

Academic Dispatch

December 3, 2020

Mary Jo Daniel Acting/Interim Vice President for Research

Research, the creation of new ideas, and of cultural works is at the heart of the UNM mission. With 27,990 students enrolled this fall at the university's six sites, in Albuquerque, Gallup, Los Alamos, Taos, Valencia, and Rio Rancho, we educate more students than any other higher education institution in New Mexico. This education happens within an institution dedicated to discovery, enriching the experience of all our learners. Within our halls and laboratories, we find new approaches to curing disease and treating addiction, create new and powerful methods to process information through quantum entanglement and superposition, push back the historical horizon of humankind's presence in Europe, and celebrate and preserve the critical linguistic traditions of New Mexico's native peoples.

At UNM the Vice President for Research (VPR) is a lynchpin in the mechanisms of facilitation for this work. UNM has been fortunate to have Gabriel Lopez, Professor of Chemical and Biological Engineering, serving in this role. Professor Lopez is returning now to the research on biomaterials and self-assembly that so strongly motivated his desire to serve others through the VPR role these past years. I thank him for his exemplary service, which included launching UNM's highly successful Grand Challenges initiative. A search for the next VPR is underway, and three candidates for the position recently and virtually visited UNM for two days of discussions, open fora, and interviews with the UNM community. Professor Lopez, whose appointment formally ends December 31, 2020, will be away in December.

I'm pleased therefore to announce that Dr. Mary Jo Daniel will take on the role of Acting/Interim VPR, effective this week. Dr. Daniel will serve as Acting VPR during December while Prof. Lopez is away on personal leave, and she will then serve as Interim VPR starting January 1, 2021, until our next VPR can assume her duties.

Dr. Mary Jo Daniel has been with UNM for a decade, having joined us as Associate Director of the New Mexico EPSCoR program. She currently serves as Interim Associate Vice President for Research, as well as co-PI on the UNM ADVANCE grant. Dr. Daniel earned her PhD in Multicultural Teacher and Childhood Education at UNM in 2005, and she has a long career of supporting STEM education and the development of STEM educators, from K-12 teaches to the support of women faculty in STEM.



Patrick Valdez leaving UNM-Taos

The UNM branch campuses – community based and community responsive colleges in Gallup, Valencia, Los Alamos, and Taos – are a valued part of the UNM family and critical resources to the state. The special opportunity they provide to support placed-based education in regions of the state remote from our Albuquerque location were one of the many attractions for me to join and serve UNM. I've greatly enjoyed learning from the Branch Chancellors about their local learners and the communities they support. The first branch I visited was in Summer 2019, where at UNM-Taos I met a number of our impressive colleagues in a wonderful, compact campus surrounded by art and a truly impressive solar array!



It is thus with much sadness that I announce the departure of Dr. Patrick Valdez as Chancellor of UNM-Taos. Effective January 1, 2021, Dr. Valdez will assume the role of Vice President for Program Strategy at 2U, a tech-based educational service provider based in Maryland. Dr. Valdez has been a transformative force at UNM-Taos, and an active participant in wider UNM efforts, including serving as the branch representative on the UNM Grand Challenges Steering Committee. We will greatly miss Patrick and his creative approach to branch challenges, his intelligence, his devotion to service, and his excellent sense of humor!

In the short interim, Dr. Cindy Rooney will serve as Interim Chancellor of UNM-Taos. Dr. Rooney will also continue in her current role as Chancellor of UNM-Los Alamos. Dr. Rooney will be ably assisted by crack staff and faculty leaders at UNM-Taos, including Dean of Instruction Randi Archuleta and Strategic Support Manager Anita Bringas. I'll sleep well knowing that this critically important educational resource for New Mexico is in good hands. This is a significant effort for Dr. Rooney, but I know well her ability to make a very heavy lift look easy, at least for a few months.

A search for a new chancellor for UNM-Taos will start immediately, with a search advisory committee chaired by Dr. James Malm, currently Chancellor of UNM-Gallup. The rest of the committee is being identified, and will be named soon. If you have recommendations, please let me know at academicdispatch@unm.edu.

Students: Register for Spring 2020!

This has been a difficult Fall term, and Spring will continue to require flexibility and resilience. While vaccination against SARS-CoV-2 is expected to be available soon, it will roll out over a period of months. But continuing your education is still vital. Spring 2021 registration is currently underway;

please register sooner rather than later. This provides the best opportunity for your preferred course schedules and to help continue your progress toward graduation. If you have any doubts or questions, contact your advisor. Online advising appointments are available, and they will often have solutions for problems that might seem intractable. You don't have to solve everything yourself: we are here to help.

Main Campus Faculty: Tell us how COVID-19 is impacting you

This morning full-time main campus faculty (TT, lecturers, research faculty) will have received a survey reminder with an individual link for this year's ADVANCE faculty climate survey. (Note: Forwarded links will not work, each of you received a unique link. Searching "advance survey" in your email should find it for you.). This year's survey includes questions about the impact of COVID-19, with options for comments. ADVANCE will analyze the COVID-19 questions during the winter break and share that information widely so that it can influence additional faculty support and discussions about how we approach annual and milestone evaluations.

If you have trouble accessing the survey (error messages, legibility, can't find the link), please contact Teagan Mullins (tmullins@unm.edu) or Lisa Marchiondo (marchiondo@unm.edu). If you have questions about the survey, email ADVANCE Director Julia Fulghum (jfulghum@unm.edu).

If you've already completed the survey – thank you! If not, please do so and help inform additional efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on faculty life.

James Paul Holloway

Professor of Nuclear Engineering

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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