



COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES  
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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## AUGUST 2025 ISSUE

### WELCOME TO THE A&S NEWSLETTER

[Share your news and announcements for an upcoming newsletter](#)

#### **Welcome to fall term, A&S Community!**

We hope your summer was productive and restful. We're excited to begin fall term with updates on innovative teaching and research happening across the College, as well as news about student and faculty accomplishments over the summer.

Marlene Sanchez, the Director of Arts & Sciences Advisement, shared that *over one-third of all A&S students (1,943 or 35% in total) made the Dean's list last spring*. This accomplishment reflects both the dedication of our students and the support of their A&S faculty.

Here's to a great fall semester.

#### **A&S Dean's Office Staff**



## UPCOMING EVENTS

#### **Save the Date: Fall Monthly Mingles**

The fall Mingle schedule is here!

This year's Mingles will be on the road due to the Humanities Building's demolition. [Let Alice know if your unit would like to host](#)

All Mingles will take place the first Thursday of every month at noon:

- *Sept 4:* Parish 115 (bring your Lobo ID to swipe in)--hosted by the English Department
- *Oct 2:* Maxwell Museum Courtyard--hosted by the Maxwell Museum
- *Nov 6:* TBD
- *Dec 4:* TBD

We had a great turnout this spring and can't wait to connect with you in September.



## GOOD NEWS & UPDATES

This summer brought notable developments across our units, from faculty achievements to transformative student programs in New Mexico and abroad.

### Faculty Recognition & New Leadership

- **Kate Cartwright** has been named Director of the School of Public Administration.
- **The Center for Regional Studies** named **Damián Vergara Wilson (Spanish & Portuguese)** [as its new Director](#)
- **Chicana & Chicano Studies** expanded [K-12 outreach through their ISEE COLLEGE program](#)
- **Physics & Astronomy** welcomed [a new exoplanet research collaboration](#) with Global Citizen Scientists
- **Iain D. Thomson (Philosophy)** has been promoted to [Distinguished Professor](#)

**Assistant Professor Sarah Dreier (Political Science)** has joined a \$152 million NSF and NVIDIA grant awarded to the Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence, [with UNM as one of four partner institutions](#).

As co-PI, Dreier will co-lead data curation for developing open AI tools and will host training sessions for UNM researchers to use the new infrastructure.

**Professor Jeffrey Rack (Chemistry & Chemical Biology)** has been named a 2025 Fellow of the American Chemical Society, [one of 36 members nationwide recognized for outstanding contributions to science and the profession](#). Fellows will be celebrated at ACS Fall 2025 in Washington, DC.

**Three Physics & Astronomy Faculty Receive NSF Career Awards:** Diana Dragomir (exoplanet research), Francis-Yan Cyr-Racine (dark matter and dark energy studies), and Tonmoy Chakraborty (advanced microscopy systems). [Department Chair Richard Rand called the simultaneous awards "unbelievable" and "a very rare hat-trick of sorts."](#)

**Professors Naomi Shin and Rosa Vallejos (Linguistics)** were selected to teach at the 2025 Linguistics Society of America Summer Institute at the University of Oregon.

The Institute provides professional development opportunities and workshops on methodological advances. Shin taught on acquisition of variation while Vallejos offered a seminar on Language Contact in Language Shift Ecologies.

**Africana Studies Students Explore Kenya in Study Abroad Experience**



This summer, the **Africana Studies Department** partnered with the Global National Security Policy Institute to take 15 students on a three-week program in Kenya.

Led by Post-doctoral Fellow Peter Njagi and Professor Stephen Bishop, students studied Swahili, explored national parks and museums, and met with Maasai communities leading wildlife conservation work along Kenya's coastal areas. Congratulations to all participants: check out a KUNM podcast on the trip at the link below.

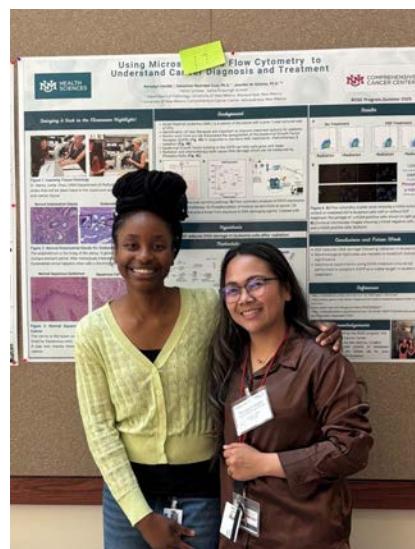
# PODCAST!

## GENERATION JUSTICE BRINGS KENYA TO YOU!



DR. BISHOP, DR. NJAGI, AND ELIJAH SHARE ABOUT THEIR STUDY TRIP ABROAD TO KENYA... TUNE IN TONIGHT TO HEAR ABOUT THE UNSPOKEN BEAUTY OF AFRICA!!!

### Celebrating Community Impact: ROSE Program Success



This summer, more than 20 middle and high school New Mexican science teachers completed the five-week Research Opportunities for Science Educators (ROSE) Program, conducting hands-on research in UNM labs alongside our faculty and graduate students.

Many ROSE participants reflected on how the experience rekindled their passion for science teaching in their final poster session. The program creates lasting connections that benefit their students, including some who've received placement in regional science fairs.

Programs like ROSE remind us that student success extends beyond our campus—when we support educators in our communities, we're supporting future students who may walk our doors as engaged, curious learners.



### Research & Graduate Studies: **Sharon Erickson Nepstad**

We're pleased to share these newly funded projects across the College, as well as upcoming opportunities for travel, research, and events.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY

The College is now accepting applications for the following:

- **Subvention Support Program**—Up to \$3,000 for book monographs or research publication for copy editing, indexing, copyrights, open access fees, and more. Preference given to those without alternative funding or who haven't received subvention funds in the past three years. *Deadline: Friday, Sept. 19* (via [InfoReady](#)).
- **Travel Support Program**—Up to \$2,000 for faculty presenting research at professional conferences or workshops. Open to tenure-track, research faculty, and lecturers. Preference for applicants without alternative funding, those presenting research-in-progress, and those who haven't received funds in the past three years. *Deadline: Friday, Sept. 19* (via [InfoReady](#)).
- **Event Support Program**—Up to \$3,000 for scholarly events hosted by A&S by departments, academic programs, interdisciplinary teams, and Category II research centers. Supported events may include invited speaker lectures or series, conferences, or workshops. *Deadline: Friday, Sept. 19* (via [InfoReady](#)).

## Newly Funded Projects

### NSF & NIH-Funded Research

- **Kristina Maria D. Lane (Geography)**—Accelerating Resilience Innovation: An Interdisciplinary Training Program for EGFP Fellows
- **Vince Martinson (Biology)**—EAGER: Mysterious Lack of Intracellular Fungal Symbionts in Insects
- **Si-Ming Zhang (Biology, CETI)**—Fine-Resolution Genetic Mapping of Advanced Intercross Lines of *Biomphalaria glabrata*

### Education, Policy, & Community Impact

- **Dana Bell (CCPI)**—Building Futures: Baby Bonds in New Mexico. Sponsor: Partnership

- for Community Action
- **James F. Cavanagh (Psychology)**—Frontal Midline Delta/Theta Rhythms and Cognitive Control in PD. Sponsor: Funded by State University of Iowa
  - **Paul Guerin (Institute for Social Research)**—New Mexico Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Competency Diversion Program Process Evaluation. Sponsor: NM Administrative Office of the Courts
  - **Carmela M. Roybal (Center for Health Policy)**—W.K. Kellogg Core Support Grant 2025–2027. Sponsor: W. K. Kellogg Foundation
  - **Gabriel Sanchez (Political Science, Center for Social Policy)**—New Mexico Medical Billing Focus Groups. Sponsor: NM Legislative Council Service
  - **Steven P. Verney (Psychology)**—Bilingualism as a Protective Factor of ADRD in American Indian Adults: The Strong Heart Study. Sponsor: Huntington Medical Research Institutes
  - **Jingjing Wang (Economics)**—Agricultural Water Users Preferences for Water Conservation Programs in the Middle Rio Grande Basin. Sponsor: Middle Rio Grande Conservancy

*State- and Institution-Funded Environmental, Health, Data, & Science Research*

- **Adrian J. Brearley (Earth & Planetary Sciences)**—Shock Metamorphism in CM Carbonaceous Chondrites. Sponsor: University of Hawaii
- **Erik B. Erhardt (Math & Stats)**—The Impact of Diffuse Mild Brain Injury on Clinical Outcomes in Children. Sponsor: Lovelace Biomedical Research Institute
- **David C. Lightfoot (Biology)**—Current Status of New Mexico Pollinators. Sponsor: NM Department of Agriculture
- **Esteban H. Muldavin (Biology, NMNHP)**—USBR WWF WaterSmart Middle Rio Grande. Sponsor: World Wildlife Fund Inc.
- **Richard J. Norwood (Biology, NMNHP)**—NMGDF Data Support for Technical Guidance Tools FY26–27. Sponsor: NM Game and Fish Department

***If you receive notification of a stop work order, termination, or reinstatement of a federal research grant, please:***

- Notify the **Office of the Vice President for Research** AND
- Send the notification to [awards@unm.edu](mailto:awards@unm.edu) and CC **Sharon Nepstad** ([nepstad@unm.edu](mailto:nepstad@unm.edu))

**Student Success: Sushilla Knottenbelt**

Greetings! I hope you've had a good and restful summer.

**Academic Support Resources**

The CTL learning strategies team supports students with academic success workshops or 1:1 sessions. Faculty can request specific workshops or refer students to the CTL team directly. Many of the workshops have corresponding modules that can be embedded by faculty directly into Canvas.



[Explore CTL resources and request workshops](#)

**Course Materials Access Program**

UNM is trialing a new Course Materials Access Program that automatically enrolls students in course material bundles through the UNM Bookstore.

Students can learn more about their options [on this page](#) and have until 9/5 to opt out if they prefer to purchase 2nd Half fall semester materials independently.

**Student Emotional Calendar for the Academic Year**

Understanding the challenges students experience throughout the academic year can help

support more responsive teaching. The emotional calendar linked below as a PDF highlights predictable stress points for our students—from increased academic loads in October to concerns about summer plans in April. This calendar can help faculty anticipate when students may need additional support.

### 2025–26 Emotional Calendar

#### A&S Staff News



*Congratulations, Karyth Becenti*

Karyth Becenti joins the College as its first Marketing Representative and the newest member of the marketing and communications team. She holds a master's degree in communications with a post-baccalaureate certificate in strategic communication management from Purdue University.

Karyth previously served as a marketing consultant, marketing director, development officer, editor, and operations manager in the private sector and brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role. She will support the College's marcomm team by helping to strengthen the College's culture and brand and managing the faculty and staff newsletter.



*Welcome to Mary Clements*

We're excited to welcome Mary Clements to the Dean's Office as our new Space Allocation and Research Facilities Coordinator!

Mary brings over 20 years of experience in facilities and space management, with a strong background in higher education operations. Most recently, she served at Emory University's School of Medicine, where she oversaw 1.3 million square feet of space and led capital projects supporting research and academic initiatives.

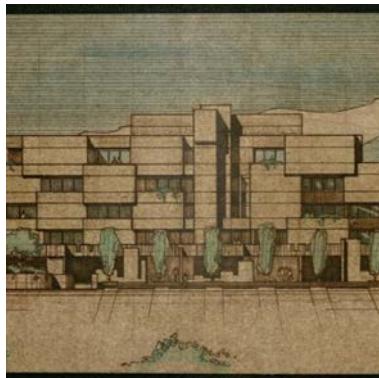
In this role, Mary will serve as a key liaison across departments, guide space planning and renovations, and manage updates to the UNM Space Database (FAMIS) in coordination with Campus Capital and Space Planning.



*Congratulations, Jennifer Kavka*

Jennifer is the College research team's new Strategic Support Manager, bringing more than two decades of expertise in research administration, strategic planning, and faculty support at UNM. In her most recent role as a College FRSO (Faculty Research Support Officer) she led faculty workshops and trainings and led project management support and federal proposal submissions.

Jennifer spent over 20 years as Program Administrator for the NIH-funded Center for Evolutionary and Theoretical Immunology (CETI). A Certified Research Administrator, she brings a strong commitment to fostering a supportive research environment to her new role and also serves on Staff Council, FSBC, and BLT, where she advocates for staff and helps strengthen the UNM community.



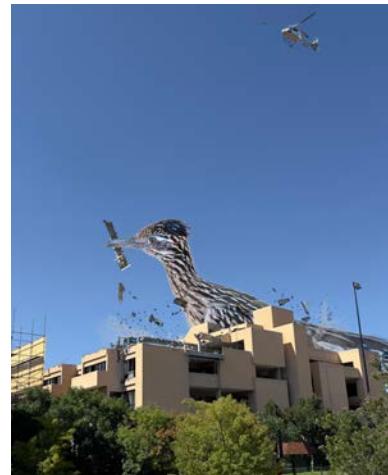
## HSS PROJECT UPDATES

### HSS Project Timeline

Winter 2025: Demolition concludes

Fall 2028: New building opens

*Roadrunner demo image courtesy of UCAM/University social media channels*





## A&S IN THE UNM NEWSROOM

- [ARID Institute Receives \\$7 Million NSF Grant](#)
- [CASAA Director Katie Witkiewitz \(Psychology\) Named Second UNM Faculty to Receive Marlatt Award](#)
- [Assistant Professor Marisa Repasch \(Earth & Planetary Sciences\) Professor Wins Early Career TUNDRA Award to Field-Test Arctic Permafrost Weathering](#)
- [Geography & Environmental Studies Co-Authors Nova Canyon Climbing Guide for Community Safety](#)
- [Speech & Hearing Sciences Launches Project MESA for Culturally Affirming Early-Intervention Training](#)
- [Research Assistant Professor Frank Schwebel \(Psychology\) Partners With Mobile Company to Study Medication Adherence for Opioid-Users](#)
- [Assistant Professor Svende Braun \(Physics & Astronomy\) Leads ATLAS B-Physics Weak Decays Group at CERN](#)
- [Earth & Planetary Sciences Team Images Hidden Fault, Flags Pacific Northwest Threat](#)
- [Biology Faculty Launch Interdisciplinary Freshman Research Class](#)
- [Earth & Planetary Sciences Faculty Research Links Grand Canyon Landslide to Meteor Impact](#)
- [Institute of Meteoritics Hosts NASA Exploration Science Forum](#)
- [Physics & Astronomy Graduate Receives Inaugural Mansoor Sheikh-Bahae Award](#)
- [Earth & Planetary Sciences Faculty Part of Award-Winning Space Research Team](#)
- [Sociology Professor Jessica Goodkind's Study Reframes Culturally Appropriate Mental Health Care](#)
- [Associate Professor Cristyn Elder \(English\) Appointed Special Advisor to Interim Provost](#)
- [Linguistics Alum Launches Local Korean Street Food Business](#)
- [Chicana and Chicano Studies Graduate Speaks at El Centro Stoling Ceremony](#)
- [Institute for the Study of "Race" and Social Justice Welcomes New Director Shiv Desai](#)
- [Economics Department Faculty Present at Environmental Economics Conference \(AERE 2025\)](#)
- [Sharon Erickson Nepstad \(Sociology\) Receives Prestigious Grant to Conduct Research in Norway](#)
- [Ph.D. Biology Grad Kevin Wilson Publishes Research on Forest Management and Drought](#)

## SHARE YOUR NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

We want to hear from you! Share news, awards, accolades, events and job opportunities within the College.

[SHARE YOUR NEWS](#)



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