New Mexico Junior College played a significant role in my becoming the successful professional I am today. I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Temporary High Risk Pool, which is also known as a Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan (PCIP), created by the Affordable Care Act in 2010. Oklahoma was awarded $60 million dollars to administer our PCIP program from 2010 until the changes in the healthcare marketplace commence in 2014. The entire focus of the program is to provide an avenue for individuals in Oklahoma with pre-existing medical conditions to purchase insurance through the Temporary High Risk Pool at a rate comparable to what they would pay if they could purchase insurance in the commercial market. When I started NMJC in 1974, I would have never thought I would be administering such an important program.

Although I did not grow up in Hobbs, I spent every summer there since age 5 with my father, Bill Rash, so I was very familiar with NMJC. However, I lived in Oklahoma with my mother, and all my friends were planning to go to OU and OSU, and so was I. Well, at least I thought I was.

My Dad convinced me that he would be very concerned about me being at a large college at the age of 17, yet he expressed to me how important it was for me to graduate from college because no one in his family or my mother’s family had ever done so. So after graduation, with a few tears (and still a little mad at my Dad), I was off to live permanently in Hobbs to attend NMJC, which I started the summer after high school graduation.

My major was Nursing, as I had plans to become a Nurse Anesthetist. Once there, I had the most wonderful professors in the world — the kind that really cared if you made it or not: namely, Joyce Gombar, Jo Ann Maher, Phyllis Anderson, Hazel Thompson, Donald Green, and Don Whittington. They were tough, but they cared, and it was specifically Ms. Gombar and Ms. Maher who made sure that I applied at the University of New Mexico to obtain my Bachelor of Science degree. And, of course, by that time they had opened up the entire world of nursing to me, and I no longer wanted to be a Nurse Anesthetist.

At UNM, I became very interested in public health and public health policy, and that is where I have spent my entire career. A graduate degree from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in 1985 allowed me to really focus on health policy, and in 1989, I became the Director of the Oklahoma Office of Rural Health. From there, I moved to a large hospital system and started and administered a Medicaid HMO for almost 10 years, and later I started and served as the Executive Director of a federally qualified health center for that same hospital system until I assumed my current position in October 2010.

I could not have asked for a better career than the one that I have had, and it all became a reality because of my Dad’s great advice to get a solid foundation at NMJC, the best junior college in the United States!!

— Tanya Case

Competitive Election Places Case on NASCHIP Board
by Derrick Miller, The Duncan Banner, Duncan, Oklahoma (10/17/2011)

Tanya Case knows health care, and her latest position is a reflection of that expertise.

Case, a Duncan native, was elected to the National Association of State Comprehensive Health Insurance plans. The admitted long-titled organization, often referred to as “NASCHIP,” exists to enhance the ability of state comprehensive health insurance plans to better serve constituents.

NASCHIP represents states with high-risk pools. High-risk pools are for people who cannot get health insurance any other way, whether it’s because of lack of income or pre-existing conditions.

Case is the executive director of Oklahoma’s Temporary High Risk Pool, which is also known as the Preexisting Condition Insurance Plan. She helps people who haven’t been able to get health insurance because they have a pre-existing condition.

The temporary risk pool is a way for her to get people health insurance when they need it most. “When people do get insurance, it not only helps them, it helps all medical providers get paid,” Case said. “It’s a win-win for everyone.”

Case was elected to the NASCHIP board of directors by a vote of state representatives. It was a competition election, and she noted, “I’m very proud to represent Oklahoma.”

Not only does NASCHIP represent states with high-risk pools, it also lobbies at the federal level. “It’s important to be on a board like this because of all the health care reform going on,” Case said. The NASCHIP group has frequent meetings through phone conferences. She said the board does meet face to face a few times a year. “We address issues that affect all states,” Case said. “One of the big things we are working on is the Affordable Health Care Plan.”

There are 10 people on the NASCHIP board of directors. In her position with the temporary high-risk pools, Case reports to another board each month. She said that board is also active and is one she served on for six years before taking the executive director position in the temporary high-risk pools. Because she was working for that board of directors, she could no longer serve on the board.

Case may be keeping busy between her job and her newly elected position, but she’s enjoying every minute of it. “I feel very honored,” Case said.
CASH FOR COLLEGE SATURDAY
FINANCIAL AID and SCHOLARSHIP WORKSHOPS
Saturday, February 25, 2012 • 9:00 am - Noon
Training & Outreach Facility

ORIENTATION
February 3 • March 2 • April 13 • May 4
2:00 - 4:00 pm
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 214

All students are invited to attend to either acquaint themselves with NMJC policies and practices or to review campus policies. The student portal and Blackboard are covered in the sessions.

PRESIDENT’S HONOR LIST

Heather Adams
Adriana Alire
Daniel Allen
Aidee Alvarado
Lori Bickley
Kenneth Boike
Lesianne Brown
Christina Bryant
Amy Casaus
Gabriel Chavez
John Cook
Crusita Cortez
David Davis
Kimberly Davis
Gustavo Díaz
John Dubose
Richard Fialho
Brittany Fuentez
Bailey Gage
Amy Garrett
Mary Gentry
Charlene Gibbs
Brian Gibson
Nicholas Gonzales
Carlos Gonzalez
Fiona Goodell
Leslie Goodrich
Nathan Gordy
Amanda Hernandez
Megan Howes
Kelsey Hughes
Nikki Kerby
Shelly King
Noel Magallanez
Leo Martinez
Erin Miller-Gibbs
Evangelina Molina
Domitilia Montes
Aksana Nelson
Chyanne Pacheco
Janet Pilkington
Sixto Porras
Brittany Quintana
Micheal Ramirez
Trey Regan
Ray Reimer
Julian Reynolds
Kristin Roberts
Abigail Rodriguez
Shaylan Savell
Chandi Sharma
Terri Skinner
Blake Smith
Karlye Smith
Amber Sosa
Jimmy Staus
Audra Taylor
Dakota Thornton
Herbey Trevizo
Christopher Valdez
Elizabeth Valenzuela
Rebecca Venegas
Danielle Vraska
Ashley Wallace
Sheila Woosley
Jasmin Wright
Alyssa Young

Late registration for Spring 2012 continues through January 23. Sign up now for the classes of your choice. (575) 392-4510 or 1-800-657-6260 or www.nmjc.edu

Dr. John Gratton, VP for Instruction for 6 1/2 years at NMJC, is now President of NMSU - Carlsbad. Guy Kesner, NMJC Board Chair, said NMJC saw a significant increase in enrollment for dual credit and online classes under Gratton. John was active in the community through Hobbs Rotary, Hobbs Chamber of Commerce, First United Methodist Church, and many more organizations. President McCleery said, “John will be a compliment to Carlsbad, but it is sad for NMJC because he is truly one of the finest professionals I’ve worked with. I didn’t ever have to worry if details were covered. Anytime someone gets an opportunity like this, we ought to stand on the street corner and celebrate. We are happy for him but sad for NMJC.” Congratulations, John. Your upbeat personality is truly an “award-winning” quality that NMSU - Carlsbad will soon experience!

We will miss you, Dr. John Gratton!!

Top: Dr. McCleery presents John Gratton with the Pillars of Education award for his years of service to NMJC during a reception held in John’s honor.
VICE PRESIDENT’S HONOR LIST

Claudia Acosta
Ryan Backus
Jolie Baldwin
Kristen Bates
Steven Boden
Michael Bogren
Lyndeana Bowen
Phillip Briggs
Jaushua Brisco
Brian Calderon
Katherine Carr
Priscilla Carrasco
Ana Luisa Castillo
Chrysalis Chandler
Michael Chavez
Christy Cole
Fernando Cortez
Adrienne Dudevich
Alexis Durham
Stephanie Elkindu
Cindy Espino
Ayana Estrada
Samara Estrada
Angie Flores
Chelsea Fons
Jonathan Gallegos
Angela Garcia
Benjamin Garcia
Victoria Garcia
Debbie Gilmore
Ricky Gomez
Meagan Gonzalez
Cynthia Gonzalez
Krista Gonzalez
Irene Guzman
Maria Guzman
Jacob Hafer
Logan Harkey
Kerri Harvey
Adriana Hernandez
Santiago Herrera
Bethany James
Jodi Jameson
Yessenia Jaquez
Melissa Jimenez
Felipe Jaurez
Karina Juarez
Stephanie Lerma
Lauren Lewallen
Leanna Lopez
Annette Lujan
Jeremiah Langer
Debbie Magdaleno
Caitlin Mares
Carolyn Marcelino
Jeffery Martinez
Christabelle Martinez
Virginia Martinez
Omar Murillo
Jessica Neufeld
Meredith Organ
Brittany Padilla
Jasmine Pagan
Nicholas Punkratz
Timothy Pearce
Kimberly Pearson
Dale Putnam
Brittany Richburg
Veronica Rivera
Marissa Rodriguez
Ariel Samaniego
Rebecca Sauls
Clayton Seil
Daniel Serrato
Emma Smith
Bilma Sorto
Ryan Springer
April Spurluck
Cecil Swenson
Krista Swensen
Priscilla Tembe
Mayra Torres
Veronica Torres
Alejo Valenzuela
Nelson Valenzuela
Ada Wilson
Hunter Wakefield
Aaron Weaver
Darby Weldy
Christopher Wilcox

Docents Needed!
The Western Heritage Museum (WHM) will hold a luncheon and training session on Monday, January 30 at 11:30 a.m. for their docents and anyone who might be interested in becoming a docent. Docents are volunteers who help guide visitors through the museum or a specific exhibit, such as Eyes on Earth, the newest travelling exhibit opening February 1. Docents also have the opportunity to help cut out other aspects of the Museum, such as special events or installing an exhibit, depending on where their interests lie. Anyone who is interested in knowing more about opportunities available at WHM and the travelling exhibits that come through, please make plans to attend this special luncheon and training. For more information about the docent program, please contact Mary Lyle at 575-492-2679.

LET IT SNOW!
NMJC CAMPUS
JANUARY 2012

The Foundation Scholarship application for Fall 2012 - Spring 2013 is now ready for students to print out and complete. Students should apply immediately and begin requesting letters of recommendations from their professors. The application can be found at http://nmjc.edu/studentservices/financialaid/scholarshipawardaliment.aspx.
2011 STAFF EMPLOYEE of the YEAR
Connie Hanson, Administrative Assistant, Enrollment Management

CONGRATULATIONS

Estephani Acosta
Nicole Acosta
Ryan Alguire
Karina Antillon
Jerika Aranda
Ashley Baldonado
Morgan Bingham
Marvin Binney
Lacey Borehardt
Luisa Cadena
Regan Calvert
Kassandra Castruita
Eddie Chavarria
Bob Cooky
Acenel Cruz
Juddt Cruz
Desiree Duarte
Matthew Dunlap
Frances Duran
Liliann Echeverria
Janeeka Evans
Laura Franco
Stephanie Franks
Nayeli Gonzalez
Samantha Goos
Amanda Hayes
Staci Hayes
Ashley Hatzeltaker
Ashley Hernandez
Rocio Hernandez
Jodi Herrera
Johnathan Hoffman
Nichole Howard
Ebomee Jones
Zach Kerby
Jennifer Kirby
Kimberly Lara
Emily Luna
Arumah Mahajana
Atibal Marquez
Heli Mendonza
Albert Montoya
Jennifer Newton
Jacqueline Norton
Maira Orona
Adrian Orntin
Rebecca Palacios
Krystal Patrick
Samantha Penick
Savanta Ragain
Daisy Reazon
Alten Rice
Marisela Rivera
Melissa Roberts
Desira Roy
Ashley Russell
Jesenia Saenz
Michael Schluhach
Brittanie Stratton
Samuel Street
Adriana Torres
Brittany Whitmire
Priscilla Wilson
Juan Zamora

2011 MAINTENANCE/SECURITY EMPLOYEE of the YEAR
John Daricek, Security Personnel

DEANS’ HONOR LIST
At NMJC’s January 2012 Board meeting, four donors received NMJC’s Pillars of Education awards for their sponsorship of NMJC’s Employee of the Year awards, which recognize outstanding faculty, support staff, and maintenance/security personnel. Dr. McCleery commended each of them for their significant commitment and contributions not only to NMJC but also to the Lea County community.

Pictured left, top to bottom: Debra Hicks, Pettigrew and Associates, P.A.; Zane Bergman, First American Bank; Joe Puckett, Wells Fargo Bank; and David Sadler, Hobbs Rotary. Not pictured are Tate Branch, Tate Branch Auto Group; and David Pyeatt, Elliott and Waldron Title.
FACULTY IN FOCUS: Joel Keranen

NMJC physics and math professor Joel Keranen is proof that numbers can take you places, not only across the country, but also around the world.

Keranen, a transplant from Michigan, stumbled onto a part-time job that enables him to take a cruise every summer—on Navy ships teaching math and physics. Unlike luxury cruise liners, however, these ships provide only the most basic of sleeping arrangements, which Keranen sometimes has to share with up to eight other men. Keranen, who is generally offered the top “rack,” or bunk, insists that it is not really that bad. “It’s actually kind of cool because it ends up rocking you to sleep,” said Keranen. “It’s real luxury, though, when you’re in the officers’ quarters, which only sleep two people, two high, in a room.”

Keranen, who taught in four other states before making New Mexico home, has spent the past nine summers aboard ship teaching for the Navy College. “It’s like being in a regular classroom, except you have books sliding off tables onto the floor;” Keranen laughed. “Seriously, it’s actually very much like being at NMJC. I teach the same types of classes.”

According to Keranen, while the ships range in their particular journeys and length at sea each summer, he has enjoyed travels to Japan, Crete, Panama, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Peru with the Navy College program.

The 44-year-old professor obtained his bachelor’s degree in Applied Physics from Michigan Technological University, and his two master’s degrees in Mathematics and Physics from the University of Illinois. He then taught in Oklahoma, South Carolina, Arizona, and Michigan before deciding to move to New Mexico.

According to Keranen, he and NMJC have been a good fit. “This has been the best place to work, or I would have just kept on moving,” said Keranen, who has been teaching at NMJC since 2001. “People in this community are friendly, my supervisors are supportive, and I have several highly motivated students every semester.”

Keranen’s supervisor, Kelly Holaday, who serves as Dean of Business, Math and Sciences at NMJC, believes that the students’ motivation derives from Keranen himself, who teaches courses ranging from Intermediate Algebra and Calculus to Tech Math and Physics. “Joel is an exceptionally creative physics professor,” said Holaday. “He has the desire and ability to actually make physics fun.”

Keranen, who is an avid bicyclist, estimates that math and physics students, upon graduation, could expect to find jobs in several different industries, with salaries ranging from $40,000 to $80,000, dependent on the education level obtained and the industry chosen.

“Students with degrees in physics are jack of all trades,” Keranen joked. “They can get jobs in research development, engineering, defense, national labs and, of course, in teaching. People would be surprised where these students find jobs. They’re really everywhere.”

When Keranen is not teaching one of his six classes or sailing around the world, he likes kicking back with “a good technical science journal” or a comparative religion book. “I think that people should enjoy life, and I try to be a good person,” said Keranen of his life philosophy.

Judging from the sound of things, this is one physics professor who might just have discovered the formula we’ve all been looking for.
Calendar of Events

SPRING 2012 CLASSES BEGIN
January 17

GED TESTING
January 26
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Mammoth Hunters
January 27 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The First Well Diggers
February 10 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

GED TESTING
February 23
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Potter Makers
February 24 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Pearlers
March 9 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

GED TESTING
March 22
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Trail Drivers
March 23 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

CUT-A-THON
March 31
Watson Hall, Cosmetology
Contact: Maria Vick, (575) 492-2850 or mvick@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Water Seekers
April 13 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

GED TESTING
April 19
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

PTK INDUCTION
April 24 @ 7:00 pm
Watson Hall, Room 101
Contact: Maria Vick, (575) 492-2850 or mvick@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Buffalo Soldiers
April 27 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

COSMETOLOGY PINNING
April 28 @ 2:00 pm
Watson Hall, Room 101
Contact: Maria Vick, (575) 492-2850 or mvick@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Homesteaders
May 5 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The Wildcats
May 18 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

GED TESTING
May 24
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

BROWN BAG LUNCH SERIES: The New Energy Pioneers
June 1 @ 11:30 am
Western Heritage Museum Complex & Lea County Cowboy Hall of Fame
Contact: (575) 392-6730 or westernheritagemuseumcomplex.com

GED TESTING
June 21
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

GED TESTING
July 19
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu

GED TESTING
August 23
Ben Alexander Student Learning Center, Room 145
Contact: Jerry Hamm, (575) 492-2592 or jhamm@nmjc.edu
Celebrate the Centennial with NMJC’s Pannell Library

Juried Art Fair
Theme: Enchantment
Submissions from local artists, NMJC students, and NMJC staff: April 22-29, 2012

“Lincoln: The Constitution & the Civil War”
Exhibit on display May 4 - June 7, 2012
“Abe Lincoln” Meet & Greet: May 24, 2012 2:00 - 4:00 pm
Program: May 24, 2012 7:00pm, Watson Hall Theatre

Book Discussion: Lincoln and the Civil War
Discussions with Dwight Pitcaithley:
University Center Rm. 216, 1:00 - 3:00 pm, Fall 2012:
September 8 & 22, October 6 & 20, and November 3

Emerging Writer’s Contest
Poetry & Short Story Submissions from previously unpublished writers: October 1 - November 9, 2012
Reception & announcement of winners: November 9, 2:00 pm

For more information, please contact Mary Tuuytschaevs, Director, NMJC Pannell Library at (575) 492-2873 or mtuytschaevs@elinnlib.org