

September 2025

FROM THE DESK OF THE
Vice President for Research

Lobos,

As we dive deeper into the semester, I understand that many of you are juggling numerous responsibilities, from mentoring young Lobos to launching research projects and creating new art pieces. With so much on your plates, I thought it would be helpful to share a checklist of essential tasks and opportunities to keep in mind as you kick off the academic year. This list includes some new requirements stemming from updated federal funding guidelines, as well as routine housekeeping items that every faculty member should address to ensure a smooth and successful start to the semester. Remember, taking a moment to review these items can help you focus on what truly matters in your teaching and creative endeavors.

- Sign up for the PI Listserv. If you're a UNM principal investigator (or want to be) you should be subscribed to this listserv.
- Make sure your annual safety trainings for you and members of your team are up-to-date. What about the new research security training, which can be found in Learning Central?
- Do you and/or members of your team need RCR training? Check out the list of offerings from the UNM Office of Research Integrity and Compliance.
- Check out the workshops offered by FRDO and Advance at UNM. Also, check back regularly as this partnership is very responsive to the needs and suggestions of the research community.
- Meet your colleagues at this semester's Lightning Lounge events; the first one is this Wednesday.
- Mark your calendar for Research & Discovery Week events November 6-14.

See all necessary links below.



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

September Safety Spotlight

This month, UNM Environmental Health and Safety Director Casey Hall volunteered to be a guest writer for September's Safety Spotlight.

Every day, thousands of us work in labs, classrooms, offices, and facilities across UNM. We all deserve to go home healthy and uninjured at the end of each workday.

This week, EHS is launching an anonymous Culture of Safety follow-up survey. This survey will be used to improve occupational health and safety along with research safety at UNM. It takes just 15 minutes, and your input is incredibly invaluable. Your responses are anonymous.

Approximately two years ago, Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) embarked on a Safety Culture assessment focused on occupational and research safety. Colleagues spoke up in our last assessment and UNM is responding. We formed an Executive Safety Committee, launched new incident reporting systems, allocated resources for workplace safety improvements, and implemented department-specific safety measures. Now, we need to know if it's working.

Last year, preventable workplace injuries changed Lobo lives, occupational safety concerns were not raised, and "near-misses" in labs, shops, and facilities went unreported. As a Pack, we can do better. Whether you work in a research lab, maintain our buildings, teach in a classroom, or support our mission in any way, you see workplace safety realities others do not. You know which safety procedures get skipped, where occupational hazards exist, and what would make your work environment safer.

The survey will open tomorrow, Sept. 9.

Research News

R&D Week Sneak Peak

If you've already secured your event in this year's Research and Discovery Week, then you are ahead of The Pack. R&D Week is set for Nov. 6-14.

Here is a sneak peak of some of our big events of the week.

- Nov. 07 | ARTSLab Open House
- Nov. 12 | Community Engaged Research Lecture: Moises Gonzalez
- Nov. 13 | Grad Studies LoboBites Competition
- Nov. 13 | Keynote Lecture: Neuroscientist and Technologist Poppy Crum
- Nov. 14 | UNM Research Advances New Mexico Expo
- Nov. 14 | Riley Schaeffer Memorial Lecture: Nobel Prize winner Dr. Paul Modrich

There is still time to register for one of our two special open house events. Please email Assistant Vice President for Research Melissa Emery Thompson (memery@unm.edu).

IEEE Quantum Week

Congratulations to all the UNM researchers who attended and participated in the IEEE International

Conference on Quantum Computing and Engineering (QCE25), that was held right here in Albuquerque last week.

Lobos participated and led several keynote addresses, panel discussions, and workshops throughout the conference.

Research Administrators Luncheon

Research administrators play a pivotal role in the success of our university as an R1 institution; thus, it is essential that we acknowledge and celebrate their dedication to helping us achieve our research objectives and milestones.

We will celebrate all UNM research administrators during a luncheon in Stamm Commons on Thursday, Sept. 25 from 12-2 p.m. Please RSVP by Friday, Sept. 12.

Their contributions extend beyond mere administrative support; they are instrumental in fostering connections and collaborations that often go unnoticed but are vital to our research ecosystem.

Thank you for everything you do!

Annual Research Lecture

You still have time to submit nominations for the Annual Research Lectureship (ARL) for Career Achievement. The deadline to submit is Sept. 30.

The ARL is one of the highest honors that UNM can bestow upon a faculty member in recognition of their scholarly activity. The nominee must be an active, full-time professor or exceptional associate professor at the time the nomination is submitted, in the tenure track, research track, or clinician-educator track.

NSF Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER)

Congratulations to the UNM faculty who received the NSF CAREER award this year

- Associate Professor Shuya Wei
- Assistant Professor Tonmoy Chakraborty
- Associate Professor Francis-Yan Cyr-Racine
- Assistant Professor Diana Dragomir

To learn more about applying to the NSF CAREER or any other grant, request research support through the FRDO website.

Huron Update

Researchers, with our One University goal continuing to guide this effort, we are pleased to share progress on UNM's implementation of the Huron Research Suite. The employee compensation (effort certification) module held its implementation kickoff last month, followed by the grants and agreements module kickoff just last week.

Each session brought together 20–30 UNM leaders and staff from across campuses. This project represents a significant lift that will streamline processes, create efficiencies, and support research excellence across UNM. Looking ahead, the Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment (COI/COC) module will hold its online kickoff later this month.

Grand Challenges (GC) Day is this Friday, Sept. 12 from 1-4 p.m. in the SUB Ballroom C. The day will feature a panel on private funding opportunities, followed by the introduction of this year's new Level 1 cohort and reports from Level 1 and 2 teams. The event is free and open to students, faculty, staff and the members of our community.

The UNM Grand Challenges Program is also seeking nominations for individuals interested in serving on the GC Steering Committee. The program's steering committee makes recommendations and provides feedback on current and future grand challenges. The committee seeks faculty, staff, and student representation from all campuses, as well as community member participation. If you are interested or know someone who would make a great addition to the committee, please nominate them here. The deadline to submit nominations is Friday, September 19.

The next term begins in October. The student member term is one year; all other member terms are three years.

Research Celebrations

Quantum Venture Studio

The New Mexico Economic Development Department has announced a significant **\$25 million investment** to establish a cutting-edge quantum venture studio in partnership with Roadrunner Venture Studios. The initiative will accelerate innovation and growth in the quantum technology sector, with the **Quantum New Mexico Institute (QNM-I)** at UNM joining as a core partner alongside Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories.

The new QNM-I headquarters at the Roadrunner facility will serve as a hub that maximizes cross-sector engagement among **national lab researchers, university experts, pioneering startups, and world class investors**, creating a launchpad for the next generation of U.S. quantum breakthroughs.

Simultaneously, UNM will utilize part of the multimillion-dollar investment to launch a new translational fellowship that broaden participation of students from all over New Mexico in quantum innovation, while attracting business expertise to both unlock the intellectual property in QNM-I and develop new companies here in the state.

Associate Vice President for Research David Hanson

We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Biology Professor Dave Hanson on his promotion to associate vice president for research! Having dedicated the past four years to his role as assistant vice president for research, Professor Hanson continuously demonstrates a strong commitment to advancing our research initiatives.

His passion for innovation, collaboration across multiple sectors, and economic development have significantly enriched our academic community, and we look forward to witnessing the remarkable contributions he will undoubtedly continue to make in his new role.

We would be remiss if we did not also point out that Dave is a lot of fun to have in the office as he always has the best stories about plant biology (yes, this can be fun!), travel woes, deep sea fishing, cake decorating, bicycling, and a range of other quirky hobbies and interests. Now if we could just get him to stop sending work emails in the wee hours of the morning... must be a biological thing!

This month's book, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer is connected to New Mexico in that it was recommended to me by a NM plant biologist, a NM ecologist, and a NM geographer.

Part autobiography, part textbook, part biology class, and part tutorial on indigenous ways of knowing, *Sweetgrass* is a love letter to mother earth. As a botanist and a member of the Citizen of Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer reminds us that we are not the only living beings on our planet and that there are lessons we can learn from plants and animals. One lesson that truly resonated with me is the concept of reciprocity – we take care of the plants and animals that take care of us. Kimmerer speaks of these interactions in terms of generosity and gifts given in both directions – a message of coexistence and co-creation.

Another key take-away for me was that I really need to have a garden again! For decades my husband and I maintained a vegetable garden and composting enterprise that was a huge source of amazing fresh vegetables, but also of peace and grounding (pun intended). For a variety of reasons, that has not been in the cards for the past few years. Kimmerer reminded me of the importance of being connected to where our food comes from, as well as minimizing waste, both plant and animal, using only what we truly need.

Finally, as a chemist who has often surmised that no one becomes a chemist because they took a first-year chemistry lecture class – it's the laboratory experience that speaks to most would-be chemists – I felt a kinship with Kimmerer who makes a similar statement. She notes essentially that no one becomes a field biologist because of a classroom experience – they thrive best *in the field*. Thus, Kimmerer provides reinforcement of my firmly held belief that some of the deepest and most critical transformations in how we think about knowledge generation happen, especially for junior researchers, when *doing* a discipline. This is particularly true when the *how* we do it directly aligns with deeper values rooted in inclusive and broad-minded approaches to building a better understanding of our world. Experiential learning at its best!