

# Academic Dispatch



**November 5, 2021**

## **Happy Diwali!**

Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights, a 5-day celebration around the 15th day of the month of Kartik. Celebrated also by Jains and Sikhs, the word Diwali itself is derived from a Sanskrit word, deepavali (dīpāvali), meaning row of lights. This joyous festival includes days focused on cleaning and preparing, decorating by hanging strings of lights and arranging clusters of lamps in beautiful patterns, creating rangoli, and celebrating the love between spouses, and between brothers and sisters. Festivals punctuated by lights and love of family – these probably sound familiar to most New Mexicans. This is also a time in the term when stress can be high, and the body of work left to be done seems clearly beyond the time available to do it. That’s a moment to take a breath, reflect, and enjoy and appreciate what has already been accomplished, and remember the impact that your work has had. The strength to complete what remains will come. I’ll take some time tonight to string up some lights – late for Diwali, but not too late for the rest of the fall ceremonies.

## **Undergraduate, Research, Arts & Design Network**

At UNM education happens within the context of discovery and creation. For a student learning psychology here, you can learn psychology from someone who not only knows the field, but who actively uncovers new insights into how the human mind functions. For a student learning history, you are learning from scholars who not only know history, but are actively reshaping our understanding of the past. Learning in this environment focused on discovery is different – richer, deeper – than learning in an environment focused only on transmission.

UNM already has many programs that provide students with direct access to this environment of discovery. Undergraduate research programs, design projects, engagement in artistic creation, a campus farm, internships, and more. For our students, these represent a set of opportunities you must seek out and engage with – these experiences will make your education more complete and support your future success. For our faculty and staff, developing these opportunities not only enrich our students' learning, but provide a vital source of creative energy that can further energize our research and community engagement efforts. We have previously taken some steps to articulate the learning objectives that students might take into these opportunities [in the UNM-5](#), which was created by a team of faculty and staff led by Director of Career Services Jenna Crabb, but we can do more to organize and make visible the opportunities for student-led original research and creation, and the reasons why these opportunities are important.

To promote and increase student engagement with our UNM environment of discovery, we are launching the [Undergraduate Research, Arts, and Design Network – URAD](#). URAD, directed by Dr. Tim Schroeder, is designed to build on and amplify the wonderful work already ongoing across UNM to provide undergraduates with early involvement in original research, the creation of artistic or design projects, engagement with internships, and other forms of experiential learning that build on UNM as a creator of knowledge. URAD is also dedicated to facilitating equitable access to opportunities, coordinate communication, and amplify existing efforts while respecting their integrity. URAD coordinates with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) and consults with the Division of Equity and Inclusion (DEI). The goal of URAD is to help students navigate to find these important opportunities, to foster faculty in developing additional forms of engagement, to help all of us clearly articulate the value of these experiences, and to celebrate all this work across the university. To learn more about URAD projects, and to join project committees, visit the [URAD launch page](#), or contact Dr. Schroeder at [timschroeder@unm.edu](mailto:timschroeder@unm.edu).

### **First-Generation Celebration**

Nearly 40% of incoming UNM students identify as being the first in their family to attend college. First-generation students face unique challenges in their path to graduation, often being the first in their families to navigate the complex processes of admissions and financial aid, course registration, and the many other pieces that make up a university experience. At UNM, you are [far from alone in your journey](#). You are joined by thousands of individuals: many of your fellow students, faculty, advisors, and college deans were first in their family—indeed, University President Garnett Stokes is a proud first-generation student. This year we are participating in the national [5th Annual First-Generation Celebration](#) beginning Monday, Nov. 8 with [our own special way of celebrating how we are first gen proud at UNM](#).

### **International Education Week, November 15-19**

New Mexico is a kaleidoscope of cultures and peoples, and it is but a part of a world of human communities that create the rich tapestry of our species. [International Education Week](#), running this year from November 15-19, will provide us with an opportunity to celebrate the kaleidoscope of international

and cultural backgrounds that make up our vibrant university community. International Education Week will feature cultural performances, talks, and exhibits. All are invited to participate in these in-person and virtual events throughout the week. Events held on UNM Campus are free to the public and meet current COVID-19 Safe Practices, so wear your masks! Please visit the [full calendar of events](#) for further details.

### **Academic Support Scholarship**

The staff at UNM make our environment of discovery and learning possible. I'm grateful for their efforts and know that our students and faculty would not succeed without them. The [Provost Committee for Staff](#) (PCS) was created in 1989 to provide opportunities for development, recognition and service to our UNM staff members. I am proud to continue supporting this committee's efforts to support our staff. The PCS and UNM HR have partnered to create a scholarship designed to help staff who are utilizing their tuition remission benefit. UNM employees now have an opportunity to [apply for a financial support scholarship](#) to help cover the costs of academic books, course fee(s) and other related course supplies. [Applications for the Staff Scholarship](#) are being accepted now through Dec. 3, 2021 at 5 p.m.

### **Bringing Light**

The world remains a complex and ambiguous place. Covid or no covid, that won't change in our lifetimes, because the challenges that face us are significant. As actors in this world, our responsibility to ourselves, our families, and our communities is to engage, to grow, to improve the world as our individual values guide us, and to hold close those we love. Learning and discovery allows us to do all these things, and bring light to the human experience.

### **James Paul Holloway**

**Professor of Nuclear Engineering**

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

A PDF version of this Academic Dispatch is available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Your feedback and input are welcome at [academicdispatch@unm.edu](mailto:academicdispatch@unm.edu).