

October 2025

FROM THE DESK OF THE Vice President for Research

Lobos,

I would be remiss if I did not note that I am writing this as we experience a partial shutdown of the federal government. Numerous people have asked me if/how this is affecting my job and the answer of course is, yes, and in so many ways! Nevertheless, our OVPR staff, executive committee, and campus partners are all working to ensure the UNM research enterprise continues to function smoothly, despite the obstacles we face.

On a more uplifting aspect that often gets overlooked. We have the distinct pleasure of helping to facilitate research by creating opportunities for developing new research pathways, supporting researchers seeking new leadership roles, and connecting fledgling researchers to opportunities. And helping others connect to greater things is exactly what we accomplished with one of our very own OVPR students.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the exceptional contributions of our research students on campus, one in particular, our former student aide, Risa Smith. Currently, Risa is a McNair scholar majoring in biochemistry with a minor in forensic science. She is expected to graduate in the spring and her academic agenda for the fall and spring semesters is notably rigorous, featuring seven conference presentations and poster sessions. This level of engagement is a testament to the dedication and ambition that many of our students exhibit throughout their academic pursuits.

Risa served as an integral member of our office for nearly three years, and it fills me with immense pride to observe the remarkable trajectory of her academic journey. In her conversations and exchange of ideas with AVPR Om Perumal, Risa's academic path blossomed and research became a central part of her education. She sets an amazing example of the ideal Lobo who maximizes every opportunity presented, thereby significantly enriching her academic experience and contributing to the vibrant research and scholarly community on our campus.

If you know a student that is on this same path, please take the time to recognize the time and effort they are giving to their future.



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

October Safety Spotlight

This month, we highlight another important type of safety in the research environment: psychological safety. Psychological safety is generally defined as a shared belief among individuals as to whether it is safe to engage in interpersonal risk-taking (usually) in the workplace.

Notably, psychological safety is often viewed as focusing on how team or group members perceive (acceptable) group norms, whereas trust tends to be viewed as focusing on one person's perceptions of individual team members. Behaviorally, psychological safety in a research environment leads to open communication, ability to voice issues, concerns, and suggestions for alternative pathways for inquiry and to the free engagement in the feedback and iteration loops important for process/design/outcomes improvement. Importantly, psychological safety has been linked to improved [team performance](#), enhanced creativity and [innovation](#), decreased workplace safety [violations/injuries](#), and improved patient outcomes in [healthcare settings](#).

The pioneering work of Amy Edmondson and coworkers has also shown that “learners” (often referred to as “trainees” in the research environment) who feel psychologically *unsafe* (e.g., intimidated, bullied, or maintaining a fear of negative outcomes) do not contribute productively to the learning environment for themselves or for others. Trainees who feel psychologically safe tend to be those who are willing to share their divergent ideas, to explore novel solutions to difficult problems, and to improve their performance through reflective behaviors. Checkout [Edmonson's 7-item scale](#) to measure psychological safety within your team, which provides insight on tools available to measure psychological safety.

Research News

Research Security Training

Researchers, please make sure you are aware of the new federal research security requirements in relation to the National Security Presidential Memorandum-33 (NSPM-33) and Creating Helpful Incentives to Produce Semiconductors (CHIPS Act).

The UNM Office of Research Integrity & Compliance and Industrial Security Office have created a one-hour UNM-focused research security training that meets all federal agency requirements. This training is hosted in [Learning Central](#) and titled “UNM Research Security Training”.

Effective Oct. 10, investigators, co-investigators, and key personnel submitting to the NSF, DOE, and USDA must provide certificates of completion for research security training at the time of Proposal Review appointment. UNM's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must electronically certify compliance at the time of proposal submission. If certificates of completion for all listed individuals are not provided, it will delay submission of the proposal until training is completed. If you have questions, please contact ORIC or OSP.

Increased Volume of Awards & Contracts

The Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) typically sees its busiest time of year in July and October. As such, we ask for your continued patience as OSP works to process each action as quickly as possible. As new actions come in, OSP works to triage each action to keep things moving as seamlessly as possible. PIs and assigned department administrators can access the [OSP](#)

[Smartsheets](#) for the latest updates on the status of their project. If you have questions, please feel free to reach out to the OSP staff member assigned to your project.

Request to Spend Funds

With the support of your department chair/director and/or dean, the purpose of the Request to Spend Funds (RTSF) form is to allow for an index to be generated in Contract & Grant Accounting (CGA) and spending on a project to begin prior to an award document received and/or fully processed by OSP.

The use of RTSFs should be considered when funding is highly anticipated, such as a non-competitive continuation. The use of the RTSF will allow for a smooth transition from year-to-year without interruption. Be mindful with your specific projects and award documents as they must allow for spending to be incurred during the period you wish the RTSF to be active.

With departmental approval, RTSFs can be considered for up to 25% of the anticipated total award for a maximum of 90 days. For submission, please include your signed [RTSF form](#) along with an Award Budget Sheet (ABS) for the anticipated award total to awards@unm.edu.

WeR1 Program for Enhancing Research Capacity (PERC)

This year's cycle of PERC is open and we're accepting applications!

Fall 2025 PERC Timeline

- Sept. 22: Application window opened in InfoReady
- Dec. 5: Proposal due date
- Feb. 13: Notice of awards
- July 31, 2026: Proposals awarded/funds transferred for projects who have completed the required progress reports

PERC supports the acquisition of shared instrumentation or enhancement of shared facilities that enable major endeavors to advance discovery, creativity, and innovation across campus. Proposals may be led by any UNM faculty or staff member with a primary appointment on central campus who is eligible to serve as a PI.

WeR1 Leadership Innovation for Faculty Transformation (LIFT) program

There is also just one week left to submit your application for the LIFT program. Applications are due Thursday, Oct. 16.

This year, we have partnered with Academic Affairs to expand and further develop the program in 2026. Our new structure, being piloted next year, will maintain the cohort model and expand the opportunities for participants to explore more focused leadership goals and pathways in small groups within the cohort. As a pilot program, the 2026 cohort is limited to central campus faculty.

Huron Update

We have officially launched the implementation of the first three Huron Research Suite (HRS) modules:

- (1) Employee Compensation and Compliance (effort certification),
- (2) Grants and Agreements
- (3) Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment.

More than 50 faculty and staff from Central and HSC campuses are currently working together to align the different processes now that we will all be on the same system. We're also working with Huron to provide the thousands of data elements and records required to integrate HRS with UNM systems including single sign on and Banner.

This transition will take the next two fiscal years to complete, but we're inspired by all the progress that has already been made. We look forward to sharing more information as it becomes available and launching our first module in early 2026.

Research Events

Research & Discovery Week

I hope everyone is gearing up for UNM's 2025 Research and Discovery Week (R&D Week)! If you're not hosting an event this year, then I know you're planning to attend one, two, or even three of our exhibits, open houses, keynote addresses, and hands-on activities. There is really something for everyone and EVERYONE is invited to visit our campus during that week. Mark your calendars, Nov. 6-14!

This year, we are introducing an easier way to keep track of all the events you want to attend during R&D Week. Our [Sched calendar](#) allows you to customize the events you don't want to miss, just click on the "my schedule" button and sign up to add the sessions to your schedule.

CTSC's BioVenture Partnership Event

Registration is still open for the 2025 CTSC BioVenture. The event will be held Friday, Nov. 7, in the SUB, Ballroom A and B from 2-5:30 p.m.

Participation is open to the public and the university community with an interest in bioscience research and innovations. This year's BioVenture will highlight experts in commercialization together with business development and research. Participants have multiple opportunities to join this event.

Poster Applications must be submitted by Friday, Oct. 31.

Lightning Lounge

There is still time to attend a round of UNM Faculty Lightning Lounge events.

- Wednesday, Oct. 15
- Wednesday, Nov. 19

During a Lightning Lounge, our Lobo faculty give short talks about their research and scholarship, and time is available for questions during and after the event. No registration required. This year, Lightning Lounges are being held in the Honors College Forum from 3:30-4:30 p.m.

If you are interested in presenting your research at a future lounge or want to recommend someone, email AVP for Faculty Affairs Christopher Lyons (cl Lyons@unm.edu) or advance@unm.edu.

Research Celebrations

Annual Research Lecture

Congratulations to Dr. David Schade who will deliver this year's Annual Research Lecture (ARL), Wednesday, Nov. 5, at 2 p.m. as a kickoff event heading into our annual Research & Discovery Week.

The ARL has been presented at UNM since 1954 and is one of the highest honors the University bestows on its faculty member in recognition of research/creative activity. Dr. Schade was also the 2023 recipient of the 8th annual Community Engaged Research Lecture Award.

Research Reads

This month's book is squarely focused on New Mexico – *Nuclear Nuevo México: Colonialism and the Effects of the Nuclear Industrial Complex on Nuevomexicanos* by Myrriah Gomez, a UNM associate professor in Honors College.

This treatise provides both historical and present-day perspectives on the impact the nuclear industry has had and still has on the entire State of New Mexico. As Gomez explores the displacement of Nuvo Mexicanas/os and Tewa people from Pajarito Plateau to create a home for the World War II “project Y” site (now known as Los Alamos National Laboratory), she makes a strong case for the argument that this action effectively has created nuclear imperialism within New Mexico.

One of the themes of *Nuclear Nuevo México* is how, for so many people, the nuclear industrial complex in New Mexico has disturbed *querencia* – the place where one is fully connected, safe, empowered, rooted, and for Gomez where one feels a responsibility toward. This resonates deeply with Interim Provost Barbara Rodriguez' recent communications encouraging us all to build and honor *querencia* here at UNM.

Ultimately, for Gomez, this translates to protecting the land and staying connected to land-based traditions. One of the things I have noticed and remarked upon in my time at UNM and my third time living in New Mexico, is how deeply intertwined our communities are, and how even the transplants (like me) find themselves drawn to the land and feel connected to that desire to protect the amazing spaces that define *Nuevo México*.