



Academic Affairs report to Faculty Senate

BARBARA RODRÍGUEZ

PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Sánchez selected as senior vice provost

Rebecca Sánchez, who has served for the past year as interim associate vice provost for academic personnel, has been selected as UNM's senior vice provost, effective Sept. 1.

She will provide strategic leadership for academic personnel and faculty affairs, support the effective and consistent implementation of academic policies and processes, and help advance institutional priorities across UNM's schools, college and branch campuses.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Sánchez to this important role in the Office of Academic Affairs.



AI Conversation Kickoff is Sept. 3

The UNM AI Steering Committee invites the campus community to the AI Conversation Kickoff event 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 3 in the Student Union Building Ballrooms.

Discussion topics:

Table topics will include AI in the classroom, responsible AI use in research, sustainability, privacy and security, and how AI can be used to improve administrative workflow.

Feedback sought:

Draft of committee's proposed AI strategic ethical framework.

**FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF ARE ENCOURAGED
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FUTURE OF AI AT UNM!**



Keynote speaker:

Melanie Moses

Distinguished Professor, Computer Science

“Can We Build Trustworthy AI at Scale?”

Bachelor's in bioengineering now offered



This fall, the School of Engineering launched a new bioengineering bachelor's degree. It is believed to be the School's first new undergraduate degree program in 40 years.

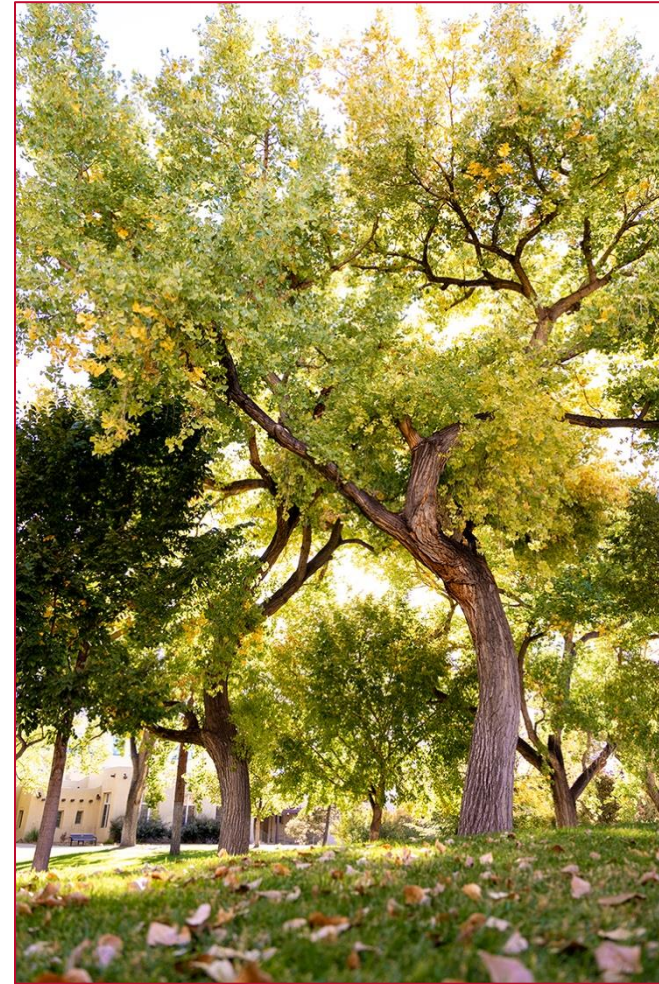
The new degree will help prepare students to work in healthcare, agriculture, food science, pharmaceuticals, and other fields related to biological innovation.

Two new Level 2 Grand Challenges teams announced

This summer, two new Level 2 interdisciplinary Grand Challenges were unveiled:

- **Trustworthy AI**
- **Biodiversity Nexus**

The teams will each receive \$220,000 to expand their research programs and to pursue larger external funding opportunities.



GrandChallenges

2026 Distinguished Professors

Congratulations to the 2026 Distinguished Professors from central campus:

Robert Berrens

Economics

Melanie Moses

Computer Science





Visit to Mexico City

Earlier this month, I was fortunate to accompany a UNM group at the APLU Commission on International Initiatives Summer Meeting in Mexico City.

The gathering brought together representatives from universities around the U.S. to discuss international research, economic development and deepened partnerships.

This visit will help pave the way for deeper international connections and initiatives.

Deans focus on strategy at retreat

In July, the Office of Academic Affairs held a retreat with the central campus deans. The focus was on strategic priorities for the academic year.

Over the next year, there will be a renewed focus on communicating in two areas that set UNM apart:

- 1. Research and education efforts focused on community engagement**
- 2. Telling the stories of how UNM transforms lives**

The deans are engaged, energized and eager to bring their optimism and ideas into the strategic focuses for their schools and colleges. I am excited to see how this passion will be put into practice throughout the University community!



Branch Leaders Retreat

- Deans September 2, 2026
 - Communication practices
 - Role clarification
 - Transfer
 - Curriculum
- Chancellors September 17, 2026
 - Government relations
 - Capital projects/real estate
 - AI

My question for you:

What information or updates would be most helpful to you in the Provost's report to the Faculty Senate?

THANK YOU

