. I believe this is a large part of our programs success.

What are some of the challenges coaches have at Luna?

I think that some challenges that we face at Luna are like most junior colleges. Being in a town away from large cities such as Santa Fe and Albuquerque means we need to house our student athletes. Not having housing on campus is a

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Randall Krutsch...

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challenge, but having Highlands near is truly a big help. Problem with this is that our campus life is a little different than colleges that have housing.

Being a small school is great in most regards, but school size does impact class choices and time options for student athletes. Much of our competitors are fully funded or near fully funded, so having less scholarship dollars is a challenge that we deal with.

Fortunately our school is very reasonably priced for students to afford school, but again, not having control of housing means Luna does not benefit financially from housing and board. We have a great faculty and administration that supports our athletes, but it would be great to have more teams to grow the school.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

When I started at Luna, it was supposed to be a short stay, but since then I have grown not only to appreciate the uniqueness of Luna, but the great people that make Luna special. I see myself here at Luna for the foreseeable future.

What do you want people to know about Randy Krutsch, who is the man behind the coach?

That I love what I do and I love coaching at the junior college level. The whole

reason that I have the degrees that I have is because of junior college. I did not perform well in high school and junior college was my only option. A teacher, not a coach changed my life and recognized that I have dyslexia and helped me when no one else did.

At this level, coaches have a true opportunity if they seek it to have a very big impact on their athletes lives. Getting to know players, their stories and the uniqueness that makes them who they are is a great blessing.

I enjoy sharing my life's stories with them, not only the success but more importantly the failures that I have had. Having young adults learn that life is about making choices and handling the results from those choices are important. We live in a world that is so focused on instant gratification and parents swooping in to pick up their kids when they fall, that real life results are hard. I want all my athletes to know they can trust me to support them and care for them not only when they are successful, but more importantly when they fail.

What would you like people to say about Luna athletics in the next few years?

I want people to recognize how much we are committed to our student-athletes and how much we care about them. I want people, especially New Mexicans to

have Luna on their "want" list for baseball and softball and hopefully many other sports. Winning is a byproduct of many people doing many things correctly. When we are winning consistently, I really don't care what they say as long as they recognize that we are doing a whole bunch of things correctly.

Any final comments?

I want to thank all of the wonderful faculty and staff at Luna. There are so many hard working people that never get the recognition they deserve. Athletics can not function on its own. One trip to play an opponent takes several people's time, energy and expertise just to get the athletes on the bus and they can not hear thank you enough.

Our facilities will not function properly without the facilities force working hard to ensure our athletes have the best facilities we can provide. Our instructors work with athletes crazy schedules and afford them opportunities to come in after hours for tutoring or make up lab times etc.

Athletes are touched by every single department in our school and I can not thank them enough for all the work that everyone does for us. The year 2024 is going to be an exciting one, and I hope everyone gets a chance to come watch a game and support our Rough Riders!

Career and Technical Education Director

Luna Community College is looking for an energetic and creative individual who can continue building the college's successful Career and Technical Education programs as the Division Director. The CTE Director will have the opportunity to implement new programs and expand the currently successful programs in Welding, Cosmetology, Automotive Repair Technology and Collision Repair Technology. If you want to make a difference for students, for the community, for the economy and for New Mexico, this is the place for you!

To discuss the position in greater detail, contact the VP of Instruction and Student Services, Dr. Dani Day, at 505-454-2567 or email her at dday@luna.edu.

Wildfire Resiliency Training Center Director

Wildfires are growing worse every year - both bigger and more frequent. To combat the devastation, we need more people with the skills and expertise to mitigate the dangers and implement recovery for lands, forests, water and communities. Luna Community College is opening a Wildfire Resiliency Training Center. If you would like to lead this important work and apply for the Wildfire Resiliency Training Center Director position contact Dr. Day at 505-454-5378 to discuss the Center and the position in more detail.

CDL link created on Luna website

Getting information and enrolling in Luna's CDL program just got easier. The college recently created a CDL enrollment link on the front page of its website. The E-Z enrollment link can be found at luna.edu. For more information on the college's CDL program, please contact Karen Weznwick at kwezwick@luna.edu or via phone at 505-454-5308.

Luna to be closed on July 4

Luna and its campuses in Santa Rosa, Mora and Springer will be closed on Tuesday, July 4. The college will resume regular hours on July 5.

Luna's Future Rough Rider's Summer Program: nurturing young minds through exploration and creativity



The Future Rough Rider's Kid's Summer Program was in Las Vegas the week of June 5-8. The program kicked off with an exciting venture into the realm of Found Sound, led by Dr. Billie Mathews. The students discovered the power of music sticks and Home Depot buckets as they crafted a rhythmic symphony using unconventional percussion instruments. This hands-on activity encouraged teamwork, creativity, and an appreciation for the beauty of sound. In addition to Found Sound, the program offered guitar lessons with Quintin Leger, a skilled musician and instructor. Leger introduced fundamental techniques including chords and melodies.

The Future Rough Rider's Kid's Summer Program went beyond the realm of arts and music, delving into the fascinating world of science and technology. Rachael Lucero led the students in water testing experiments, teaching them the importance of environmental stewardship and the impact of water quality on ecosystems. Francisco Apodaca introduced them to the concept of soil contamination and provided hands-on experiences with 3-D printing, encouraging innovation and critical thinking.

Under the guidance of Denise Fox, the students were introduced to the intricacies of taking dental impressions, gain-



ing insights into the field of dental assisting. This interactive lesson allowed them to understand the importance of oral health and the technical aspects of dental care.

Kim Baca facilitated law enforcement simulation exercises, providing a glimpse into the world of criminal justice. Through role-playing scenarios, the students developed problem-solving skills and learned about the responsibilities of law enforcement professionals. Gene Martinez, a skilled welder, gave the participants an opportunity to experience the art of welding firsthand. With safety precautions in place, the students learned basic welding techniques. This hands-on activity allowed them to explore a valuable trade skill and potentially inspired future career paths.

The week-long program concluded with a showcase of talent and achievement. The participants regaled an audience composed of their parents and Luna Community College employees with a captivating Found Sound and guitar concert. The culmination of their hard work and dedication was evident as they demonstrated their newfound skills.

Meals for the participants were provided by the El Rialto cafe in Las Vegas. The meals helped ensure that the young minds stayed energized and focused, al-



lowing them to fully immerse themselves in the various activities and lessons.

Luna Community College's Future Rough Rider's Kid's Summer Program in Las Vegas, N.M., created an opportunity for young minds to explore and discover their interests.

