What Instructors Need to Know

SPRING 2026

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

What Instructors Need to Know: Syllabus and more

This guide provides instructors with some of the things instructors need to know for spring 2026.

What's new?

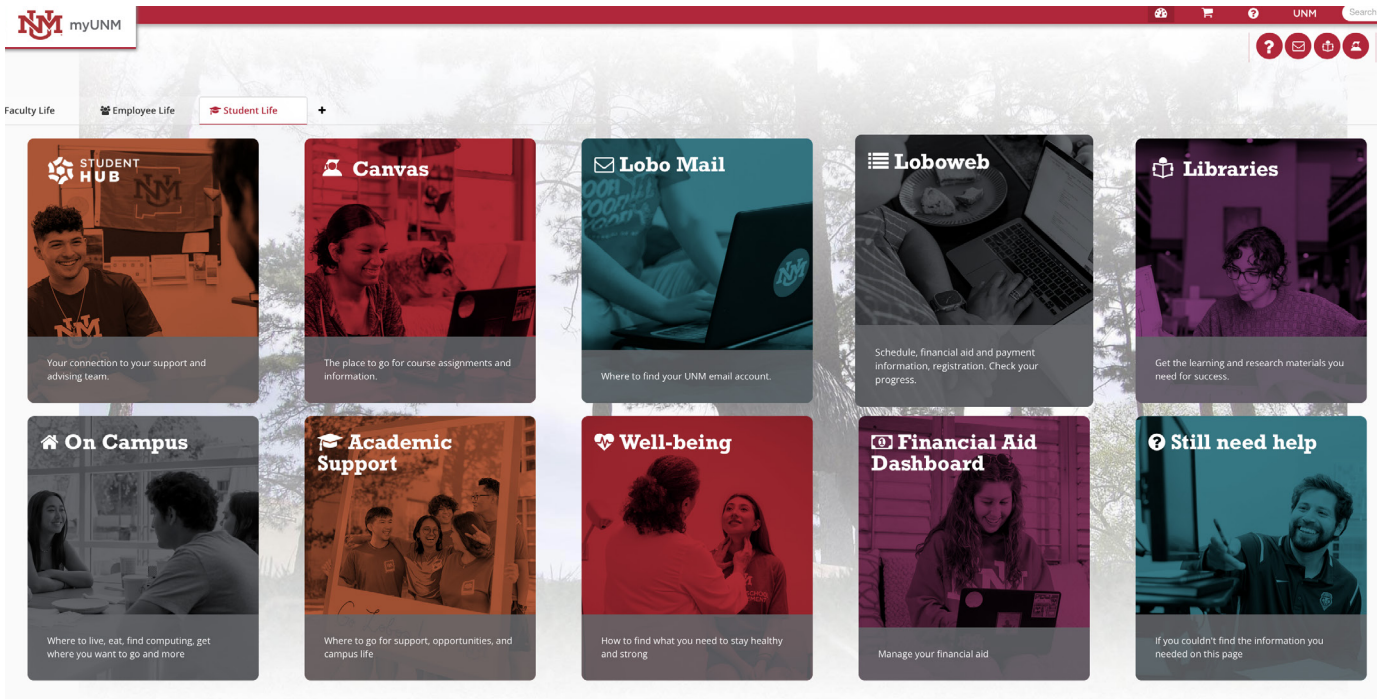
- MyUNM Student Life Tab
- Enhanced CTL Instructor page
- Key deadlines

What else is here?

- New applications for AY 2025-26
- Syllabus language

Looking for more resources? Check out provost.unm.edu or ctl.unm.edu

What's new?



Student Life tab on MyUNM

The new Student Life tab on MyUNM, available on login, offers a direct portal to student information, help, services, and opportunities, including:

- **Lobo Well-Being**: Wellness, activities, resource centers.
- **Academic Resources**: tutoring, workshops, research, study abroad, and community engagement.
- **On Campus**: Food, transportation, parking, computing, housing, and maps.
- **Canvas**: Learning management system for courses and course materials in My Shelf.

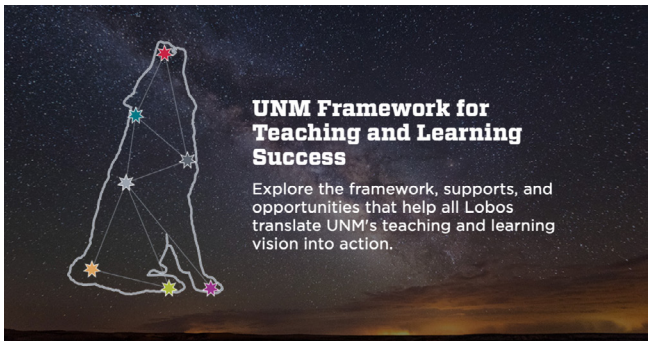
Please explore the Student Life tab and use it to refer students to resources and opportunities that address their needs. Mention it in your syllabus as a standard single access site for students.

Key Deadlines

- **Course materials adoption**: July 1 for fall sections, Nov. 1 for spring sections, and April 15 for summer sections.
- **2026-2027 Catalog Edits**: Main campus and Health Sciences Center: April 24, 2026.
- **Assessment**: Updated assessment plans should be submitted to your college assessment chair in fall 2026 (by their due date). In AY 26-27, academic program assessment reporting will restart based on your new assessment plan.
- **Online course proposals (OCPs)**: The best consideration deadline for fall 2026 is Feb. 6, 2026. OCP forms can be accessed through the Online Course Proposals webpage.
- **Student Experience Project**: Faculty Fellows program on socio-psychological classroom interventions that can improve belonging and academic outcomes. Apply by March 31, 2026. More information here.

Enhanced CTL Instructor Page

Following on Faculty Senate adoption of the UNM Framework for Teaching and Learning Success, the Center for Teaching and Learning is building web pages aligned with the framework. Resources, workshops, and teaching enhancement opportunities are added regularly to this one-stop site.



Applications

The Course Materials Access pilot program through the UNM Bookstore provides "complete" access to all required course materials for a flat rate of $279 per semester for Albuquerque campus undergraduates. Go to the website and select access to Albuquerque graduate students and UNM Taos students. Students may Opt-Out of course materials access. Digital materials will be accessible in Canvas (learning management system) on the first day of classes when instructors adopt materials by the adoption deadlines and physical materials and course kits will be available for pick up. Please indicate your adoptions or decision not to adopt materials by the following deadlines: July 1 for fall sections, Nov. 1 for spring sections, and April 15 for summer sections.

New Graduate Application: UNM has replaced an aging graduate application system with one that better meets the needs of today's students. The new TargetX includes the same information and functionality for applicants and faculty reviewers as the old application, but with several improvements imbedded throughout. Faculty can access the Target X graduate application through the Faculty MyUNM portal. Please attend a training session and view the tutorial videos for TargetX on the IT training page or Grad Studies Faculty/Staff Resources page.

Syllabus context

Students benefit from syllabi that provide: student learning outcomes; course schedule; information about course materials, email, office contact and how communication will occur; office hours or help hours; assignment grading, feedback and grading scale; and a welcoming message. Consider exploring the Syllabus and First Day Toolkit that UNM helped develop and test as part of the Student Experience Project.

Note on Disruptive Behavior: UNM policy provides faculty with some options on handling disruptive behavior that require specific syllabus language (FH D75). Please review the policy in full. Here are the key elements:

The instructor is encouraged to include general guidelines about expectations regarding adherence to the Student Code of Conduct in the course syllabus. Under UNM policy (see Related Documents below) and relative to federal protections of a student's right to educational access, an instructor may not simply drop a student from a course due to a one-time occurrence of disruptive behavior; therefore, an instructor must explicitly state in the syllabus that:

- Disruptive behavior will result in a student being asked to leave a class meeting, which will be recorded as an unexcused absence; and
- Per the absence policy for this class, the student will be dropped after ___ (a specific number must be stated) of unexcused absences.

Consider developing a community agreement with your students on shared values and expectations for a productive class environment.

AI in the classroom: UNM faculty and staff have developed a thoughtful site offering syllabus language calibrated to different levels of appropriate AI use for classes. It is always wise to have a conversation with a student about inappropriate AI use and about the consequences for their learning and future success. If necessary, faculty can document with the dean of students inappropriate AI use that is in violation of the terms laid out in the syllabus. Consider exploring a resource such as José Antonio Bowen and C. Edward Watson's *Teaching with AI* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2024). A team of faculty and staff led by Soraya Abad Mota participated in an AAC&U Institute on AI and have brought back new ideas to UNM. The Center for Teaching and Learning is also sponsoring a community of practice focused on the Bowen and Watson volume.

Library Tutorials on Foundational Information Literacy and Library Skills: University Libraries offers a variety of self-paced and interactive tutorials at https://library.unm.edu/services/instruction/tutorials.php. Each tutorial comes with a certificate of completion that students can download if you'd like to assign these as homework. Want help? Email the Undergraduate Librarian Team: undergrads@unm.libanswers.com

Syllabus language

REQUIRED SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

Accommodations: UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at arcsrvs@unm.edu or 505-277-3506.

UAP 2720 and 2740. Our classroom and university should foster mutual respect, kindness, and support. If you have concerns about discrimination, harassment, or violence, please seek support and report incidents. Find confidential services at LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center, the Women's Resource Center, and the Arcoiris Center. UNM prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex (including gender, sex stereotyping, gender expression, and gender identity). All instructors are "responsible employees" who must communicate reports of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence to Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity. For more information, please see UAP 2720 and UAP 2740.

REQUESTED SYLLABUS LANGUAGE (alter as needed):

Credit-hour statement: This is a three-credit-hour course. Class meets for three 50-minute sessions/two 75-minute sessions of direct instruction for 15 weeks during the spring 2026 semester. Please plan for a minimum of six hours of out-of-class work (or homework, study, assignment completion, and class preparation) each week.

or

Credit-hour statement: This is a three-credit-hour course delivered in an entirely asynchronous online modality over eight weeks during the spring 2026 semester. Please plan for a minimum of 18 hours per week to learn course materials and complete assignments.

Course Materials Access (for Albuquerque undergraduate students only):
Your digital course materials are directly available now on the My Shelf link in Canvas. Your physical course materials, such as books and required lab/studio course kits, are available at the UNM Bookstore, and you will receive an email about how to pick them up. To simplify your course materials access, you are automatically enrolled in a Complete option at a flat rate of $279 per semester. This will show up on your bursar bill. The Complete option covers all your required course materials for all your Albuquerque campus courses, including any graduate courses you may be taking (branch campus course materials are billed and available separately). If you are interested in course materials access for only selected courses, or if you want to opt out entirely, you will need to select the option you want in the My Shelf link in Canvas. You can change your selected option in the My Shelf link in Canvas until the registrar's "Last Day to Drop Without a 'W' Grade and 100% Tuition Refund." Make sure that you review the video and information here to understand cost and the options for Complete (automatic enrollment), Select (take action), and Opt-out (take action).

Syllabus language

OPTIONAL SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

Respectful behavior and absences

Respectful Conduct Expectations: I am committed to building with you a positive classroom environment in which everyone can learn. I reserve the right to intervene and enforce standards of respectful behavior when classroom conduct is inconsistent with University expectations [and/or classroom community agreements]. Interventions and enforcement may include but are not limited to required meetings to discuss classroom expectations, written notification of expectations, and/or removal from a class meeting. Removal from a class meeting will result in an unexcused absence. [Insert number] or more unexcused absences may result in permanent removal and a drop from the course (see attendance policy). The University of New Mexico ensures freedom of academic inquiry, free expression and open debate, and a respectful campus through adherence to the following policies: D75: Classroom Conduct, Student Code of Conduct, University Policy 2240 – Respectful Campus, University Policy 2210 – Campus Violence.

Academic honesty and AI use

Responsible Learning and Academic Honesty: Cheating and plagiarism (academic dishonesty) are often driven by lack of time, desperation, or lack of knowledge about how to identify a source. Communicate with me and ask for help, even at the last minute, rather than risking your academic career by committing academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty involves claiming that work created by another source is your own original work. It is a Student Code of Conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. When you use a resource in work submitted for this class, document how you used it and distinguish clearly between your original work and the material taken from the resource. (Add specifics about acceptable AI usage.)

Encouraging use of supports and resources

Thriving and finding support: Students are especially successful at UNM when they take advantage of support and get involved in campus and academic life. The student and instructor MyUNM login page provides direct links to wellbeing resources, including financial capability, mental health, food, jobs, and resource centers. MyUNM will help you identify academic resources like peer tutoring and opportunities like study abroad. You can contact academic advisors and resource advisors for information and guidance via Student Hub on MyUNM. I look forward to providing you with information about academic opportunities related to our class and to helping you find support resources.

Welcoming, honoring and acknowledging students: The Division for Change and Empowerment offers statements to include on syllabi, in Canvas shells, or on in-class powerpoint slides in class to communicate welcome and respect.

Instructor opportunities

Engaging Student Learning Support for your Classes
The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers a variety of services, such as tutoring in STEM, writing, and languages, integrated support like supplemental instruction, embedded tutoring (for both in-person and online courses), and in-class workshops on writing and learning strategies. Resources are designed to align with your teaching goals. As your partner in fostering a stronger learning environment, CTL also offers tailored recommendations for integrating student support into your curriculum. Contact Stephanie Sánchez at stephs@unm.edu, or visit the CTL website for more tips and tools. The opportunity to apply for fall 2026 peer support will be circulated in spring 2026.

Communities of Practice for Faculty

Teaching with AI: Led by Jet Saengneon, Megan Hauser, Mitch Marty and Baset Haridy. This team of instructional designers, who have been supporting instructors in making choices about AI in their teaching since ChatGPT first launched to the public, will engage faculty in developing approaches to AI use in the classroom.

Student Experience Project: Faculty Fellows apply socio-psychological interventions tested at UNM to improving academic outcomes. Contact: StudentExperienceUNM@unm.edu
Learn more here.

New Faculty Student Experience Project. New faculty meet as a new community to learn about easily implemented interventions to create a successful classroom environment. Lead: Dr. Erin Shortlidge, Executive Director of CTL. Call for Participation sent directly to new faculty. Contact: Joe Suilmann, suilmann@unm.edu.

Intersectional STEM: Lead: Nancy López.

Improving Gateway STEM (working group). Lead: Kimran Buckholz

Faculty Wellbeing. Lead: Leola Paquin

Designing for Depth and Engagement. Explore how to create transformational learning experiences using backward design, active learning, authentic assessment strategies, and informed by an asset-based approach to your design choices. This community of practice supports instructors in creating inclusive, engaging courses that honor students' strengths, deepen learning, and spark connection. Sessions include resource sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and space to apply new ideas. This spring community of practice is meant to continue the work of the New Faculty Student Experience Project from the fall. While we will be prioritizing spaces for faculty new to UNM, we welcome all to apply. Leads: Jet Saengngoen, Magdalena Vázquez Dathe, and Stephanie Spong.

Collaborative student success projects

Here is a set of ambitious projects undertaken by faculty and administrative leaders to strengthen student persistence and hit our goal of 80% third-semester retention by 2030:

Improving Lower-Division Math: The goal is to shorten and define STEM and non-STEM math pathways and to improve course success rates and persistence at UNM. A pilot curriculum and placement system has launched for Fall 2025 on the Albuquerque campus. Leads: Dr. Monika Nitsche, Cash Clifton, Karon Klipple, Khalid Ifzarene, and Patrick Denne and collaborations with the College of Arts and Sciences, University College, the School of Engineering, the Office of Advising Strategies, and Undergraduate Research, Arts and Design. Contact: Tim Schroeder, schroeder@unm.edu.

Faculty Student Experience Project: The goal is to leverage resources, from professional course design and student learning support to communication plans and student outreach, to increase student course persistence and support faculty teaching large enrollment courses. Collaborators: Sushilla Knottenbelt, Stephanie Spong, Pamela Cheek, Caleb Richardson, Fred Gibbs, Sharon Nepstad, Diana Torrez, Ben Hanelt, Eli Wilson, Daisy Atterbury, Luke Gorton, Jillian Stafford, Diana Habel-Rodriguez, Ezra Depperman, Mark Morgan-Tracy, Jose Sanchez. Contact: Joe Suilmann, suilmann@unm.edu.

Elevating General Education: The goal is to embed college transition skills in general education courses and for faculty to develop and share a bank of transition skill resources for use in gen ed areas. Lead: Cait Lippett in collaboration with General Education faculty. Contact: Joe Suilmann, suilmann@unm.edu.

Faculty Working Group

Best practices for Syllabus and Curriculum Design: Nicole Capehart (Faculty Senate Curricula Committee), Cait Lippett (Faculty Senate Teaching Enhancement Committee, Patrick Manning (Faculty Senate Graduate and Professional Committee), Eva Rodriguez-Gonzalez, Stephanie Spong. Contact: Pamela Cheek, pcheek@unm.edu

Is there anything we have missed, or do you have any questions? Please let us know by contacting Pamela Cheek at pcheek@unm.edu.

Best wishes for the upcoming semester from the entire team in Academic Affairs!