

Leonard Prairie is a financial aid officer at the University of Mexico's Health Sciences Center, with five years of experience in financial aid with both the UNM main campus and UNM's Health Sciences Center. He is also a proud graduate of the University of New Mexico, where he earned a bachelor's degree from the Anderson School of Management with a focus in marketing.

His career in higher education spans two decades, beginning at the University of New Mexico's Los Alamos campus, working primarily with the office of instruction. His focus shifted to student services, where he worked in the communications center before finding his way to financial aid, where he takes great pleasure in assisting students with their financial aid.

He continues to contribute by participating in the 2025 SWASFAA planning committee and delivering presentations at both the SWASFAA super conference and NMASFAA min-conference. Additionally, being honored with the 2025 Philo Brasher Emerging Leadership Award.



Mr. Leonard Joseph Prairie

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Summary

- With two decades of experience in higher education, I have developed a strong expertise in areas such as financial aid, admissions, and registration. My skill set also encompasses data entry, effective communication strategies and presentation development. Additionally, I possess advanced proficiency in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL).

Education

Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing

- August-2005 to May-2013 University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM

Associate of Arts in Pre-Business Administration

- Aug-2003 to May-2005 University of New Mexico-
Los Alamos Los Alamos, NM

Diploma

- Aug-1997 to May-2001 Bernalillo High School Bernalillo, NM

Work Experience

University of New Mexico, Health Sciences Center, Financial Aid Office **Financial Aid Officer**

- **October 2022- Present**
- Review and assesses eligibility of financial aid for students within UNM's Health Science Center.
- Exercises professional judgement in determining attendance increases and unusual circumstances.
- Provide approvals or disapproval of loan requests and reviewing for signed promissory notes and entrance loan counseling. Thorough examinations of tax-related documents, W2 forms and other relevant tax information, to ensure proper verification.
- Provide guidance regarding student financial aid through various channels, including in-person meetings, telephone conversations, or zoom sessions.
- Oversee undergrad programs, including Dental Hygiene, Emergency Medical Services, Radiological Sciences and various other Health Sciences programs.
- Oversee scholarship processing which includes call for applicants, determining eligibility and disseminating over \$500,000 dollars in a five-year grant cycle.
- Member of the planning committee for the 2025 SWASFAA Super Conference.

University of New Mexico, Enrollment Management, Financial Aid Office
Financial Aid Officer

- **Jan 2020- October 2022**
- Review and assesses eligibility of applications for financial aid. Exercises professional judgement to determine whether adjustments should be made.
- Review for accuracy and provide signature approvals or disapproval of loan applications, promissory notes, and other financial aid documents.
- Conducted orientation sessions, as well as assisted in entrance and exit counseling interviews, in accordance with university, state and federal guidelines.
- Provide information, in person, on the telephone, and through electronic chat or zoom, to students, prospective students, and families regarding student financial aid.
- Organized workshops to students, parents and other individuals interested in financial aid policy and procedures.
- Reviewing, distributing and processing petitions for satisfactory academic progress (SAP) for students who fail to meet established standards. This role involves carefully examining petitions and making informed professional decisions regarding their approval or disapproval.
- Review of unusual enrollment (UNEN) focusing on students who exhibit atypical enrollment patterns concerning their receipt of Federal Pell Grant funds. This process is essential for ensuring compliance with federal regulations and maintaining the integrity of financial aid distributions.

University of New Mexico, Enrollment Management, Communications Office
Senior Student Enrollment Associate

- **Dec 2011- Jan 2020**
- Provided integrated advice and guidance to prospective and current students and their families, faculty, staff, and lower level enrollment associates regarding admissions/transfers, student records, registration, financial aid and/or associated issues. Also, participated in planning and implementation of related programs and initiatives, and resolves or provides support in the resolution of complex, sensitive student enrollment issues as they arise.
- Lead and functionally supervise lower level staff in the execution of defined program/project initiatives related to assigned functional area of operation.
- Developed, wrote, edited, and coordinated production of multimedia informational and/or promotional communications and reference materials related to assigned functional area of operations.
- Oversaw area when management is out as well as provided front desk support.

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, Office of Instruction
Instructional Coordinator/Administrative Assistant II

- **Jan-2008 to Dec-2011**
- Assisted the Interim Dean of Instruction in managing the administration of over 30 adjunct faculty members while collaborating with Bernalillo and Rio Rancho Public Schools to coordinate classroom assignments for approximately 60 courses. Additionally, oversaw and assessed the performance of both staff and students.
- Organized meetings and program activities, while also handling the creation and management of all incoming and outgoing correspondence.

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, Office of Instruction/Student Services
Administrative Assistant I

- **May-2006 to Dec-2007**
- Recruited students by outreach, tabled college fair days and community fairs throughout Sandoval County.

- Assisted students with the UNM application processes, registration of classes through the UNM I-TEL, financial aid and administered compass placement testing.
- Developed the scheduling for Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, while also providing support to ABE students in completing their enrollment, class registration forms and testing.
- Oversaw the sales of books for UNM-Los Alamos, which encompassed the management of book storage, distribution, and inventory for the Bernalillo branch campus.

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, Student Services

Student Employment

- **Jan-2003 to Apr-2006**
- Recruited students by outreach, tabling college fair days, and distributing class schedules in Sandoval County, which includes the communities of Rio Rancho, Placitas, Corrales, and surrounding pueblos.
- Assisted students with the UNM application processes, registration of classes, financial aid through UNM I-TEL and peer advisement.
- Experience with daily office duties, such as answering telephones, planning meetings, faxing, photocopying for instructors, and filing ABE, credit, and administrative paperwork.

University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, Adult Basic Education Program

ESL Instructor

- **Aug-2004 to Dec-2004**
- Provided specialized instruction for the purposes of developing the students' ability to effectively perform courses of study in English and acquire the English language.

Certifications & Community Services

- Philo Brasher Emerging Leadership Award (2025)
- New Mexico Dream Team Completion Certificate (2022)
- Staff Recognition Award for the Division of Enrollment Management (2014)
- Wise Men & Wise Women Mentorship Program (2003-2009)
- Certificate of Achievement- Directors list for UNM-Los Alamos (2003-2004)
- New Mexico State Database certificate (2004)
- Certificate of participation with the New Mexico Boys State (2000)