

Academic Dispatch



Winter on Campus. Credit: University Communication and Marketing.

December 18, 2020

The solstice will be upon us soon and winter will begin, at least from an astronomical perspective, but also the days will start to lengthen in promise of a coming spring, a season for planting and renewal. Traditionally in the lands that are now New Mexico this is a time of ceremony and observance, to bring balance and blessing to the world. And so it can remain for us, a time to reflect on the achievements of the past and to think of hope and promise for the future.

In this spirit, I have two auspicious announcements to share with you about our future leaders:

Ellen Fisher named Vice President for Research

I'm pleased to announce that we have selected Dr. Ellen Fisher, currently of Colorado State University, as the next Vice President for Research at UNM, effective Feb. 22, 2021.

Dr. Fisher is currently Professor of Chemistry and Assistant Vice President for Strategic Initiatives in the Office of the Vice President for Research at Colorado State University, as well as the CSU Chief Research Integrity Officer. After receiving her Ph.D. from the University of Utah in 1991, and holding a postdoctoral position at Sandia National Laboratories, Dr. Fisher started at CSU as an Assistant Professor of Chemistry in 1993. She rose through the faculty ranks, and served as Department Chair in Chemistry, before starting in a series



of roles in the CSU Office of the Vice President for Research, serving as senior advisor and as the founding director of the School of Advanced Materials Discovery at CSU, before becoming the Assistant Vice President. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Vacuum Society, and American Chemical Society (ACS). She currently serves as Executive Editor of the journal *ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces*.

A strong advocate for women faculty and women in STEM, Dr. Fisher was recognized for these efforts with the CSU Margaret B. Hazaleus Award for Empowering Women in 2008. She has received a number of other awards for teaching and mentorship, and has taught in Chemistry and also in Women's Studies. Dr. Fisher has done extensive work to develop team science, including publishing on the science of team science, and used her understanding to facilitate the creation of stronger research groups. She has mentored 21 students to completion of the doctorate, over half of whom are women and over 10% of whom are minorities, and also mentored over 50 undergraduate student researchers of similar diversity.

I am very excited to bring a scholar of Dr. Fisher's caliber to UNM as our new Vice President for Research. I look forward to working with Ellen to advance the Grand Challenges and further develop the critical research enterprise at UNM.

Nina Wallerstein named interim Dean of Population Health

Earlier this week Professor Nina Wallerstein was announced as the new Interim Dean of the College of Population Health, stepping in for Dr. Tracie Collins, who has taken on the role of Secretary-Designate of Health for the State of New Mexico. In the announcement Dr. Doug Ziedonis, Executive Vice President of Health Sciences, noted the valuable input from many of the college's faculty, staff, and students in making the selection.

Dr. Wallerstein is well known at UNM as an international leader in community-based participatory research (CBPR), and in diversity, equity, and inclusion. She has been the Director for the Center for Participatory Research here at UNM since 2009. Dr. Wallerstein has established herself as an outstanding mentor, leader, community engager, teambuilder, educator, and researcher. She is committed to supporting the trajectory set by Dean Collins for the next six to eighteen months, depending on whether Dr. Collins returns in the next six months as dean or whether we begin a national search for a new dean.

I am thrilled to welcome Dr. Wallerstein to the academic leadership at UNM.

Staff Scholarships

The Provost Committee for Staff is currently accepting applications for the staff scholarship. This scholarship supports staff participating in the tuition remission program with additional expenses, such

as academic books, course fees, and more. Applications are due Friday, Jan. 8, 2021 at 5 p.m. To submit your application or find more information, see the [Provost Committee for Staff webpage](#).

Winter is Coming

This winter, we are in the midst of a global crisis that has thwarted so many hopes and separated us from friends and family; however, the winter solstice is a traditional time for storytelling and for remembering the past so as to learn its lessons for the future and to understand the promise of the year to come. We know that the lengthening days bring hope of new tools to combat the pandemic. We are not done yet, and there is still hardship to endure, masks to wear, and distancing to practice. But we know we can endure it, and continue to grow even as we practice the necessary measures to ensure the health of New Mexico communities. The days grow longer, the light increases, and we can look forward to new opportunities for learning and discovery.

Have a great holiday, and return to UNM in a new year, refreshed I hope, and ready to thrive no matter the temporary trials of the time.

James Paul Holloway

Professor of Nuclear Engineering

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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