



# Querencia at UNM

THE PROVOST'S PERSPECTIVE FROM THE HEART OF UNM

## Dreaming bigger, together

At a recent meeting of the UNM Alumni Association Board, alumnus and Campus Environments and Services colleague and friend Ed Manzanares shared a thought that has stayed with me. He reflected that, historically, we had not always dreamed big enough at UNM. But he also observed that something feels different today — that the University is thinking more boldly about what is possible.

His observation resonated with me.



**Dreams came alive for thousands of Lobos last month at UNM's two Commencement ceremonies.**

This month, I was honored to be appointed provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. I am deeply grateful to President Stokes, President-elect Goldstein, and to the many faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members who have offered their support, encouragement, and confidence. Thank you.

My connection to UNM spans much of my life. I am a native New Mexican and a proud two-time Lobo graduate. Over the years, I have had the privilege of serving this institution as a student employee, staff member, faculty member, department chair, senior vice provost, and now provost.

Through each of those experiences, one truth has remained constant: UNM changes lives. It changed mine, and I see it changing lives every day.

In the weeks since my appointment, I have spent time meeting with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners. I have attended celebrations, participated in difficult conversations, and listened carefully to what people hope for UNM's future.

What I have heard is encouraging.

People care deeply about this University. They want our students to succeed. They want faculty and staff to have the support they need to do their best work. They want UNM to continue serving New Mexico while expanding its impact far beyond our state.

Most of all, I have been struck by a growing sense of possibility.

Whether the conversation is about student success, workforce development, health care, research, artificial intelligence, quantum science, or community partnerships, I hear people asking not whether UNM can lead, but how we can lead most effectively. I hear a willingness to tackle challenges that once may have seemed beyond our reach. I see people who believe deeply in this institution and in what it can become.

That spirit reminds me of Ed's observation. For many years, we may not always have dreamed big enough at UNM. Today, I see a University that is increasingly willing to match its aspirations with its potential.

Dreaming bigger is not about being bigger. It is about having the confidence to pursue meaningful goals on behalf of our students and the communities we serve. It is about recognizing that our future will be shaped not only by what we have accomplished, but by what we are willing to imagine and build together.

As I look ahead, I am excited about the future of Academic Affairs and of UNM. We have important work before us, and we have an extraordinary community to do that work.

Thank you for all that you do for our students, our University, and our state. Thank you for the opportunity to serve alongside you.

Together, I believe we can continue dreaming bigger — and delivering on those aspirations for New Mexico.

With gratitude,

**Barbara Rodríguez**  
**Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**

Keep an eye for a new publication from the Office of Student Affairs that will highlight the people and programs making a difference in the lives of students. *Engage* will be available in digital and print formats in July.

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Welcome Back Days starts Aug. 14, with a full array of events set, including Friday Night Live, Class Crawl, Movie on the Field, and the President's Ice Cream Social, where you can meet our new president, Dr. Steve Goldstein, as well as UNM leadership. Starting in July, departments and student organizations can sign up to participate [here](#).

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*Querencia at UNM* will be taking a break this summer, resuming in the fall, but if you have ideas for content you would like to see featured, let us know! Contact us at [querencia1@unm.edu](mailto:querencia1@unm.edu).



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*Querencia at UNM* is a monthly publication of the Office of Academic Affairs. Find previous issues at [provost.unm.edu](http://provost.unm.edu).