

# Academic Dispatch

June 11, 2020



## Dean of Fine Arts

Actor. Educator. Academic administrator. Certified instructor in stage combat. Former Division I athlete. This is Harris Smith, an exciting artist who will take on the role of Dean of the UNM College of Fine Arts, effective August 1, 2020. He has acted in film, television, and theater, and has served for the last 15 years in a variety of administrative roles. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Professor Smith headed the professional actor training program, was interim chair of the Department of Theater Arts, and then Director of the Johnny Carson School of Theater and Film. Now at the University of Utah, Professor Smith serves as the Chair of the Department of Theater. His research work focuses on psycho-physical character development for the actor, and on choreographing violence for stage and film, as well as on interdisciplinary endeavors bringing the skills of an actor to other fields. He recently served as a communications coach for the New York State Defenders Association, and he is exploring Afrofuturism values in stage combat. Besides his university teaching, he has conducted numerous workshops on acting and fight choreography, including in Sichuan and Chengdu, China, has served as a movement coach, directed, served as fight choreographer, and acted in numerous productions. He recently served as executive producer and stunt coordinator for the short drama film, “The Healing of Harmon,” the story of a Kurdish refugee in Lincoln, Nebraska. This film was created as the third film in the Carson Film Series, a project to bring together industry professionals with students, and has won a number of awards, including Drama Short winner from the Independent Short Awards. The Carson Film Series, which Professor Smith produced, was purposefully interdisciplinary, and films in the series brought together

students in music, graphics, art history, architecture, dance, and even the campus police, in an interdisciplinary creative enterprise.

This interdisciplinary work, bringing together the wide variety of the arts as well as the disciplines beyond, has been a great interest for Professor Smith, and I look forward to supporting him in this work to further the arts at UNM and in New Mexico.

Harris Smith will replace Interim Dean Regina Carlow, who is departing UNM at the end of this month to assume the role of Dean of the College of Fine Arts & Communication at Towson University in Maryland. During the period from July 1 to August 1, Professor Glenn Kostur will serve as Interim Dean of the College of Fine Arts. Both Regina and Glenn have my sincere thanks for their service to UNM.

### **COVID News: Fall Instructional Calendar and Daily Self-Screening**

The public health crisis brought on by the SARS-Cov-2 virus continues, and we must all remain vigilant. Wear your mask. Wash your hands. Now wash them again. Our state has been developing guidelines to allow us to continue many activities, including higher education, while still minimizing the transmission of this virus, and keeping the numbers of infections low enough to isolate and contain its effects. The success of this program requires a selfless approach: I protect you, and you protect me. Did I mention? Wear your mask.

After consultation with faculty, faculty governance, students, public health professionals, academic advising staff, and others both at UNM and beyond, UNM has determined that we will use a modified instructional calendar for Fall 2020. The start and end dates of term will formally remain as previously published, August 17 and December 12th, but fall break will be rearranged, and in-person instruction will end before Thanksgiving. Instruction will continue remotely for the final week of classes after Thanksgiving, and for exam week.



Aug 17, 2020	First Day of Classes
Sept 7, 2020	Labor Day - no classes
Oct 7, 2020	Wednesday break day - no classes
Nov 3, 2020	Tuesday break day / Election day - no classes
Nov 25, 2020	Last day of in-person classes
Nov 26/27	Thanksgiving break - no classes

Nov 30 - Dec 4	Remote instruction week
Dec 7 - Dec 12	Remote exam week
Dec 12, 2020	End of Term

The branch campuses and certain professional disciplines (especially the health disciplines) may have variations on this schedule, according to their unique needs.

This schedule eliminates fall break (previously Oct. 8-9) as the start of a 4-day weekend in favor of two separated days – a Wednesday and a Tuesday – and greatly reduces the numbers of students returning to campus after Thanksgiving break. This eliminates two possible travel-return periods and reduces the number of students on campus if we experience a late November or December seasonal wave of respiratory virus infections. It requires the last two weeks of the semester (including exam week) to be provided remotely. I would expect that classes that require hands-on activities – studios, labs, certain clinical work – would complete this before Thanksgiving, so there will be no loss of these critical in-person learning opportunities.

### Daily Self-Screening

Starting this week all staff and faculty at UNM are receiving a morning email asking if they are coming to campus, and if so, asking them to self-screen for symptoms of COVID. There’s no denying it – this email is annoying, especially to those not planning to come to campus. But it’s necessary. We don’t know on any given day who is planning to come to campus, and even faculty who are not under contract in the summer do come to campus and work on their scholarship. This daily screening is a prudent public health measure, and is required by State of NM public health protocols. I protect you; you protect me. Oh, and wear a mask.

### Remembering Melissa Vargas

Melissa Vargas, valued member of the Provost Office staff, passed away on May 30, 2020. Melissa, a proud Lobo, worked for UNM for 23 years in a number of roles. I first had the pleasure to meet her when I interviewed for the provost role, and she proudly introduced herself as “the trainer of provosts!” I think she had worked for most of them, and I was happy to be trained by Melissa! I will miss her. A wreath in Melissa’s memory has been placed outside the Alumni Memorial Chapel this week, and funeral services will be held on Monday, June 15, 10:00 a.m., at Annunciation Church on Vermont Street.

### James Paul Holloway

**Professor of Nuclear Engineering**

**Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**

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