



Lobo Researchers,

For more than five years, I've had the privilege of calling The University of New Mexico home, though New Mexico has held a special place in my heart and history for much longer (more than 50 years!).

Thus, it is with deeply mixed emotions that I write to share some personal news. After much thought, careful consideration, and many conversations with my husband, Todd, and with my mother, "The Ginny", I have decided that this academic year will be my last and I will be retiring during the spring 2027 semester. As part of that "retirement", I will be focusing on building and expanding one of my other passions – my team science consulting group, Divergent Science LLC.

My time at UNM has been nothing short of transformational, and as you can imagine, this is a bittersweet decision for me. Although it may seem like a short period of time, UNM has been incredibly important to my professional life, and I will carry with me so many positive memories and lessons from my time here. I am incredibly proud of what we've accomplished together, from the WeR1 faculty success programs to Research & Discovery Week, to the creation of two new Category 3 centers, increased recognition of the outstanding research we do, and more! I'm especially grateful for the support, partnership, and friendship of colleagues across the institution who have made this work both meaningful and rewarding. It has truly been a privilege to serve the UNM research enterprise and its communities. Although it feels like the right time to begin this next chapter, I will always care deeply about UNM and the people who make it such a special place.

UNM Provost Barbara Rodriguez and I have been working on a transition plan for me and for the OVPR. We will provide more details as we solidify the plan over the next few weeks.

Lobos, we still have so much work to do in the next few months and let's not forget the first week of November has become a UNM tradition with Research and Discovery Week. It's the perfect opportunity to celebrate innovation, creativity, discovery, and all the Lobo researchers who make it happen.

Ellen R. Fisher
UNM Vice President for Research
Professor of Chemistry

Safety Spotlight & Compliance Corner

This month we're chatting with UNM Industrial Security Officer Mikell Coleman. UNM's [Industrial Security Department](#) (ISD) has oversight over industrial security and export controls, and you may be familiar with our office if you engage in classified research, international travel, or international collaborations.

Lobos, as UNM's industrial security officer, I work alongside Export Control Officer Patrick Bourgoyne to meet federal research security requirements, in accordance with National Security Presidential Memorandum 33 ([NSPM-33](#)) and federal funding agency implementations.

Recently, ISD collaborated with UNM's [Office of Research Integrity and Compliance](#) (ORIC) to develop a comprehensive UNM-specific research security training course (ORIC_Research_Security), and a refresher training course (ORIC_UNM_RS_Refresher) to meet the annual training requirements for federally funded research. You can access the trainings in [UNM Learning Central](#).

Federal [research security mandates](#) require UNM to maintain an organizational record of international travel related to funded research. ISD has partnered with the [Global Education Office](#) (GEO) to create a [registration form](#) for faculty and staff traveling internationally to engage in funded research. Please use this form to register any upcoming travel abroad related to your UNM research or related job duties. You are also encouraged to sign up for [international health and travel insurance](#), during the registration process.

Are you curious about how research security requirements may impact your work? Are you concerned about the impacts to international travel and global collaboration? As we thoughtfully consider how to balance current and emerging research security requirements with our values as academic professionals and researchers, let's embrace transparency as a shared responsibility. Please contribute a question to our upcoming research security FAQ page here: [UNM Research Security FAQ – Fill out form](#).

Research Events

2026 Research and Discovery Week

We are less than one month away from UNM's annual Research and Discovery Week that kicks off Nov. 2.

We received more than 90 proposals, reflecting the creativity, curiosity, and momentum across UNM's research community. This year's R&D Week will take place in the Student Union Building and other spaces around campus. Centered on this year's theme, 'Resilient Ideas. Real Impact.' the week will feature keynote speaker Setso Metodi of Quantinuum, an outstanding lineup of speakers and workshops, and nearly 20 interactive research tables that bring discovery to life.

To learn more, visit our website.

GC Day Wrap

Last week, we celebrated UNM Grand Challenges Day and welcomed the newest Level 2 teams: Biodiversity Nexus and Trustworthy AI. The event opened with remarks from President Steve Goldstein who highlighted the collaborative spirit driving the Grand Challenges initiative. Team conveners shared updates on their work, while a UNM student also offered a powerful reflection on the impact of participating in the Grand Challenges program.

We're excited to see what our two new teams do in the next two years.

SHRI Fiestas

UNM's Southwest Hispanic Research Institute hosted its inaugural Research Fiesta last week. The day included a community engaged research session, graduate research talks, and an 'art and activism' presentation.

The institute also presented Professor Nancy Lopez with its first SHRI Faculty Research Award. Congrats, Nancy!

We look forward to future Research Fiestas!

Research News

PI Survey

We are launching a new PI Satisfaction Survey. If you've applied for or received external funding through UNM main or branch campuses in the last two years, we are asking for your input on how well we're supporting you.

Please respond by Nov. 25.

You will receive an email from **OVPR@qualtrics.unm.edu** with a direct link to the survey. If you don't see it in your inbox, we encourage you to check your "other" inbox and spam. If you are unable to find it, please email vpr@unm.edu and we will resend it.

The survey takes about 10 minutes, and your input will directly inform improvements to the offices and processes that support UNM researchers.

Increased Volume of Awards & Contracts

OSP typically sees its busiest time of year around the state fiscal year change in July and the federal fiscal year change in October. The last six months of the year typically includes *four times* the volume of work for awards and contracts than in the first half of the calendar year.

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 one 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.

As an added note, please be considerate of your fellow researchers who are also trying to get their proposals submitted and their contracts signed. Missing OSP proposal review appointments and/or failure to respond in a timely fashion to requests for information not only delays your action, but it can also significantly impact your colleagues.

Faculty Mentored Research Awards

Every year, this is one of my favorite award categories to announce. Along with the Undergraduate Research, Arts, and Design Network (URAD), we created the Faculty Mentored Research Awards to honor outstanding examples of collaborative partnerships between a UNM undergraduate researcher and the researcher's faculty mentor. This year's winners are:

Award of Excellence:

Faculty: Davorka Gulisija

Student: Xavier Larsson

Award of Distinction:

Faculty: Diana Dragomir

Student: Allison Shaver

Award of Distinction:

Faculty: Lydia Tapia

Student: Adrian Faust

PERC

Applications are now open for this year's cycle of the Program for Enhancing Research Capacity (PERC). PERC supports the acquisition of shared instrumentation or enhancement of shared facilities that enable major endeavors to advance discovery, creativity, and innovation across campus.

Applications are due Nov. 6.

Since the fall of 2021, OVPR has held 6 cycles of the WeR1 PERC program and invested more than \$2.6 million.

LIFT

Along with the Office of Academic Affairs, we are inviting tenured UNM faculty who seek to transform their leadership effectiveness to submit applications for the 2027 WeR1 Leadership Innovation for Faculty Transformation (LIFT) program. LIFT provides concrete support and mentoring over the calendar year to a small cohort of faculty to advance their research and/or administrative leadership knowledge and skills.

Applications are due Oct. 28.

Coming Soon: FaST

The Spring 2027 Faculty Scholarship Time (FaST) competition will open next week, with applications due Nov. 20.

This iteration of FaST will provide graduate project assistant support for course-related duties rather than course releases due to the compressed timeline for Spring 2027 implementation. Future cycles are expected to return to offering course releases and/or graduate assistant support.



Huron Research Suite Update

Our Office of Sponsored Projects, COI, and IRB teams continue to work with colleagues across the Health Sciences Campus and Huron to build and implement the respective Huron Research Suite modules. Below are quick updates for each module:

Employee Compensation & Compliance (ECC) – Effort certifications for our second certification period (January–June 2026) in Huron are due Oct. 10. Moving forward, we will transition to quarterly effort certification. The next certification period, July–September 2026, will open for review on Oct. 26, with certifications due Jan 8, 2027. We have provided additional time for this certification period to account for the November and December holidays.

Grants & Agreements – Over the last month, teams have been testing the ‘agreements’ module and migrating existing data into Huron. Data validation will begin this month. Similar work is underway for the ‘grants’ module, including development of the financial system integration to create greater orchestration between Huron Research Suite and Banner.

Conflict of Interest (COI) – Teams continue to test system functionality and make adjustments based on their findings. An orchestration between Grants & Agreements and COI was recently released, which will help facilitate the flow of information between the two modules and support a more integrated process.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) – Our team is working on data migration and system testing as we prepare for implementation.

Overall, we are currently projecting a Spring 2027 go-live for Grants & Agreements, COI, and IRB.

Research Radiates

Lately, so much of our conversations and what’s in the news surrounds artificial intelligence (AI). This month, I’m excited to introduce you to a UNM researcher who is making major impacts in this field. She believes that safety comes first and when that happens, true innovation abounds. Computer Science Professor Pavithra Prabhakar is leading so many projects on our campus and is a true collaborator at heart.

Lobos, my research focuses on making physical systems controlled by intelligent software—such as robots, self-driving cars, and aircraft—safer and more trustworthy. I develop mathematical methods and software tools to ensure that these systems behave safely and securely, even when they use artificial intelligence (AI) to perceive their surroundings, make decisions, and take actions.

I have always been interested in the question of how we can make complex systems behave reliably. As software, and more recently AI, began to control physical systems around us, that question became much more consequential. These systems can have a direct impact on people and the physical world, and failures can be catastrophic. That is what drew me to the problem of making AI-enabled systems trustworthy.

New Mexico is at the forefront of aerospace, national security, and advanced technology, where intelligent systems are increasingly being used in applications in which safety and security are essential. My goal is to help make trustworthy AI a reality by enabling us to take advantage of increasingly capable AI while ensuring that the systems it controls remain safe and secure. At UNM, I am also helping build a broader community around this goal as a lead convener of the Trustworthy AI Grand Challenges team and by leading the development of the Robotic Intelligent Systems with Trustworthy Autonomy (RISTRA). RISTRA will be a new center within the School of Engineering that brings together researchers across disciplines to advance trustworthy robotic and autonomous systems, while building partnerships across New Mexico and beyond.