

Julianna Matz-Esquibel, Taos High School

"The key attribute which characterizes Julianna is her unwavering commitment to her students. In its broadest aspect this shows as her relentless encouragement and exhortation keeping students going even when they had lost confidence in themselves and wanted to give up. She pushes her students and is demanding of them, but constantly telling them they can do it if they try and she will help them on the way, but they have to do it for themselves. Many of our students are first generation college goers (or will be when they get there) and don't think they are 'college material'. Julianna debunks this and shows them that they can succeed with college level courses by providing dual credit college level Chemistry classes for her high school students and working with other High school instructors and the UNM-Taos dual credit program to ensure that when her students graduate high school they have multiple credit hours on their transcript and have a head start when they get to college. She has also taught AP Chemistry for at least 15 years, getting students to push themselves to achieve academically in STEM fields and helping students gain access to scholarships and entry into some of the country's finest colleges and STEM programs.

Julianna doesn't just teach the academically minded students. She wants all of her students to succeed, and is very well aware that success looks different for every student.

Julianna advocates for and instructs her students in multiple other ways – she knows her students and their lives. They know they can count on her and if they have difficulties in their lives she will be supportive and act as a sound role model – something that some of our students have never experienced before from an adult with authority over them.

Julianna has put her time and energy in running several student clubs and organizations over the years – she single handedly developed the THS German club. She also has been an active sponsor for the Interact club (a high school Rotary club) which is service oriented and she has directed student service projects both overseas and locally. She is also a ski club sponsor. The list goes on and on. "