

July 2025

FROM THE DESK OF THE
Vice President for Research

Lobos,

As we soak up the sunshine this summer, whether you're lounging or diving headfirst into your research, it's crucial to stay in the loop about the ever-changing world of federal funding opportunities. This season brings a wealth of updates that could significantly impact our research endeavors, and I am committed to ensuring that each of you remains in the loop. Together, let's harness this knowledge to not only enhance our projects but also to inspire innovation and collaboration within our vibrant Lobo community. So, gear up for an exciting journey ahead—because informed researchers are empowered researchers! Please make sure you are visiting our dedicated webpage, [Tracking Federal Funding Updates](#).

With that, the summer is moving fast, and it seems we are already approaching our fall semester. It's a wonderful opportunity to embrace fresh beginnings, invigorating challenges, and the rich experiences that await us in the upcoming months. There's still a lot of fresh produce (I'm a sucker for a great summer salad!) and possibly relaxing beach or deck time left to enjoy before we greet a new cohort of Lobos. Let's welcome this change with open arms and an eager spirit, ready to embark on this journey together!



*Ellen Fisher, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research
Professor of Chemistry*

July Safety Spotlight

Safety training doesn't have to be boring. In fact, there's lots of evidence that proves using drills and simulations can help students and others manage their emotions, call on their emergency procedures, and generally better understand how they might react in a real emergency.

With so many Lobos in the field this summer, it does beg the question as to how you might prepare for the unknown in a natural setting like a glacier or a volcano. In this [Nature article](#) published last fall, Sarah Boon retells the story of an Arctic researcher, Maya Bhatia, who lost her life in 2023 while collecting samples of melt water in the Canadian Arctic.

Boon argues that universities need to prepare researchers more intentionally and intensively for field work to ensure researchers have practiced survival and emergency techniques, as well as how to avoid hazardous situations when possible. Perhaps more importantly, Boon argues that principal investigators should also have "completed leadership training for emergency situations." All field researchers should realize there are many dangers in an unforgiving environment that can change rapidly and having a culture of safety among the research team must be of paramount importance to protect both the research and our Lobo researchers.

Research News

NSF Engines

The UNM led [Energized Watershed](#) coalition has been named one of 29 semifinalists in the second National Science Foundation (NSF) [Regional Innovation Engines competition](#).

The project, led by Assistant Vice President for Research and Biology Professor Dave Hanson, focuses on innovating new technologies to efficiently capture, recycle, treat and reuse water; produce and distribute clean energy; and generate predictive hydrological process models.

The NSF Engines program has truly elevated the landscape of scientific discovery, but more importantly, it is fostering collaboration that resonates far beyond the borders of New Mexico. Researchers here at UNM come to work every day with the dedication that inspires a collective vision for a brighter future. Your tireless efforts not only propel scientific advancement but also weave a stronger fabric of community, uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

ARID Director

I am excited to announce the appointment of Anne Kinsinger as the new director of the Accelerating Resilience Innovations in Drylands (ARID) Institute, following a national search that commenced after the institute's grand opening in 2023.

Kinsinger will step into her new role Sept. 15.

Kinsinger will join The Pack after more than three decades in various pivotal roles at the nation's premier agency for water, earth, biological science, and civilian mapping—the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) (USGS).

For more information and to find out who Kinsinger plans to explore our beautiful state with when she arrives, read our release.

QNM-I Director

With that, Robert “Bob” Ledoux will also join The University as the new director of the Quantum New Mexico Institute (QNM-I). Ledoux will begin his new role Aug. 1.

Ledoux comes to UNM after serving as program director at the [Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy](#) (ARPA-E) where he oversaw and developed several initiatives and programs. Ledoux is a transformational leader bringing with him more than 30 years of professional and entrepreneurial experience.

For more information and to find out what state question Ledoux plans to answer when he arrives, read our release.

Heat acclimation and the science of staying cool

As global temperatures rise and heat waves become more frequent and intense, understanding how to stay safe in the heat is no longer optional - it's essential. UNM Professor Fabiano Amorim, chair of the Department of Health, Exercise and Sports Sciences (HESS) has spent his academic career studying how heat affects the human body, especially in labor-intensive environments.

His research first took shape in Brazil, where he investigated why sugarcane workers were developing chronic kidney disease despite being physically fit and free from traditional risk factors. Since coming to UNM, Amorim has examined how heat affects construction workers in the US, conducting some of the most comprehensive field studies on occupational heat stress in the U.S.

One of the key findings? The most effective interventions are remarkably simple.

- Rest
- Shade
- Water

UNM astronomers confirm new gas giant exoplanet

Made possible through a collaboration with citizen scientists around the world, UNM astronomers, along with U.S. and international researchers, have confirmed the existence of a new giant exoplanet.

The planet, TOI-4465 b, is a gas giant located approximately 400 light-years from Earth. It was first spotted by NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) space telescope as a possible single-transit event — a moment when the planet passed in front of its star.

The discovery is detailed in a new paper published in The Astronomical Journal, with Postdoctoral Fellow and lead author Zahra Essack, and Assistant Professor Diana Dragomir as co-author.

UNM Libraries launches AI & Pedagogy Summer Program

UNM's College of University Libraries and Learning Services (CULLS) is hosting the AI & Pedagogy Summer Program from July 7 through Aug. 15.

The new virtual initiative is designed to support humanities educators in thoughtfully exploring the role of artificial intelligence in higher education. Participants will work toward a classroom project while learning from colleagues across disciplines and backgrounds.

Each participant will also receive a ChatGPT Plus subscription to aid in exploring generative AI tools as part of their work in the program.

Research Celebrations

CERL Honoree: UNM Professor Moises Gonzales

Congratulations to UNM Professor Moises Gonzales, for being named the 2025 Community-Engaged Research Lecture honoree. Gonzales is a professor of urban design and the chair of the Community and Regional Planning Program at the UNM School of Architecture and Planning.

The CERL recognizes exceptional scholarly work that embodies UNM's commitment to community engagement and profoundly and systematically affects the relationship between the university and the larger community in a positive and meaningful way.

Professor Gonzales is an inspiring researcher whose research intertwines the co-production of community-based knowledge with the vibrant fields of urban design, historic preservation, and physical planning in the sun-kissed arid southwest. With a heart for community engagement, he champions the integration of traditional knowledge alongside cutting-edge scholarship, ensuring that his work resonates deeply with local communities. Most importantly, his commitment to community engaged scholarship is a cornerstone of his mission at UNM, where his research continues to transform the cultural and physical landscapes of the Southwest. Gonzales is expected to give his lecture this upcoming fall semester.

Research Reads

Research Reads

This month's book certainly qualifies as a great summer read. Indeed, I read the majority of it while lounging on a shady deck with a beautiful view of the mountains. For this month's read, I was looking for books by New Mexico writers with possibly a connection to UNM. Fortunately, *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya delivers on both counts. Anaya was born in Pastura, New Mexico, is a three-time alum of UNM, and was a member of the UNM faculty from 1974 to 1993.

Last fall, the UNM Alumni Association celebrated his work through a Lobo Living Room program titled "[Magic of Words](#)", which unfortunately I was unable to attend. Having now read *Bless Me Ultima*, Anaya's signature work, I am eager to read more of his writings, both fiction and nonfiction. Anaya gracefully weaves an understanding of the land, nature, the supernatural, and religion to craft a truly page-turning story of a small boy learning to become a man. Anaya is often called the Godfather of Chicano literature, and I can certainly see why. His blending of language and culture, intertwined with themes of hope and belief in things unseen makes his storytelling unique and compelling.

Overall, it was a splendid way for the two of us to spend Memorial Day, and I am grateful to Morrow for providing the nudge that made it happen. As with all the books I have read this year, I highly recommend it. But this time I can say my 88-year-old mom is also going to read it!