

Josephine "Jozi" De Leon
Vice President for Equity & Inclusion



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Dr. Josephine "Jozi" De Leon received a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, North Carolina, a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). She later obtained a master's degree in educational psychology from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

After her master's degree, Dr. De Leon moved back home to the southwest and obtained a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from New Mexico State University. She began her first academic appointment at the University of New Mexico as an assistant professor in Special Education with an emphasis in culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities.

During her time at UNM, she became nationally known for work in the teaching and assessment of underrepresented students with special needs. In 1992 Dr. De Leon joined the faculty of New Mexico State University as an associate professor in the Department of Special Education/Communication Disorders. She became the department head in 1998.

Shortly thereafter, she became an associate dean in the College of Education and later became the associate provost for academic affairs and NMSU community colleges. While in her role as associate provost, she led efforts involving the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students. This has included working with programs focused on the success of underrepresented students (TRIO, ENLACE, AGEP, NM Mesa and others) and faculty (ADVANCE).

Dr. De Leon also served as first Deputy Secretary for Academic Affairs, Planning and Research for the state of New Mexico when Governor Richardson created the New Mexico Higher Education Department in 2005. She oversaw the Educational Equity Division within the Department.

During her tenure with the Department, she helped shape policy to create greater accessibility to higher education for all New Mexico students. She worked closely with the NM Public Education Department on matters impacting the transition of students from secondary to post-secondary institutions. Her work within the Department maintained a focus on New Mexico's diverse and underserved populations.