

## **International Students Information about Applying to and Attending the University of New Mexico (UNM)**

Welcome to the admissions process for the International student. If you are prepared to apply for the Department of Mathematics and Statistics graduate programs, go to <http://www.math.unm.edu/general/applications.php> and click on the International Admissions icon.

Once you have applied to UNM, you will receive an email from the Office of International Admissions (IA) and that should include any additional information they will need for your packet. This packet will include official transcripts in both your native language and certified English translations. PLEASE—be sure to get all information requested by IA to them as soon as you possibly can. Your transcripts, TOEFL scores, and GRE scores must go directly to IA, sending them to us will only delay the process unnecessarily. Your letter of intent, recommendations, and supporting materials may come directly to the department now.

IA will not accept unofficial copies of TOEFL or GRE scores. Take your tests early so that ETS will have those to IA in a reasonable time frame. Please do not contact the Department about copies, they just will not work. You must understand that even though IA gives you an identification number of “999something” your packet will not arrive in the Department until it is complete. The financial statement is usually not required to get the packet to us—but everything else they request must be supplied before they forward your complete packet to us.

If you are applying for the February 15 financial aid deadline, you should probably begin your application process by the first of September. This should allow you plenty of time to get all the paperwork required for IA to process your paperwork and get it to us. It is always better to be safe than sorry when you are applying for financial aid.

The Department of Mathematics and Statistics generally awards less than a dozen Teaching Assistantships each year divided among the three disciplines. Your ranking for a TA will depend on your transcripts and an excellent GPA, a high TOEFL or ESL score, and strong letters of recommendation from professors in your departments. Competition is very hard and there are many applicants vying for only a few TA's in each discipline. If at all possible, you should begin saving money so that you can support yourself through your first year of classes at UNM. As a foreign graduate student, you must take 9 hours of coursework to remain in compliance with Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). Out of state tuition for 9 hours is currently \$4,616.00 per semester.

The Department does offer International Students the opportunity to apply for Part-time teaching Instructor positions. These positions are referred to as "Special TA's" and although they do not pay tuition, they make it possible for you to pay in-state tuition and for 9 hours that is currently \$1,366.00. The pay is around \$2,750\* per class and you would only be allowed to teach one class as a foreign student. The criteria for receiving a "Special TA" are the same as for a regular TA and we do consider special TA's for regular TA's as they become available. Remember that your spoken English must be excellent to be able to teach classes in the Department. Not only must you be able to speak English well, your comprehension of spoken English must be excellent as well.

Some helpful methods of improving your English are watching American movies with subtitles, watch English spoken programs without subtitles to increase your comprehension, and listen to news broadcasts in English. If possible, find a native English speaker to practice your conversational English and to test you on your English comprehension. Remember, just speaking is not enough you have to understand those who speak to you in English. This is critical to your success as a student and teacher at UNM.

### **NOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED AND WERE AWARDED FINANCIAL AID OR CAN COME ON YOUR OWN, WHAT NEXT?**

If you were accepted into the program with financial aid, IA will notify you immediately as will the Department with an official letter of acceptance. You must notify the Department immediately of your acceptance, you may email your acceptance. That email will be forwarded to IA and they will begin your admission process. You should maintain the official letter from the Department for your visa process as it will state the amount of your stipend, the length of your support, the number of hours of tuition you will receive each year, and the fact that you will have insurance provided by the University. IA will send you an I-20 and an admission letter from the University of New Mexico. All these forms will be needed when you begin your visa process. Let us encourage you to begin that process immediately upon receipt of all these letters and the I-20.

Since September 11, 2002, immigration to the U.S. has undergone necessary changes. One of those changes is the difficulty in obtaining student visas. Begin your process as soon as you possibly can. If you have been accepted by the Department, you may contact the Coordinator, Program Advisement at [dgeorge@math.unm.edu](mailto:dgeorge@math.unm.edu) for assistance in any supporting paperwork.

Once you obtain your visa, you will be ready to come to UNM. You will be expected to be here a maximum of 30 days before the semester will begin. You

\*There is a slight possibility that this amount will increase to \$3,000 per semester.

will attend an orientation through the Office of International Programs (OIPS) two weeks before your classes begin. If you have a TA, you will report for work the Monday before classes begin as that is when your contract begins. If you do not arrive until that week, your first check may be delayed a week or two as all your paperwork will be processed when you sign your contract.

The week before classes begin, all graduate students will have orientation in the Department. There will be mandatory training for TA's and you will be expected to register for a special class offered International TA's called ITARC. That information will be included in your acceptance letter.

If you receive a "Special TA", the process will be identical for you except that you will not have to take the ITARC class until you have a regular TA. The special TA will pay around \$550\* per month so you will need to have saved enough money to pay for your tuition as well as to supplement your living expenses. A sample budget is included at the end of this information.

### **THE CULTURE OF ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

As a foreign student, you will no doubt suffer from acute culture shock when you first arrive in New Mexico. The first thing that will surprise you is that this is not a desert at all, but really very green and lovely. The weather may be rather warm as it will be August when you get here and it will not start getting chilly until late October early November.

The people of Albuquerque are very friendly, but not generally outgoing so you will not be overwhelmed as you might be in more gregarious environments. There is an attitude of what we refer here to as "mañana", which means "tomorrow" in Spanish. If you don't like to wait for things or have a type A personality, this may be a cultural difference that you will have to deal with early in your stay. If you are seeking a laid back, slower paced environment then Albuquerque will fit your needs.

The weather here is temperate and only on several occasions during the winter does it get really cold. Last winter we had very little snow in Albuquerque, but plenty of snow on the mountain nearby to make skiing available until mid-March on the Sandia Ski Slopes. There is usually plenty of snow to ski in Santa Fe every winter. Springs are over fairly quickly, summer weather usually lasts until the end of September, fall is very short lasting until around mid-December. Winters are fairly mild with little snow and not too many days below freezing.

There is a lot to do recreationally around Albuquerque. Bike trails criss-cross the

\*This amount will be \$600.00 if the salary is increased as anticipated.

city. Johnson Center on the campus offers not only swimming, tennis, racquetball, basketball, football, indoor and outdoor tracks, and much more they also offer adventure get-away tours for UNM students at reasonable prices. There are hiking, camping, and many outdoor activities for rugged individuals.

For the more refined tastes, there is the Ovation Series at Popejoy Hall on the UNM campus that features all plays, musical programs, dance programs, and speakers. The city itself offers numerous museums, a quaint Old Town area where you can shop or just absorb the 300 year old history of Albuquerque, a symphony orchestra, as well as a little theatre group and a civic light opera.

There are numerous India pueblos around the Albuquerque area and these pueblos open themselves to the public for several of their traditional feast days. Jemez Pueblo has the Corn Festival every fall. You may meet Native Americans who will invite you to attend feast days at their pueblo or on the Navajo Nation which are open to the Public. Remember, some feast days for the Native Americans are private and not open to the public. Also, when on reservations—either the pueblos or the Navajo Nation—please abide by the rules of that community. Often photographs are not allowed, so be sure and check with someone official before you start snapping pictures.

Festivals abound in the Albuquerque area. Yearly festivals include; the Bernalillo Wine Festival every Labor Day, the Greek Festival held in October, the International Balloon Fiesta October, and the New Mexico State Fair September. Several International shows come to Albuquerque, including the International Arabian Horse Show. There is a racetrack at the NM Fairgrounds and until December 2004 a flea-market is held at the fairgrounds each weekend.

Albuquerque has a small city feeling, even though it is the largest city in New Mexico. The total population of New Mexico is around 1.5 million people. Over half a million people live in the Albuquerque metro area. If you are looking for an urban area with lots of space and fairly decent traffic, then Albuquerque will fit your bill. The city offers numerous movie theatres, plenty of shopping opportunities, a semi-pro baseball team, concerts by famous musicians across all music venues from Ozzy Osburne's "Ozzfest" to country entertainers like Reba McIntire. The city boasts nice parks, plenty of cultural aspects such as a zoo, a botanical garden, a Nature Center on the Rio Grande River, and even a beach! Tingley Beach is currently being renovated to bring it back to it former state in the late 1960's and 70's when it was a popular tourist attraction for people traveling Route 66 to California.

## **HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO LIVE IN ALBUQUERQUE?**

The most expensive thing in Albuquerque is the rent. A decent 1 bedroom, furnished apartment will usually be \$500-550 per month and that may or may not include utilities. We highly recommend that you seek a roommate to share rent. You can find a decent two bedroom for between \$625-750 per month, but with two people sharing the rent you cut your expenses dramatically. You should try to find a place that has utilities included whenever possible to avoid the costs of having utilities connected, etc. It would also be better for you to purchase the use of a cellular phone rather than a land line as the cost is cheaper for the cell. High speed internet access is available by using Comcast Digital cable, but this charge may be fairly high. There is student housing on campus and you can check that through the web pages at <http://www.unm.edu/~reshalls/index2.htm>.

Food is reasonable in Albuquerque. If you don't want to cook, there are enough restaurants to keep you dining out for a year without going to the same place twice. A wide variety of dining is available from excellent oriental restaurants of every description to vegan to pizza and Italian to Mediterranean to Latin to New Mexican to plain old steak and potatoes to all types of regional US dining choices. You name it—there is probably a restaurant serving that type of food. There are many reasonably priced restaurants in town, but remember it is always cheaper to prepare your own meals.

Books will be a big expense, but you can buy at the UNM bookstore, on-line at Amazon or Barnes and Nobel, or at a number of text book stores around the city. Occasionally, you can buy used books from students, but most of them like to hang on to their texts, so this option is fairly rare..

Please take a moment and take a tour of the campus by clicking on <http://www.unm.edu/%7Evisitor/index.html>. Our campus is easy to navigate and although there are 25,000 students on the main campus—it never seems like there are that many students around.