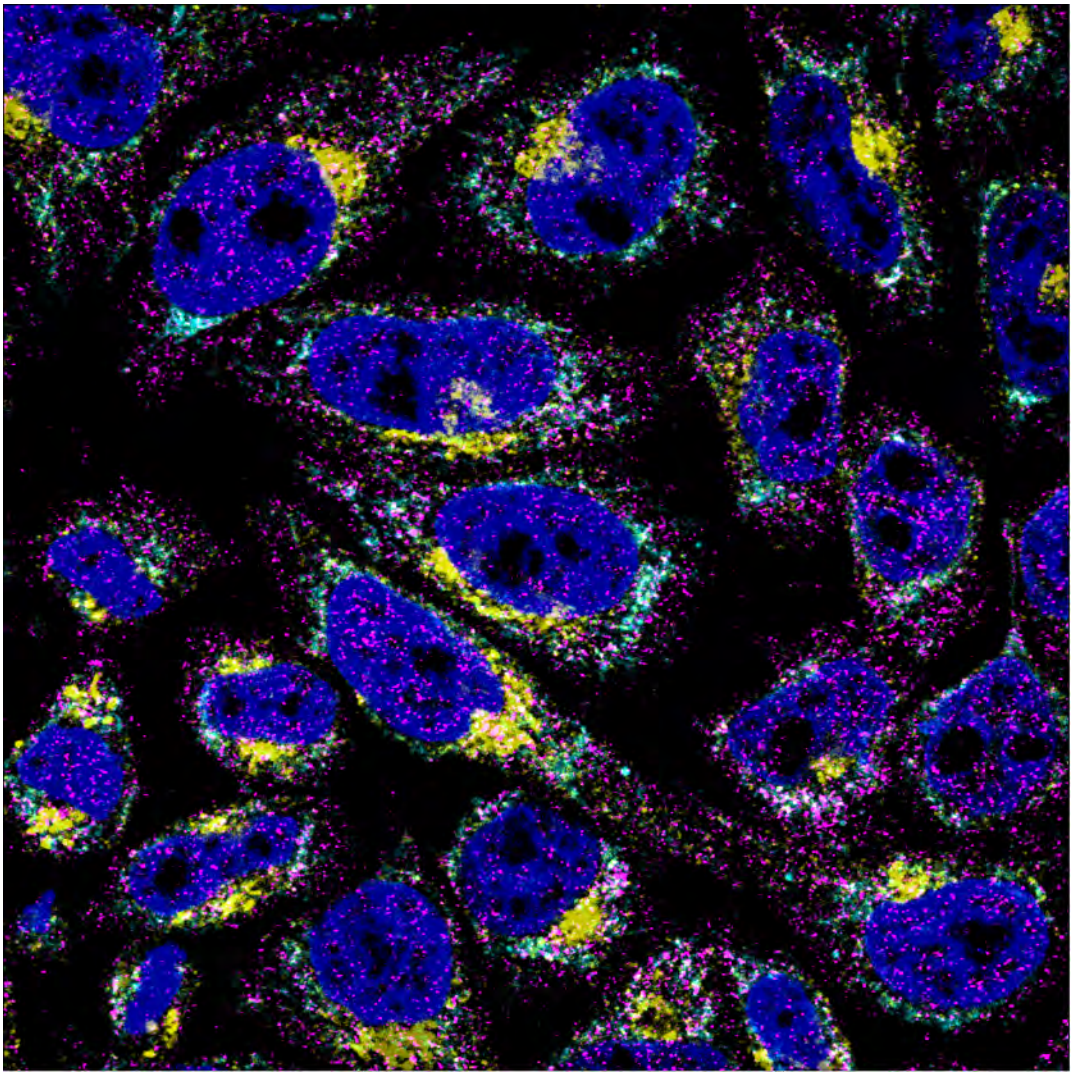
*Path*FINDER

WINTER 2026



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
PATHOLOGY

WINTER 2026

COVER IMAGE: HeLa cells with immunostaining of LAMP2A (cyan), pAKT (magenta), Golgi apparatus (yellow), and nuclei (blue). Image courtesy of Dr. Eduardo Hernandez Acosta, postdoctoral fellow in the Endicott Research Lab.

*Path*FINDER

Welcome to the Winter 2026 edition of *Path*FINDER, the Department of Pathology's biannual news magazine. Since our last edition, the University of New Mexico Hospital has grown considerably. In October 2025, we saw the opening of the new Critical Care Tower with the addition of 96 ICU beds and 18 new operating rooms. The Critical Care Tower now houses a significant portion of our laboratory which includes our blood bank, point of care division and a brand-new gross room. This has been the first significant change to our hospital gross room and blood bank in decades. We now have a considerably larger area for both labs with entirely updated equipment. More changes are coming with a major remodeling effort in the main UNM Hospital to further expand our ability to take care of our community.

Featured in this edition are Research Profiles of our two newest tenure track research faculty, Drs. Joe Endicott and Katie Zychowski. Both joined our department over the past last year and bring fascinating new research directions to our department. Dr. Endicott graciously provided the vibrant cover photograph of brilliantly stained HeLa cells. Likewise, you may have noticed the colorful laser speckle images provided by Dr. Zychowski for the cover of our last edition, the Summer 2025 *Path*FINDER. Also in this issue we introduce a Staff Profiles section to highlight our pathology staff. Two profiles are included; you'll see featured Rachel Grattan, an associate scientist from our Research Division and DeeAnna Gutierrez, our department's chief accountant.

Sadly, we announce the passing of one of our retired research faculty, Dr. Walker 'Kip' Wharton. Before joining the faculty at UNM, Kip spent many years as an adjunct faculty based at Los Alamos National Labs. Later he joined the research team of Dr. Cheryl Willman in the Cancer Center. He will be missed by his friends at UNM. This fall we welcomed a number of new faculty in our divisions of Hematopathology and Anatomic Pathology. Please see the Faculty News section in this issue for the announcement of these new clinical faculty. They collectively bring important areas of expertise to our diagnostic teams. Faculty News also spotlights recent awards garnered by our accomplished faculty, including the UNM Health Sciences Center Office of Research Junior Faculty Excellence in Research awarded to Dr. Tae-Hyung Kim and our New Mexico State Fair winners,

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*Path*FINDER - *continued*

Drs. Evelyn Lockhart and Richard Marlar, in food and animal categories. See also the recent accomplishments of our clinical and research trainees. A big congratulations to the December graduates of our Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS) program and the Undergraduate Pipeline Network (UPN), all moving on to the next stage of their careers, and to this year's recipients of the Pathology Department Staff Awards.

Lastly, please note our opportunities for gifting in our department through the UNM Foundation. Links are provided to a variety of funds from which to choose, each supporting a spectrum of Pathology endeavors.

Wishing you a productive and rewarding 2026!

Nancy Joste, MD

Professor & Chair of Pathology

Please follow us on Facebook, Instagram and X.

Research Profile

BY S. JOSEPH ENDICOTT, PHD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

In the summer of 2023, I saw an online job posting for a tenure-track faculty position in the Research Division of the Pathology Department. My research and teaching interests seemed to be a strong match for the position. I have a solid background in autophagy and metabolism research, and the opportunity for collaborations with the Autophagy, Inflammation, and Metabolism (AIM) Center made UNM HSC a highly appealing environment for establishing my lab.

I visited Albuquerque for the first time in January 2024 for an on-site interview, where I had a schedule of 20 one-on-one meetings. After the first three or four, I already knew I wanted to come to UNM. I was most impressed by the collegiality and collaborative spirit of the faculty, and I felt this would be the perfect fit for launching my research program. I joined the UNM Pathology Department in September 2024, and it has now been about a year since I received the keys to my lab. I am delighted to say that my first impressions were correct, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the other faculty at UNM.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

My lab focuses on the biochemical mechanisms that underlie resilience against age-related pathologies, particularly cancer and metabolic syndromes. While most pathology research centers on disease pathogenesis and treatment strategies, far less work is devoted to understanding the molecular mechanisms that promote natural resilience against non-communicable diseases.

During my postdoctoral work at the University of Michigan, I studied multiple genetically modified mouse models that are long-lived with low rates of cancer, including the mouse model of Laron Syndrome. Laron Syndrome is a rare hereditary form of dwarfism, and affected individuals rarely develop cancer, despite normal rates of cancer in their relatives who live in similar environments. In the course of this research, I discovered that long-lived mouse mutants displayed increased activity in a selective protein recycling mechanism known as chaperone-mediated autophagy (CMA). This increase in CMA led to mRNA-independent reductions in the expression of proteins involved in cancer and cell growth.

Building on this work, I have established a multidisciplinary research program that combines quantitative proteomics, biochemistry, microscopy, cell biology, and mouse studies to address fundamental questions about CMA. CMA is the most selective form of lysosomal proteolysis, targeting specific proteins for degradation, and is mechanistically distinct from bulk degradation via macroautophagy.

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Research Profile - *continued*

While CMA is often studied in the context of clearing proteins that contribute to age-related diseases, my work suggests its most fundamental role is the selective degradation of rate-limiting enzymes, which downregulates essential metabolic processes such as glycolysis, cytoplasmic acetyl-CoA production, fatty acid synthesis, and cytoplasmic ribosomal translation.

My current research has two primary goals:

1. To elucidate the mechanisms of CMA regulation at the endocrine, cellular, and subcellular levels, using a strategic combination of in vivo and in vitro techniques.
2. To deploy innovative "omics" approaches to identify novel CMA targets and unravel how their degradation limits the activity of metabolic pathways underlying fatty liver disease, cancer, and aging.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

My lab is currently pursuing three main research projects:

1. PTEN and CMA:We are investigating how the PTEN transgene influences protein expression by activating CMA. Mice that overexpress PTEN are long-lived, cancer-resistant, and have very low body fat despite normal food intake. Conversely, PTEN deficiencies in mice and humans are strongly associated with cancer. To understand how lysosomal protein degradation drives the proteomic changes observed in these long-lived mice, we have performed quantitative proteomics on whole liver and isolated liver lysosomes.
2. Endocytosis and receptor trafficking:We are evaluating how endocytosis and endolysosomal trafficking of cell surface receptors regulate CMA. CMA remains one of the least studied branches of autophagy. Although progress has been made, many questions remain unanswered. This project aims to clarify how cells regulate selective protein degradation through CMA.
3. Endocrine-targeted vaccines:We are collaborating with Bryce Chackerian's lab in the UNM Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology to treat mice with vaccines against self-derived antigens. In this case, we are targeting endocrine factors that have been implicated in aging and age-related diseases in mice. Of all the organ systems, the endocrine system has the greatest influence on organism lifespan. The longest-lived of all mouse mutants have targeted mutations to the endocrine system. We are working to recapitulate these beneficial endocrine changes by stimulating the mouse immune system to selectively eliminate specific endocrine factors.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

My lab's first year at UNM has been very rewarding. The summer of 2025 stands out in particular. We hosted summer students from three outstanding internship programs, and it was a joy to walk into the lab each day and see the young students smiling and excited about their work. I became a scientist because I believe it is the most fun and fulfilling career I could pursue — and the best part of my job now is watching new scientists discover that same joy.

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS.

Since joining UNM, I have maintained collaborations at the University of Michigan while also establishing new partnerships both locally and internationally.

I recently co-authored a paper with Dr. Richard Miller's lab at Michigan, where we identified new mechanisms by which MEK1 regulates CMA. The Miller lab also serves as my connection to the National Institute on Aging's Interventions Testing Program (ITP), which evaluates drugs for effects on mouse lifespan. I am the sponsor of one of the interventions currently under investigation. Additionally, Dr. Venkatesha Basrur, Technical Director of Michigan's Proteomics Resource Facility, is a collaborator on our active proteomics projects and several submitted grant applications.

At UNM, my lab has collaborated with Jing Pu's group in the Department of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, providing custom R programming support for proteomics analysis and data visualization to aid their organelle-specific proteomics experiments. In return, the Pu lab has supported our studies of CMA in cells with organelle trafficking defects. Our collaboration with Bryce Chackerian's lab, mentioned earlier, is supported by a UNM HSC RAC award.

Beyond UNM, I am collaborating with Dr. Helin Norberg, Associate Professor at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, to co-author two major review papers, one of which will be submitted very soon.

The Endicott Lab Group. Pictured left to right: Dr. Eduardo Hernandez Acosta, Jayden Trujillo, Kristina Blair, Dr. Joseph Endicott, Quiteria Jacquez and Bella Wichman

Research Profile

BY KATIE ZYCHOWSKI, PHD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

I joined the Department for several reasons. First, UNM Pathology has a long-standing tradition of excellence in research, sustained across decades and multiple administrations. Being part of a department with such a strong research culture was very important to me. Second, I was drawn by the outstanding mentorship. I wanted to be immersed in a research-intensive environment while learning from exceptional mentors. The senior Pathology Research faculty are top-tier scientists whose guidance has been profoundly influential in my career. It is truly an honor to work with them. Although I have been at this university for 11 years, I have not encountered mentorship that matches the quality and commitment I have experienced in the UNM Department of Pathology.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

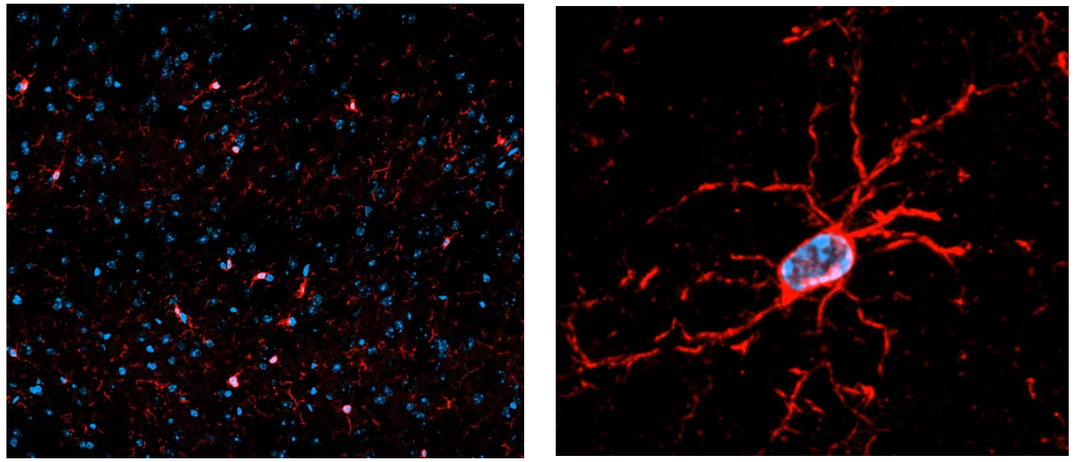
We are currently working on two primary projects. The first is focused on biomarkers, including extracellular vesicles, in former uranium miners. U-mining was prevalent in the Western United States from the 1940s-1990s and many of these miners are living with chronic health ailments. This study is currently identifying associations between U-exposure and immune-related biomarkers. The second project involves understanding immunotoxic mechanisms following air pollution exposures, including wildfire smoke. My current research serves to give direction to public health implications related to inhaled exposures and systemic disease.

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS.

During the past year, I collaborated with Dr. Eric Prossnitz, Chief of Molecular Medicine in the UNM Department of Internal Medicine, in assessing the role of ovarian hormone signaling following wildfire smoke exposure. I am also collaborating with the Co-Leader of the Cancer Control and Population Sciences (CCPS) Program in the UNM Department of Internal Medicine, Dr. Shuguang Leng, to examine estrogen signaling as a determinant of immune vulnerability to wildfire smoke exposure. In the UNM College of Pharmacy, I am collaborating with both the P42 Superfund Research Program and the P30 NM-INSPIRES Center.

WHAT ARE YOUR RESEARCH GOALS?

In the short term, I aim to secure an additional R01 grant and subsequently renew my current award. My group is currently working on two manuscripts: one under revision and another nearing submission, which are also key near-term goals. In the long term, my objective is to establish a sustained, research program focused on environmental toxicology and related areas.



Left: Microglia in the brain. Right: An activated microglia in the brain following wood smoke exposure.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS IN OUR DEPARTMENT OR OTHERWISE?

Although I have only been faculty in the Department of Pathology for a year, I have really enjoyed the departmental seminars. They have given me a much better understanding of the clinical aspects of the department as well as the breadth of ongoing research projects. Outside of work, my favorite moments are those spent with my children.

From left to right: Eunju Lim (Associate Scientist 1), me (PI), Sydnee Yazzie (BSGP Graduate Research Assistant), Dr. Mijung Oh (Postdoctoral Fellow)

In Memory

WALKER 'KIP' WHARTON, RESEARCH PROFESSOR EMERITUS

BY DR. JANET OLIVER, PROFESSOR EMERITA

We are sorry to report the death on August 4, 2025 of Walker (Kip) Wharton, a good friend to our department and to many members of the Pathology research faculty. The cause was a fast-growing glioblastoma.

Kip was a staff member and later group leader in the Life Sciences Division at Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) from 1981 to 1995. During those years he was appointed Adjunct Associate Professor of Pathology, and in that role provided strong student support and research resources to our Macy Foundation-funded PhD program, the precursor to the current inter-departmental PhD program in biomedical sciences at UNM. He particularly helped the department to recruit Dr. Larry Sklar to a joint position of Professor of Pathology and Director of the National Flow Cytometry Resource at LANL. In 1996 he relocated to the Moffit Cancer Center at the University of Florida, joining his former PhD mentor, Jack Pledger, to help launch the Moffit's cancer research programs. He returned to New Mexico in 2001 to be closer to family and was recruited as Research Professor of Pathology to Dr. Cheryl Willman's team studying the molecular biology of childhood leukemia. He retired in 2017.

Kip was a larger-than-life rambunctious personality with a fierce dedication to his research on cancer, to his wife Debbie and son Tyler and to his friends at UNM, especially Pathology Department faculty Drs. Larry Sklar, I-Ming Chen and Jan Oliver. Debbie passed away exactly four weeks after losing her beloved Kip. A memorial at the UNM Alumni Chapel in September remembered them both with great affection.

Photo at top: Debbie and Kip Wharton

Photo at left, from left to right: Drs. Janet Oliver, Kip Wharton, and Larry Sklar.

Staff Profile

BY RACHEL GRATTAN, HS ASSOCIATE SCIENTIST 2

ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM THE ALBUQUERQUE METRO AREA OR DID YOU RELOCATE HERE?

I grew up in Michigan and received my education from Central Michigan University. While completing my M.S., I applied for a technical position requiring electron microscopy expertise with the New Mexico SpatioTemporal Modeling Center (STMC), under the direction of UNM Pathology Department faculty Drs. Janet Oliver (retired), Bridget Wilson (retired) and Diane Lidke.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

I made the decision to remain within this department after the end of the STMC. The research that the faculty, staff and students produce in the UNM Pathology Department is high caliber and multidisciplinary, and I am proud to take an active role pursuing this important work. I appreciate the collaborative environment between researchers and clinicians. The administrative staff in the department are also true gems!

WHAT IS SOMETHING INTERESTING YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FIELD OF PATHOLOGY?

Pathology encompasses all levels of biological organization, from the molecular to the organismal, and includes population studies. There's always an interesting talk within the department that can inform one's work, regardless of the biological complexity in question.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS AT WORK?

Much of my efforts are in training staff and student researchers on various laboratory techniques. I witness BSGP students mature through their Ph.D. programs, and there is a wonderful moment for each trainee where they transition from novice into expert in their subject. It is very rewarding to reflect on my "academic tree."

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE SOMEONE HAS GIVEN YOU?

Memories are fallible. Document EVERYTHING. Record keeping is essential when research studies last years and people come and go in their careers.

WHAT IS SOMETHING WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW ABOUT YOU?

My hobbies are diverse. I enjoy hiking, swimming, sewing and fiber arts.

Staff Profile

BY DEEANNA GUTIERREZ, ACCOUNTANT 3

ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM THE ALBUQUERQUE METRO AREA OR DID YOU RELOCATE HERE?

I was born and raised in the Albuquerque South Valley.

HOW DID YOU CHOOSE TO JOIN THE UNM PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT?

When I was a student at UNM going for my Bachelor's degree in accounting and working as an associate bagging groceries at Albertsons, I wanted a job that would provide some office experience. I looked at UNM knowing they had student employment jobs and found the Office Assistant job in the Pathology Department. I didn't know much about pathology at all at the time, but loved that I would get experience and I could have a flexible work schedule on campus while I was in school. I have liked it so much that I have stayed within the department for almost 11 years in various positions in accounting!

WHAT IS SOMETHING INTERESTING THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE FIELD OF PATHOLOGY?

Something interesting that I have learned is all the different ways that pathology in intertwined into everyday healthcare. Since a lot of the patients don't ever see the pathologist, I don't think they realize how important pathologists are to healthcare.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE MOMENTS AT WORK?

Some of my favorite moments at work are being with my coworkers. We have made great memories having lunch and social hours together. Trivia night and karaoke were the best! The Saggio's pizza ordered with extra cheese, or the runs to Bob's Burgers and Taco Bell for lunch were always a nice treat during the work day!

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE SOMEONE HAS GIVEN YOU?

Some of the best professional advice I have received was to make connections and network with people. You never know who you are going to meet and what connections can be made. When you are surrounded by the right people it improves your work day.

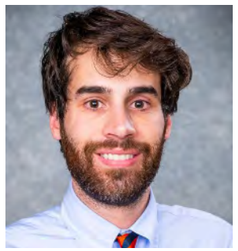
WHAT IS SOMETHING WE DON'T ALREADY KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I love to bake and try new recipes. I make all the birthday sweets for everyone in my family. They all give me new recipes and challenge me to try to make them.

Faculty News

NEW FACULTY

ALEXANDER GROSS, MD
Assistant Professor Clinician Educator, Anatomic Pathology – September 1, 2025



ADAM WILBERGER, MD
Associate Professor Clinician Educator, Hematopathology – October 1, 2025

ANTHONY MARTINEZ, MD
Assistant Professor Clinician Educator, Anatomic Pathology – October 13, 2025

FACULTY RETIREMENT

QIAN-YUN ZHANG, MD, PHD
Professor Emerita, Hematopathology, January 1, 2026

Faculty News - *continued*

FACULTY AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

THE PATHOLOGIST POWER LIST 2025

The Pathologist Power List is an annual list of 50 impactful pathologists across the world. The list celebrates these inspirational figures driving innovation and achievement in pathology and laboratory medicine. In a world defined by rapid change, unprecedented challenges, and incredible new scientific advances, these trailblazers don't just adapt - they lead through their principles to ignite innovation, inspire action, and push boundaries in pathology and laboratory medicine. **Rama Gullapalli, MD, PhD,** was selected for this year's Power List! View the full list of individuals along with **Dr. Gullapalli's** write-up at this link: The Pathologist Power List 2025

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD: DR. TAE-HYUNG KIM

Tae-Hyung Kim, PhD, MS, Assistant Professor of Pathology, received the 2025 Junior Faculty award from the HSC Office of Research. **Dr. Kim's** research in cancer biology emphasizes how metabolic cues reshape the physical properties of cells to drive invasion and metastasis. His multidisciplinary group integrates mechanobiology and biophysics with cancer metabolism to mapping signaling axes that link extracellular glucose to cytoskeletal control, cell deformability, and motility. His research aims to elucidate the mechanisms underlying cancer progression and to identify potential targets for novel therapies.

In addition to his early-career research excellence, **Dr. Kim** has demonstrated a deep commitment to academic mentorship, actively participating in the Undergraduate Pipeline Network. He is a visible ambassador for UNM HSC with over 20 invited talks at national and international venues since joining the department. He is a generous colleague who fills a vital scientific niche and brings a positive attitude and collaborative spirit to our community.

*From left to right: Mike Richards, MD, MPA, Exec. Vice President HSC; winners Drs. Sarah Pirio Richardson, **Tae-Hyung Kim,** Elizabeth Yakes Jimenez; Hengameh Raissy, PharmD, Vice President for Research HSC. Photo Credit: UNM HSC Marketing & Communication Department.*

Faculty News

FACULTY AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

CAP AI COMMITTEE SELECTION

Rama Gullapalli, MD, PhD, has been selected to be a member of the College of American Pathologists (CAP) AI committee. The committee term is for up to 6 years, renewed annually, and is charged with guiding the implementation of AI in the field of Pathology. New members were chosen this year through a highly competitive selection process. "It is an honor to participate in this committee, and I very much look forward to being a part of it and advancing the implementation of AI in the field of Pathology," said **Dr. Gullapalli.**

AAPA 50th ANNUAL CONTINUING EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Marlena Chavez, PA(ASCP), Cathy Martinez, PA, HTL(ASCP), Ruzbeh Mehta, PA(ASCP), and Christopher Schlosser, PA(ASCP) attended the 2025 American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) 50th Annual Conference that took place in Denver, Colorado, September 7-11, 2025.

Christopher Schlosser, PA (ASCP) and Ruzbeh Mehta, PA (ASCP) presented their talk entitled "Postmortem Computed Tomography (CT) Use in the Forensic Setting: A Primer for Forensic Pathologists' Assistants and Real World Case Application," which was well received. **Marlena Chavez, PA** (ASCP) took 3rd place in the Gross Photo Competition Benign Category for her submission of Ameloblastoma.

NEW MEXICO STATE FAIR CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to two of our Pathology faculty, **Evelyn Lockhart, MD, MScBMC, and Richard Marlar, PhD,** who both won in New Mexico State Fair competitions this year! **Dr. Lockhart** won several ribbons; her apple galette won a blue ribbon in the "Apple Pie-Nontraditional" class before advancing to win the "Best of Show" ribbon for pies! **Dr. Lockhart** also won third place ribbons for her lime and mango tart, as well as for her chocolate macaron in the cookie competition.

Dr. Marlar and his wife have a ranch - the Flying Heart Ranch - where they breed Navajo-Churro sheep, the first sheep to come to the US. They won both Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion for Navajo-Churro Sheep, as well as Reserve Grand Champion for Colored Heritage Sheep Fleece!

Faculty News - *continued*

FACULTY AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

PATENT AWARDED: DR. AARON NEUMANN

Aaron Neumann, PhD, in association with UNM Rainforest Innovations and the University of Colorado, has been awarded a Patent for his invention titled, "Rapid, culture-free Detection of Drug Resistance Characteristics by Raman and Surface Enhanced Raman Spectroscopic Methods."

Dr. Neumann's invention involves highly sensitive assays for pathogen detection, identification, and/or analysis, including (but not limited to) sensing of metabolite patterns associated with high-risk drug resistance phenotypes. View the complete patent information or visit the UNM Rainforest Innovations site for more details.

Clinical Trainee News

MGP FELLOW SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION COMMITTEES

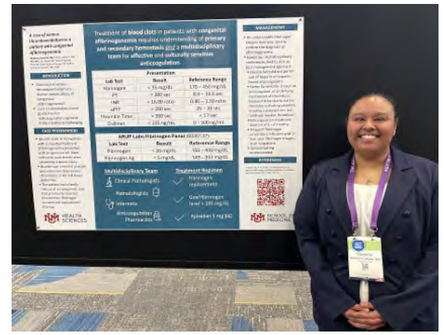
One of our Molecular Genetic Pathology Fellows, **Mukul Divatia, MD**, has been selected to serve as the Association of Molecular Pathology (AMP) Publications Committee SL Junior Member for November 2025-November 2027.

The Publications Committee has certain responsibilities for AMP's official journal, The Journal of Molecular Diagnostics (JMD), which is co-owned by the American Society for Investigative Pathology (ASIP), including advisory to AMP's Board and ASIP's Council regarding JMD policy issues; scope statement; business success; publisher Request for Proposal and selection; selection of Editors and Editorial Board members; performance expectations for Editors. The Committee reviews AMP member submissions of Case Reports for potential publication in CAP Today.

Clinical Trainee News

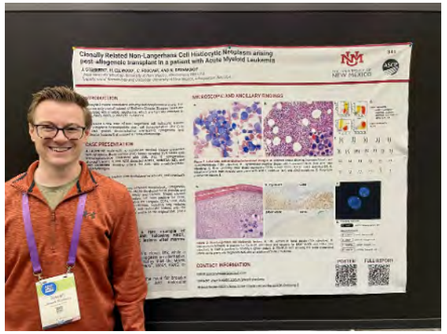
NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Residents **Madison Guevara, MD, and Joseph Stenberg, DO,** presented their abstracts at the annual American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) meeting November 17-20, 2025. Project titles and team members are listed below:



Project: "A Case Study of Venous Thromboembolism in a Patient with Congenital Afibrinogenemia"

Research team: **Drs. Madison Guevara, Evelyn Lockhart,** Ala Ebaid, Allison Burnett, **Richard Marlar, and Andres Mindiola Romero.**



Project: "Implementing and Validating an Open-Source Digital Pathology Pipeline for Translational Research at UNM Pathology"

Research team: **Drs. Joseph Stenberg, Kathryn Foucar, Daniel Babu, Jordan Redemann, Nancy Joste,** Charles Foucar, and **Rama Gullapalli**

Project: "Case Report: Clonally Related Non-Langerhans Cell Histiocytic Neoplasm Arising Post-allogeneic Transplant in a Patient with Acute Myeloid Leukemia"

Research team: **Drs. Joseph Stenberg, Hillary Ellwood,** Charles Foucar, and **Nicole Deshmukh**

Resident **Molly Biggs, MD,** also submitted her abstract for the upcoming National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) Conference held in Louisville, KY, October 17-21, 2025.

Topic: "Atraumatic Hemoperitoneum, a Case Report"

Research team: **Drs. Molly Biggs and Audra Kerwin**

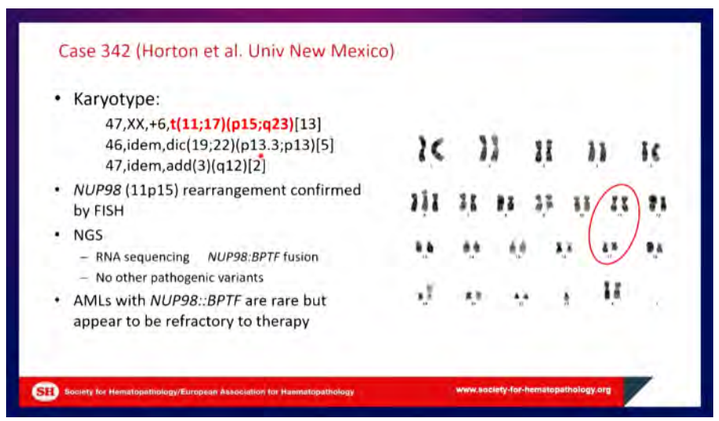
Clinical Trainee News - *continued*

NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Joseph Stenberg, DO, third year pathology resident, presented a poster at the Association for Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine (ADLM) July 27-31, 2025, in Chicago, IL: “JAK2V617F Mutation Prevalence in Thrombophilia Profiles: A Regional Laboratory Experience.”

Dr. Stenberg pictured with former UNM Pathology faculty Dr. Marian Rollins-Raval.

Darrell Horton, MD, fourth year pathology resident, presented a case titled, "Infant Acute Megakaryoblastic Leukemia with Rare NUP98 Rearrangement," at the Society of Hematopathology (SH) and European Association for Hematopathology (EAHP) 2025 Workshop, September 3-6, 2025, in Cincinnati, OH.



Research Trainee News

STEINKAMP LAB THESIS DEFENSE: PARISA NIKEGHBAL, PHD

Parisa Nikeghbal, who was a graduate student in **Dr. Mara Steinkamp**'s research lab, successfully completed her BSGP Thesis Defense on August 6, 2025! Her thesis is titled, "Patient-Derived Ovarian Cancer Models Provide Insight into Cancer Cell-intrinsic and Immune Cell-Dependent Effects on Therapeutic Response." In September, **Parisa** began a post-doctoral fellowship at Virginia Tech in the Laboratory for Biomaterials and Tissue Engineering.

STEAM SUMMIT SUCCESS: RAHUL KUMAR

Rahul Kumar, a 4th-year graduate student in **Dr. Rama Gullapalli**’s Research Lab through UNM’s Biomedical Engineering Research Program, attended The Southwest Transformative Educational Advancement Mentoring (STEAM) Network Program 2nd Annual Summit (STEAM Summit 2025), which was held in Flagstaff, AZ, from July 23rd - 26th, 2025. **Rahul** earned second prize for the Graduate Student poster competition for his presentation titled, "Chronic Low Dose Exposure of Cadmium and Hyperglycemia Induces the Oxidative Stress and Mitochondrial Dysfunction in Hepatocytes via Altered Mitochondrial Dynamics."

Research Trainee News - *continued*

FIRST PLACE POSTER AWARD: MIJUNG OH, PHD

Mijung Oh, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher in the Research Lab of **Dr. Katie Zychowski**, attended the Mountain West Society of Toxicology Meeting here in Albuquerque, August 21-22, 2025. At the meeting, **Dr. Oh** won 1st place for Postdoctoral Poster presentations for her project titled, "Ovarian Hormone Deficiency Exacerbates Wildfire Smoke-Induced Immune and Metabolic Dysregulation in the Hematopoietic Niche."

From left to right: Dr. Mijung Oh and her fellow awardee and colleague, Dr. Sakshi Siddharth Patil, COP Pharmaceutical Sciences.

KIM LAB CONFERENCE SUCCESS

Wonkyung Lee, a medical student at Yeungnam University in South Korea and a visiting researcher in **Dr. Tae-Hyung Kim**'s lab, received the Best Poster Presentation Award for 3rd Place in the Undergraduate Student Caucus and Poster Competition at the 18th American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities, held September 18 – 21, 2025 in Baltimore, MD.

Department News

MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES PROGRAM FALL 2025 GRADUATES

Congratulations to the Fall 2025 Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS) graduates! Pictured are our nine graduates being acknowledged for their accomplishments at the MLS Pinning Ceremony held on December 12, 2025. At the ceremony, the MLS program honored **Zara Mamdani** with the Lynn Saxton award. This award is given to an outstanding MLS student in honor of the first director of the MLS at UNM, Lynn Saxton. The award is based on academic and leadership abilities and exhibited professionalism.

Congratulations to our MLS graduates - we are proud of you and can't wait to see what you accomplish!

Fall 2025 MLS graduates with Drs. Nancy Joste and Barbara Masten; and award winner Zara Mamdani with Dr. Masten and Julia Allen.

2025 PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT STAFF AWARDS

Congratulations to our 2025 recipients of the annual Pathology Department Staff Awards! This year we honor (first name order) **Amy Estanisleo*, Cathleen Martinez, DeeAnna Gutierrez*, Kristen Broesder*, and Tyler Wysner.** A reception was held on December 18, 2025. **Pictured with Dr. Joste**

Honorable mention to all nominees:

Amber Valdez, Asmah Oscar, Danielle Burke, Emilia Avila, Fred Schultz, James Chavez, Kayla Ulibarri, Olivia Felt, Rachel Grattan, Rosalia De Leon, Sara Romero, and Shayna Lucero.

Department News - *continued*

SUMMER 2025 UPN PROGRAM GRADUATES

The UNM HSC UPN program is an umbrella program that brings together undergraduates conducting summer biomedical research across the UNM HSC campus with the goal of cultivating students' interest in research while helping them attain skills needed to apply for and succeed in post-baccalaureate education. The program provides the opportunity for approximately 50 scholars to choose from several areas of research at the University of New Mexico's Health Sciences Center. Several different research programs participate as part of the UPN experience, which includes seminars, career development opportunities, and social activities. This year, the program attracted a record number of participants, including learners from other programs!

On Friday, August 1st, the Undergraduate Pipeline Network Summer Research Experience successfully held their Capstone Research Event at the UNM Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center. Joining the 56 UPN students in their poster presentations were 25 undergraduates from across NM who completed research as part of the NM INBRE Student Experience and 17 High School Scholars from the CURE for Cancer program. In total over 100 students presented their research findings to more than 300 faculty, staff, trainees, and family members.

Thank you, **Dr. Jennifer Gillette**, Professor of Pathology, for continuing to serve as the Director of the UNMHSC Undergraduate Pipeline Network (UPN) program and providing the leadership and support that this essential program needs to succeed, pairing numerous future providers with mentors that help guide them toward their ideal careers.

Make a Gift

Your gift today impacts health care and research for tomorrow. Please consider making a recurring, one time, or legacy donation to one of the following funds:

THE PATHOLOGY EDUCATION FUND
Advance the education and research missions of the department.
VISIT: The Pathology Education Fund

THE CHEN HEMATOPATHOLOGY LECTURE SERIES
Support the Department of Pathology annual Hematopathology Lectureship and the education and training of future pathologists.
VISIT: The Chen Hematopathology Lecture Series

THE FOUCAR ENDOWMENT
Invest in future Pathologists. Recruiting and training highly proficient Pathology residents and fellows is a top priority.
VISIT: The Foucar Endowment

THE GEORGE D. MONTOYA RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Encourage UNM students to pursue a career in biomedical research.
VISIT: The George D. Montoya Research Scholarship Fund

THE HARVEY ENDOWED CHAIR AND PROFESSORSHIP
Invest in Pathology research faculty. Endowed professorships attract and retain expert faculty who teach passionately and lead innovative translational research.
VISIT: The Harvey Endowed Chair and Professorship

OMI FORENSIC PATHOLOGY FELLOWSHIP PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Enhance the education and professional development of OMI Forensic Pathology Fellows.
VISIT: OMI Forensic Pathology Fellowship Professional Development Fund

THE THOMAS M. WILLIAMS & MARGARET G. WILLIAMS ENDOWMENT FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Support the greatest educational and training needs within the Department of Pathology.
VISIT: The Dr. Thomas M. Williams & Margaret G. Williams Endowment for Education and Training

If you need assistance with your gift please contact:

Maggie Schold, MFA, Director of Development, UNM School of Medicine
Mobile: (505) 259-9164 or Email: maggie.schold@unmfund.org

Donate by check, estate planning, bequest, charitable annuity, insurance gift, charitable trust and more. Thank you for thinking of the Department of Pathology's funds as you generously give!

Acknowledgements

The University of New Mexico Department of Pathology gratefully acknowledges Nancy Risenhoover and Emilia Avila for the layout of this newsletter.

For more information on our department, please visit our website:

pathology.unm.edu

Do you have news? Please share! Contact: HSC_PathAdmin@salud.unm.edu

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