



Lobos,

Let's get this semester started! I want to take this opportunity to welcome all the new Lobo researchers to campus, as well as all our returning faculty, staff, students, and postdocs. I hope everyone had a fun and relaxing summer. Let the innovating begin!

I think of my August newsletter as the perfect opportunity to send out a few 'Back to School' reminders for our research community.

- **Stay informed:** Be on the lookout for important emails dedicated to researchers that come through on our PI Listserv. [Sign up here](#).
- **Federal Research Updates:** HSC VPR Hengameh Raissy and I send joint communication regarding the latest news about the federal research funding landscape. Look for more to come this fall and [visit our webpage](#) to read previous communication.
- **Need funding or proposal support?** Schedule a [consultation with FRDO](#) and click 'Request Research Support'.
- **Research Security Training:** Lobo researchers can access required trainings in [Learning Central](#).
- **Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Workshops.** Do you know if you and/or your students and postdocs need to attend one of our RCR workshops to be compliant with the terms and conditions of awards? Visit our [RCR webpage](#) to register for an upcoming workshop or to request a training.
- **Grow Your Research Skills.** Join FRDO and UNM ADVANCE for [research and success workshops](#).
- **Save the Date:** Showcase your work and encourage students to engage by [building R&D week](#) into your course syllabus.

Ellen R. Fisher
UNM Vice President for Research
Professor of Chemistry

Safety Spotlight & Compliance Corner

This month we're chatting with Research Professor Salvador Portillo who is an expert in not only laser systems but laser safety. Professor Portillo conducts laser safety training for UNM's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. His colleagues say he goes above and beyond the basic safety requirements in keeping his team of student researchers safe during the use of lasers.

My laboratory focuses on utilizing pulsed power to drive high current through various possible fusion sources. In a way, we are making a tiny, short-lived "sun" in our lab, and we want to understand not just the composition of these plasmas (partially ionized gases) but also their temperature, density, and most importantly, their spatial and temporal evolution. One way to do this is to use lasers as interferometers (devices that merge light beams to create an interference pattern which can then be measured), and that is what my students do.

It is important to know that all this work is performed by our undergraduate and graduate student researchers that come into my lab with varying degrees of technical experience. Importantly, lasers present a potential health hazard including the risk of retina and cornea damage, skin burns, and even the possibility of starting a fire. As such, our lab mantra is *everyone goes home at the end of the day*.

Our safety of culture is based on training, not just in a physics-based classroom tutorial way, but also through extensive hands-on training. This training includes three essential parts:

- 1) Administrative Controls: We use general standard operating procedures (SOPs) as well as task specific operational guides and authority-based approval path chains and, of course, signage throughout the lab.
- 2) Engineering Controls: Physics-based and laser specific controls are implemented within the lab, ranging from physical admission barriers, photon control via laser curtains, beam dumps, emergency cutoff and interlocks to name a few.
- 3) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use: Everyone in my group is required to use laser goggles with the right optical density for the appropriate wavelength.

Every day we are working to safely understand the behavior of these powerful light sources, while protecting and training the future cadre of scientists who will drive the next stages of technology development in New Mexico.

Research Events

Save the Date: 2026 Research and Discovery Week

This year UNM's R&D Week will kick off Nov. 2. Events will take place in the Student Union Building and other spaces around campus. The week is open to everyone including undergraduates, graduates, postdocs, faculty, and staff. We are currently **accepting proposals** for speakers, workshops, and Hands ON My Research tables. Proposals are due by **Aug. 31**.

Lobo faculty, please consider building R&D Week attendance into your fall syllabi. The week is a great opportunity for students to learn more about the world-class research happening across our campuses.

Faculty may choose to incorporate R&D Week through required attendance, participation in activities, reflections, discussions, presentations, or extra-credit opportunities. Visit our [Faculty Guide for Course Integration](#) for more details.

UNM AI Launch

[Registration is now open](#) for the UNM AI launch event happening on **Thursday, Sept. 3.**

The free event, hosted by the UNM **[AI Steering Committee](#)**, will be **11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** in the **Student Union Building ballrooms**. Attendees are encouraged to attend the full day but are welcome to attend some individual sessions. This event is open to students, faculty, and staff with an interest in the future of AI at UNM and those who wish to learn more about or influence the standards, policy, and guiding ethical principles around the University's use of AI. Stay tuned for more at ai.unm.edu.

Research News

U.S DOE's Genesis Mission

I'm excited to announce that UNM researchers were selected as part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Genesis Mission.

UNM and Los Alamos National Lab researchers are developing a new artificial intelligence framework that could transform how scientists search for some of the rarest events in the universe by recovering faint signals that conventional methods often discard.

Researchers include:

- UNM Professor Dinesh Loomba
- LANL Scientist Ralph Massarczyk
- UNM Professor Greg Taylor
- UNM Professor Huaiyu Duan
- UNM Associate Professor Francis-Yan Cyr-Racine
- Research Professor Jayce Dowell

The project, *Learning Beyond Threshold: AI-Driven Signal Extraction for Rare-Event Searches*, is one of nearly 300 Genesis Mission projects, which brings together DOE's world-class scientific capabilities, advanced AI, high-performance computing, and the nation's leading researchers to transform how scientific discovery is conducted.

Fulbright Award

Congratulations to English Professor Tiffany Bouelle who was recently named a Fulbright Award recipient for the 2026-2027 school year.

The Fulbright Program is one of the most prestigious awards available in higher education, offering both students and faculty the opportunity to complete an exchange program in another country with

an aim to advance their work in research on a topic of their choosing.

Bourelle will spend the year in Strasbourg, France, with research focusing on ethics in artificial intelligence.

Two UNM graduate students will also spend the next year on exchange after receiving Fulbright Awards; Micah Chavez and Esteban Rangel. We are so proud of you! Good luck and have fun!

NM SPARK Program

Eleven UNM faculty members have been selected as part of the inaugural cohort of the New Mexico Scholars Pursuing Advancement, Research, and Knowledge (NM SPARK) program. The program is a two-tiered internal grant initiative supporting assistant and associate professors who are advancing their research, scholarship, and creative work in alignment with the University's 2040 strategic priorities.

SPARK is the newest element of UNM's WeR1 faculty success program and is a collaboration between ADVANCE at UNM, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), and the Office of Academic Affairs.

For more details, [click here](#).

QU-REACH at CHTM

This summer, 15 students from universities across New Mexico traveled to participate in the sixth annual Quantum Undergraduate Research Experience (QU-REACH) at UNM's Center for High Technology Materials (CHTM).

During the 10-week immersive program, students conducted research in topics related to quantum sensing, quantum communications, and quantum computing under the guidance of 11 faculty mentors. The program concluded with a poster session where the students presented their work on July 31.

A special *thank you* to our UNM faculty from around campus for their mentorship over the summer.

NSF Policy: Collaborations with Restricted Parties

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently issued a '[Dear Colleague Letter](#)' announcing its intention to implement a new policy in October regarding collaborations with entities appearing on certain U.S. restricted-party lists.

We recognize that researchers may have questions regarding the scope and implementation of this future requirement. Our office is currently reviewing the guidance and assessing potential impacts on NSF-funded research activities for the University, as we await announcement of NSF's official policy on this matter. Please notify UNM's Faculty Research Development Office and our Office of Sponsored Projects of any intended funding applications and concerns as early as possible.

We will provide further guidance and resources to the research community as more information becomes available. If you have questions, please contact industrialsecurity@unm.edu.

PI Survey

This fall, UNM investigators will be invited to participate in a new Researcher Satisfaction Survey. By gathering feedback on experiences with proposal development, award administration, and research support services, we hope to establish a baseline for continuous improvement and identify opportunities to strengthen UNM's research enterprise.

Please be on the lookout for additional details through the PI listserv in the coming months.

NMC Santa Fe

This year, the New Mexico Consortium opened a Santa Fe collaboration space as part of the New Mexico Innovation Hub (NMIH) – Santa Fe campus.

The space offers modern conference and event rooms where Lobo researchers can host meetings, events, workshops, and conferences at no charge. The space is centrally located in Midtown Santa Fe. To use this space, contact NMC via email: info@newmexicoconsortium.org

Research Technology

Huron Suite Update

Earlier this year, the University successfully launched the Huron Employee Compensation Compliance (ECC) module. Many of you worked to complete effort pre-reviews and certifications in the new system, marking a significant milestone in our One University implementation of the Huron Research Suite. Thank you to our faculty, staff, research administrators, and central offices whose collaboration helped make the initial effort certification period a success. As we continue to refine our processes with each subsequent certification period, the new system has already improved our ability to manage effort reporting and reduce delinquent certifications. I have also been pleased with the positive feedback from both faculty and staff regarding the ease of reviewing and certifying effort in the ECC module.

The next effort certification period for January–July 2026 began on July 22 for research administrators. *During the initial payroll data load, we identified discrepancies affecting some effort reports. Our implementation team is actively working with Huron to correct these issues. To ensure the accuracy of certifications, please do not complete Pre-Reviews or Effort Certifications until you receive notification from the Contract & Grant Accounting Effort Reporting teams that the ECC system has been corrected and certifications may resume. We appreciate your patience as we work to resolve this issue as quickly as possible.*

Looking forward, implementation activities also continue for the Huron Grants & Agreements, Conflict of Interest (COI), and Institutional Review Board (IRB) modules. Project teams are currently focused on data migration, system configuration, and testing in preparation for the next phase of implementation, with additional Huron modules anticipated to go live in early 2027.

Research Radiates

Research Radiates

This month, I get to introduce an interdisciplinary UNM researcher whose work is truly rooted in the word *community*. UNM Assistant Professor Lisa L. Losada-Rojas's home department is the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering, but her passions cross multiple disciplines leading her to often collaborate with colleagues across Central and North campuses as she creates innovative transportation solutions.

I study travel behavior, which aims to understand how people move, choose modes, and respond to infrastructure. I use eye-tracking, heart-rate monitors, surveys, and conversations with communities to gather human-centered data about what's really happening. My goal is to develop transportation solutions that improve community health by changing how people travel, based on understanding how they behave—not on assumptions.

I grew up in a rural area and I'm an enthusiastic cyclist. When I studied civil engineering, I learned something that stuck with me: the word "civil" means we're here to deal with public infrastructure, which in my mind translates to serve communities. But we kept designing transportation based on what we assumed people would do, not what they do. I wanted to flip that rhetoric and gather real data about how people behave and use that to reshape transportation in ways that improve their lives and health. That's been my mission ever since.

Here in New Mexico, rural communities and non-motorized cyclists often have no voice in the planning rooms where transportation decisions get made. I aim for my work to provide human-centered data, real evidence about behavior, infrastructure needs, and health outcomes so they can advocate for solutions that work for them. Beyond New Mexico, this approach reminds transportation planners everywhere that you can't separate how people move from community health. That's when transportation solutions work, when they're grounded in how people really behave and what communities need.