Barbering & Cosmetology: A Profession Like No Other
Making History, Honoring Stories & Students

My name is Betty Espinoza. I am one of the Barbering and Cosmetology instructors. I have been here at Northern for about 5 or 6 administrations as a student and faculty member. I have seen a lot of changes during this time.

I will be completing my 15th year at the end of this semester.

I have been thinking of retiring. As much as I like teaching here at Northern, I feel maybe it is time that I leave and enjoy my family, and home for the years I have left. I will be turning 73 this coming May. I say 73 years with no hesitation: I know ladies don’t normally say their age, but I feel proud for the many years my Dear God has granted me. I feel that if I would be ashamed of my age, I would be ungrateful for the many years my Dear Lord has granted me. I am thankful that at 72 I still have my mother.

TIME TOGETHER – PRIDE IN OUR SHARED EXPERIENCES

I have enjoyed teaching here at Northern. I have had many students, some good, some great, and some not so great, but I have learned to love all of them with all their differences.

We spend 7 hours a day, 28 hours a week, over 400 hours a semester together. Barbers attend the college for 3 semesters totaling 1200 hours, and cosmetologists for 4 semesters totaling 1600 hours. The big difference of one program to the other is that barbers do shaves, cosmetologists do nail care. In the many hours we spend together we really get to know the student, where they come from, their problems, their life stories, and their dreams. All students have a story to tell, they are all different in many ways, and yet the same, they need and want the same things, out of life. During the semesters that the students are at school they become a family, they learn, they work, they eat, they laugh together. In many ways, they help each other, as well as have disagreements.

We are very fortunate to have this college in our community to serve our northern NM students and many others as well.

The college was founded in the early 70s to educate our northern community students at an affordable price. Before that they would have to go to college elsewhere.

Many of our students now still live at home, they come to the college attend classes while still going home for lunch to eat their mother’s tortillas. They are so lucky.
I am very proud of our program here at Northern. In teaching we combine our courses together, for example we combine Barbering I and Cosmetology I, Barbering II and Cosmetology II, and so on. By doing this we produce a more knowledgeable student. Both programs have a lot to contribute to each other.

When our students attend hair shows, they discover how much more they have learned by being in a program that combines both Cosmo and Barbering courses.

**DISCOVERY & EXPLORATION UNLIKE ANY OTHER PROFESSION**

This profession is like no other: We touch people’s lives like no other profession does. The power of touch is very powerful. We see people when they are happy, sad, wanting a new look for a new job, or a new look because they have left their spouse. A new look or well-groomed look is important.

We give a child their first haircut, then when they first go to school, when they go to middle school, and a new look for high school, proms, weddings and then they come back with their babies again. Circle of life. We become their friends and their therapists. We give them a lending ear so they can unload their problems, good or bad. I have clients that have been coming to me for over 25 years.

In our program we teach the History of our profession. Imagine as early as 2630 BC the Egyptians used minerals, insects and berries to create makeup for their eyes. We teach Infection Control, Bacteriology, Sciences of Skin Diseases and Disorders, General Anatomy, Hair Care, Nail Care Business Skills, and Communication Skills.

**WORKING TOGETHER**

Teaching in Blackboard through Zoom has been challenging for us. We are in class in Zoom 5 hours a day, 3 hours in theory, and 2 hours in Lab and advisement. We struggle every day. Thanks to Analisa, Dr. Moon, James, Janice and many others. Our Northern family has been good and supportive to us. They have been helpful in many ways. I think of all the years that I have been here, I only met one person that was not nice to me. We have a wonderful Northern family.

In my years of teaching here at Northern I have been so lucky to have worked alongside with two great partners, Elaine Valdez for 12 years, and with Gloriadell Gonzales for three years. I am blessed to have her as a great partner. Gloriadell was my student when I first started teaching here at Northern. She learned from me then and now I learn from her. The Cosmetology/Barbering program is fortunate to have a great instructor like Gloriadell. Getting along in any program with your peers, brings harmony to the program.
No one is better than anyone regardless of title. I know I don’t have a PhD like most of you, but in my field, I feel I do. Let us be nice, kind and helpful to one another. Life is too short. When our journey through life is over it is not what we take but the beautiful memories we leave behind with everyone who we met along the way.

**TRAVEL & INSPIRATION**

We had a Cosmetology/Barbering Club and had many fundraising events. With this money we were able to attend Hair expos in California and New York.

We, students and faculty have attended many International Beauty Expos. We have gone to Long Beach 3 times and to New York around 6 times. Taking the students to International Expos is like taking a child to a candy store. This is where the beauty industry introduces the latest trends, styles, education, new product and tools. We have taken the students by air and by train. All beauty industries have a live stage promoting whatever they do best and their beauty product.

The one in New York is held at the Javits Convention Center. Students are unable to see all of it in the two or three days they attend. Students and faculty fundraise to be able to make this possible. While being there they attend Broadway shows, see the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, Staten Island, Ground Zero, Little Italy, China Town, The Metropolitan Museum, Carnegie Hall, Radio City, Time Square, and many other places (museums of their choice). We go uptown and downtown in the blue and red buses. I make sure it is an educational trip. We were there during the Boston Bombing. There was a lot of commotion.

**BOOKS, SUPPLIES, SKILLS & PROVIDING SERVICE**

One thing I feel we need to work on in our program is for students to be able to get their books and their supplies kits at the bookstore. Years ago, my students were able to get the books and supplies on the first day of school. Now my students are getting the books on the 3rd and 4th week. They get their supplies anywhere from 4 and up to 6 weeks. I have three students now that were told they were getting their books February 6th that is not good for the student.

As important as the students are I think we could do better for them. Maybe we can cut out on some of the things that we want and instead go after the things the students need, like books and supplies, have these things available for the students on the first week of school. Those things are essential to the students and for the faculty to be able to teach properly. It is difficult to teach students when they don’t have the materials they need. It is hard to be creative. I imagine the changes were made because of a financial
burden on the college. We need to keep in mind it is all about the student and their needs.

Some of our students told me that registration was very confusing this semester, they would call and couldn’t get a hold of anyone.

When we were at the college, we offered services such as men’s and women’s haircuts, chemical waving, manicuring, pedicuring, shaves, artificial nails, waxing hair removal. I hope we can do that soon in the future. I am asking you to support our program by coming to get a service. Our students do a great job under our supervision, and if they happen to mess up in your haircut, in 2 weeks you won’t be able to tell.

Thanks,

Betty

Betty Espinoza
Barbering & Cosmetology instructor
bettyespinoza@nnmc.edu