LOS ALAMOS

Student Services Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2026

MEET OUR NEIGHBOR: LAIRD ARI DAFORGE



Few people know that a short walk from our campus will lead you to workshop custom built to restore elaborately designed antique instruments. Laird Ari Daforge, a former music student at UNM-Los Alamos and a current resident of the Denver Steels area, has dedicated the last few years to restoring instruments, including clavichords and guitars. His greatest passion, though, is the harpsichord, and he has restored numerous instruments in his backyard shop since returning to Los Alamos.

Ari is from Los Alamos, and he graduated from Los Alamos High School in 1983. His first passion was acting, which he then went on to study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Albuquerque and at John Robert Powers. He also studied fashion and modelling in Paris.

Ari gave up acting and moved back to Los Alamos during the pandemic to take care of his mother. There were not a lot of opportunities for acting jobs here, but he remembered having been introduced to instrument restoration by retired meteorologist Douglas Barclay. Barclay mentored Ari in the English harpsichord tradition, and taught him the importance of using costly hardwoods in the restoration. Since the pandemic forced him to spend extra time at home, Ari decided to dedicate himself to this craft. He started to set up his shop with custom tools and jigs to help him to precisely replicate the detailed woodwork of these fine instruments.

Harpsichord restoration is exacting and expensive. The hardest part is making sure the jacks—the part that connects the plectrum to the key—is built precisely. The plectrum is the element that strikes the string. Even a millimeter deviation can make a jack useless. To accomplish this, Ari built a precision jig to position the fine pieces as he shapes them.

The expense comes both from buying damaged instruments and from acquiring the wood and materials needed for the restoration. Ari has paid up to $3,500 for a 9-foot-long copy of a 1745 J.D. Dulcken harpsichord. It may seem like a high price, but the detail and high-quality materials make it worth it. He uses primarily Swiss pearwood for the jacks, but he also has to purchase aged yellow cedar and African blackwood—the most expensive wood in the world—for other parts. He uses authentic rabbit glue, saying, “I want everything to be just like they used back then. I think it makes it better.”

Ari has sold all the restored harpsichords he has completed. You can reach him at daforgeari@gmail.com.



MLK, JR. STATE COMMISSION NONVIOLENCE COHORT

The New Mexico Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission is seeking participants in a nonviolence cohort to learn more about nonviolence and navigating conflict. Participants will commit to completing an 18-hour online class. Participation is open to students, staff, and faculty.

NONVIOLENCE COHORT I

The New Mexico Martin Luther King Jr. State Commission's Nonviolence Cohort invites community members to explore Dr. King's principles of nonviolence and apply them in everyday life. Through learning, dialogue and practical activities, participants will build skills to navigate conflict, strengthen relationships and respond to injustice with purpose and compassion.

Whether in schools, workplaces or neighborhoods, each participant can help build the Beloved Community. We encourage anyone interested in advancing peace and positive change to express interest in joining the cohort.

Scan the QR code to complete the interest form. If you need additional information please email info@mlkjrc.nm.gov or call 505.222.6466.

IMPORTANT DATES

November 6: Last day to drop without permission of Student Services

November 2: Registration opens

November 26-29: Thanksgiving. Campus closed. No classes.

December 3: Last day to drop with dean's permission (talk to your advisor)

December 7-12: Final exams

December 24 - January 2: Winter break, campus closed.

CAREER CORNER

Missed LANL's recent resume workshop? No worries, you're not too late! Make an appointment with Career Services Manager Brittany Carpenter (brcarpenter@unm.edu) and she'll share all of the tips she learned. You can also meet LANL at their next career event in Española on Nov. 5, 2026. For more information, see the flyer below.



REGISTRATION OPENS ON MONDAY, NOV. 2

Registration for spring semester starts on Monday, Nov. 9. Set up an appointment with your advisor through StudentHub or by calling us at (505) 662-5919. Also, don't forget to complete your FAFSA. Contact Jenny Duran if you need any assistance: jenduran@unm.edu.

FOLLOW US

SAN ILDEFONSO PAINTER ROMANDO VIGIL (TSE-YE-MU)



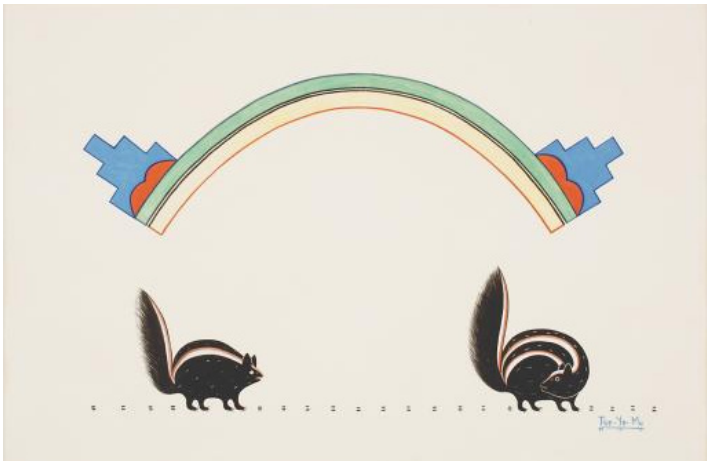
November is Native American Heritage Month. This year, we are featuring San Ildefonso painter Romando Vigil (Tse-Ye-Mu, 1902 – 1978).

Vigil was from a family of potters, and he was drawn to the geometrical patterns of the San Ildefonso potting tradition. It is possible that he would have gone on to be a potter, but he fell in love with painting when he was introduced to the discipline by Elizabeth Robbins, a teacher at the Santa Fe Indian School. Robbins taught her students to use easels and to paint things they were familiar with.

Working alongside other students at the school, Vigil developed a distinctive style. He focused on people and animals. He frequently portrayed Pueblo ceremonies and scenes from daily life. His style focused on the central figures, clearly outlined and brightly colored. Sometimes, backgrounds could be geometric patterns or simple items to create a sense of place, such as a cactus. More commonly, the background would be left entirely to the imagination of the viewer.



Male and Female figures from the Buffalo Dance, 1932, Spencer Museum of Art



two skunks and a rainbow, unknown date, Spencer Museum of Art

Vigil studied a variety of art to help him develop his style. He travelled to Europe twice to develop an appreciation for their traditions. He seems to have been most influenced by the Rococo movement, and his later art makes extensive use of repeated patterns with subtle changes.

In the 1950s, Vigil worked as a line artist and painter for Disney Studios. Learning the "Disney style" influenced him to focus on clear, heavy lines and to exaggerate the size of the elements that he wanted viewers to notice.

The vivid, symmetrical style of Vigil and other San Ildefonso painters became emblematic of Native American art, and it inspired design practices throughout the country. As Native American motifs influenced art worldwide in the 20th century, it was this style they copied. It is possible that San Ildefonso rivals Dozza, Italy as the small village with the largest influence on the visual arts.



Women in the costume of the Basket Dance, 1932, Spencer Museum of Art

PHI THETA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY MEETING

Interested students and members are invited to attend our Wednesday meetings. We hope to see you there!



FIRST GENERATION PROUD CELEBRATION

Next week, UNM-LA is recognizing and celebrating our first-generation members of campus — those who are the first in their families to attend college and/or attain a degree. We are proud of you and honored to be a part of your educational journey!

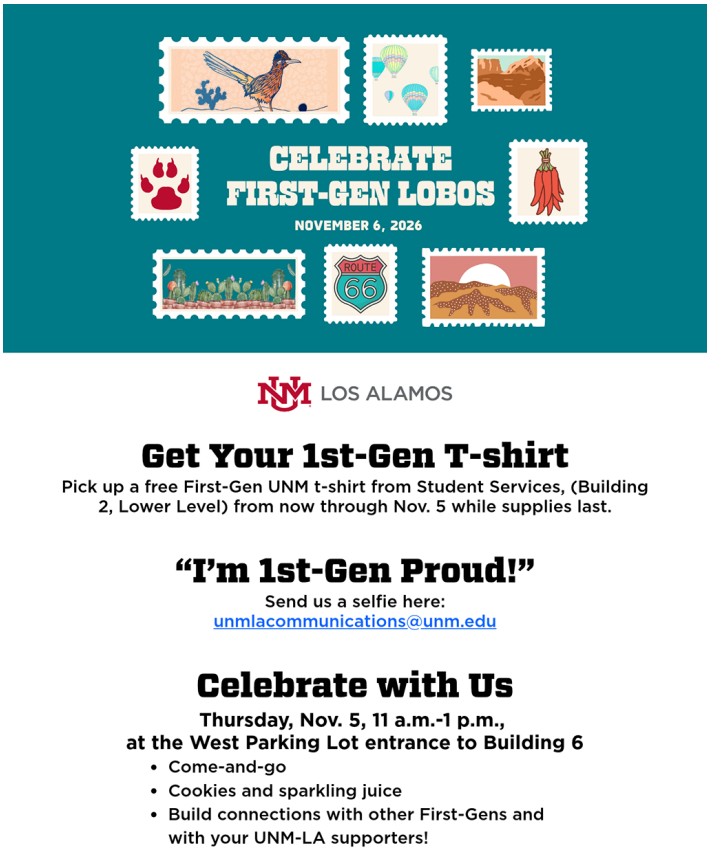
Now through Nov. 5, if you consider yourself a first-gen student, come pick up a free "First-Gen Proud" t-shirt from the Student Services office in the lower level of Building 2 (while supplies last).

Now through Nov. 8, send us a selfie with a tag line, "I am First-Gen Proud!" or "I Support First-Gen!" Group photos are encouraged, too. Email them to unmlacommunications@unm.edu.

We'll post a collage of them in Student Services for the rest of November.

On Thursday, Nov. 5, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m., everyone is invited to join the celebration with cookies and sparkling juice. This is a come-and-go event for the whole campus, an opportunity to get to know each other better, share our stories and build relationships across campus to support you throughout your college experience. When you stop by, grab a gray Lobo shield shirt!

We hope to see you there!

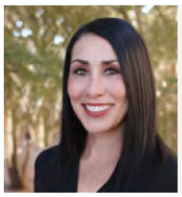


ADA STATEMENT

The University of New Mexico-Los Alamos is committed to the recognition and the proactive pursuit of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The University makes reasonable accommodation for religious observances, national origin practices of a student and to the known physical or mental limitations of a qualified student, unless such accommodations have the end result of fundamentally altering a program or service or placing an undue hardship on the operation of the University. Qualified students with disabilities should contact Student Services for information regarding accommodations in the academic and/or employment setting. If you have a special need and require an auxiliary aide and/or service, please contact Student Services at (505) 662-5919.

STUDENT SERVICES

Student Services is a central hub of information for prospective, current, and former students to find assistance and answers to questions about admissions, financial aid, registration, academic advising, career services, and other resources on campus.



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Admissions

The Office of Admissions can help if you have questions or are ready to apply to UNM-Los Alamos. The Office of Admissions can provide application instructions for degree-seeking, non-degree, dual credit/concurrent, international, senior, or transfer students. Complete details can be found on the Admissions page: losalamos.unm.edu/admissions.

Financial Aid

The Office of Financial Aid provides information on financial resources available to degree-seeking students. These resources may include scholarships, grants, and loans from the federal or state government, independent organizations, and/or UNM-LA itself. UNM-LA determines financial aid eligibility from the FAFSA, so please take time to file this document online every year. Don't assume you are ineligible—there are many opportunities to pursue.

Enrollment Services

The Office of Enrollment Services at UNM-LA processes high school and other college transcripts of current and former students. The registrar can also answer questions about dual credit and concurrent enrollment, VA benefits, and graduation requirements.

Academic Advising & Student Success

Academic advisors can provide guidance through the admission process, degree and course selection, and registration. Advisors also assist with changing a major, following up instructors' early alerts, filing graduation petitions, and planning for baccalaureate work. Advisors can also help resolve registration errors. Degree-seeking students must meet with an advisor before registering for each semester to check that their chosen classes will continue to make progress toward their degrees and to have their advising hold lifted. The Director of Student Affairs coordinates ADA accommodation services for students, and oversees academic advisement, student retention, and success initiatives.

Career Services

Student Services offers career services to assist students with self-exploration, selecting a major, and opportunities for gaining experience in their chosen fields. Career services also include resume reviews, internship connections, job fairs, quantifying or translating skills, sharing job postings, and building connections between employers and our students.

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