

# Academic Dispatch

Communication from the Office of Academic Affairs

*Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you.  
But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.  
Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I.  
But when the trees bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.*

— Christina Rossetti

**April 10, 2025**

## In appreciation of our natural spaces

What Christina Rossetti knew to be true in the 1862 is still true today. Nature holds an awesome and mysterious power over us. This is one of the many reasons New Mexico has such a capacity to enchant us with its wild spaces and haunting vistas. “Who Has Seen the Wind?” from Rossetti’s first book, *Goblin Market and Other Poetry*, reminds us of how, despite our intellectual hubris, humans do not hold all of the answers. There are many phenomena in the vastness of the universe — even the seemingly mundane and scientifically explicable wonders like wind, rain, and the many varieties of fauna and flora that populate our planet — that have the ability to change our trajectories, as well as our temperament.



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Enjoying nature is a known boost to mental health. When your physical reality becomes overwhelming, be it from work, school, or any other of life’s responsibilities, a common and healthy response is, “I need some air,” which (weather permitting) generally means outside. I often take this path myself – escaping the confines of Scholes Hall to wander the campus or simply circumnavigate the Duck Pond. And we are fortunate at UNM to have some beautiful spaces to enjoy, with a vast variety of trees, plants, public art, walkways, and, coming soon, a vastly improved Duck Pond.

UNM’s Office of Sustainability recently hosted a brief ceremony at the UNM Alumni Chapel — led by Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration Teresa Costantinidis and Vice President for Institutional Support Services Shawna Wolfe — to mark our [designation as a Tree Campus for Higher Education](#). The designation by the Arbor Day Foundation recognizes higher education campuses that are dedicated to enhancing community well-being through tree education, investment, and engagement. This celebration included a tree planting outside of Scholes Hall, and so now there is a new tree to check out! That tree is but one of more than 5,000 trees from 235 different species within the garth of our grounds, which is a nationally recognized arboretum.

April — Earth Month — is a perfect time to explore our campus with new eyes, avoiding the rush from place-to-place and embracing the moment to appreciate the natural growth. There are this month a variety of events to help us appreciate nature, such as the Sustainability Expo on April 24 and Arbor Day on April 25, which will also be a campus cleanup day. For more on Earth Month and UNM’s sustainability efforts, check out the [Office of Sustainability](#). And for more on how nature can boost your mood, you could read the literature, but better yet, explore the great outdoors.

## Learn all about UNM's undergraduate research at UROC on April 11

As the flagship R1 Carnegie Classification university in New Mexico, UNM produces a constant supply of groundbreaking, fascinating, and life-changing research. It is often assumed that all research is conducted by Ph.D.-level professors (and their hard-working graduate students), but many are surprised to discover that our undergraduates are also actively involved in the generation of new knowledge. Our undergraduates design research studies, author journal articles, attend conferences, and have some pretty remarkable experiences that undoubtedly help set them apart and provide them with unique experiences well before they earn their UNM degree. To highlight their involvement in our research ecosystem, UNM is hosting the [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Conference \(UROC\)](#) on April 11 at the Student Union Building. I encourage all to take time during the day to enjoy a closer look at some of the creative research our next generation is working on. Learn more at [uresearch.unm.edu](http://uresearch.unm.edu)



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## Don't miss Lightning Lounge on April 16

Last month we learned about sonic painting, multispecies thriving, mental health in refugee and immigrant populations, and the amazing wonders of the gut biome. This month, the focus is equally diverse, presenting research on safe streets, exercise and inflammation, how our brains make choices, and ArtScience (you'll have to attend to find out what that is!). If your curiosity is piqued, be sure to carve out some time in your schedule to attend Lightning Lounge, hosted by [Advance at UNM](#), the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of the Vice President for Research. The next installment (and last of this semester) will be held at 4 p.m. April 16 in Ortega Hall, Room 335. Although Lightning Lounge won't be resuming until the fall semester, if you have an idea for research that you (or a colleague) would be interested in presenting in a seven-minute format, contact Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Christopher Lyons at [clyons@unm.edu](mailto:clyons@unm.edu).

## Know Your Rights presentation planned for April 21

International students, faculty, and staff are welcome at UNM. As a joint initiative between the administration of UNM and United Academics of UNM (UA-UNM), we will be hosting a "Know Your Rights" presentation at 6 p.m. April 21 at Dane Smith Hall, Room 125. The event will be led by Amber Weeks and Olsi Vrapı, attorneys with the Vrapı Weeks law firm in Albuquerque. The session will focus on immigrant rights, travel considerations, and U.S. permanent resident options. After the 30- to 40-minute presentation, there will be a Q&A segment. No registration or RSVP is necessary.

### James Paul Holloway

**Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**  
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Comments or questions? Contact us at [academicdispatch@unm.edu](mailto:academicdispatch@unm.edu)