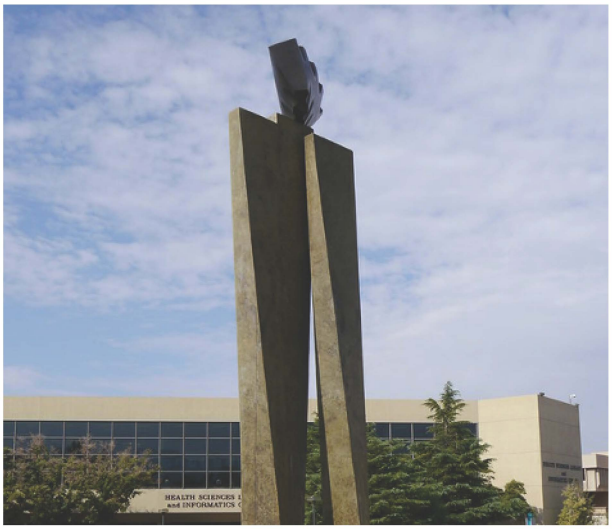
HEALTH SCIENCES
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

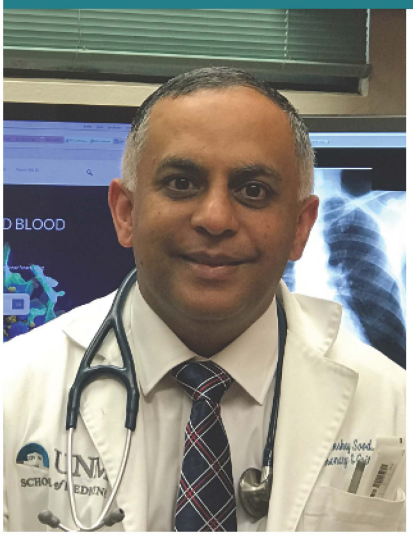
NEWSLETTER

HSC FAA

Akshay Sood, MBBS, MPH, MBA
Interim Director for Faculty
Academic Affairs



PROMOTION: INCENTIVE OR BARRIER?



Akshay Sood, MBBS, MPH, MBA
Interim DIrector of
Faculty Academic Affairs

Academic promotion at the UNM HSC is an important marker of professional accomplishment. On September 22, 2026, the HSC will celebrate more than 100 faculty promotions across its school and colleges, along with the recognition of four Distinguished Professors, the University's highest academic honor. These achievements reflect the extraordinary talent and impact of our faculty.

Yet for many clinician faculty, it can feel more like a barrier than an incentive. National studies have shown that clinicians advance through academic ranks at lower rates than their PhD colleagues, with women and underrepresented minority faculty facing additional challenges. Common frustrations include unclear expectations, limited time due to clinical responsibilities, and a perception that promotion criteria place greater value on research than on patient care/service and teaching.

To better understand faculty experiences with promotion, the School of Medicine is participating in a multi-institutional study examining faculty attitudes and barriers related to promotion (flyer at the end of this newsletter). Findings will help guide future improvements in promotion processes.

In parallel, Sylvia Negrete, MD, at the UNM Department of Pediatrics, is developing an AI-driven promotion dashboard that will help navigate promotion requirements more effectively. Together, these efforts aim to ensure that promotion serves as an incentive for academic growth rather than a barrier to success.



DR. JOANNA FAIR APPOINTED AS VP OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Fair currently serves as Regents' Professor, Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Health Sciences Center, and Chief of Staff for UNM Hospital. She has previously served as Vice Chair of Academic Affairs and Chief of Nuclear Medicine in the Department of Radiology at the UNM School of Medicine. Throughout her career at UNM, she has demonstrated strong leadership across academic medicine, medical education, clinical operations, and faculty development. As Associate Dean and then Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education for more than six years, she helped expand UNM's residency and fellowship programs to 71 ACGME-accredited programs supporting more than 750 trainees. She has also led major clinical and operational initiatives within Radiology and UNM Hospital while contributing to national leadership organizations in nuclear medicine and medical education.

Dr. Fair was selected following a national search and brings a collaborative approach to leadership and a deep understanding of the academic, clinical, and operational missions of the Health Sciences Center. We look forward to the continued impact of her leadership across our institution.



Joanna Fair, MD, PhD, Vice President for Academic Affairs

CELEBRATIONS

Anniversary

Rick Holmes, Administrative Officer, celebrates his 2-year anniversary with Faculty Academic Affairs on July 22, 2026.

Upcoming Birthdays
Happy Birthday to our team members celebrating this summer!

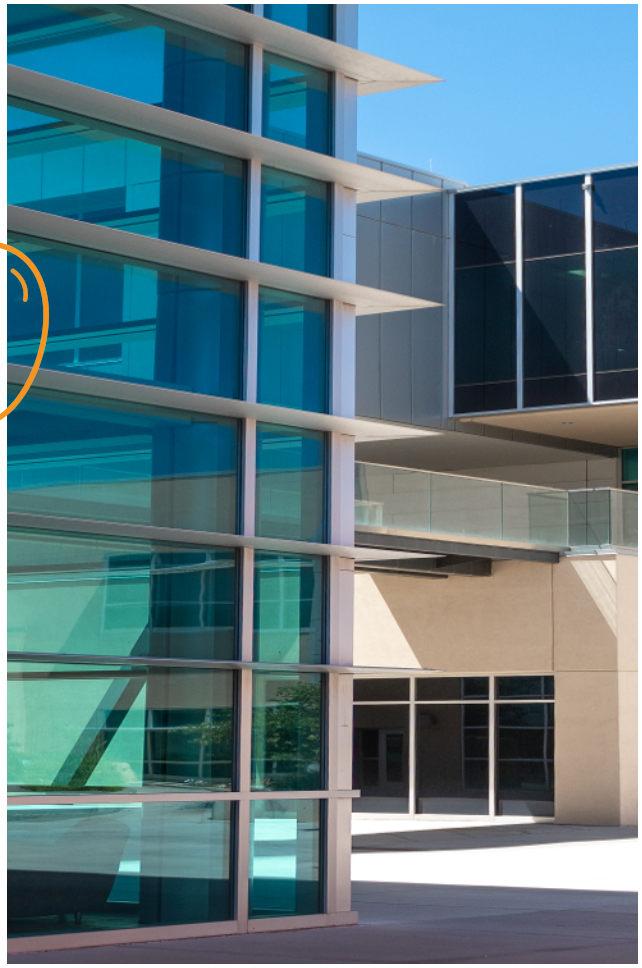


July 20 – Kelsey Higgins



August 10 – Jasmine LeJeune

HSC Promotion Ceremony
Tuesday, September 22, 2026 2:00 PM-5:00 PM.
Domenici Auditorium



DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS FY 2026

The Provost of the University of New Mexico honored the following faculty at the Health Science Center. by promoting them to the rank of Distinguished Professor, the highest honor at the university. Distinguished Professor Rank and Title Information can be found in the UNM Faculty Handbook, Section B2.2.5

Dr. Tassy Parker, a Seneca Nation citizen born and raised on the Cattaraugus Territory, brings the rare power of lived experience, clinical training, scholarly excellence, and community accountability to everything she does. A medical sociologist, registered nurse, Executive Director of the University of New Mexico Center for Native American Health, and Associate Vice President for American Indian Health Research and Education, Dr. Parker has spent more than two decades transforming the landscape of Indigenous health by building bridges among science, culture, education, policy, and community leadership. Her work spans mental health, substance use recovery, chronic disease prevention, trauma, obesity, and Indigenous research governance, always grounded in the belief that Native communities hold the knowledge, strength, and authority to shape their own health futures. With more than $10.7 million in external funding, dozens of peer-reviewed publications, and leadership roles across Tribal, urban Indian, national, and global Indigenous health networks, she has helped build the infrastructure for a new generation of Indigenous scholars, health professionals, leaders, and traditional knowledge keepers. Dr. Parker's career reflects not only academic achievement, but a profound commitment to Native Nation-building, self-determination, sovereign powers, and the enduring strength of Indigenous peoples.



Distinguished Professor Tassy Parker, Family and Community Medicine



Distinguished Professor Alan Tomkinson, Internal Medicine, and Cellular & Molecular Oncology

Dr. Alan Tomkinson is a leading scholar in DNA repair and genome stability whose research has provided fundamental insights into the mechanisms of DNA replication and repair. He has authored more than 120 peer-reviewed publications in journals, including Nature, Science and Cell,and sustained over three decades of continuous NIH funding, including multiple R01 and P01 grants focused on DNA ligases I, III, and IV. Internationally recognized, he frequently delivers invited lectures and serves on prominent editorial boards. His translational work identified DNA ligases as promising therapeutic targets and provided insights into the activity of FDA-approved PARP inhibitors in cancer and normal cells. He has demonstrated impactful leadership through mentoring, directing graduate programs, preparing three successful renewals of the NCI P30 grant that supports the UNM Cancer Center and leading the Cancer Center pilot grant program that has generated more than $60 million in extramural grant funding in the last 10 years.

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS FY 2026



Distinguished Professor Michelle Ozbun,
Comprehensive Cancer Center

Since joining UNM in 1998, Professor Ozbun has become an internationally recognized leader in human papillomavirus (HPV) research. She is one of only a few scientists worldwide able to propagate infectious HPV, using the demanding 3D organotypic raft culture system. Her landmark discovery that the cellular MEK signaling pathway, not the viral E2 protein, dominantly regulates HPV oncogene transcription overturned decades of scientific consensus and opened a new translational pathway. Two NIH grants and a V Foundation award now support her work developing topical MEK inhibitors for HPV cancer interception. Earlier in her career, she was first to isolate infectious HPV virions at scale from raft tissue cultures and developed the field's first reproducible infectious-virion titration system. Dr. Ozbun has been continuously NIH-funded since 2000, with over $18.5 million in research-direct support. Her work has accrued over 19,800 citations. She served two elected terms as the International Papillomavirus Society's Treasurer and Executive Board Member and was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology in 2022. Beyond research, she has built lasting mentorship and DEI infrastructure at UNM, directing the IDIP T32 training program and ACS Institutional Research Grant while advancing junior faculty success and inclusive scientific training.



Distinguished Professor Mark Unruh,
Internal Medicine

Dr. Mark Unruh, MD, MS, tenured Professor and Chair of Internal Medicine at the University of New Mexico, has demonstrated sustained achievement across teaching, research, and service. As an educator he has earned multiple teaching and mentorship honors, built novel residency curricula, mentored trainees to more than 60 co-authored publications, and improved Internal Medicine board pass rates through targeted support for at-risk residents. As a physician-scientist in nephrology, he has published nearly 300 papers (H-index 79), serves as MPI on two NIH R01-equivalent grants and Deputy Director of the Southwest CACTI, and grew the Department of Medicine NIH funding. He pioneered patient-centered outcomes in chronic kidney disease, focusing on quality of life, sleep disorders, and fatigue in dialysis patients. His work appears in top journals and has shaped clinical guidelines and research priorities. He has led major NIH, PCORI, and VA-funded studies, including landmark dialysis trials. Nationally and internationally, he holds editorial roles at leading kidney journals, chaired national grants review committees, has delivered 100+ invited lectures, and helped establish the Kidney Institute of New Mexico through a major philanthropic initiative.

RESEARCH AND CREATIVE WORKS LEADERS AWARDS



Dr. Ross Clark, Surgery, and Cell Biology & Physiology

Dr. Ross Clark has developed a successful NIH-funded research program focused on vascular science, particularly using hydrogen sulfide to improve diabetic limb salvage and wound healing, supported by multiple SBIR grants. His work includes industry collaborations, and patent submissions with ongoing efforts to expand into mechanistic studies supported by a KL2 career development award. He has also launched a new research direction investigating microplastics in vascular disease, generating widely recognized preliminary data and leading a large R01 proposal as well as participation in a multi-institutional P01 proposal. Dr. Clark maintains strong national visibility and serves as Departmental Vice Chair for Research, where he oversees research infrastructure, organizes departmental initiatives, and leads faculty development programs to grow the institution's research capacity.



Dr. Tatsuya Norii, Emergency Medicine

Dr. Tatsuya Norii is widely recognized as an international expert in resuscitation and airway management research. He has made key contributions to global resuscitation guidelines through ILCOR and the American Heart Association. He has contributed to major institutional initiatives such as the CTSC and the SW CACTI grant. His research productivity is exceptional, with over 50 peer-reviewed publications, 35 systematic reviews, and multiple book chapters, alongside leadership of national registries in Japan. Overall, his work spans multiple disciplines, significantly influencing clinical practice and establishing him as a global leader and role model in acute care research.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM OUR OFFICE

Smart, L; Sood, A; Shore, X; Building Empathy, Connection, and Wellbeing through a Cross-Cultural Communication in Mentoring Curriculum. The Chronicle of Mentoring and Coaching, 2026, Vol. 10, No. 1, 87-588. https://mentor.unm.edu/cmc/o8887l.

Sood, A; Tigges, B; Helitzer, D. A scalable dissemination model for training faculty in mentor development and networking. 2026. Medical Research Archives (online) 14(5). https://doi.org/10.18103/mra.v14i5.7423

HSC INSTITUTE OF ETHICS

The Institute of Ethics is welcoming its fourth leader since it was established in 2002. Recently, Dr. Jonathan Bolton stepped down from his role as Director of the Institute of Ethics.

We thank him for his excellent service in this role and the various programs he has created and grown since 2019.

The new leader is Mitch Irvin RN, currently a lecturer in the UNM College of Nursing and a PhD candidate in nursing ethics at Duquesne University.



Dr. Jonathan Bolton,
Former Director, Institute of Ethics



Mitch Irvin, RN
New Director, Institute of Ethics

Mitch Irvin, RN, MSN is a Lecturer II and Director of the Direct Entry Pre-Licensure Program at the UNM College of Nursing. He serves as Co-Chair of the UNM HSC Ethics Committee and serves as clinical ethics consultant where he has helped broaden access to ethics consultation services for clinicians, patients, and families navigating complex and difficult care decisions — to resolve conflicts and support ethically sound care. He also co-created a professional development certificate course in clinical ethics and chairs the HSC Interprofessional Education Shared Values and Ethics Conference. Through his combined roles as educator, program director, and ethics committee leader, he has positively cultivated an expanding community of ethics-informed practitioners, embedding principled decision-making into the everyday practice of clinical and academic life throughout the organization.

TRUST MATTERS: BUILDING A STRONGER, MORE CONNECTED HSC COMMUNITY

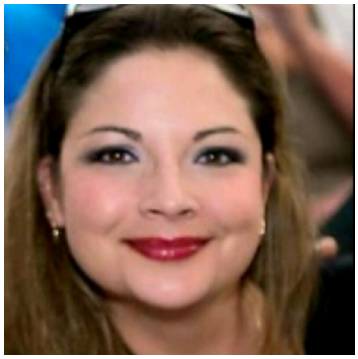
The UNM Health Sciences Center Office for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion's Climate Assessment Action Committee is developing an Institutional Trust Curriculum to strengthen trust across the HSC community. Institutional trust is important because it serves as the foundation for effective teamwork and organizational success. When people trust their institution and each other, they are more likely to feel safe, valued, and engaged. Trust encourages open communication, collaboration, innovation, and a willingness to participate in organizational initiatives.

This professional development curriculum will seek to engage staff, faculty, and learners in exploring why institutional trust matters, how it is built through integrity, consistency, competence, and humility, and how it can be repaired when damaged. Participants will gain practical skills for fostering psychological safety, strengthening relationships, and sustaining trust in teams and organizations. Designed to be a sustainable, and broadly accessible workforce development opportunity for all, this initiative aims to promote a connected, collaborative, and supportive institutional culture.



Dr. Linday Smart
Associate Vice President for Operations & Strategic Initiatives, HSC Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

HSC FACULTY CONTRACTS OFFICE



Krickett Marquez, Director,
HSC Faculty Contracts

The summer season is well underway, and with it comes one of the busiest times of the year for the Faculty Contracts Office team. We are currently deep into the FY27 FIBCI, FCP, and contract renewal cycle, while also managing our peak hiring season.

This year's School of Medicine FY27 FIBCI and contract renewals have presented additional challenges due to the Division of Effort initiative. Despite these complexities, we remain optimistic that all renewals will be completed on schedule for the July 1 deadline.

Over the next several months, our team anticipates processing approximately 75 new faculty hires, 30 new Postdoctoral Fellows and Temporary Part-Time (TPT) appointments, as well as numerous appointment extensions and renewals for Postdoctoral Fellows and TPTs. It will be a very busy summer, and our team is working diligently to support these efforts.

In addition, the HSC Faculty Contracts Office (FCO) hopes to launch the new standardized HSC Letter of Offer (LOO) templates and review process for the colleges and HSLIC in June. We look forward to sharing more information as implementation moves forward.

As always, the HSC FCO team is here to assist and answer any questions you may have.

HSC Faculty Contracts Office website: https://hsc.unm.edu/faculty-affairs/offices/faculty-contracts/

HSC FACULTY ACADEMIC MATTERS (FAM)

Faculty academic affairs matter. As I approach my retirement after 37 years at UNM, I am struck by how my long-standing involvement in faculty academic affairs has kept my career vital and fresh. Whether through service within the College of Nursing as Faculty Affairs Chair, on countless search and APT committees, across the HSC with the Office of Faculty Academic Affairs (OFAA), or more broadly at UNM as a member of the Academic Freedom & Tenure Committee or the Section B Task Force helping to draft new portions of the UNM Faculty Handbook, this work connected me with colleagues I would not otherwise have met. It also offered the privilege, and profound satisfaction, of advocating for my peers and for the broader academic mission.



Dr. Beth Tigges
Regents' Professor and
Chair, Faculty Academic
Matters Advisory Group

Like many others, I will continue part-time at UNM through my work with the Southwest Center for Advancing Clinical and Translational Innovation (SW CACTI) and, to a lesser extent, with OFAA. My career here would have been far more one-dimensional without engagement in faculty academic affairs. I encourage each of you to seek out at least one such opportunity, ideally more, during your time at UNM.



UNM Health Sciences & the VA Partnership

UNM HEALTH SCIENCES

UNM Health Sciences and the New Mexico VA have enjoyed a long-standing commitment to fostering and supporting joint appointee opportunities. The MOU dated September 2022 allows for Joint Appointments for up to 150% effort total time at both institutions combined. UNM HSC currently has over 117 faculty joint appointees who enjoy this opportunity.

A LEGACY OF PARTNERSHIP

Since World War II, the Veterans Administration (VA) has established robust partnerships with academic institutions nationwide. These collaborations have been instrumental in advancing medical research, enriching educations opportunities, and elevating patient care standards. The long-standing alliance between the New Mexico VA Healthcare System and the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center exemplifies the impact of such affiliations.

PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL JOINT APPOINTEE PROGRAM

The Joint Appointee Program is designed to foster a synergistic relationship between VA medical centers and academic health institutions. By appointing healthcare professionals to roles that span both organizations, this program aims to:

Enhance Patient Care

Integrating academic insights with clinical practice ensures that both organizations have access to current medical treatments and comprehensive care.

Advance Medical Research

Collaborative efforts facilitate research initiatives, leading to innovative solutions for complex health challenges.

Enrich Educational Opportunities

Joint appointments provide a dynamic platform for training the next generation of healthcare professionals, offering them diverse experiences in both academic and clinical settings.

Community Engagement Opportunities

Joint appointment can advance health equity and community outreach activities in their service areas through patient care, research, education, and advocacy.

Interested professionals should contact their department or college administrator regarding available opportunities.

Additional benefits information is available through the School of Medicine Office of Faculty Affairs and Career Development "OFACD."

https://bit.ly/42GF4ot

Brief survey
10-15 minutes

Motivating Factors and Barriers that Influence Promotion Seeking



VOLUNTARY

FACULTY RESEARCH STUDY

Study Information

Assistant professors and Chairs are invited to participate in research study 26:136, "The Pursuit of Academic Promotion: Motivators, Challenges, and Strategies for Change", consisting of a brief 10-15 minute survey. The study focuses on the motivating factors and barriers that influence faculty decisions regarding promotion seeking. The purpose of the study is to better understand these motivators and barriers so that promotion policies can be refined in ways that foster faculty development, ultimately improving recruitment and retention in academic medicine.

• Study Questions?

Sarah Harendt, PhD, MS (Study PI):
smumbargerwells@carilionclinic.org
540-915-8404
Akshay Sood, MD, MPH (Site PI):
ASood@salud.unm.edu
505-272-4751

• Legal Questions?

You may contact the UNM Human Research Protections Office at (505) 272-1129

Study participation is voluntary. Responses are anonymous, and no identifying information is collected.

HEALTH SCIENCES

Project ECHO®

THE NM WORKFORCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, UNM HSC, AND ITS PARTNERS PRESENT

FACULTY ECHO

A virtual professional development opportunity for faculty

You are invited to join the Faculty-to-Learners Mentor Development Series, a core component of the **FACULTY ECHO Program**. This series offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen your leadership, communication, and resilience skills, while deepening self-awareness and your ability to engage thoughtfully with a range of perspectives. Together, these elements support the development of effective, impactful, and meaningful mentoring relationships.

August 5th - September 23rd, 2026
Wed., 4-5 PM (MT)



Join us for the Faculty to Learner Mentor Development Fall 2026:

REGISTER HERE:

https://rebrand.ly/FacultyECHO

THIS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY THE UNM HSC OFFICE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION, NEW MEXICO WORKFORCE DIVERSITY CENTER OF EXCELLENCE, UNM HSC OFFICE OF FACULTY ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, UNM SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, OFFICE FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT, AND UNM MENTORING INSTITUTE, WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY BOONSHOFT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER, THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, HRSA GRANT #: 1 D34HP45723-01-00

In support of improving patient care, Project ECHO® is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

AMA Designation Statement
Project ECHO® designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

ANCC Designation Statement
Project ECHO® designates this live activity for a maximum of 1.0 ANCC contact hour. Nursing contact hours will be awarded for successful completion of program components based upon documented attendance and completion of evaluation.

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echo.unm.edu