

CLASS OF 2023
Outstanding Graduate



“I hope to use knowledge and experience I’ve gained at NMSU to positively impact the tourism and reputation of my hometown.”

—Paloma Y. Hernandez Perez

PALOMA Y. HERNANDEZ PEREZ
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences

First-generation college student Paloma Y. Hernandez Perez always knew a career in hospitality would be in her future; indeed, she learned English thanks in part to YouTube cooking tutorials.

Having moved by herself from Mexico to the United States in 2019, Paloma will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management (HRTM) and a minor in marketing. She is a Crimson Scholar and has made the dean’s list twice. In 2022, she was inducted into Eta Sigma Delta, an international hospitality student honor society.

Paloma’s scholarships included the Crimson Success Scholarship, the Yates Endowment award, the Ecolab Scholarship of the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Foundation, an

El Paso Hotel and Lodging Association scholarship and the Hyatt Hotels Fund for Minority Lodging Management Students scholarship. She was one of only four students chosen to represent NMSU HRTM at the 2022 National Restaurant Association show in Chicago.

She held internships while at NMSU such as the “Lettuce Entertain You Remote Intern Learning Experience” and an intense internship with Hyatt Hotels during which she managed staff, performed daily ordering, and completed closing reports for two restaurants, one which served more than 350 people daily.

Paloma served as an ACES Ambassador, held positions with the NMSU chapter of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality and volunteered for the Therapeutic Riding Program and Keep State Great.

After graduation, Paloma heads to California to pursue the Culinary Institute of America’s prestigious Advanced Culinary Arts certificate program. Her goal is to someday open her own restaurant and advocate for the Las Cruces/El Paso/Juárez area as a tourism destination. ▲