

# Health Sciences DEI

## Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

In 2008, Chancellor Paul B. Roth, MD, MS, launched the Office for Diversity for the Health Sciences\* and named Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD, as its inaugural director.

Under her leadership, the Health Sciences DEI office has grown to a permanent staff of 14, with five staff members supported by grants, as well as student interns/employees.

Over the past 15 years the Health Sciences Office for DEI has invested millions of dollars to support new positions and initiatives to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within the Health Sciences and in New Mexico.

## Notable Milestones



**Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD**, Vice President & Diversity, Equity & Inclusion executive officer

Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD, named inaugural vice chancellor of Health Sciences DEI; the first Hispana and only the third vice chancellor for DEI of a U.S. academic health center.

Several Health Sciences DEI director positions evolved to associate vice chancellor positions to manage and lead essential Health Sciences-wide DEI work and an executive associate vice chancellor position was created.

In 2009, Paul B. Roth, MD, MS, asked Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD, and Professor Margaret Montoya, JD, to convene the Health Sciences Faculty Workforce Diversity Committee to document the working conditions of the Health Sciences' faculty of color. The committee's work led to the creation in 2011 of the Advancing Institutional Mentoring Excellence Pilot Project or AIME.

Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD, is the executive director of the UNM Combined BA/MD Degree Program, and together with the Health Sciences Office for DEI, strengthens relationships through shared office space, leadership and mission.

*\*Later renamed to Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*



*Health Sciences Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*



**Karen Kinsmen, MS, PMP**, Director/Senior Program Manager, UNM STEM-H Center, and students

In 2015, UNM Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Health (STEM-H) joined the office. The UNM STEM-H Center is a diverse portfolio of dynamic signature regional pre-college STEM competitions, professional development trainings, resource-rich websites and equipment/curricula reaching thousands of students and educators annually.



**Lawrence Roybal, PhD**, associate vice president for Community Initiatives, Health Sciences Office for DEI

*ENLACE student graduation ceremony, 2021*

In 2019, Engaging Latino Communities for Education (ENLACE) joined the office. ENLACE is a statewide collaboration of gente (people) who represent children and families who traditionally have no say in policy initiatives that directly impact their communities. More than 60,000 New Mexican students have benefited from ENLACE, including more than 6,200 individuals impacted by direct service programs.

ENLACE New Mexico is driven by a network of transformational leaders and programs as diverse as the state it serves. The mission is to empower communities and families to transform New Mexico's educational system.



Over the past 20+ years, the Health Sciences Office for DEI health careers pathways programs have become unified under the Communities to Careers brand to grow New Mexico's diverse health care workforce:



In 2020, a group of students, residents, staff and faculty called for institutional change within the Health Sciences to actively work toward an anti-racist climate. Chancellor Roth and Health Sciences leadership supported this call by creating the White Coats for Black and Indigenous Lives Steering Committee.

In 2019, Valerie Romero-Leggott, MD, conceptualized and subsequently founded the Health Sciences Inclusive Excellence Council (IEC), which for the first in the history of the UNM HSC time brought together all Health Sciences entities to advance DEI and create an inclusive space whereby learners, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, patients and community members can discuss and support the academic, professional and personal development of all diverse Health Sciences individuals, value each other's DEI-related efforts and develop unified programming, policies and practices. With the support of John Paul Sánchez, MD, in his role as special advisor and later executive associate vice president for DEI, was finalized and approved by the Health Sciences Core Group. The council includes 25 core members: the chair, vice chair, 10 DEI executive officers, and 13 at-large members representing UNM Health Sciences staff, faculty, learners and alumni.

There are four inaugural committees of the Inclusive Excellence Council:

- Academic Development and Professional Training, which focuses on DEI content in the curriculum for learners, and training for faculty and staff.
- Workforce Development, which focuses on recruitment, retention and promotion of diverse Health Sciences students, residents/fellows, staff, faculty; leadership; and personal development.
- Community Engagement, which focuses on enhancing communication channels with internal and external stakeholders to gauge their needs and heighten awareness of opportunities through Health Sciences DEI and fostering partnerships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Culture and Climate, which focuses on assessing campus DEI climate and raising awareness and reducing the frequency and burden of implicit bias across education, research and clinical spheres.

Two initial activities of the IEC have included collaboration in heritage month planning and development of this DEI historical report. Most recently, the UNM Health Sciences Office for DEI is conducting an institutional climate assessment that is taking place in FY 2023.



Hispanic Heritage Month 2022