Lobos,

As we wrap up another semester, I find immense pride in the dedicated faculty, remarkable students, and supportive research staff at The University of New Mexico. Your collective efforts have fostered an environment rich in inquiry and innovation.

I would like to highlight our undergraduate students – who are graduating in the coming days – and those who engaged in research opportunities across campus. I promise your research experience not only enriched your own academic journeys but also contributed significantly to our vibrant academic community. This dedication to exploration and discovery is truly inspiring and serves as a testament to the bright future that awaits you.

Despite the uncertainties we encountered this semester regarding federal research funding, it is essential we continue to acknowledge that we have made significant strides in navigating these challenges. As the landscape of research continues to evolve, there remains much to uncover about the implications for our research community and how we adapt to new paradigms.

It is through your dedication and open lines of communication that the leadership at UNM has been able to effectively respond to these critical changes. Your contributions are invaluable, and together, we will continue to build a resilient environment for Lobos that encourages growth and innovation in the face of adversity.

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

May Safety Spotlight

This month's safety spotlight focuses on safety meetings, briefings, chats, talks, notes – basically the many ways in which we can and should discuss health and safety concerns in a professional setting. Often, these are formal affairs, with students, faculty, and staff, along with leadership and even third-party stakeholders having open dialogue. Although formal meetings should occur on a regular basis, finding other ways to integrate safety into everything we do takes a bit more creativity, but perhaps has a bigger, longer-term payoff for both individuals and the institution.

These "safety moments" (a.k.a. safety minutes, safety shares, or safety chats) also help to maintain open lines of communication about safety issues. Some pro tips for creating impactful safety moments are to keep them short and tailored to the audience, make them interactive, choose engaging topics, and make it tangible by using real-life examples. Here are a few ways you can regularly incorporate your own safety moments:

- Start your weekly research group meeting with a safety share from one or more group member.
- Create space for safety moments at departmental seminars.
- Explicitly include safety protocols while onboarding a new group member or employee.
- Introduce safety as a required element of graduate students' theses, dissertations, and final defenses.
- When in the field, start every day with a safety moment to highlight issues that might arise that day, especially if researchers will be covering new territory and/or if weather could impact their work.
- Some organizations have safety moments at the beginning of every meeting as a matter of routine.
- When holding a workshop or meeting in a different building than participants normally work in, be sure to point out fire exits before the event starts.

Research News

TEF FY26 Q1 Call for Applications

Researchers, the Technology Enhancement Fund (TEF) is an appropriation by the state legislature to the Higher Education Department that provides matching funds to state research universities and Tribal colleges.

Each eligible institution is inviting applications from researchers who would like to request matching funds from TEF for pending or upcoming proposals that require cost share, matching funds, institutional commitment, or other similar language.

Internal applications are due by Tuesday, May 20. Your initial application should be submitted via InfoReady.

Please reach out to Assistant Vice President for Research Dave Hanson (dthanson@unm.edu) with any questions.

Faculty Mentored Research Award Nominations

We are seeking nominees for the 2025 Faculty-Mentored Research Award and nominations must be submitted via InfoReady by May 30.

This award is given annually to an outstanding undergraduate researcher and their faculty research mentor based upon the demonstration of a strong research partnership.

If you have any questions or require assistance submitting materials, please contact:

- Assistant Vice President for Research Melissa Emery Thompson | memery@unm.edu
- URAD Director Tim Schroeder | timschroeder@unm.edu

Award selections will be made in June.

FRDO Launches WeR1 GROWL

UNM's Faculty Research Development Office is accepting applications for our new WeR1 pilot program Grant Revision for Outstanding Wins to Level-up (GROWL). The program is designed to support UNM faculty in revising and resubmitting previously declined grant proposals or funded grants that were terminated.

Applications will be accepted until May 22 through InfoReady. Contact frdo@unm.edu with questions.

Postdoc Research Symposium

Last month, we celebrated the third annual New Mexico Postdoc Research Symposium with postdocs from across the State of New Mexico presenting their research alongside their mentors and colleagues.

The day included poster presentations, a panel on early career advice, and a keynote address from Purdue University Assistant Professor, Shalini Low-Nam. Congratulations to all the presentation winners and participants!

Serendipitous discovery could lead to more efficient catalysts

A team of international researchers, including faculty from UNM, found that hot car exhaust containing nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide caused a previously unknown reaction that, used proactively, can significantly improve catalytic activity.

Catalysts are substances that increase the rate of chemical reactions. The researchers found that hot exhaust encouraged ceria (cerium oxide) particles, one of the components of the catalyst materials, to form two-dimensional, nano-sized clusters. These clusters, densely covering the surface, create many sites where chemical reactions can happen, increasing the efficiency of the process.

Research Events

ROSE Program

Teachers from around the state will make UNM their home in less than a month for the summer Research Opportunities for Science Educators (ROSE) Program.

Since 2021, UNM has partnered with state's public education department to bring middle and high school science teachers to UNM for a full-time, hands-on summer experience working in an existing

research group. Teachers will join ongoing projects and participate in discovery-based research with the goal of bringing their new ideas, tools, and enthusiasm back to their students around New Mexico.

This summer cohort welcomes 20 teachers from Albuquerque, Gadsden, Gallup, Las Vegas, Lovington, Santa Fe, Shiprock, and Zuni Pueblo.

Research Celebrations

Goldwater Scholars

Last month, three Lobo undergraduates were selected as Goldwater Scholars, Anthony Languit, Alex Knigge, and Tanisha Medha.

Knigge is a third-year undergraduate student majoring in Computer Science with a minor in Mathematics and holds the distinction of being a National Hispanic Scholar. Additionally, she serves as a research computing specialist at the UNM Center for Advanced Research Computing, a Category 3 interdisciplinary research center supporting university researchers in leveraging high-performance computing for their projects.

Congratulations to all three scholars!

Research Technology

New AI Tools

UNM IT has introduced new AI tools including Zoom AI Companion, Microsoft Copilot, and Apple Intelligence that are now available to UNM students, faculty, and staff. When using AI tools, it is important to avoid sharing sensitive or confidential data. UNM strongly advises following the guidance provided at UNM AI Resources and using the tools responsibly to ensure the protection of sensitive information. The unauthorized sharing of data protected under FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality regulations is prohibited.

For more information, see the AI Data Use Notice on the UNM AI Resources webpage.

Research Reads

Earlier this spring, I had the privilege of immersing myself in the captivating world of photography at the California Museum of Photography, where I was fortunate enough to explore an extraordinary exhibit showcasing the work of UNM Professor of Photography Meggan Gould. This exhibition not only featured a remarkable array of photographs but was also complemented by a thought-provoking monograph titled "7 Pictures Remaining."

Gould’s project began during the pandemic and originally focused on the film frame counters on analog cameras – the mechanisms by which the photographer knew how many pictures remained on a roll of film. In examining the cameras within the museum’s archive, Gould discovered many of them still contained undeveloped film.

In "7 Pictures," Gould artfully weaves her terse yet powerful reflections, comparing her findings to messages in a bottle—fragile vessels of emotion and memory that “lie, lazily latent.” Collectively, the presentation of the photographs, in conjunction with photos of historic frame counters (with background colors arising from expired black and white photo paper used to make contact prints), harkens to a previous time with a different kind of tension between latency and urgency.
One question I have remaining is: if you take a photograph, but no one ever sees it or if it isn’t photoshopped to perfection, does it ever truly exist? Although I highly recommend you check out the book, here are some photographs, I rather amateurishly, took of the exhibit.