



COLLEGE OF
ARTS & SCIENCES
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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WELCOME TO THE A&S NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2026 ISSUE

Dear Arts & Sciences Community,

We hope the Spring semester is off to a great start and that you've had a chance to reconnect with colleagues across UNM.

Our February 2026 newsletter highlights recent achievements from A&S faculty, students, and alumni, along with upcoming workshops, events, and funding opportunities to look out for this semester.

—A&S Dean's Office Staff

UPCOMING A&S EVENTS



[Please join us for the first Monthly Mingle of 2026](#)

Thursday, February 5 at 12 PM
Chemistry (Clark Hall), Room 201

Join your College community for food and connection: we'll be serving lunch, with vegetarian and gluten-free options available.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our upcoming Mingles:

- **Thursday, March 5, Hibben Center Lobby**
- **Thursday, April 2, Science and Math Learning Center, Room TBA**
- **Thursday, May 7, Ortega Hall**

Save the Date: HSS Building Design Reveal and A&S College Celebration

Join us on **Wednesday, February 18th** for the HSS design presentation and our inaugural A&S College Celebration of Excellence.

We invite you to SUB Ballroom A for a first look at the HSS design and model moderated by Studio Tsien and SMPC Architects.

Following this exclusive preview, we invite you next door to experience faculty poster sessions, presentations, and the first College staff awards.

SUB Ballroom A

- 2–3 PM HSS Building Design Reveal
- Studio Tsien & SMPC Architects

SUB Ballrooms B & C

- 3–3:30 PM Reception & Marshall Curriculum Awards and Assessment Grants Viewing
- 3:30–4 PM 2026 Staff Award Ceremony
- 4–5 PM Research Excellence Talks

Lessons for Convergence Research and Work with Large, Interdisciplinary Teams

Melinda Morgan, Ph.D., Regents' Professor
Geography & Environmental Studies

Precision Measurement and Quantum Technology at UNM

Victor Acosta, Ph.D., Regents' Lecturer
Physics & Astronomy

Infrastructure, Power, and Crisis in Modern American History

Jason Scott Smith, Ph.D., Regents' Professor
History



**ARTS & SCIENCES
COLLEGE
CELEBRATION**



NEWS FROM A&S RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES

Funding & Development Opportunities for Faculty

The College is accepting applications for:

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: Monday, February 16 \(via InfoReady\).](#)

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: Monday, February 16 \(via InfoReady\).](#)



NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Low-Tech Teaching Strategy Boosts Classroom Engagement

In *The Chronicle of Higher Education* Teaching newsletter, **Beth McMurtrie** highlights Loyola Marymount University historian **Elizabeth Drummond**'s low-tech classroom strategy to boost discussion. By banning most laptops and using rotating student note-takers who collaborate in a shared digital notebook, Drummond reports more engaged students, livelier discussions, stronger performance, and improved classroom community.

Here's how her strategy works:

- Two students are assigned as note-takers for each class. All students, except those with note-taking accommodations, do this twice during the semester.

- Assigned note-takers use laptops to put their notes directly into a class notebook on Microsoft Teams, the technology Drummond uses for class instead of a learning management system.
- Students with accommodations contribute by adding key takeaways from three or four days of class, such as an issue to discuss further.
- Laptops are banned otherwise, and students are encouraged, but not required, to take notes by hand. They can use a tablet similar to a notepad if they prefer.
- The laptop ban is lifted on occasion, such as for group work.

History professor **Elizabeth Drummond** found that a low-tech classroom with rotating student note-takers led to stronger engagement, better notes, and more vibrant discussions, as students were freed from constant screen use. She reports improved performance, increased peer interaction, and benefits for students with accommodations, most of whom chose not to use computers.

A&S Center for Academic Success AI Workshops

The **A&S Center for Academic Success** is offering a series of in-person workshops to help department administrators, staff and faculty become more familiar with undergraduate processes and curriculum at the College of Arts & Sciences and UNM. These workshops are designed to provide insight into the undergraduate experience. The workshops will be offered as follows:

Faculty & Advisor Collaboration for Student Success Workshop

Tuesday, February 3rd 10:00am-11:45am (in person)

Strengthens faculty–advisor partnerships by covering shared processes such as transfer equivalencies, grading impacts, and degree progression, with a focus on communication strategies and best practices that support student success.

Demystifying the Undergrad Degree Requirements at A&S

Tuesday, March 10th 10:00am-11:45am (in person)

Provides a clear overview of A&S undergraduate degree requirements, including core curriculum, majors/minors, and key policies, to help faculty and staff guide students consistently and effectively.

Advisement Practices at A&S

Monday, April 13th 1:00pm-2:45pm (in person)

Offers an overview of advisement structures and policies in A&S, highlighting student–advisor ratios, appointment models, and strategies for supporting diverse student needs. To support the end of the semester, we are repeating the following workshop.

Faculty & Advisor Collaboration for Student Success Workshop (VIRTUAL ONLY)

Tuesday, May 5th 10:00am-11:45am

Revisits the faculty–advisor collaboration workshop in a virtual format, focusing on shared academic processes and communication strategies that help students stay on track toward graduation.

Advisement supervisors also offer these by request, as time and staff availability allow, if department faculty and staff are not able to attend the scheduled dates. Additionally, we are open to suggestions on other topics that align with the undergraduate experience at A&S for future semesters.

You can sign up for these workshops here: [A&S Advisement Workshops for Faculty and Staff Registration](#)

A&S ACADEMIC EVENTS

Hosted by IFAIR in anticipation of the 2026 AISA Conference.

IFAIR Book Talk

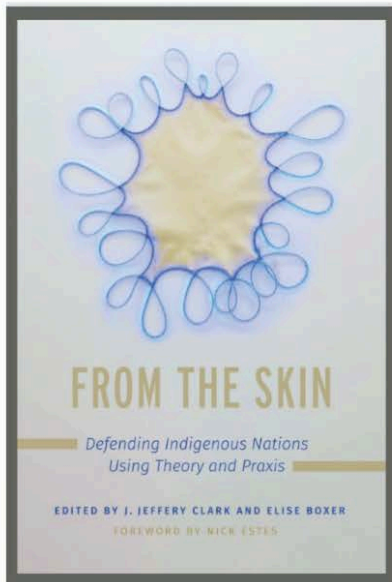
FROM THE SKIN

Defending Indigenous Nations Using Theory and Praxis

February 4th, 12:30 - 2:00 pm

Rooms: Lobo A & B

Student Union Building (SUB)



The American Indian Studies Association (AISA) 2026 Conference will be Feb. 5th - 6th

This year's theme, Constellations of Indigenous Belonging and Kinship, celebrates kinship as both a lived practice and a powerful framework for Indigenous sovereignty, governance, and community. Explore how relationships across generations sustain culture, care, and accountability.



Dr. Elise Boxer (Dakota)

Director, Institute of
American Indian
Studies/Associate
Professor at University of
South Dakota



Jerome J. Clark (Diné)

Assistant Professor of
American Indian Studies
at Arizona State
University

**American Indian Studies
Association Conference:
Constellations of Indigenous
Belonging and Kinship**

**Graduate pre-Conference:
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Conference:
Thursday, February 5— Friday,
February 6, 2026**



The American Indian Studies Association (AISA) continues to honor the visionary scholars, community leaders, and knowledge holders who founded and continue to grow the field of American Indian Studies (AIS).

The 2026 conference invites reflection on and celebration of the Constellations of Indigenous Belonging and Kinship—those intricate, interwoven relationships that sustain Indigenous communities across generations, geographies, and experiences. This year's theme centers on kinship's intellectual, cultural, and political significance as both an analytic and a lived practice.

Belonging and kinship ground Indigenous Sovereignty, Peoples, and Governance, offering frameworks of accountability, relationality, and care that challenge settler-colonial structures.

[View the AISA Conference Schedule](#)

International Studies Institute

Middle East Film & Lecture Series

(Did we mention... it's free open to the public?!)

FEBRUARY

2/3 The Syrian Bride (Israel/Palestine & Syria); Les Field, UNM Anthropology

2/10 West Beirut (Lebanon); Hossam Abouzahr, founder of The Living Arabic Project

2/17 Turn Left at the End of the World (Israel); Amit Sadan, UNM Postdoctoral Fellow

2/24 Battle of Algiers (Algeria); Niko Doezema, teacher and independent researcher. *Discussion at 3:30pm

MARCH

3/3 Amreeka (US/Palestine); Abdullah Serag, Arabic instructor, UNM and Albuquerque Academy

3/10 Cairo Station (Egypt); Emily Drumsta, Middle Eastern Studies, UT Austin

3/24 Captain Abu Raed (Jordan); Zack Manning, former Peace Corps volunteer and founder of Diwan Institute for Humanity

3/31 The Mummy (Egypt); Doaa Omran, UNM English.

*Discussion at 3:30pm

APRIL

4/7 TBD (Iran); Mozafar Banihashemi, UNM Religious Studies

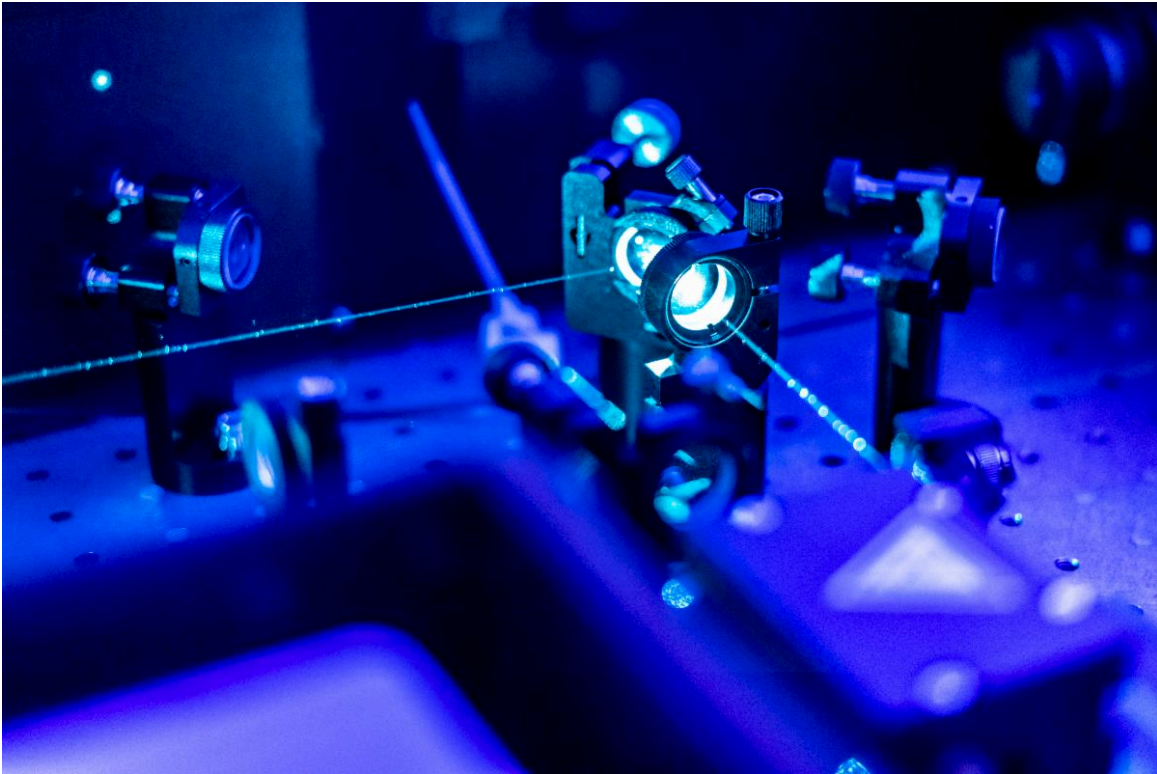
4/14 Crossing the Bridge (Turkiye); Santiago Vaquera-Vasquez, UNM Spanish & Portuguese

4/20 Adam (Morocco); Touria Khannous, Arabic, LSU

**All online film screening begin at
12pm followed by an online discussion
at 2pm, unless noted**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO JOIN IN!





Thorlabs Mobile Photonics Lab Experience

The **Department of Physics and Astronomy** will host the Thorlabs Mobile Photonics Lab Experience from **Feb. 24–26, 2026**, at Yale Mall on UNM's Main Campus, offering hands-on demonstrations in quantum optics, biomedical and spectroscopy experiments, and optical communications.

[Event Information & Volunteer Sign-Up](#)

A&S IN THE NEWS



[Professor and Regents' Lecturer Osbjorn Pearson \(Anthropology\) co-authors landmark study revealing the most complete Homo habilis postcranial skeleton, reshaping understanding of early human evolution.](#)

[Associate Professor Jonathan Davis-Secord \(Medieval Studies\) Receives MLA's William Riley Parker Prize](#)

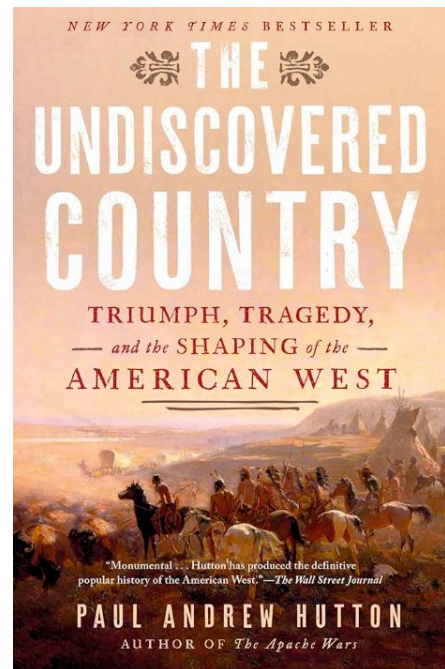
[Assistant Professor Anna Nelson \(Mathematics & Statistics\) and students brought New Mexico's voice to Capitol Hill, advocating for federal investment in mathematics research and education at MathSciOnTheHill.](#)

[Director Andreas Hernandez \(Sustainability Studies\) partners with UNM students and community leaders to advance participatory budgeting and food justice efforts in Albuquerque's District 6.](#)

[Professor Erin Wilkinson \(Linguistics\) is advancing signed language research at UNM by centering Deaf communities, expanding linguistic access, and reshaping how signed languages are studied and understood.](#)

[Distinguished Professor Emeritus Dr. Paul Andrew Hutton's \(History\) *The Undiscovered Country* was named a top 10 book of 2025 by *The Wall Street Journal*](#)

[Professor of Practice Gwyneth Doland \(Communications & Journalism\) leads a UNM research effort mapping media coverage gaps and news deserts across New Mexico.](#)





[The New York Times](#) spotlights **Dr. Quin Baine**, a University of New Mexico alum (**Biology**), and her colleagues' urgent fight to save the critically endangered Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly from extinction.

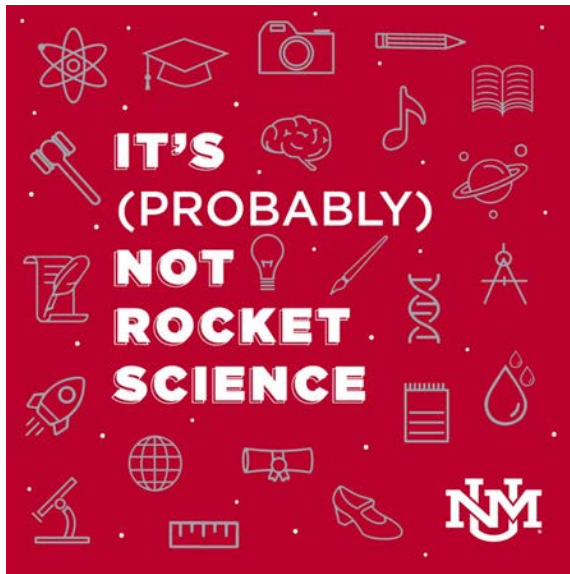
[New study led by UNM Alum Tony Gargano \(Earth & Planetary Sciences\)](#) uses oxygen isotopes from Apollo lunar soils to show that late-arriving meteorites delivered only a small fraction of Earth's water.

[Students Mia Dragone and Elijah Cage \(Political Science\)](#) took the lead at the Albuquerque Bar Association, presenting on civil rights in a rare professional forum for undergraduates.

[Department of Mathematics & Statistics](#) drew more than 400 students statewide to the first round of the UNM-PNM Math Contest, showcasing creativity and mathematical reasoning across New Mexico schools.

[UNM Fall 2025 Inspiring Graduate Student Veronica Lopez \(Chicana & Chicano Studies\)](#) balances full-time teaching with graduate study as she advances culturally responsive education.





[It's \(Probably\) Not Rocket Science: Tamalewood: The Sparkling Cinematography of Colonization in the New Southwest](#)

The latest episode of *It's (Probably) Not Rocket Science* features 2025 LoboBITES winner **Gabriela Guajardo**, a graduate student in the Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies. Guajardo discusses how film and visual media in the U.S. Southwest have helped shape romanticized narratives of colonization, often obscuring histories of violence, dispossession and cultural erasure.

Distinguished Professor Adrian Johnston (Philosophy) has accepted an appointment as Professor of Philosophy at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, where he will teach summer seminars beginning in August 2026. In addition, Johnston's 2024 book *Infinite Greed: The Inhuman Selfishness of Capital* has been named a finalist for the 2025 Gradiva Award for Best Book by the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis.

Regents' Professor Thomas F. Turner (Biology) is leading UNM's role in the Rio Grande Futures Partnership, a five-year, NSF-supported effort to model sustainable water use and strengthen river and Bosque ecosystems amid growing climate-driven scarcity.

Associate Professor Eli Wilson (Sociology & Criminology) received a UNM RAC Grant to support his project *Labor of Lifestyle* and has an article forthcoming in *Cultural Sociology* titled "What's authentic to me doesn't mean it's authentic to you": *Relational Authenticity Work in the American Culinary Field*," co-authored with Ellen T. Meiser.

Assistant Professor Kayla Martensen (Sociology & Criminology) delivered their talk, *The Changing Carceral Landscape: Juvenile Justice Reform in Chicago*," for the Ladhoff Lecture Series at Northern Arizona University, presented *The Criminalization of Trauma: Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Reforms as a Project of Carceral Expansion*" at the American Studies Association conference, published *"Carceral Collusions with 'the Community'"* in *The Scholar & Feminist Online*, and was accepted into the 2026 ARIS (Abolition–Reparations–Investment–Safety) Study Circle with Scholars for Social Justice.

Assistant Professor Kiwoong Park (Sociology & Criminology) published *"How are marital transitions associated with cognitive functioning amid health declines? A gender-specific hybrid panel model analysis using the Health and Retirement Study"* in *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B* (November issue).

Professor Nancy López (Sociology & Criminology) co-authored *"Understanding Inequity in Graduation Rates at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): An Intersectional Analysis by*

Assistant Professor George Weddington (Sociology & Criminology) published the article “*Afro-pessimism and a posthuman sociology*” in *Dialogues in Sociology*, contributing to contemporary debates on critical theory and posthuman social analysis.

Professor Jessica Goodkind (Sociology & Criminology) co-authored “*The Work-Wellbeing Paradox: Exploring the Emotional and Bodily Dimensions of Intersectional Capitalism among Latinx Immigrants in the U.S.*” (*Social Science & Medicine*, 2026) and “*Understanding the Mental and Physical Health Consequences of the U.S. Citizenship Exam for Rohingya Refugees: Implications for Policy and Practice*” (*Social Science & Medicine*), advancing research on migration, health, and policy.

Professor Owen Whooley (Sociology & Criminology) published “*When Police Go to Mental Health School*” in *Contexts* (Fall 2025), examining the expanding role of law enforcement in mental health training and crisis response.

Race, Gender, and First-Generation College Status” in *Social Sciences*, presented nationally at APSA, APHA, and SACNAS, and advised Children’s Hospital of Orange County on implementing multidimensional race and ethnicity data collection in response to new OMB standards.

Akansha Nanda (Combined BA/MD Degree Program) earned a top presentation award in the Chemistry category at the Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists, making her the only sophomore to receive the honor. A 2025 Yale summer research participant, Nanda is now seeking a research opportunity for the coming academic year as she advances through the BA/MD curriculum.

In Memoriam

Professor Emeritus Bill Zimmer (Mathematics & Statistics) died in mid-December. William John Zimmer earned his PhD under Irving Burr at Purdue University (1959) and advised 7 Ph.D. students at UNM.

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

Is your unit hosting a lecture, workshop, or special event this spring? Submit early so we can include them in the monthly "Upcoming Events" section. Thanks for helping keep us connected.

March Issue

Submit by Wednesday, March 4 Publishes Wednesday, March 11

April Issue

Submit by Wednesday, April 8 Publishes Wednesday, April 15

May Issue (Part 1–Regular Newsletter)

Submit by Wednesday, April 29 Publishes Wednesday, May 6

May Issue (Part 2–Awards Edition)

Submit by Wednesday, May 13 Publishes Wednesday, May 20

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University of New Mexico College of Arts & Sciences | 1 University of New Mexico Ortega
Hall 201 | Albuquerque, NM 87131 US

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