



Dear Research Colleagues & Community,

It's Black History Month, an opportune time to remember that Black history is American history. The University has provided excellent opportunities to learn about the contributions of Black researchers, scholars, and students not only here at UNM but also across the country. There are still some upcoming events to attend, including "[The Spectrum of Blackness: Diversity within the Black Community](#)" panel from the CABQ Office of Equity & Inclusion, and "[We Come From Strong People: A Chat with Karen Collins](#)" from the Maxwell Museum. I also recommend that you visit the UNM Digital Repository's [Black Alumni Chapter Oral History Project](#), spearheaded by UNM alumna Barbara Brown Simmons. Other events and information on Black History Month can be found on the [Department of Anthropology website](#).

Before I dive into what we have been up to at the OVPR, I'd like to invite the research community to join me on March 1<sup>st</sup> from 3:00–4:30 PM for a Town Hall, provided in-person and virtually. I will present updates on the state of research at UNM—recapping our progress and looking toward the future. Importantly, I also want to take some time to answer your questions about the OVPR and the vital support we continue to give our researchers across campuses. [Please RSVP here](#) and [submit your questions here](#) ahead of time. The in-person location will be ECON 1002.

Other upcoming events include the Quantum New Mexico (QNM) Symposium (March 31-April 1) and the Team Research Symposium (April 19-21). Both contribute to our goal of expanding research capacity and encouraging collaboration across academia, industry, and national labs. In addition, we have updated our Grants Management Training (GMT) for all involved in extramurally funded research at UNM, which must be completed every three years. You can find it in [Learning Central](#) with the GMT tag.

Our outstanding [New Mexico EPSCoR](#) program is experiencing a leadership change this spring. Professor Bill Michener, long-time director of the NM EPSCoR program, is retiring on March 1. Over the past 13 years, Bill has provided exceptional leadership and unwavering support of faculty, postdocs, and students across the entire state of New Mexico. A heartfelt thank you to Bill – we will miss you! As we say goodbye to Bill, we are so pleased to welcome the new director for the NM EPSCoR program, Ganesh (Gunny) Balakrishnan, Professor of Electrical

and Computing Engineering at UNM. Gunny started his tenure as EPSCoR director at the beginning of the year and we are truly excited about his plans for continuing to support faculty, staff, and students, as well as utilizing the EPSCoR program to create positive research and economic development across our beautiful state. Welcome, Gunny!

As I approach my one-year anniversary as UNM's Vice President for Research, I'm excited about all the great things happening for our staff, students, and faculty. We've started the next exciting phase for the Grand Challenges with capstone presentations by Communication and Journalism undergraduates, great outcomes of previous Grand Challenges projects and a prelude of the potential for the future of the program. This spring, we will launch the re-imagined future of Grand Challenges in conjunction with the Team Research Symposium; I will provide more details at the OVPR Town Hall.

I am pleased that our latest component of the WeR1 Faculty Success Program, FRESSH—Fostering Research Expansion in the Social Sciences and Humanities—is off to a great start with the Pilot Program Kick-off set for this Friday, February 25th. FRESSH represents a collaboration between OVPR and the College of Arts and Sciences, along with others from across our campuses and focuses on assisting faculty with developing concepts and proposals, expanding utilization of internal resources, providing targeted training for opportunities, and building community around Social Sciences and Humanities research. I am confident FRESSH will indeed live up to its name by expanding and enhancing (dare I say “re-FRESSHing”?) UNM's social science and humanities research community.

Be sure to check out our [top research news stories](#) from last year. As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions, and I look forward to seeing you at the Town Hall on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Best wishes,  
-Ellen

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