



NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

A Place for Individual Excellence

February 21, 2018

Barbara Damron, Ph.D., Secretary
New Mexico Department of Higher Education
2044 Galisteo St. – Suite 4
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-2100

Dear Secretary Damron:

I am joined by Dr. Roxane Gonzales-Walker, Provost/Academic Affairs and Dr. Cristina Durán, Dean of the University's Facundo Valdez School of Social Work to request your support to retain funding in HB 2 to establish the Native American Social Work Studies Institute (NASWSI).

At its founding forty-four years ago the School's mission statement pledged focus on Hispanic/Latino and Native American social work education. In 2005 the Legislature appropriated funds to establish the Bilingual/Bicultural Clinical Practice Concentration which has made it possible to provide students with a curriculum of courses that prepares them for work in Hispanic/Latino communities. The concentration's success is evidenced by the number of graduates of this program who are prepared to work with Spanish speaking clients, and partnerships with agencies and communities throughout the state who seek out our graduates confident of their abilities and knowledge. Funding for the NASWSI opens the way for the School to fulfill its mission and to set a course to develop the Native American Clinical Practice Concentration in response to calls from tribal leadership and the Native social work community for graduates prepared to address the complex issues in today's tribal societies. The program will mark the nation's first effort in any school of social work to establish a Native American program. The School looks forward to this pioneering endeavor to prepare students for work in tribal communities and to position itself in a leadership role in the development of Native social work theory and practice.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sam Minner
President

Dr. Roxanne Gonzales
Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Cristina Duran
Dean of the Facundo Valdez School of Social Work