

December 2025

FROM THE DESK OF THE Vice President for Research

Lobos,

As we wrap up 2025, it's the perfect moment to reflect on and celebrate the achievements we've made over the past year. This is not only a time for us to acknowledge our collective accomplishments but also an opportunity to express our gratitude to the incredible individuals who have played a pivotal role in helping us reach our research goals. We extend our sincere thanks to our dedicated researchers, enthusiastic students and postdoctoral fellows, as well as the invaluable research administrators at The University of New Mexico. Together, we have fostered an environment of innovation and collaboration that propels us forward even in the toughest of times, and it is your support that we celebrate as we close this chapter and look ahead to new possibilities.

As we take the time to honor the individual Lobos who make up our research enterprise, it is with both sadness and deep respect that I recognize and celebrate the life of UNM Facility Security Officer Jessica Hermosillo. Although Jessica only joined the Lobo community a few years ago in 2022, she brought with her more than 22 years of experience working with defense contractors, gaining deep knowledge in secure operations. She was passionate about mentoring other security professionals to strengthen and protect national security. Jessica passed in October, leaving behind family and friends who reflect the values she lived by each day. It's individuals like Jessica who inspire our continued commitment to UNM's research mission.

While Jessica leaves behind big shoes to fill, the UNM Office of the Provost has welcomed back former Facility Security Officer Deborah Kuidis on a part-time basis and has begun the search for a full-time successor. We will keep you updated on the progress of this search, including opportunities for the research community to meet with the finalists. If you have suggestions for potential candidates, please direct them to the Office of the Provost (Jennifer Love, jenlov22@unm.edu).



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



December Safety Spotlight

Cold and flu season is upon us. From a research safety perspective, cold and flu season presents unique challenges related to personal health, laboratory cleanliness, and research continuity. Standard safety protocols must be reinforced to prevent the spread of illness among lab personnel and to protect sensitive experiments from contamination. Some of the risks associated with cold and flu season include:

- Increased illness resulting in staff shortages and potential disruptions to time-sensitive experiments or maintenance of essential equipment like cell cultures or cryogenic storage. Mitigation strategies include:
 - Please, stay home. Create a culture wherein taking time off because you're not feeling well is acceptable.
 - Update and communicate research continuity plans to address potential staff shortages.
 - Ensure multiple personnel are trained to handle critical, essential tasks. This reduces the impact of an individual employee being out sick.
- Contamination of the research environment as respiratory viruses spread via droplets and aerosols, which can contaminate surfaces, equipment, and sensitive experiments. Mitigation strategies include:
 - Enforce personal hygiene protocols.
 - Establish a regular schedule for cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
 - Ensure multiple personnel are trained to handle critical, essential tasks.
- Compromised research integrity resulting from fatigue and malaise brought on by illness. These can lead to human errors potentially compromising data integrity or causing safety incidents. Mitigation strategies include:
 - Please, stay home.
 - Consider staggered shifts or allowing for remote work (e.g., data analysis) to reduce the number of people in the research environment at one time and allow researchers to perform alternative tasks as they feel able.

Research News

Research Engagement and Activities in Collaborative Teams

Congratulations to Assistant Professor Cassandra Boness on the launch of her newest study stemming from the UNM's Center on Alcohol, Substance Use, and Addictions (CASAA), entitled Research Engagement and Activities in Collaborative Teams (REACT). This significant initiative marks a milestone as the first study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute on UNM's Central Campus. The REACT study is thoughtfully designed to develop an innovative research instrument aimed at assessing the effectiveness of collaboration between community and academic partners during the research process. This endeavor not only highlights the importance of partnership in research but also sets a precedent for future studies aimed at enhancing collaborative efforts in addressing pressing societal issues.

Assistant Professor Boness, we're excited to see what comes of this project and thank you for always striving to enrich the UNM research enterprise and the New Mexico communities we serve.

WeR1 PERC

There are only a few days left to submit an application for this year's cycle of the [WeR1 Program for Enhancing Research Capacity](#) (PERC).

Proposals are due this Friday, Dec. 5.

PERC supports the acquisition of shared instrumentation or enhancement of shared facilities that enable major endeavors to advance discovery, creativity, and innovation across campus. This program seeks to add or augment research capacity through the acquisition or upgrading of instrumentation for use by multiple investigators. Thus, the proposed equipment must be housed within a space accessible to more than one PI/lab group and must have multiple committed users either within a single department/college, or preferably from multiple departments and colleges.

OSP Holiday Deadlines

The end of 2025 is quickly approaching, and the Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP) wants to ensure researchers plan ahead. Offices will be closed:

Winter Break | Dec. 24 - Jan. 2

Please be mindful that due to staffing constraints and availability of staffing in other compliance offices, we may not be able to accommodate requests with short turnaround times close to these dates.

VPR Joint Communication

A friendly reminder to all UNM researchers -- Hengameh Raissy, the vice president for research at HSC, and I continue to send joint communications to provide you with the most recent updates concerning the federal research funding landscape. We encourage all faculty and researchers to stay informed and engaged with these communications, as they are designed to support your research endeavors and enhance collaboration within our academic community.

We maintain an archive of all communications sent in 2025 [here](#).



Research Events

Huron Update

The Huron Research Suite implementation continues to move forward across ECC (effort certification), Grants & Agreements (G&A), and COI/COC modules, with design activities, data mapping, and technical integration work progressing. ECC is nearing completion of design and will start testing this month. Testing and training will continue through January 2026 as we prepare for a certification launch in the Spring of 2026.

G&A and COI teams continue to work on advancing SmartForm design, Banner and Learning Central integrations, and cross-module workflows, with both modules targeting September 2026 go-lives.

Lastly, the OVPR will host a unified Huron website for both campuses to support consistent communication and ongoing updates. The first version of the website will be launched in the coming weeks – keep an eye out for more information and a link.

Research Celebrations

LIFT Cohort

Congratulations to our 2025 LIFT cohort:

- Warigia Bowman (School of Law)
- Ricardo Gonzalez-Pinzon (Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering)
- Mindy Morgan (Geography & Environmental Studies)
- Seth Newsome (Biology)
- Shawn Secatero (Teacher Education Educational Leadership & Policy)
- Naomi Shin (Linguistics)
- Ryan Swanson (Honors)

Within the last year, this interdisciplinary group gathered monthly to share ideas, tackle research leadership challenges, and support each other's professional growth. These meetings sparked new collaborations, fresh perspectives, and a sense of community across UNM departments.

Thanks to their energy and commitment, the cohort made impressive progress on ambitious goals and helped strengthen research leadership at UNM. As the LIFT program expands in 2026 to include broader academic leadership, we're excited to see how future cohorts will build on this foundation. The 2025 cohort and OVPR will be welcoming the 2026 cohort to the LIFT family later this month.

Advancing Compliance and Ethics

If you read my newsletter each month, you know how important safety, compliance, and ethics are to me when it comes to the research we conduct on-and-off campus. Each year, UNM recognizes four individuals during Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity (CEEEO) Compliance Week with the Advancing Compliance and Ethics (ACE) Awards. This year, two of our research compliance professionals were recognized among the recipients of the 2025 ACE awards:

- Linnea Ista — operations director of Research Integrity and Conflicts of Interest in Research
- Linda Mayo — executive director, Office of Research Compliance and Integrity
- Paula Smith — associate dean, Dean of Students Office
- Selam Wondaferew — privacy officer, UNM Health Sciences Center

I want to personally thank each of these individuals for their dedication to this area of research, and for doing the right thing across our institution.

Research Reads

I have been reflecting on the announcement of their respective upcoming retirements by two of our amazing women leaders, President Garnett Stokes and UNM Advance Director, Dr. Julia Fulghum. Which makes this month's book selection, *The Inspired Retirement: Purpose and Passion in Your Next Adventure* by UNM Law Professor Nathalie Martin, even more apropos.

Martin's 2025 book is part advice, part workbook, and part holistic fitness manual – a perfect mix on how to approach a new chapter in your life. The focus on finding meaning, wellbeing, and purpose in retirement with limited focus on the financial aspects is a refreshing change from most retirement tomes. Although I will admit that I did not do all the “Purpose Practices” she suggests (e.g., journaling, making lists of things you enjoy, establishing good habits), I did get a journal and plan to go back through these exercises before I retire. And I plan to check out a yoga class or two at the gym. No matter where you currently find yourself on your journey toward retirement, *The Inspired Retirement* is a thoughtful, practical, and essential guide to building your next adventure. I highly recommend it!

On that note, this will be my last book review we share with you for Research Reads (although I promise to keep reading)! This section of my newsletter will transition in the New Year to ‘Research Radiates’ where we will share testimonials directly from Lobo Researchers about how their studies, projects, and art impact New Mexicans across the state and around the world.