



RELEASE: March 5

Lobos Researchers,

This week's message contains a few newsworthy items as well as a few updates from our offices on other issues we're addressing.

Federal Funding Update

As we reported in January, Congress passed a [three-bill minibus](#) (Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment) that included significant support for federal funding agencies. Notably, Congress [rejected the significant cuts](#) to science agencies originally proposed by the White House. Nevertheless, [recent reporting](#) suggests several agencies, including NSF, NIH, and NASA have experienced a continued slowdown in their spending. NIH has also [released new data](#) showing a sharp decline in the funding rate for both early career investigators and more established investigators.

What can you do? We encourage all investigators to continue to build relationships with program officers at federal funding agencies. In addition, we understand that there may be a push to fund proposals as we enter the second half of the federal fiscal year, so please continue to submit proposals and white papers. Finally, the New Mexico EPSCoR office notes that there is still a mandate at NSF to support proposals from EPSCoR states and that proposal submissions have dwindled over the past few months. Please reach out to our research development offices for assistance in identifying opportunities and proposal submission!

SBIR/STTR

Lawmakers [recently](#) agreed on a bill to reauthorize the popular [Small Business Innovation Research \(SBIR\) and Small Business Technology Transfer \(STTR\) programs](#), which expired at the end of the last federal fiscal year (Sept. 30, 2025). This is good news for our Lobo entrepreneurs and for startups across the State of New Mexico. Eleven federal agencies participate in the SBIR and STTR programs, which are credited with facilitating the translation of research discoveries to innovation for everyone's benefit.

Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) [announced](#) two new interagency agreements (IAAs) with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Under the IAAs, Department of State will assist with management and compliance oversight of Section 117 foreign gift and contract [reporting](#) for higher education institutions, including operating the reporting portal and supporting national security reviews. ED released a [fact sheet](#) on the IAA. Notably, Congress has agreed to these IAAs with some reservations. Read more about that [here](#).

Publication Costs Task Force

UNM's two offices of research have recently charged a small task force to examine various aspects of the rising costs of scholarly publications. The cross-campus task force will focus on three areas:

- Assessing the publication costs-related challenges facing UNM researchers across the institution



- Gathering information on how peer institutions are addressing similar issues
- Developing a set of recommendations for potential mitigation strategies that UNM could consider in addressing researchers' concerns.

Please reach out to either Melissa Rethlefsen (MRethlefsen@salud.unm.edu) or Hannah Torres (htorres8@unm.edu), who are co-chairing the task force, if you have any questions or information you would like to share with the group. We anticipate having a report from the task force by the end of the semester.

While our VPR Joint Communications may not come every week, we want to reassure you that we are actively monitoring the dynamic changes in federal funding. Your concerns and issues related to grants are of utmost importance to us, and we encourage you to maintain open lines of communication.

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