

The logo for SA+P, consisting of the letters 'S', 'A', and 'P' in a bold, sans-serif font, separated by plus signs, all enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Dean's Newsletter ^{1.11}

05.22.2021

Dear friends,

I would like to begin with a big congratulations to the Spring Class of 2021! Celebrating them in our first campus-wide in-person event was truly touching and inspiring.



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Help our Rankings!

It is that time of the year when you can help us with the **2021 Design Intelligence Ratings**, which can affect how our Architecture and Landscape Architecture programs are ranked nationally. Please consider filling out the short survey if you hire SA+P graduates, or if you are a recent graduate. The survey is open through **July 22, 2021**.

[Architecture Survey](#)
[Landscape Architecture Survey](#)

News

A collaborative proposal led by

This academic year has been unlike anything we have ever experienced, and it is one that will be hard to forget. We may find ourselves choosing not to let go of some of the remote teaching modalities that emerged, of necessity, this year. The jury is out on which aspects of pandemic-era pedagogy we'll continue to deploy moving forward.

This was the central theme of a panel in which I recently participated, "Pedagogy in a Post-Pandemic World," where I was honored to exchange thoughts with **Deborah Berke**, Dean, Yale School of Architecture, **Mark Jarzombek**, Professor, MIT Architecture, **Nasrin Seraji**, Principal of New Agency for Speculations on Architecture, and **Mark Fergusson**, Dean, Catholic University of America. (Thank you, **Adnan Morshed** for the invitation to participate in this inspiring dialogue.) We agreed that even as we find ourselves returning to the traditional forms of connection that undergird the educational experience—the relationships between student and student, and faculty and students—we now know that more is possible. My own take is that we must acknowledge the benefits of being catapulted (without warning and practically overnight) into a new age of more democratic connectivity.

Students truly deserve the most equitable possible connection with universities and with each other, and we now know, through these means, that their educational goals can be reached with greater ease. Also, elite institutions often bank their success on pedigreed faculty rosters and closely guarded entry gates, but increasingly, faculty are now able to make broader connections across a variety of institutions. Finally, as curricular development continues, innovative educational infrastructure, of the kind exemplified by [Dark](#)

Professor **Michaele Pride** was the recipient of the Grand Prize in the Faculty Team Research Concept Competition. The core group included Associate Professor **Catherine Page Harris**, graduate student of CRP **Aaron Moore**, and colleagues in North Campus and Main Campus. Their project, “Creative Action for Housing Solutions” envisions an interdisciplinary team using data, community-based participatory research, creative placemaking, and storytelling to better understand and center the experiences of people living with housing insecurity. [Learn more](#) about the project and all of the collaborators.

Assistant Professor of Architecture **Aaron Cayer** has been instrumental in helping to create the **Architecture Beyond Capitalism School** (ABC School), a free, six-week-long virtual summer school launching June 19, 2021. Dean **Robert Alexander González** also serves on the Board of Directors of The Architecture Lobby, the group sponsoring this summer program, which tackles capitalism, labor, and practice within architecture. Various themes will be discussed and broken down into a 2-hr live session every Saturday for six weeks.



Congratulations to SA+P alumni **Brandon Adriano Ortiz-Concha** for his second prize recognition in the Avery Review Essay Prize, which celebrates the critical writing of students on issues of architecture. His essay is: “Ephemeral Narratives: Design Considerations for Future Past.” Mr. Ortiz-Concha is a traditional micaceous potter from Taos Pueblo and a recent graduate of the M.Arch program with a professional certification in Historic Preservation and Regionalism. [Read his essay here.](#)

Kudos are in order for two SA+P

[Matter University](#)—a truly democratic network—will enable new forms of knowledge and knowledge production, promote cross-institutional connections, and promulgate a more equitable approach to design.

Within the context of this enhanced connectivity, the School of Architecture + Planning launched a re-envisioned Jeff Harnar Award program. In 2007, **Garrett Thornburg**, founder of the Thornburg Foundation, launched this architectural competition in memory of his friend, Santa Fe architect Jeff Harnar. We thank the foundation and Mr. Thornburg for their continued support, and also the foundation’s Executive Director, **Allan Oliver**, and Community Funding Officer and Administrative Director, **Leslie Garcia**, for supporting this year’s program, which benefited from both financial and geographic expansion. Mr. Oliver noted: “My favorite part was to hear and see the excitement of the students and to witness their interaction with the top-notch jury members. I can really see the difference in the program...we’re excited about the Harnar Award’s geographic expansion, new award categories, and commitment to support equity, diversity, and inclusion within the field of architecture.”

The jury members also expressed delight in exploring the meaning of contemporary architecture and landscape architecture in the Four Corner States, a regional designation that many of them considered more intriguing to consider than the more general term Southwest. Many thanks to Assistant Professor **Anthony Fettes**, who played a critical role directing this year’s awards and who led an insightful jury discussion prior to the announcement of the winners. We thank jurors **Marlon Blackwell**, University of Arkansas, **Deborah Berke**, Yale University, **Rene Davids**, University of California, Berkeley, **Andrés Jacque**, Columbia University, **Carlos Jimenez**, Rice University, **Phoebe Lickwar**, University of Texas at Austin, **Elaine Molinar**, Snøhetta, **Frederick Steiner**, University of Pennsylvania, and **Thaïsa Way**, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

The Jeff Harnar Awards Night kicked off with a lecture by Snøhetta founders, architects **Craig Dykers** and **Elaine Molinar**, both of whom referenced their professional and personal connections to the Four Corners States.

Congratulations to this year’s winners!



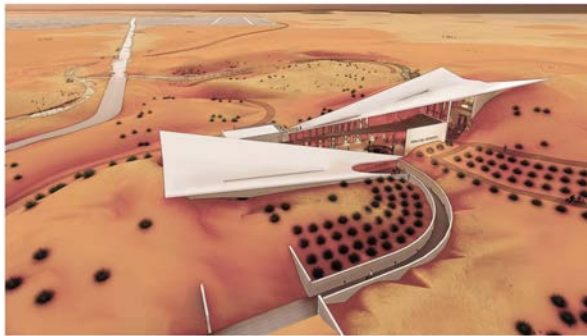
The 2021 Jeff Harnar Award Winner
Contemporary Architecture in the Southwest
Dust Architects, Tucson, Arizona

recipients of the 2020-21 Teaching Excellence Awards: Associate Professor of Community + Regional Planning, **Caroline Scruggs**, received an **Outstanding Teacher of the Year** award, and **Jordan James**, Community + Regional Planning Program, received the **Susan Deese-Roberts Outstanding Teaching Assistant of the Year**. Congratulations!

Nación Genizara: Ethnogenesis, Place, and Identity in New Mexico (2020) has won the 2021 State Historic Preservation Award, the book's third award. Congratulations to the book's authors, Associate Professor of Community + Regional Planning **Moises Gonzales** and **Enrique R. Lamadrid**.

Professor Emeritus and former SA+P Dean **Roger Schluntz**, FAIA, was recently installed as the Vice Chancellor of the AIA College of Fellows, having served as its elected Bursar the two years previous. Schluntz will become the Chancellor of the College in 2022. The College includes approximately 3% of the 95,000+ member of the American Institute of Architects. Notable SA+P UNM alumni who are AIA Fellows include **Antoine Predock**, **Jon Anderson**, **Ed Mazria**, as well as emeriti/ae UNM Professors **Edith Cherry** and **Don Schlegel**, a former School of Architecture head now deceased. Fellowship is one of the highest honors the AIA can bestow upon members who are deemed to have made significant contributions to architecture and to society.

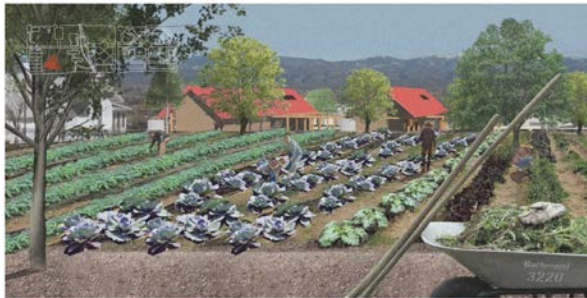
Congratulations to **Angela Pacheco** for being promoted to Supervisor of Academic Advisement at the SA+P. She earned a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership with an emphasis in Secondary and Higher Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Art History with an emphasis in Architecture History from UNM. In addition, Professor of Architecture, **Michaele Pride** has been named the School's Associate Dean of



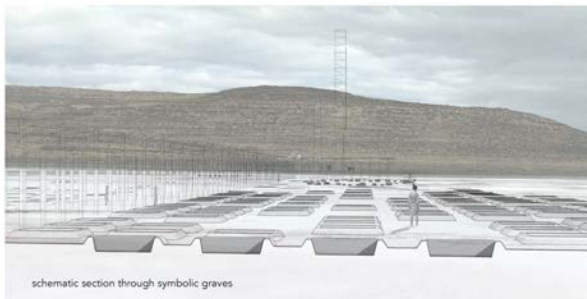
The 2021 Jeff Harnar Award Winner
Unbuilt Architecture
Diana Duran, Ke Vaughn Harding and Tania Nevarez



The 2021 Jeff Harnar Award Winner
Architecture - Student Winner
Nathan McNeilly, Arizona State University



The 2021 Jeff Harnar Award Winner
Unbuilt Landscape Architecture
Raphael Montoya, Los Angeles, California



The 2021 Jeff Harnar Award Winner
Landscape Architecture - Student Winner
Isabelle Ghabash, University of New Utah

Congratulations to **Cade Manning Hayes** and **Jesús Edmundo Robles, Jr** of Dust Architects, Tucson, Arizona, who won the top prize of \$10,000 for *Contemporary Architecture in the Southwest* for the Casa Caldera in Phoenix. The *Unbuilt Architecture* prize (\$2,500) went to the team comprising **Diana Duran**, **Ke Vaughn Harding**, and **Tania Nevaraez**, for the Agave Sanctuary: La Perla del Desierto. The *Unbuilt Landscape Architecture* prize (\$2,500) went to **Raphael Montoya**, Los Angeles, California, for his project *Acequias: Building Social Resilience in Española, New Mexico*. The *Student Prize for Architecture* (\$1,500) went to **Nathan McNeilly** (Arizona State University) for his Fire Station 62 in Ahwatukee, Arizona. The *Student Prize for Landscape Architecture* (\$1,500) went to **Isabelle Ghabash** (University of Utah) for her Memorial to Women and Girls Lost to Climate

Student Equity and Excellence. We would like to thank Associate Professor and Regents' Lecturer, **Katya Crawford**, for the dedication she brought to this position. Her "You Have My Ear" sessions with students were unique to our School and helped students through some very difficult times.

Design

An interdisciplinary team of representatives at UNM won first place in the **NASA MINDS** Senior Teams Category: Overall Design, Build, and Demonstration, beating out dozens of other teams across the country. The SA+P collaborators included faculty mentor Associate Professor of Architecture **Kristina Yu** and M.Arch students **Martin Luna**, **Natasha Ribeiro**, **Wil Lyons**, and **Amir Bakhshi**. The UNM CHILI HOUSE Team based its submission on teaching robots to take care of plants on Mars—a big step towards having viable food available for astronauts when they land on the Red Planet. [Read more](#) and [see the video here](#):



Congratulations to Assistant Professor of Architecture **Cesar A. Lopez** and his colleague, Associate Professor, **Neeraj Bhatia** (CCA), for their recent invitation to participate in the forthcoming **Chicago Architecture Biennial**. Their practice, **The Open Workshop**, one of 29 contributors selected from around the world, will be paired with a Chicago community group to explore "forms of shared, collective space..." [Read more](#). The team, in collaboration with Associate Professor **Antje Steinmuller** (CCA), is also currently unveiling their exhibition "Commoning Domestic Space" at the **17th Venice Architecture Biennale**.

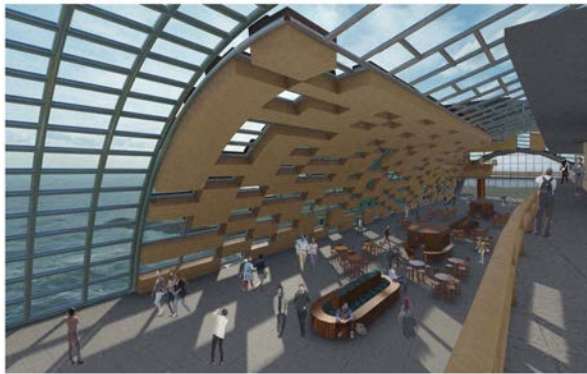
Change in Roze Bay, Utah.



2021 Jeff Harnar Award – Honorable Mention
Contemporary Architecture in the Southwest
G. Donald Dudley Architect, Albuquerque, NM



2021 Jeff Harnar Award – Honorable Mention
Unbuilt Architecture
Jon Anderson Architecture, Elliot Heild, Albuquerque, NM



2021 Jeff Harnar Award – Honorable Mention
Architecture - Student Winner
Trevor Orgill, University of New Mexico



2021 Jeff Harnar Award – Honorable Mention
Unbuilt Landscape Architecture
Kartika Rachmawati, Lone Tree, Colorado

Honorable Mentions were also bestowed by the jurors on the Montessori of the Rio Grande Charter School by **G. Donald Dudley Architect**, Albuquerque, New Mexico (HM in *Contemporary Architecture in the Southwest*); the Arroyo Del Oso Elementary School, by **Jon Anderson Architecture**, **Elliot Hield**, Albuquerque, New Mexico (HM in *Unbuilt Landscape Architecture*); the ECO2 Venture project by **Kartika Rachmawati** in Lone Tree, Colorado (HM in *Unbuilt Landscape Architecture*); and the Opera House in Tallinn by **Trevor Orgill**, University of New Mexico (HM in the *Student Prize in Architecture*).

Events like the Jeff Harnar Awards give the SA+P community an opportunity to reflect on the work the School is doing in its



Research

Assistant Professor of Architecture
Aaron Cayer was recently awarded a **UNM ECURE Fellowship** (Expanding Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience) for next year to focus on undergraduate inclusion and research methods in World Architecture History II. Cayer also presented a paper at the **2021 Society of Architectural Historians Conference** entitled: “Corporate and Classified: The Architecture Archive in the Age of Secrecy,” which was presented in the session: What is the New Architectural Archive?

Congratulations to Assistant Professor of Architecture, **Gabriel Fries-Briggs**, who received a UNM RAC Grant for his book project *Imaging Architectural Labor*. The project synthesizes five years of design-research projects by the Reimagining Research Collective with a theorization of imaging practices in architecture. Funding will support students to assist in research on the history of imaging and how it has transformed the nature of design work, who performs it, and how authorship and agency are distributed.

unique location in the country. We also hope that the continued success of this awards program will encourage increased dialogue among all Architecture and Landscape Architecture students and faculty in the Four Corners States.

In April, we also launched a new tier of membership in the Dean’s Circle, a group who supports the SA+P in new and current initiatives. More than just an invaluable think tank and fundraising group, the Dean’s Circle empowers our School’s mission. We thank its existing and new members for all their support. If you are interested in joining the Dean’s Circle, please contact the SA+P Development Officer, **Laurie Roche**.

The Dean’s Circle is currently assisting with the on-going renovation of the Predock Center for Design and Research—for which we also received a \$120,000 state appropriation in the last legislative session. They are also supporting the forthcoming **Architecture + Design Summer Academy** for high school Juniors and Seniors, launching this June and July. To learn more about the Academy please contact its director, **Dr. Janet Abrams**.

In this newsletter, you will find a profile of Distinguished Professor of Community and Regional Planning and Regents’ Lecturer **Claudia Isaac**. We are excited to share the advocacy work that Dr. Isaac has undertaken since her arrival at UNM, focusing on community engagement research projects that have positively impacted Albuquerque.

Once again, congratulations to our new graduates! Way to go Spring Class of 2021!

I thank you for your continuing support for the SA+P, and for having our backs as we weathered this year together. Over this difficult period, our faculty and staff did a tremendous job to ensure we deliver the best education to our students, which—in pandemic times as in all times—remains the most important part of our mission.

My very best,

Robert Alexander González
Dean and Professor

 [@Gonzalez_UNM](https://twitter.com/Gonzalez_UNM)



Claudia B. Isaac: Teaching Planning with Pragmatic Idealism

Cindy Graff Cohen

You could call Distinguished Professor Claudia Benoit Isaac an idealistic pragmatist. A member of the Community and Regional Planning Department since 1988, she comes at planning with high hopes that policy makers, developers, and all parties involved with planning will have the best interests of all citizens at heart. However, Dr. Isaac teaches planning students practical strategies for taking on those with less equitable agendas.

“Early on, rational or technocratic planning created inequality, with planning decisions such as gentrification, gerrymandering, and ‘sacrifice zones’ where polluting plants are located in what happens to be low-income communities of color,” Isaac says. “The complicity of planning was challenged in the 1960s with ‘advocacy planners’ working in municipalities and becoming the bridge between low-income communities and planning committees and their bosses.” At the base of her work is advocacy and social change. “One of the things I love about being a planner,” she says, “is that I can educate people to be subversive in their work.”

Isaac has held many positions and received a long list of honors at UNM, including becoming a Regent’s Lecturer in Planning, receiving the University’s Community Engaged Research Lecture Award, and the Faculty of Color Lifetime Achievement Award. Recognition for her work beyond UNM includes the University of Michigan Sojourner Truth Award.

When the Latin American and Iberian Institute awarded its first Distinguished Professor in Latin American Studies designation last year, Isaac was the inaugural recipient. The award recognizes her service as a former Latin American Studies Department Chair, but also acknowledges the large number of students from the Department who have benefited from her expertise in developing countries. Many have gone on to hold important positions in governmental agencies.

Her passion for Latin America goes back to graduate school.

Announcements

Associate Professor of Architecture **Alex Webb** will be offering a coding crash course at this summer’s NMFOG (Foundation for Open Government) & City of Albuquerque June Hackathon, the “DataFest:ArtQuest,” which will take place over two weekends, on June 12 and June 19. Registration opens the first week of June. [Read more...](#)



Please join us in thanking emeritus professor and past dean **Geraldine Forbes Isaacs** and Professor of Practice **Baker Morrow** for curating the exhibition *Martineztown*, which is currently on display on the Crit Bridge in Pearl Hall. The exhibition presents the history, the period of urban renewal, the redevelopment of Martineztown, and the ongoing development of Martineztown and the surrounding area. The exhibit will be available for viewing through the summer.

When she turned seven, they moved to nearby Maplewood, NJ, where the elementary schools were highly rated—and where the mayor had declared he was “very proud to be the mayor of a ‘lily-white’ town,” Isaac recalls. Her parents formed a support group with other Black parents who had been against racial gerrymandering in Orange. They were interested in furthering integration through “block-busting.”

Maplewood homeowners would not sell to Black people or to married women without their husbands cosigning the loan. Since Dr. Isaac had very dark skin, the couple was not able to buy a home. So Evelyn’s sister, who also looked white, bought the house for them. Sadly she was widowed, but that meant she could buy a home without a husband’s co-signature.

In their “determinedly white neighborhood,” some new neighbors made life difficult for the Isaac family. Other neighbors were helpful allies whose children accompanied Claudia and Vina to school for safety. Some people began moving out and selling their homes to other Black families—a practice that disappointed their father.

The idea behind block-busting was for Black homeowners to integrate different areas, rather than create another racially segregated area. Dr. Isaac idealistically thought that by being good neighbors, his family could change people’s minds and reduce discrimination. He became a leader in organizing for integration and a member of the Essex County Housing Authority to try to work within the system.

Mrs. Isaac, who had become a nurse with HeadStart, took a more pragmatic approach. She did become active in the girls’ school’s PTA, but she was also, as Isaac recalls, “not shy about marching into the principal’s office” when she saw a problem, such as when the two girls were getting tracked into technical courses rather than rigorous academic work.

Her assertiveness with the school’s administration also enabled Claudia to skip her senior year after she became a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. She followed Vina to Bryn Mawr College, where she took pre-med courses, but majored in psychology, in spite of her father’s fervent appeals to become a doctor. This time, Dr. Isaac’s protests did not work.

Seeing Planning Through Others’ Eyes

“At the time I did not think much about how my early experiences would affect my future career,” she laughs. However, as Isaac learned more, she knew that organizing alone was not going to change issues surrounding gerrymandering, inequitable distribution of resources, and segregated school districts. City planners had to stop perpetuating unfair systems.

“I approached planning from the beginning as a social justice endeavor,” she emphasizes. “It should be about bringing positive

social change as opposed to reinforcing deeply held racist and sexist structures.”

She especially enjoys teaching some of these concepts to new graduate students in her Planning Theory and Process course, required in their first semester. “They’ve been drawn to UNM’s planning program because they like our social justice approach, but they don’t often know what that means for planning,” she says. In the course, she explores planning history and different approaches to achieving goals.

“Students can learn to read policies and practices to understand the theoretical underpinnings,” she says. “These planning paradigms are often incompatible on the face of it, but planners are always working in teams with people who are coming from a different paradigm. It is possible for planners to find points of common ground or ways of persuasion that might not be their preferred way of choice.”

“I try to make my students wear the hat of each of these paradigms. They can try to understand the internal logic of different planning paradigms,” she adds. “This does not have to be a purely oppositional exercise. You can often find common ground, if you recognize that these people are not evil. They may be wrong—and are often wrong! But they are not evil.”

“I love this course because it allows the students to be radical, but it also gives them really pragmatic tools for entering into the profession,” Isaac says. “In most governmental and private sector planning, if you want to be engaged and productive in your profession, you have to learn a way to talk with people even when you fundamentally disagree with them.”

Serving Albuquerque and UNM

Throughout her career, Isaac has been on the road teaching, presenting papers, and working in various communities, while staying involved nationally and internationally in architecture and planning academic organizations and African-American associations. In her early years, she spent more time in community engagement projects in Mexico and other countries, but she realized that she could be more productive working in her own state and city, where she could stay in closer contact with groups.

Her extensive work in Albuquerque is reflected in long lists of community engagement research projects, affiliations, board memberships, reports, and city commissions, including a Mayoral Transition Team and the Workforce Housing Public Information Campaign. The Albuquerque YWCA gave her a “Women on the Move” award for Education, Training, and Development and she has consulted on New Mexico Main Street programs with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Her research and interests are diverse; she has worked with community issues ranging from food security and

community health to economic development and early childhood learning.

After teaching at other universities as a visiting professor, Isaac found that the experiences reinforced how much she already liked UNM students. Like her, they are both idealistic and pragmatic.

“I’ve had students who are deeply committed to their education and have worked really hard to get here. They value their experience, they utilize it,” she says. “They’re not trying to game the system or just get a credential. I love teaching. On a weekly basis, my students lift me up.”

Distinguished Professor **Claudia B. Isaac** can be reached at cisaac@unm.edu

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Feature: Mark Childs / Fall 2020 Welcome / New Faculty

[Dean's Newsletter 1.2](#)

Feature: Michael Pride / New SA+P Org Chart / MakerLab / You Have My Ear / Associate Chairs & Special Asst's to the Dean

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Feature: Ted Jojola / Land Acknowledgement / Jeff Harnar Award Student Competition / New Alumni Liaison / VAP Jeffrey S. Nesbit

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Feature: SA+P Recruitment + Advocacy / Contesting Conversation Series / Student Experience Project

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Feature: Alex Webb / New Online Certificate in Indigenous Planning / New MS Architecture Areas of Focus

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Feature: Katya Crawford / Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society / AIA Architects' Roundtable / iD+Pi invitation to Venice

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Feature: Janet Abrams / Fall 2020 Graduates / Final Reviews / Profs. Castillo and Mora's

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Feature: Francisco Uviña-Contreras / Marjorie Mead Hooker Professors / Nora Wendl's Practices for Keeping Time Workshop / Meet the Jeff Harnar Award Jury

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Feature: Moises Gonzales / Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society / Fall 2020 Dean's List / Meet the Planners



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