

January 2026

FROM THE DESK OF THE Vice President for Research

Happy New Year, Lobos!

Welcome back, everyone! I hope your holiday break was not only relaxing but also an opportunity to recharge your creative batteries. Now that we're diving back into our projects, whether it's writing a book chapter, curating an art showcase, or planning your next field study in the landscapes of the Southwest, let's embrace this fresh start with renewed enthusiasm and excitement.

In two weeks, the spring 2026 semester will be upon us. Research is at the heart of what we do here at The University of New Mexico. Our commitment to the highest level of research activity defines us as Lobos and sets us apart from others. Every day is an opportunity to do just that – highlight the research, scholarship, and creativity that happen here and impacts all New Mexicans.

In contemplating the new year and the new semester, I have decided that 2026 should be the year of “structure” (order, organization, intention), following a year that was filled with shifting landscapes. As we get back into the swing of things, think about how you might be able to introduce a bit more structure to what you do. Whether that looks like journaling more, creating onboarding processes for new researchers, developing research agreements with colleagues, or something else, bringing structure to your research endeavors can bring a sense of calm, certainty, and direction.



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

Safety Spotlight & Compliance Corner

In 2026, we'll be highlighting both safety and compliance in this feature as the two are often hand in hand in ensuring excellence in research.

Did you know that one of the biggest safety issues we have at UNM is slips, trips, and falls? Our injury/incident data from 2025 shows Lobos are nearly twice as likely to suffer an injury due to a slip, trip, or fall compared to the next most frequent type of injury, needle sticks.

It turns out that UNM is not unique in this regard. Slips, trips, and falls are one of the primary causes of injury in the workplace with the National Safety Council indicating nearly 25,000 slips, trip, and fall accidents occur daily in the U.S. In many cases, these lead to missed time at work, and more severely to permanent disability or death. Perhaps most importantly, they are largely preventable. Here are some quick tips on how to avoid this type of injury:

- **Don't multitask** – Keep your focus on where you're going.
- **Watch where you are going** – This one seems obvious, but you'd be surprised at how often people fall when looking at things other than where they are going.
- **Think ahead** – Like any good hazards assessment, thinking about how slips, trips, and falls might occur *before they do* may help prevent them in the future. Some examples include cleaning up spills as soon as they happen, not stretching power cords across walkways, using appropriate equipment (like a ladder instead of a rolling chair), and reporting unsafe site conditions (e.g., broken pavement or torn carpet) immediately to your building proctor or unit head.

This may also be a good time to remind everyone that it's important to report all incidents, even slips, trips, and falls to EHS as this can help prevent future incidents of a similar nature.

Research News

Turning Discovery Into Impact: UNM's 2025 Research Year-in-Review

In 2025, researchers at The University of New Mexico addressed some of the most pressing issues facing New Mexico and the nation. Their innovative research and community engagement efforts have resulted in solutions across various fields and disciplines, demonstrating a commitment to addressing local and national issues. The following stories highlight a glimpse into the transformative contributions made by Lobo researchers, showcasing their dedication to enhancing the well-being of communities throughout the state and beyond.

{will highlight a few different stories here}

Research: By The Numbers

Over the past year, our University has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in the face of unprecedented challenges and I'm so proud of the work we accomplished to be where we are in the New Year! I want to take the time to highlight some research numbers for main campus, which serve as a testament to the potential that happens when we collaborate, innovate, and adjust our strategies in uncertain times. These accomplishments not only reflect our commitment to excellence but also underscore the importance of teamwork and creativity.

- Expenditures: \$181M FY25
- Proposals: \$521M FY25
- Awards: \$245M FY25

Also, our partners at UNM Rainforest reported the following for all UNM campuses in FY25:

- Invention Disclosures: 94
- Patents Issued: 46
- Startup Companies Formed: 7

I can't emphasize enough how significant these numbers are after the uncertain year we all had in 2025!



Research Events

RCR Symposium

The Office of Research Integrity and Compliance (ORIC) offers full-day symposia dedicated to the responsible conduct of research (RCR). This symposium provides a platform for researchers, students, and faculty members to engage in thought-provoking discussions and gain valuable insights into various aspects of responsible research.

Completion of this symposium fulfills the federal and UNM RCR training requirements for funded research at UNM. Join us at our next symposium, Thursday, Jan. 8.

Looking ahead, we are also expanding our RCR offerings beyond symposia. In 2026, ORIC will pilot a series of more targeted training events tailored to the needs of specific groups—such as faculty PIs, postdoctoral scholars, graduate students, undergraduate researchers, and research staff—so that each community receives timely, relevant guidance that aligns with their roles and responsibilities in the research enterprise.

FRDO Writing Workshop

There is still time to register (for remote participation ONLY) for the three-day writing retreat hosted by the Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE), the Provost's Office, and the OVPR beginning today at the Open Space Visitor Center. The retreat runs through Thursday, Jan. 8, offering in-person, remote, and hybrid options, plus optional post-retreat workshops.

The organizers aim to frame writing through a holistic approach that understands wellbeing as an intrinsic part of writing. Researchers can also attend the post-retreat workshop without attending the retreat.

Post-Retreat Workshop (via Zoom):

- Jan. 9: Planning Your Semester Writing

Register for the retreat + optional workshops [here](#).

Research Technology

Huron Update

The Huron Research Suite implementation continues to progress. The Effort Certification (ECC) implementation team advanced through initial system integration testing.

Staff from the Contract & Grant Accounting Offices, colleges, and departments from both sides of campus have participated in testing and provided valuable feedback. The implementation team is incorporating feedback and will continue testing and data validation this month. The ECC module remains on schedule to go-live next month, and we will have our first certification in March (for July – Dec 2025).

Research Resources

UNM researchers, InCites Benchmarking & Analytics is now available through UNM Libraries A-Z Databases. The OVPR has provided access to UNM researchers on a one-year trial. InCites is a research evaluation tool, helping research institutions to demonstrate research impact; benchmark against peer universities; build strategic teams; innovate in emerging research areas; and assess collaboration.

All access requires a username and password with Clarivate/Web of Science. To create an account, use your unmc.edu email to register.

Research Radiates

I have been waiting for the new year to begin this new section in my monthly newsletter – we’re calling it “Research Radiates”. I believe our research, here at UNM, has deep impact for everyone across our state and sometimes we don’t always communicate and share just how amazing (and radiant!) that impact can be.

Starting this month, we will share testimonials directly from our researchers about the impact of their research and how it radiates not only right here in New Mexico but across state lines and around the world.

We are starting off with one Lobo researcher who is sometimes known as the “fly-guy”; Mubarak Hussain Syed is always demonstrating creativity and excellence when it comes to mentoring our future UNM researchers.

Lobos, my name is Mubarak Hussain Syed and I’m an assistant professor in the UNM Department of Biology. In my lab, we use tiny fruit flies to learn how the brain is built as it grows, how early

development shapes behaviors like sleep and navigation, and what goes wrong in autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

My inspiration to study developmental biology began at a hands-on workshop at the National Center for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru, India, where I first saw how complex life grows from simple beginnings and how time shapes development and aging.

Our research and education efforts deepen understanding of brain development and neurodevelopmental disorders, while training students and teachers from New Mexico and beyond.

You can learn more about our impact here.