OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY SECRETARY

Memorandum

Date: November 11, 2026

To: Roberta Lavin, Faculty Senate President

From: Nancy D. Middlebrook, University Secretary Nancy D. Middlebrook

Re: Request Faculty Senate Approval of Proposed *Faculty Handbook* Policy C190: Letter of Academic Title

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The proposed new Faculty Handbook Policy C190: Letter of Academic Title was developed based upon guidelines from the College of Arts and Sciences and reflects best higher education practices and/or policies from other colleges and universities. It also includes input from UNM academic and research administrators and the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee.

The Faculty Senate Policy Committee (FSPC) reviewed the recommended Policy and sent it to the campus for review and comment. Numerous comments were received and the FSPC worked with the commentors and subject matter experts to develop clarifications in the policy language where appropriate. The FSPC approved the attached proposed new policy to go forward to the Faculty Senate for approval and would be happy to have a member at the Faculty Senate meeting to an answer questions or concerns. Thank you for this opportunity to work collaboratively with you on this important policy.

Attachments:
Proposed New FH Policy C190: Letter of Academic Title

cc: Eve L Espey, Co-chair, Faculty Senate Policy Committee
Karen Patterson, Co-chair, Faculty Senate Policy Committee

Faculty Handbook	**C190 Letter of Academic Title**
Approved By: UNM Faculty and UNM President	
Last Updated: ~~Draft 2/12/26 – 8/26/26~~ ~~10/7/26~~ 11/4/26	
Responsible Faculty Committee: Faculty Senate Policy Committee	
Office Responsible for Administration: Provost and Executive Vice President for Health Sciences	

Legend: New Policy draft.
Changes to address campus comments are in **purple**.

Revisions to the Applicability, Policy Rationale, and Policy Statement sections of this document must be approved by the Faculty Senate and the UNM President.

APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all academic UNM departments, including the Health Sciences Center and Branch Community Colleges.

POLICY RATIONALE

Individuals who are not employed as UNM faculty, but who participate in UNM's teaching, research, and/or clinical missions, to the extent allowed by existing UNM policies, may be recognized with Letters of Academic Title (LAT). Exempt staff employees are eligible for a LAT. This Policy defines who has the authority to grant a LAT, rights and responsibilities associated with a LAT, and restrictions on use.

POLICY STATEMENT

An individual who participates in UNM's teaching, research, clinical missions, and/or performs general affiliate functions as described below on a voluntary basis, may be granted a Letter of Academic Title (LAT). The individual shall not be a UNM faculty member but may be an exempt UNM staff member. LATs may confer a faculty title, but do not confer a UNM faculty appointment. If the holder of a LAT is to be paid by UNM for their role in UNM's teaching, research, or clinical missions, a formal employment relationship and faculty appointment must be established. Once a formal faculty appointment is established, the LAT is discontinued.

To become effective, all LATs must be approved in accordance with the procedures in relevant academic and administrative departments for the requested categories. The term for an initial LAT is usually one (1) ~~year~~ or **two (2) years**. Subsequent requests may be granted in renewable terms of up to three (3) years~~.~~. **Terms of different durations must be approved by the Provost/EVPHS or designee**. LATs are non-continuing, meaning there is no expectation of

renewal. If the sponsoring academic or administrative department does not actively seek renewal, LATs will automatically expire at the end of their stated term. LATs may be discontinued by any of its signatories or their successors at any time without cause. **LATs in existence prior to the effective date of this Policy do not need to be changed to comply with this Policy. However, for any future renewals, these LATs must be updated to reflect the requirements of this Policy.**

1. Approval of LATs

LAT applications are initiated by the sponsoring department. The application should include appropriate justification and be approved by the appropriate dean **and/or center director**. ~~Research~~ **Voluntary Research Affiliate** LATs require approval from the requisite Vice President for Research. All LAT applications should be submitted to the Provost/Executive Vice President for Health Sciences (EVPHS) or designee for final approval.

Revisions to the remaining sections of this document may be amended with the approval of the Faculty Senate Policy and Operations Committees.

PROCEDURES

1. LAT Titles and Ranks

A LAT grants the holder use of a UNM faculty title while the LAT is in effect. The faculty title and rank should be consistent with titles and ranks listed in the *Faculty Handbook*. ~~However, the following ranks and titles of particular distinction may not be given to someone via a LAT~~: **D**istinguished professor, emeritus, or national laboratories professor may not be used for a LAT. Official titles of all LATs must include the phrase "(appointed via Letter of Academic Title)." Ad hoc titles not listed in Section B of the *Faculty Handbook* may not be used. Selection of an appropriate title and rank to be bestowed by a LAT should be consistent with the underlying criteria for holding the title and rank in general and consideration of the roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled by the individual.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

A LAT is a privilege granted by UNM, and the title comes with personal and institutional responsibilities and expectations. Therefore, a thorough vetting process and due diligence should be followed by academic and administrative departments when granting LATs. At a minimum, holders of LATs are entitled to library privileges, to hold a UNM network account, and to be listed in the UNM Directory. Additional rights and responsibilities related to UNM's teaching, research, and clinical missions may be extended to LAT holders who actively participate in UNM's missions. In those cases, academic and administrative departments who seek to issue LATs for such purposes should develop internal policies and guidelines describing the process for reviewing a LAT request and the responsibilities, rights, and privileges of LAT holders. LAT holders actively involved in UNM's teaching, research, or clinical missions are subject to compliance with annual or other training requirements similar to UNM faculty employees.

3. Performance or Conduct

Any concerns or complaints about the performance or conduct of an individual holding a LAT shall be treated in a confidential manner to the extent legally permissible and promptly brought to the attention of the department chair responsible for the individual whose actions are in question. The department chair will complete an assessment and determine the appropriate action. The action taken will be dependent on the nature of the misconduct and may range from guidance and training up to rescinding the LAT. UNM discipline policies can provide guidance.

4. LAT Categories

LATs may be granted in one or more of the following categories after vetting in accordance with the relevant administrative and academic unit procedures.

4.1 Voluntary General Affiliate

The purpose of the General Affiliate LAT is either to provide qualified individuals who are not UNM employees access to general resources at UNM or to provide qualified, exempt UNM staff a non-paid academic departmental affiliation. Holders of General Affiliate LATs are entitled to library privileges, to hold a UNM network account, and to be listed in the UNM Directory. Additional rights and responsibilities may be extended to LAT holders who actively participate in UNM's missions. Although there are no general expectations for General Affiliate LAT holders beyond complying with UNM policies regarding the use of university services, this title is granted to professionals, scientists, community members, or others whose affiliation benefits UNM's engagement with external entities on a voluntary basis.

4.2 Voluntary Teaching Affiliate

The purpose of the Teaching Affiliate LAT is to allow qualified individuals to participate in UNM's teaching mission within academic departments, on a voluntary basis. This may include non-UNM employees or UNM employees in non-teaching job roles who teach on a voluntary basis. These individuals must be appropriately credentialed and complete the required institutional training and compliance requirements to engage in teaching activities at UNM. They should also be thoroughly vetted in accordance with the relevant administrative and academic department procedures. Teaching LAT holders are granted all of the same benefits as General Affiliate LAT holders.

4.3 Voluntary Research Affiliate

The purpose of the Research LAT is to allow qualified non-UNM employees or exempt UNM staff to participate in UNM's research mission within academic departments or research centers on a voluntary basis. These individuals must be appropriately credentialed and must complete the required institutional training and compliance requirements to engage in research activities at UNM. Research LAT holders who wish to serve as Principal Investigator (PI)/Co-PI on grants must request and be approved for PI status, meet the PI eligibility requirements and complete the required training. Research LAT holders are granted all of the same benefits as General Affiliate LAT holders.

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring unit to provide the necessary resources and space to support the individual's participation in research activities. LAT holders are not eligible to serve as sole PI or Project Director (PD) on grant applications. However, they may participate as a PI, Co-PI or Co-Investigator (Co-I) on grant applications, in accordance with sponsor policies and at no cost to the project, as long as the project has a PI/Co-PI/Co-I employed by UNM at the time of submission.

There are instances wherein an individual is a LAT holder at proposal phase, but upon award, could be hired as a UNM employee in accordance with UNM hiring procedures. If hired as a UNM employee, the LAT is discontinued.

4.4 Voluntary Clinical Affiliate

The purpose of the Clinical LAT is to allow eligible practicing professionals to participate in patient care and teaching, scholarship, and/or service related to UNM's clinical or clinical-educational mission on a voluntary basis. These individuals must be appropriately credentialed and must complete the required institutional training and compliance requirements to engage in clinical activities at UNM. Clinical LAT holders are not eligible to serve as sole PI or PD on grant applications related to the clinical or clinical-educational mission of UNM. However, they may participate as PI, Co-PI or Co-I on grant applications. Clinical LAT holders are granted all of the same benefits as General Affiliate LAT holders.

DEFINITIONS

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

- Board of Regents
- Professors and academic staff
- Academic deans and other executives, department chairs, directors, and managers

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Faculty Handbook: Section B "Policy on Academic Freedom and Tenure"
FH Policy C07 "Faculty Disciplinary Policy"

University Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual
UAP Policy 3215 "Performance Improvement"

CONTACTS

Direct any questions about this policy to your chair or dean.

HISTORY

New Policy

DRAFT HISTORY

January 22, 2026 – changes to address key stakeholder comments
November 14, 2025 – proposed draft approved by AF&T
September 12, 2025 – proposed draft revised to incorporate suggestions from VPR offices