



Lobos,

Welcome to a new academic year! Although my summer did not go exactly the way I planned - I shattered my wrist playing racquetball less than a week before I was set to go on vacation - it has been a time to slow down and reflect on the research enterprise at UNM and the research process in general (while binge watching the Olympics).

I have been reading "Creativity in Research" with our Leadership Innovation for Faculty Transformation (LIFT) group. This book reminds us that creativity is the source of innovation and that there are things we can do to foster creativity in our own personal research journeys. One quick takeaway is that we tend to focus almost exclusively on the outcomes of research (papers, grants, books, etc.), and not on the process or journey behind the outcome.

As the new academic year commences, it's a good time to think about what steps in your research journey were achieved this summer, rather than whether you finished that set of experiments, closed the last chapter of your manuscript, or submitted your latest results to a high-profile journal. Instead, focus on what you can do to improve your research process and enhance your creativity - think about your research stories and methods of storytelling, manage your energy, and seek constructive feedback.

These are things I am contemplating as my wrist continues to improve and I try to stay focused on the (slow) process of healing and not so much on the day-to-day outcomes of what my wrist and fingers can do.

Have a great semester, Lobos!



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

# August Safety Spotlight

A new academic year inevitably brings new people to UNM's research environments. Although new researchers bring enthusiasm, different perspectives, and increased research productivity, they can also be viewed as a liability from a safety perspective. Studies have found that new workers are at a [significantly increased risk](#) of experiencing "lost time" injuries than those who have been on the job for a year or more.

This is attributed to several possible factors, including lack of familiarity with tasks, hesitancy to speak up about potential hazards, and lack of safety training. Having a clear onboarding plan that includes explicit safety training around specific hazards in the research environment in which new employees will be working, as well as safety procedures, can dramatically decrease injuries among new workers.

In addition, intentional mentoring and supervision by senior members of the research team can provide a comfortable environment for new researchers to ask questions and receive guidance on new tasks and procedures. As Lobo researchers, we are part of a pack, therefore we must protect each other from injuries and accidents through education and mentoring.

## Research Events

### CERL

Congratulations to our 2024 Community Engaged Research Lecture (CERL) awardee, UNM Associate Professor Kimberly Gauderman.

Reflective of her research interests and her concern for social justice and human rights, Gauderman is an associate professor of Latin American history. She has been practicing as an expert witness in Latin American asylum cases since 2010, focusing on gender, sexuality, and racial-based violence.

Gauderman's lecture will take place Sept. 12 at 4:30 p.m., at George Pearl Hall.

### R&D Week

Registration remains open for this year's Research & Discovery Week that's scheduled for Nov. 8-15. We can't wait to share with you all the feature events, such as lectures, open houses, workshops, exhibits, and other creative activities at UNM.

Contact [memery@unm.edu](mailto:memery@unm.edu) with questions.

## Research Celebrations

### 2024 Faculty Mentored Research Awards

I'm excited to announce the 2024 winners of the Faculty Mentored Research Awards. We received so

many outstanding nominations for the award this year and simply could not pass up the opportunity to recognize two – instead of one – of these outstanding teams.

- Assistant Professor of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering Anjali Mulchandani | Economics and Philosophy major Kamryn Zachek
- Lecturer Jake Greenberg | Finance Major Solomon Gbara | Chemical and Biological Engineering Major Audrey Lee.

The FMRA is awarded to outstanding undergraduate researchers and their faculty research mentor based upon the demonstration of a strong research partnership.

## NSF Trailblazer Award

I'm excited to highlight that UNM has been selected to receive one of six NSF Trailblazer Awards. Chemical & Bio Engineering Professor Gabriel Lopez will lead the 3-year, \$3 million project "Overcoming the Lignin Barrier for Valorization of Forest Biomass – a New Paradigm for Mitigation of Catastrophic Wildfires."

The project aims to develop revolutionary green approaches to break down lignin, opening the door to new, sustainable economies in forest communities most at-risk for catastrophic wildfires.

Congrats, Professor Lopez.

## NSF Invests \$16M in UNM-Affiliated Projects

NSF announced it will invest nearly \$16 million in three research projects led or supported by UNM. The grants are part of a \$77.8 million NSF investment in projects that will build climate resilience capacity as part of the Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

This is not only an investment in University of New Mexico-led research, but in research that will positively impact the entire State of New Mexico as well as our neighboring states and regional tribal communities. These three projects show the breadth of interdisciplinary work that happens every day on our campuses where our student and faculty researchers seek to tackle today's challenges to enhance tomorrow's future.

# Research News

## Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs

UNM President Garnett S. Stokes issued a new condition regarding Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs (MFTRP) laws and regulations that will take effect Friday, August 9.

Please be sure to read the memo in full. The official policy is going through the standard policy review process to become part of the faculty handbook. For additional information regarding this policy, contact Facility Security Officer Jessica Hermosillo at [jhermosillo@unm.edu](mailto:jhermosillo@unm.edu).

## All of Us Research Program

University Libraries and the Health Sciences Library & Informatics Center is actively engaged in the NIH sponsored All of Us Research Program (AoU). AoU is aimed at advancing precision medicine

and improving human health with an explicit goal of building a database that includes information from historically underrepresented populations. Researchers are encouraged to access and use this rich and diverse protected health information database. Learn more through one of our [workshops](#).

Additional information and guides:

Health and Health Sciences: <https://libguides.health.unm.edu/allofus/allofus>

Main and Branch Campuses: <https://libguides.unm.edu/allofus>

## GC Steering Committee

The [UNM Grand Challenges Program](#) is looking for 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 next terms begin in October.

## Outstanding Research Staff Awards Nominations

OVPR seeks nominations for the 2024 Outstanding Research Staff awards. Eligibility is limited to research administrators, and support staff across central campus. Research support staff at all levels, including students and part-time employees, are eligible.

No self-nominations. You can submit multiple nominations, one per award category. Award winners will receive \$1,000.

## Research Technology

### SAVERS

As a joint venture across all campuses, we are excited to announce the Spring 2024 Scholarly Advancement Via Enterprise Research Software (SAVERS) program awardees.

- Melissa Sanchez, PI | Jennifer Kavka, Co-PI | Viorel Atudorei, Co-PI
- Mousumi Roy, PI | Co-PIs: Eric Lindsey, Darcy Barron, Dinesh Loomba, Stephen Boyd, Stavroula Foteinoupoulou
- Lisa Whalen, PI | Matthew Aronof, Co-PI
- Swathi Subramany, PI | Wendy Hannah, Co-PI
- Tim Petersen

Applicants are chosen based on their potential to significantly enhance research capabilities at UNM and foster collaborative efforts across multiple departments, colleges, and campuses.

## Research Recipe!

Agility, balance, and endurance are just a few words associated with most athletic sports. But those words can be applied to any research study, project, and experience. Researchers must have agility to think quickly on their feet. They must balance the needs of their research team, tight deadlines by funding agencies, and most times a hectic teaching and service schedule. Lastly, researchers must have the endurance to (as I mentioned above in my message) truly experience the journey and process and not just focus on the outcome.

Second-year UNM nuclear engineering student Ixchel Valentino has done just that competing in season 16 of NBC's American Ninja Warrior. Valentino said, during an interview on the show, that her STEM background empowers her to better analyze ninja obstacles.

Her next appearance is set to air on Monday, Aug. 12 on NBC. Go Lobos!