

CLASS OF 2025
Outstanding Graduate



JILLIAN MCBETH

College of Arts and Sciences

Jacksonville, NC, native Jillian McBeth is the Department of Government's highest-achieving student this semester, graduating with a GPA of 3.992. A government and anthropology double major, Jillian also has minors in public administration and Spanish.

Jillian's family moved to El Paso, TX, when she was 14. Fascinated with the differences in culture and language from North Carolina, she decided to pursue anthropology as a major. Her interest in public policy and social justice also grew, and a government class with Dr. Thaddieus Conner inspired her to add government as a second major. Jillian later served as a research assistant for Dr. Ani Ter-Mkrtchyan, with whom she completed a U.S. Department of Energy-funded co-op project to study the role of public

opinion in energy policy decisions.

According to Dr. Neil Harvey, chair of the Department of Government, "Jillian is an exceptional student who combines academic excellence with a strong commitment to advocacy and education in the broader community." At NMSU, she served as chapter president of the National Political Science Honor Society (Pi Sigma Alpha), helping to organize a student panel on reproductive rights at a national conference in Washington, D.C. "She will be an inspiring leader in whichever career path she takes."

Jillian's accolades include the Nick Franklin Public Policy Scholarship and the college's Community Engagement for Social Justice award. She notes, "I've been fortunate to never be afraid to speak my mind in class and to have the opportunity to advocate for change, exercise my rights, and be recognized for doing so. Not all college campuses value this."

Jillian has spent as much time as possible in the NMSU Spanish Language Lab. "Through the Lab, I've improved my skills and made new friends—I've even spent my last two birthdays there!" After graduation, Jillian hopes to work in the public sector and eventually pursue a Master of Public Administration. ▲