

Academic Dispatch



Flowers; Snow. Credit: University Communication and Marketing.

November 19, 2020

In many ways, it may seem we are coming to the end of a term, with the end of in-person instruction upon us, and the Thanksgiving holiday forthcoming. But there is much educational growth and discovery yet to achieve this year. UNM's students will continue learning and creating in remote modalities, and our research laboratories will continue operating under COVID safe practices. Much of this research enterprise is supported by federal funding, as well as by industrial, foundation, and state funding, with the total comprising over \$300M in annual research expenditures. But this is not the true measure of the work – rather, the measure is the impact that our faculty and graduate and undergraduate researchers bring through the creation of new knowledge, new ideas, and new understanding. These accomplished scholars are discovering ways to inoculate against opioid overdose, creating coatings that self-disinfect when activated by light, developing methods of information processing that can encode both true and false at the same moment, creating integrated models of ecological and economic factors influencing agricultural nutrients in arid-land-river ecosystems, and an endless host of other conceptions that will change the way the world works.

For our students, the presence of this research enterprise is the truly distinguishing feature of UNM. A student here learns within an environment of deep discovery. She proposes a plan for vaccine delivery to remote places – congratulations to graduate student Amelia Bierle who just won the Lobo Bites competition for this! – through study with researchers who shape public policy. He learns the skills of persuasive writing from a teacher who herself crafts masterful evidence-based arguments designed to survive close professional critique. They master mathematics through study with someone who not only knows mathematics, but through study with someone who creates mathematics. The research and creative mission of UNM is inseparable from the educational mission, from the very beginning of a Lobo's education. A critical priority for UNM is to

provide regular research and creative opportunities to our students throughout their UNM experience. Stay tuned for some future new developments on this priority!

Many at UNM have been crucial for our work this fall to continue this mutually entwined journey of learning and discovery, a journey that has continued despite unparalleled obstacles. Our staff and students have been incredible, and their efforts to succeed despite the pandemic are remarkable. I want today to especially celebrate the faculty who provide the enduring intellectual spine of the institution. Thanks for all you do.

UNM has instituted a number of adjustments to policies and practices intended to support faculty during this complex time. While these have been shared before, I know how difficult it has been to catch every message this fall. We have therefore collected a list of modified policies and opportunities at the [Office of Faculty Affairs and Services](#) website; in addition, the [Advance website](#) has a number of resources on teaching and parenting during COVID, and also outlines a number of the policy and process modifications that are in place for faculty support.

#WeBelongInCollege

Students who share the story of their college experience can help other students by shining a light on the barriers faced, doubts and struggles met, and moments of triumph achieved. UNM, along with five other universities, partnered with Get Schooled this year for a special scholarship opportunity designed to highlight our students' stories. Get Schooled designated twenty \$1000 scholarships for students from any of our campuses. UNM students who submit a video story to the [SEP - #WeBelongInCollege webpage](#) by Nov. 30 are eligible for one of those twenty scholarships. This opportunity is supported by the Student Experience Project, a national grant-funded effort focused on improving students' sense of belonging and community, and working to improve equity in educational outcomes.

International Education Week

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not make note of International Education Week. I hope that you have had a chance to participate in some of the many events this week that remind us how learning and discovery are global, and that New Mexico is a part of, and intimately connected to, a much larger world. While travel is curtailed and there has not been much opportunity for Lobos to go out and experience the world this year, there are many international students, faculty and staff among us whose intellectual talents enrich UNM and New Mexico. You are welcome here.

Have a great Thanksgiving, and stay safe.

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