

15 February 2016

Dr. Christopher Brown  
Department Head, Geography  
New Mexico State University

Dear Dr. Brown,

I am writing this letter to express on behalf of my colleagues our enthusiasm, preparation, and commitment to undertake the New Mexico Joint Doctoral Program in Geography, in collaboration with you and your colleagues.

For almost three years now, our two departments have been working together to advance a joint PhD program in Geography that would build on the respective strengths of our existing faculties, facilities, and programs. In that time, our faculty have enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about your programs at NMSU and to work with your faculty on the nuts and bolts of program development planning. In particular, the two-day retreat we held in January 2015 was extremely valuable in terms of demonstrating that our two faculties were able to establish a very good working relationship based on mutual respect. The retreat also showed that our joint faculties are realistic, innovative, and strategic – characteristics that are, of course, critically important for a planning team.

By way of this letter, I confirm that our faculty has grown only more certain and committed to the joint doctoral program in the year since our joint planning retreat. The development and implementation of a PhD program has been a key component of our department's strategic plan for some time, and we feel strongly that the program we have designed with you is stronger than it would have been otherwise, because it is based in a meaningful UNM-NMSU partnership. We believe the New Mexico Joint Doctoral Program in Geography will be greater than the sum of its parts and that it will provide much greater benefit to both institutions than our departments could provide individually.

As you know, we at UNM have spent the last year working to develop various pieces of the proposal and to clarify administrative procedures related to its passage through the multi-level approval process. We have also lined up a variety of financial and administrative resources that will stand us in good stead as we look ahead to post-approval program delivery. We look forward to continued work with you and your colleagues on this important program.

Sincerely,



Maria Lane, Department Chair  
Geography & Environmental Studies  
University of New Mexico