

Academic Dispatch

May 26, 2021

The whirlwind of the spring semester has largely passed, but in Academic Affairs we still have some critically important unfinished business: leadership transitions! And vaccinations. Did I mention vaccinations?

A quick clarification to the President's Weekly Message on Monday, May 24: our UNM summer schedule is not entirely online and remote, as the message suggested. While the majority of courses are being offered remotely for the summer sessions, we do have in-person classes, as we did in Spring.

Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences



Interim Dean Arash Mafi

As you know, Mark Peceny will be stepping down at the end of June after 10 years of valued service to UNM as Dean of Arts and Sciences. After an internal search, I have selected Arash Mafi, Professor of Physics and Astronomy and Director of the Center for High Technology Materials, as the Interim Dean of Arts and Sciences, effective July 1, 2021. Professor Mafi has been one of UNM's most successful researchers. His research team undertakes cutting-edge research in photonics, focusing especially on nonlinear and quantum aspects of guided-wave optics. Guided-wave optics, in forms including optical fibers and plasmonic and silicon nano-waveguides, constitute the fundamental platform in device applications in photonics. Dr. Mafi's work on using disorder to actually sharpen images transmitted by optical fibers was named one of the top 10 breakthroughs in physics in 2014. It was one of the first practical applications of the physical phenomenon of Anderson Localization known since the 1950s. Dr. Mafi is a Fellow of the Optical Society of America, a Fellow of the International Society for Optics and Photonics, a Senior Member of IEEE, a Life Member of APS, and a member of AAAS. He received the NSF CAREER Award in 2013. Dr. Mafi's research has resulted in 95 peer-reviewed journal publications and 124 conference publications and abstracts. Professor Mafi has also served as the Chair of UNM's interdisciplinary Optical Science and Engineering graduate program. Dr. Mafi will serve in the interim role for about a year, while we conduct a search for the next dean of Arts & Sciences.

We welcome Arash to this important role at UNM, and thank Mark Peceny for 10 years of service as Dean of Arts and Sciences.

Dean of University College and Dean of Honors College

We are equally pleased to announce the appointment of Eric Lau, Professor of Music – Saxophone and Chair of the Department of Music in the College of Fine Arts, as the Dean of the Honors College and Dean

of University College, both effective July 1, 2021. These two colleges, which remain separate colleges but will now share a single dean, are joined in being a critical focal point for high impact educational practices at UNM, which include first year experience courses, honors programs, living-learning experiences, and undergraduate research. University College is also home to essential pre-professional programs supporting students ultimately pursuing programs in allied health fields, and to the popular bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary liberal arts.



Dean Eric Lau, University College and Honors College

An active performer and teacher, Dr. Lau has presented concerts, masterclasses, and clinics throughout the United States, Europe, Puerto Rico, and Brazil. As a concerto soloist, Dr. Lau has been featured at both National and Regional North American Saxophone Alliance Conferences as well as with the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra and the Roswell Symphony. His commitment to new music has led to his presenting premiere performances of more than two dozen works for saxophone, including works by David Maslanka, Gunther Schuller, Michael Colgrass, and Ida Gotkovsky.

In addition to his solo performances, Dr. Lau is a regular performer with the New Mexico Philharmonic, the Santa Fe Symphony, the Santa Fe Opera, and as baritone saxophonist with the Iridium Quartet. With Iridium, a saxophone quartet that he co-founded, he can be heard on four professional CDs that include eight world premiere recordings. In addition, Dr. Lau's solo CD Journey, features unique instrumental arrangements of vocal music written between the 17th to the 21st century. Dr. Lau received the Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees from Michigan State University where he was a recipient of both the Catherine Herrick Cobb Fellowship and the Dean's Recruitment Fellowship and his Bachelor of Music Degree from Louisiana State University. Dr. Lau has taught at UNM since 2003.

Eric replaces Professor Rob DelCampo, who has ably and creatively served as Interim Dean of University College for three years, and Interim Dean Diane Marshal who has led the Honors College this year, following Honors Dean Greg Lanier, who stepped down in spring 2020. Professor DelCampo will continue to steward the very successful Innovation Academy, UNM's entrepreneurship and innovation program, which he founded. I sincerely thank Rob, Diane, and Greg for their service to our students.

Vaccination

It's pretty simple. Get vaccinated. We have planned a largely in-person fall semester, and it's only possible with vaccination.

James Paul Holloway

Professor of Nuclear Engineering

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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