

Academic Dispatch

Communication from the Office of Academic Affairs

June 26, 2025

*"And whether we shall meet again, I know not.
Therefore our everlasting farewell take.
Forever and forever farewell, Cassius.
If we do meet again, why we shall smile;
If not, why then this parting was well made."
— William Shakespeare*

As we part, a few words of praise for the people and place

When I was considering joining UNM, I consulted with former UNM provost Mary Sue Coleman. Mary Sue had been here in the 1990s and she remembered our university with great respect. She told me that UNM was "a keystone institution in New Mexico," a university that mattered deeply to the state and its success. I talked also to several Lobo alums, and I was struck by the sincere expressions of gratitude that each articulated for their alma mater. For each, UNM had made a profound impact on their lives.

There were many factors that drew me to UNM – my long familiarity with our beautiful state, the strong leadership that was developing at the institution, the opportunity to further contribute to the enduring project that is research-based higher education, and the clear dedication of the faculty, staff, and students to this project – but ultimately it was the commitment of the UNM community to joyfully Advance New Mexico that most swayed me to serve here as chief academic officer. I believe that universities must be about a place and must clearly serve a community constituency. We exist as an institution not for ourselves, but for them. Indeed, it is the loss of this connection of university with place that is at the heart of the public's loss of confidence in us.



Over the past six years during my tenure as provost, the dedication of our staff and faculty to this mission of service to our place has remained undimmed. Through challenges both expected and unimagined the UNM community has striven, grown, discovered, created, and served. I'm proud to have been a part of this time in the development of the University FOR New Mexico.

Our people matter, and indeed are the heart of our university. From distinguished professor to grounds keeper, from food service worker to physician, all are part of the amazing UNM community it has been my privilege to serve. I am in awe of you all, and I depart with the deepest affection for all of you.

Even while the people make the institution, the individuals may come and go. And so, it is time for me to depart. I remain devoted to higher education and will continue to serve this project in the role of president at the University of Toledo, another institution devoted to its place. Yet a piece of my heart will always remain here, in the Land of Enchantment.

Farewell!

James Paul Holloway

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Professor of Nuclear Engineering

Two new faces join Academic Affairs in July

As the leadership of the Office of Academic Affairs transitions in July, two faculty will be joining its leadership in new interim roles.

Professor Rebecca Sánchez, currently associate dean for equity, inclusion and faculty affairs in the College of Education and Human Sciences, will begin July 1 as interim associate vice provost for academic personnel. And Cristyn Elder, an associate professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, will begin July 14 as special advisor to the interim provost for labor relations. This appointment is a half-time role.

Sánchez will oversee academic personnel policies and processes, and Elder will support Academic Affairs in labor relations with United Academics of UNM (UA-UNM) and the graduate student union (United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America - UE).

“Rebecca and Cris join our Academic Affairs team in two vitally important roles,” said Barbara Rodriguez, who will become interim provost and executive vice president for academic affairs on July 3. “As I transition into new duties, I’m looking forward to collaborating with these colleagues. Their insight, dedication, and strategic vision will be vital as we continue to strengthen UNM as an exceptional institution for faculty excellence and achievement.”

[Read the full announcement](#)

A summer hiatus, then we'll be back ...

Toward the beginning of the academic year, stay tuned for communication (perhaps with a different name or format) from Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Barbara Rodriguez. Comments, questions or ideas? Contact us at academicdispatch@unm.edu.



Sánchez



Elder