



FROM THE DESK OF THE Vice President for Research

January 2025

Happy New Year, Lobos!

Welcome back to campus, get ready to engage in research, work hard, and have fun all semester long. Just as so many people set resolutions and goals for themselves come the New Year, it's the perfect opportunity in an academic setting like ours to ignite a new project you've been hesitating to begin, put pencil to paper and write that chapter you've put off, or create that piece of art that can become a part of our history.

Lastly, the 57th Legislature of New Mexico convenes for 60 days. UNM Day at the State Capitol is an annual event that allows our students, faculty, researchers, and artists to engage with legislators and legislative staff about budget and legislative priorities impacting campus life. Lobos will also be able to highlight UNM's accomplishments and research to legislators and community members from across the state. I can't wait to see everyone up in Santa Fe at the end of the month!

Good luck this semester, let all your research endeavors commence.



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

January Safety Spotlight

Anyone with a cat knows the fun you can have with a handheld laser pointer, but did you know that UNM performs cutting-edge research involving state-of-the-art lasers? Not only do UNM researchers use lasers to explore a range of research questions, but they are also developing new applications and techniques utilizing lasers as well as exploring new types of lasers using novel materials.

Lasers have become ubiquitous because they can operate at a single, well-defined wavelength and can achieve significant power densities. Although lasers are powerful research tools, they also have unique safety concerns. These include both the obvious, direct laser beam hazards, such as skin/tissue burns and eye damage, but also include secondary hazards such as laser-generated airborne particulates. Depending on what wavelengths are being used and whether the lasers are embedded within an instrument, there are numerous steps that individual researchers need to take to ensure appropriate safety precautions are in place, including using the appropriate eye protection.

For example, last fall EHS embarked on a project to identify individual labs that needed additional laser barriers (e.g., curtains, beam enclosures, beam blocks), and OVPR provided the funds to purchase the necessary 29 items for 11 labs across campus. Keep in mind that the first step for researchers is to visit the EHS website for our [UNM Laser Safety Program](#).

Research News

GC Level 1 Proposal

There is still time to submit a request for proposals (RFP) for new Level 1 Grand Challenges teams; applications will be accepted through Jan. 31 via [InfoReady](#).

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO'S

Grand Challenges

This RFP solicits new proposals from interdisciplinary research teams for participation in Level 1 of the GC program. A cohort of 5-7 teams, each with diverse disciplinary expertise, will be competitively selected for the one-year Level 1 program.

Learn more about the Request for Proposals at two informational sessions:

- Friday, Jan. 17 from 2-3 p.m. via [Zoom](#)
- Wednesday, Jan. 22 from 12-1 p.m. via [Zoom](#)

Passcode: GC

CERL Nomination Deadline

We are still seeking nominations for the annual Community Engaged Research Lectureship (CERL) Award. The CERL is one of the highest honors UNM bestows upon a faculty member in recognition of exemplary community engaged research and community engaged creative works. The nominee must be an active, full-time professor or an exceptional associate professor at the time the nomination is submitted, in the tenure track, research track, or clinician-educator track.

Complete nominations, including all documentation, must be submitted via [InfoReady](#) on Jan. 16 by 5 p.m.

NMC/NMAIC RA Scholarship

The New Mexico Consortium (NMC) Artificial Intelligence (AI) scholarship is the perfect opportunity for any of our graduate students interested in AI related research. This scholarship is being offered to three universities in New Mexico through the New Mexico Artificial Intelligence Consortium.

Material Transfer Agreements

Researchers, as a reminder, Material Transfer Agreements (MTA) are contractual agreements that govern the transfer of research materials between two entities when intended for research purposes. UNM requires that materials both arriving and leaving the university be under an MTA prior to the movement of the material. Having this agreement in place protects all parties involved by addressing pre-existing and future intellectual property (IP) rights involving the material.

Utilize the MTA process on the OSP website or contact ospcontracts@unm.edu for more information.

Research Celebrations

2024 Top Research News

Last year, Lobo researchers reached new heights, discovered new paths, and explored new techniques that contribute to moving our communities forward both local and on a global scale.

Each year, The University of Communication and Marketing (UCAM) Team releases its Research Year-in-Review, a select list based on the top 2024 news stories. Congratulations to all our faculty, student, and staff researchers on a successful, fun, and an ambitious 2024! Can't wait to see what this year brings!



Forever chemicals reach extraordinary levels in wildlife at Holloman Air Force Base

A team of researchers from The University of New Mexico's Museum of Southwestern Biology (MSB) reported unexpectedly high levels of chemical contamination in wild birds and mammals at Holloman Air Force Base, near Alamogordo, N.M. in new research published in *Environmental Research*.

CASAA research on sports betting and binge drinking published in prestigious journal

UNM's Center on Alcohol, Substance Use and Addictions (CASAA) is recognizing a new piece of research being published in the prestigious journal JAMA Network Open. This spotlight centers on a critical issue—sports betting/wagering and binge drinking—led by Professor Joshua Grubbs. The 15% acceptance and publication rate by JAMA not only shows how elite this publication is but also how important the ties between sports gambling and alcohol misuse are to highlight.





A new look at Grand Canyon Springs and possible threats from uranium mining

A new research paper, published recently in *Annual Reviews of Earth and Planetary Sciences*, coordinated by scientists from UNM and collaborating institutions, addresses the complex nature and societal importance of Grand Canyon's springs and groundwater.

UNM BIG GIVE

Every year in the month of February, for 24 hours, UNM and our dedicated faculty, staff, and alumni across the world celebrate UNM BIG GIVE!

Last year, UNM Big Give set a University record in 24 hours with 2,527 alumni and supporters worldwide establishing a new record for the highest number of individual donations in a single fundraising event at the university. UNM Big Give raised over \$770,000, which was allocated to various sectors such as research, healthcare, sports, culture and wellness.

Stay tuned for more details about your opportunity to give back to some of UNM's most impactful research projects and programs.



Research Reads

Last month, I asked for reading suggestions, and I want to thank Rasa O'Donnell from UNM Taos who recommended *Fountain Creek: Big Lessons from a Little River*, written by Jim O'Donnell (who is a UNM alum!).

I immediately went out and purchased the book and read it over the winter break. It was a fascinating, well-researched exploration of yes, a creek/river, but also such timely and complex issues surrounding climate change, unhoused people, urban expansion, the rights of rivers, decreasing biodiversity, and the history of water management and law in the western U.S. All that along with a frank first-hand narrative from the author as he walks not only Fountain Creek, but all its tributaries as well. Glorious. Scary. Thought-provoking. I highly recommend!

P.S. My New Year's resolution is to read at least one book a month that is somehow related to New Mexico, UNM, and/or the intermountain west. Still taking recommendations!