

CLASS OF 2025

Outstanding Graduate



OLIN PAKKALA

College of Business

A Crimson Scholar every semester since fall 2021 with a 4.0 GPA, Olin Pakkala is graduating with a Bachelor of Accountancy plus a Bachelor of Business Administration with a major in finance and a concentration in risk management and insurance.

Originally from Houghton, MI, Olin's family moved to Rio Rancho, NM, when he was in high school, and there Olin learned about NMSU. He knew NMSU was well respected but candidly notes an outstanding financial package sealed the deal.

A high school economics class sparked his interest in business, and he was an economics major until he took his first accounting course "and it just clicked." College Professor Paula Groves soon enticed him to add finance as a major. Olin

"Sometimes life gives you curveballs. At NMSU, I learned to take advantage of those curveballs and turn them into opportunity."

notes that mentorship in the college was "off the charts—career guidance, networking, and friendship."

Olin, who describes himself as "reserved" in high school, says that being president of the NMSU chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, the international honors organization for accounting students, is his proudest achievement: "We turned the culture into something that transcended accounting through enthusiasm and passion." Associate Professor Robert Ewing concurs, saying, "As president of Beta Alpha Psi, Olin demonstrated exceptional leadership by transforming a struggling organization into a vibrant community."

Associate Professor Kevin Melendrez adds that Olin is "one of the five best students I have ever taught. However, what truly separates Olin from others is his leadership, kindness, and willingness to help others." Olin's volunteer activities included preparing tax returns for students and low-income Las Cruces through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program.

Olin says he's proof that "Winning in school and life is not just for the few. Everyone is worthy of good things—but you need to put in the work and show you care." After graduation, Olin's next good thing is a new job in the PricewaterhouseCoopers tax department in Minneapolis (and watching Twins games). ▲