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**SENT VIA MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

April 30, 2024

Dr. Joseph Shepard, President  
Western New Mexico University  
1000 W College Avenue  
Silver City, NM 88061

Dear President Shepard,

During the Regular Session of the 54<sup>th</sup> Legislature, House Bill 2 of the General Appropriations Act of 2022 included appropriations to Western New Mexico University that included \$250,000 to an “Early Childhood Center of Excellence” and an additional appropriation during the 55<sup>th</sup> Legislature in the amount of \$500,000. The university has been a leader in innovative service provision, training, and education in the complex field of early childhood care and education for many years. The center delivers the highest quality early childhood education and care – an active research site – family counseling center, professional development, and numerous teacher preparation programs. Additionally, it is the systems integration of early childhood services with the university’s Family Counseling Center which earned recent distinction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie M. Rodriguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie M. Rodriguez  
Cabinet Secretary

cc: Dr. Cindy Martinez, Dean, College of Education