

# The Luna Light



*“Creating Opportunities for You!”*

Second Volume 2, Issue 4

January 15, 2019



**Luna Student Services Advisor Janice Medrano assists Manuel Martinez with setting up his schedule on Thursday. First day of classes for spring began on Monday, Jan. 14. Martinez, a Mora native, intends to major in Media Art and Film Technology. For more information on spring classes, please call 505/454-2550. The last day to register for classes is Tuesday, Jan. 22.**

## Spring registration underway

### Deadline to sign up is Jan. 22

Registration for the spring semester is up and running at Luna Community College, and students are encouraged to sign up for classes now through Jan. 22.

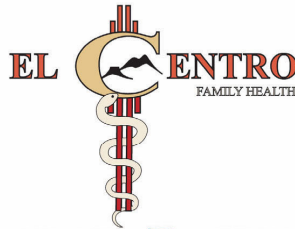
The first day of class for spring 2019 began on Monday, Jan. 14, and the last day to add or drop classes is Tuesday, Jan. 22.

Schedules and related information necessary for online registration are available via the newly updated Luna website, [www.luna.edu](http://www.luna.edu). Students may also visit the registrar’s office on campus for assistance with registration.

For those seeking an associate degree or certificate, Luna offers programs in the departments of allied health, business, education, humanities, nursing, STEM and vocations. A student who wishes to pursue a degree or

certificate — a full list of which is available on the website — should consult with an advisor to ensure that they develop the appropriate course schedule and take other necessary steps for their chosen program.

Luna also offers a number of classes at convenient times for personal enrichment and benefit for the non-degree student. These are also listed in the current semester schedule available online.



# NOW AVAILABLE

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## **Student Health Center at Highlands University**

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- Mental health counseling
- Healthy relationship advice
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- Blood pressure checks
- Health education
- Family planning
- Pregnancy testing
- HIV screening & treatment
- STD screening & treatment
- Minor surgical procedures
- Medicaid enrollment

**Walk in or call:  
901 Baca Street  
505-454-3218**

**Open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday through Friday**

Luna Community College students enrolled in a degree program and taking six hours or more are automatically eligible for the new health center benefits and assessed a \$50 fee per semester. Those who'd prefer to opt out of the program may do so by completing an opt-out form and returning it to the LCC cashier in the Student Services Building no later than Jan. 25, 2019.

# Eventful 2018 paves way to promising 2019 at Luna

*The following is a column written by Luna interim President Ricky Serna. It has been published in several newspapers across the region.*

For many, this time of the year prompts much reflection on the reasons to be thankful — the challenges overcome throughout the last 12 months, and goals we hope to accomplish in the new year.

For Luna Community College, 2018 was far from typical. The year was marked with several challenges that called for a community to establish an institutional culture built on collaboration, transparency, assessment and quality outcomes. Although the past year brought about difficult and uncertain times, we now look back and celebrate the changes that came from the most challenging time in the college's history.

The year began with a sense of urgency to complete the college's Show-Cause Report that was due to its accrediting agency on Feb. 1. Just months prior, the Higher Learning Commission placed the college on a Show-Cause Order. The order provided Luna with 90 days to make notable changes in its governance and administrative practices, all while drafting a comprehensive report that demonstrated the college's compliance with all criteria for accreditation.

In response to the Show-Cause Order, college faculty, staff and administration came together to develop and adopt a shared governance policy that provides for a collaborative model of decision making that includes the board of trustees, the president, administration, faculty, staff and students. It is now the process by which institutional direction and policies are developed, modified and implemented.



**Serna**

Integral to shared governance was the establishment of the college's first Staff Advisory Senate. The senate serves as a source of input on issues and decisions that relate to regular full-time/part-time and non-faculty staff at the college. Within the past year, the senate has conducted elections, completed drafting its bylaws and marked its one-year anniversary by re-establishing the college's Years of Service Celebration for employees.

In May, the college completed construction of its Media Arts Auditorium. The 18,000-plus square foot auditorium is among the largest public venues in northern New Mexico with a total capacity of 1,200. Just two weeks after its grand opening, the auditorium reached capacity when hundreds celebrated the spring 2018 commencement.

Following a study, the board of trustees approved a \$300,000 salary parity proposal aimed at raising employee compensation to a level consistent with sister institutions throughout the region. The proposal, which yielded salary increases for 70 percent of college personnel, raised the college's minimum wage to above \$10 per hour. Salary adjustments took effect prior to the end of the fiscal year to ensure the 2 percent state-mandated salary adjustment was applied to increased salaries.

In addition to addressing staff compensation, the college has grown by more than a dozen new positions that have been created to increase student services, completion and graduation rates. New positions include a Director for Institutional Research, developmental education specialists, a total of seven faculty/advisors — one for each academic department, a Director for Student and Career Services, and a Veterans Resource Coordinator.

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# Health care services open to Luna

Students at Luna Community College now have access to services at the Student Health Center at New Mexico Highlands, thanks to a new agreement between the institutions.

The memorandum of understanding signed Jan. 8 between Highlands and Luna also includes El Centro Family Health, which currently delivers medical and behavioral health services to Highlands' students on the main campus in Las Vegas.

"We recognize that there is a need for college students to access care, and Highlands has had a great partnership with El Centro for 27 years," said Kim Blea, dean of students at Highlands. "The idea for this new agreement is for the parties to work together for the mutual benefit of supporting our students' holistic well-being through medical and behavioral health services."

Blea said the agreement is designed to serve as a pilot project in extending services to Luna students. At Highlands, students pay a student health fee that gives them access to services. Luna students will pay their own student fee.

"El Centro is well known for the quality of its service and commitment to serving underserved populations in rural Northern New Mexico and local Las Vegas public schools," Blea said. "El Centro is very community minded and it's exciting that we can now extend this kind of care to other college students in our community through this new collaboration with Luna."

Blea said Highlands has a strong, long-term commitment to ensure that its students are supported in every aspect of their life, including physical and emotional well-being.

Highlands University President Sam Minner said another benefit of the Highlands agreement with Luna and El Centro is that the cooperation will lead to cost savings through the shared usage of space at Highlands.



Photo by Rick Loffredo, NMHU

**NMHU President Sam Minner, El Centro CEO Lore Pease and Luna interim President Ricky Serna sign an agreement that enables Luna students to use the Highlands Student Health Center run by El Centro.**

"This collaboration is an opportunity to join forces with Luna and El Centro to provide medical and behavioral health services in a cost-effective way so that students from both institutions can lead healthy lives of great meaning and purpose. This is a win-win for all of us," Minner said.

Ricky Serna, interim president for Luna Community College, said: "It's a pilot project that allows us to gauge the long-term needs for our students in health and behavioral health services. We look forward to working with Highlands and El Centro to increase overall capacity and access to services in this region."

El Centro Family Health was previously known as Health Centers of Northern New Mexico.

"I'm really pleased that this new partnership will ease the stress of students going through college," said Lore Pease, CEO for El Centro.

The new health center agreement is for spring semester 2019 with the option for the three parties to renew the pilot project if all approve.

— Margaret McKinney, NMHU University Relations

Save big on

# HEALTH CARE

## Luna students can now take advantage in a low-cost health care program beginning in Spring 2019.

Luna Community College, in partnership with NMHU Student Health Center and El Centro Family Clinics, is offering eligible Luna students health-care services for a nominal fee of \$50 per semester. The program is being introduced for Spring 2019.

### Who is eligible?

Luna students seeking a degree and taking six credit hours or more.

### What is being offered?

Students can take advantage of clinic services at the NMHU Student Health Center. Services include clinic visits and basic health care and lab services offered through the center. When the Highlands clinic is closed, students may use El Centro's locations in town.

### How much does it cost?

Basic services will be covered by a total fee of \$50 added to student tuition and fees charged at time of registration.

### Why should I take part?

The pilot program could save students considerably in out-of-pocket health care costs. The clinic is easily accessible to all students.

### Do I have to pay the fee?

The fee is required; however, students may opt out of the program at time of registration for spring semester or complete an opt-out form and submit to LCC cashier by Jan. 25, 2019.

### How do I participate in the program?

Luna students who are in a degree program and taking six or more credit hours a semester will be automatically enrolled and assessed the \$50 fee. Bring your current Luna ID to clinic visits.

### SERVICES TO INCLUDE:

- Routine check-ups
- Pregnancy testing
- Acute injuries and illnesses
- Immunizations
- Nutrition counseling
- Weight management
- Asthma services
- Mental health counseling
- Health education
- Audiometry
- Blood pressure check
- Family planning
- HIV screening & treatment
- STD screening & treatment
- Minor surgical procedures
- Medicaid enrollment

Walk in or call ahead!

El Centro Family Health's  
STUDENT HEALTH CENTER  
at HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

901 Baca Street  
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Open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday through Friday





**Davi and Jose Mondragon, shown celebrating their recent graduation from Eastern New Mexico, both got their start in higher education at Luna Community College. The brothers credit Luna for the beginning of their promising careers in the STEM field.**

## ‘A stroke of luck’

## Mondragon brothers got good start at Luna

**J**ose Mondragon has been good at math and science for a long time. So it’s a natural conclusion that he’d pursue a career in engineering.

But it took the opportunity presented via Luna Community College’s baseball program to give him a kick start. And it took the caring approach of at least one LCC faculty member to guide him along his way.

“Attending LCC was a stroke of luck for me,” Mondragon recalled of the days after his graduation from Albuquerque’s Valley High in 2013. “I intended to go to the University of New Mexico

(but) I still wanted to play baseball past high school. The program at LCC allowed me to continue to do that, so I chose to go to LCC instead. It turned out to be a beneficial choice for my future career.”

“The experiences at Luna taught me very well about how college works and what it takes to be successful in college,” he said. “Attending Luna helped strengthen me for my future college years.”

Betsy Sanchez, who oversaw the pre-engineering program at the time, was a particularly helpful ally.

“She always made sure I was in the correct classes and was making sure to do all my work to the fullest of my ability,”

Mondragon said. “She also secured scholarships for my brother (Davi) and I to continue our education at Eastern New Mexico University, which set us up for an amazing future. Her kindness also extended to any other LCC student that she talked with ... I will be forever grateful for the help (she) gave me.”

“I decided to pursue the engineering field because I knew I had strengths in math and some sciences,” he said, noting that he’d been enrolled in Advanced Placement math classes throughout high school and did well in them. “I figured that would be the field that would best suit my strengths. The design and creating different things is what piqued my interest the most.”

Although he had a natural aptitude for math and science, Mondragon encountered his share of challenges in finishing his studies.

“The biggest challenge I would talk about is the semesters I took an overloaded class schedule to maintain my double major,” he noted. “I think the credit hours I took was around 18 to 20 for two semesters. The whole school year was comprised of 12- to 15-hour days of classes and homework to stay up to date with my classes. That year took a lot out of me, but it sure has paid off.”

Upon graduation from ENMU, Mondragon secured a job with Oncor Electric Delivery, an electric transmission and distribution company in north-central Texas.

“I work on the protection equipment for high voltage transmission and distribution equipment,” he said. “This job is very fun and technical. I feel accomplished every day from my work and am very happy with the job.”

Mondragon said he’d like to either get further into professional engineering or continue his master’s in electronic engineering.

He’s grateful to Sanchez, whom he called the best teacher, and to his parents. “My mom (Juanita Lujan) always pushed me educationally and made sure I was continuing my education,” he said.

“My dad (Frank Mondragon) showed me how to work hard and have perseverance and drive. My hard work ethic is due to him.”

“The best advice I could give high school students is to always continue your education,” he said. “I can promise you that if you go to college and take it seriously, it will create a tremendous future. College is definitely the hardest thing I’ve done, but it pays itself off in great value.”

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From his childhood days, when he’d accompany his dad into his mechanic’s workshop, his young mind full of wonder about how things worked, Davi Mondragon was a natural fit for the world of engineering.

In school, he did well in math and “loved to build and design things in classes like wood and metal shop.”

Today, Mondragon is employed as a technician for Oncor Electric Delivery in Texas, getting to do what he loves – using his mind and his hands to help provide a vital service to the public.

Mondragon, who used his education at Luna Community College as a springboard to an engineering degree at Eastern New Mexico University, said it’s “an extremely fun and fulfilling job,” that’s given him opportunity to build his career. He also is considering earning his master’s in engineering and potentially

working his way up in the company or moving to a research position at a national laboratory. “The sky is the limit,” he said.

Like his brother Jose, Davi graduated from Albuquerque’s Valley High. He spent plenty of time growing up in Taos, his father Frank’s hometown.

His parents – Frank Mondragon, a mechanic who ran his own business, and Juanita Lujan, a Duke City native who earned an accounting degree from UNM – both were major influences, albeit in different ways. Juanita, he said, “always instilled in me the importance of education.” Frank taught “the importance of a good work ethic and gave me experience working with my hands, which was very fun for me.”

Between its affordability and the fact it provided an opportunity for him to play collegiate baseball, Luna emerged as the college of choice for Mondragon. But he got more out of the experience than he’d anticipated.

“My experience at Luna played a very important role in where I am today and what I was able to do after I left,” he said.

While he felt confident in his academic abilities going into college, Mondragon was unsure of what to do with his life beyond graduation and he didn’t know what he needed to do to get there.

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## Luck...

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“The great instructors at LCC and my advisor helped me not only build on my confidence as a student but find and maximize opportunities that set me up for the future,” he said. “The personal and one-on-one relationship with everyone at Luna was amazing and is something you just don’t get from large universities or junior colleges. At the end of my community college career, I had a lot of experience on my resume and was set up to go to an excellent university.”

In addition to completing his basic core classes and getting individual attention at Luna, Mondragon benefitted through extracurricular activities like visiting university campuses and the state legislature, serving as a student ambassador, and working on a summer research project.

“Luna helped me find out more what I wanted to study when I did move on,” he said. “I always had a general knowledge of what I wanted to do but in the end I had a better focused idea of what to study when I moved on.”

Advisor Betsy Sanchez, Nichole Collins and Lorraine Martinez proved especially helpful. “They all truly cared about my future,” he recalled, “and without a doubt I can say that I wouldn’t be where I am today without them.”

Sanchez and Collins, he said, “inspired me to dream bigger ... and helped me move on to a four-year university.” Sanchez introduced him to the field of engineering and got him to look at several universities. Collins helped interest him in computer science, in which he attained certification.

After graduating from Luna in May 2015 with an associate degree in pre-engineering, Mondragon went on to earn his bachelor’s in engineering and computer science this past May.

“The aspect of understanding how things work and developing new ways to improve products with new technology and designing completely new products intrigued me the most about engineering,” he said. “Also, being able to improve people’s lives through this gives me satisfaction.”

“The advice I have for high school students is to find something that you love doing and work hard at becoming the best at it,” he said. “Life is too short for you to be mediocre and not give it your all. Never make any excuses for yourself because no matter how bad it is, there are others out there who are not getting the opportunities you’re getting, so it is important to make the most out of them.”

## 2018...

Continued from Page 3

Following a site visit and committee hearing in Chicago, the Higher Learning Commission Board voted in July to remove the college from Show-Cause and place the institution on probation. This measure recognized the significant work and changes achieved by the institution over a short period.

Just a few months ago, the college went live with its all-new website. The new site, which is still located at luna.edu, captures the increased levels of sophistication, professionalism and service that can be found throughout the campus.

All this, and so much more, has given Luna Community College reason to celebrate a wonderful 2018. It also sets the stage for a wonderful new year. In the past 12 months, we learned much about our ability to persevere under pressure. We learned much about the undivided support of the communities we serve. However, most important, we learned that we can never be successful if we don’t first face trials.

On behalf of the campus community and board of trustees, thank you for helping make 2018 a wonderful year! Thank you for your support, honesty and for holding us accountable. We wish you a very prosperous new year.