

UNM-Gallup launches seminars for running, maintaining a business

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Participants will receive entrepreneurial training and technical assistance

The University of New Mexico-Gallup has partnered with STC.UNM and the Innovation Academy to provide an entrepreneurial seminar series for the spring 2019 semester.

These seminars will provide training and technical assistance at numerous UNM campuses and sites. The seminars will be free to the UNM community and the public, both in-person and online. Participants are required to register for the series.

The January seminar was held at UNM-G Jan. 18, and served as an introduction to the New Mexico Rainforest University Center Program and mentor, Gallup native Sandra Begay.

“When you study certain subjects, the responsibility is grand. You have to be aware of that,” she said during the seminar.

Begay is a former regent of UNM and a current principal member of the technical staff for Sandia National Laboratories. She leads the lab’s efforts in the Renewable Energy Program to assist Native American tribes with renewable energy development.

As the site mentor for UNM-G, Begay took the role partly because she considers Gallup her hometown. She currently specializes in structural engineering, a path that she was influenced to

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take based on a tumultuous life event.

She recalled being in the bay area during the 1989 San Francisco-Oakland earthquake, which killed 67 people and caused about \$5 billion damages. Her reaction to the event, and the other people around her, help to shape her views of learning and interacting with others.

STC.UNM is a nonprofit corporation formed and owned entirely by the UNM Board of Regents. Their goal is to support New Mexico economic development and to be an innovator in worldwide technology commercialization.

Begay asked participants if they wanted to start or grow a business. The New Mexico Rainforest University Center, a government-funded program that provides entrepreneurial training and technical assistance, is one of the groups that can help individuals or groups achieve that goal.

The training platform for the program is e-commerce, which is designed to assist any business with its digital presence. Students at numerous UNM campuses will be able to take a course called "Create. Sell. Bank." for credit while community members can take it to receive a certificate in entrepreneurial capabilities.

Cara Michaliszyn, director of economic development for STC.UNM, said that participants will have to attend between seven and 12 seminars to receive the certificate.

"This is an evolving program, so we can see what the needs really are for ideas and entrepreneurs," she said.

Working with a community was stressed by Begay during the seminar, saying that the best way to generate ideas for businesses and planning is to talk to other people. Running a business is a collaborative effort, she said.

"[You should] think a little bigger than where you are now," Begay said.

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Begay spoke about how the participants' Navajo ancestors were able to find the strength to survive at Bosque Redondo, and that we could be capable of finding similar strength and management skills to thrive in the present.

“Have a vision, know what it means to do it, and think big,” she told the room.

For more information, a calendar of events, and to register for upcoming seminars, visit:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/stcunm-2995876357>

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