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Inclusive Excellence

Fall 2025 Newsletter

A Message from Vice President Assata Zerai

Welcome back to our beautiful campus, fellow Lobos!

We are excited to see you on the quad! My colleagues and I have been working throughout the spring and summer to think through the best ways to communicate the important work that we do, which is always rooted in our great love for UNM. We aim to activate that work with greater efficiency, deep respect for all of our communities, and a desire to serve the peoples of New Mexico and beyond.



Our awesome Associate Ombuds, Ms. Heidi Ricci, facilitated generative discussions at our retreat this year. During our brainstorming sessions, our new Special Advisor, Dr. Nahir I. Otaño Gracia, boiled down our work in the simplest terms: we work to identify the obstacles getting in the way of students, faculty, and staff achieving their desired goals at UNM, and then we utilize best practices to remove those barriers.

In the retreat we came together to delineate who we are, and we are pleased to share the results of our hard work. We present to you our new aspirational statement, mission, and values.

Our Aspirational Statement:

We envision a university where all Lobos are empowered to pursue success without barriers.

Our Mission:

We seek to elevate and strengthen UNM's core values by creating access for, cultivating the potential of, and inspiring all Lobos. We do so by learning from our legacies and fostering connections for synergy, hope, and

joy.

Our Values:

As the heart of the pack, we build on our roots to amplify the voices of UNM's communities by following these core values:

- Curiosity and the production of new knowledge
- Promotion of innovative research and artistic endeavors
- Creating and following best practices
- Meeting the changing needs of all Lobos
- Minimizing harm
- Remembering to dance even in the midst of difficult circumstances

Similarly, we felt it was important to update our name to reflect our new aspirational statement, mission, and values. We are now the **D**ivision for **C**hange and **E**mpowerment (DiCE - pronounced "dee-seh"). The acronym, DiCE means to proclaim and affirm. We look forward to working with our UNM communities in the coming months to carry out our mission for the betterment of all.

Peace,
Assata Zerai, Ph.D., Vice President, Professor of Sociology

Changes in DiCE

Welcome To The Team



Nahir Otaño Gracia

We are very excited to welcome our new Special Advisor to the Vice President, Dr. Nahir I. Otaño Gracia. She is an Associate Professor of English and Medieval Studies. Dr. Otaño Gracia will coordinate efforts that contribute to Objective 5 (student success) of Goal 3 (Inclusive Excellence) of 2040 Opportunity Defined <https://opportunity.unm.edu/index.html>.

In her own words:

"Have you ever felt that your life choices have led you to something special? This is how I feel about joining the Division for Change & Empowerment at UNM; that I am exactly where I am meant to be. The last decade of my academic career—my research, teaching, and service—has been defined by a desire to remove the obstacles that stop me, my students, and my colleagues (both faculty and staff) from reaching our goals; and to create and promote scholarship that recovers the past by focusing on what has been left unsaid, what has been omitted, and what has been deprioritized by previous scholarship. For example, my monograph *The Other Face of Arthur: Chivalric Whiteness in the Global North Atlantic* (Penn 2025), which reveals the role of Arthuriana in the racial logics of medieval Europe through an analysis of the construction of chivalric whiteness, was met with extreme resistance by my field and was rejected and discarded several times without providing me with feedback. My response has been to create as many opportunities as possible for those around me: From taking on a number of editorial projects that allow my colleagues to publish their innovative research to providing free workshops on professionalization, teaching, and the job market, my commitments are to creating a space in which those around me do not experience the same lack of mentorship and support that I did when I started this journey.

I am so excited to join the Division for Change & Empowerment, and I hope you come visit, say hi, and let me know how I can help!"

Welcome To The Team



MARISSA GREENBERG

We are also excited to welcome our new Special Advisor to the Vice President on Disability Affairs (SAVP-DA), Dr. Marissa Greenberg. She is an Associate Professor of British and Irish Literary Studies. Dr. Greenberg will support activities associated with advancing institutional policies and practices that will most directly benefit UNM faculty



with disabilities at UNM Central, Health Sciences and Branch Campuses, including assisting in the design, oversight, and assessment of all related activities.

New DiCE Resources



WRITING CHALLENGE AND LISTENING CIRCLES

The Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE) envisions a university where *all* Lobos are empowered to pursue success without barriers.

As part of our commitment to curiosity and the production of new knowledge, innovative research, and creative works, we are organizing two new initiatives modeled on NCFDD and the [circle process](#).

1. Writing Challenge: A low-stakes way to add accountability to our writing. We meet, say what we'll work on, and we work. All are welcome! To register: <https://goto.unm.edu/writingchallenge>
2. Faculty Listening Circles: Designed to help faculty listen to and

Writing Challenge:
Mondays and
Wednesdays
9:30 – 11:00 AM
<https://goto.unm.edu/writingchallenge>

Faculty Listening
Circles
Last Wednesday
month 11:00 AM –
12:00 PM
<https://goto.unm.edu/facultylisteningcircles>

**DIVISION FOR CHANGE
AND EMPOWERMENT**

support each other. These include topics such as feeling valued, managing overwhelm, and navigating teaching. We are currently working on creating circles for students and staff. To register: <https://goto.unm.edu/facultylisteningcircles>

Critical Analyses of US and Global Cultures (CAC)

The aim of the 3-credit "Critical Analyses of US and Global Cultures" (CAC) undergraduate degree requirement is to cultivate a critical analysis about the cultures, histories, and/or current circumstances of social groups who have experienced historic or contemporary differential treatment in the U.S. or in a global context.

Faculty/instructors, this is a reminder that the submission deadline to be listed as a CAC course in the upcoming academic year is this Friday, September 12, 2025.

For more information on the CAC's course requirements, the learning outcomes, and the submission process, a final zoom workshop will be held on **Thursday, September 11, 2025**.

11 September 2025 from 9:00 – 10:00 via Zoom
<https://unm.zoom.us/j/94077804631>

For more information, please visit the [CAC website](#).

2025–26 Alza Council

We are excited to announce that the Diversity Council has a new name: **Alza Council**. In Spanish, alza means "to rise," a reflection of our mission to uplift and amplify voices that too often go unheard. The Alza Council embodies our commitment to creating space for **all** Lobos, ensuring that every member of our community has the opportunity to rise and be heard.

The UNM Alza Council brings together individuals from a wide range of roles and areas of expertise across the University's academic and professional community. Council members represent the rich variety of perspectives and lived experiences found at UNM, and work collaboratively to foster a more welcoming, effective, and responsive environment for all. The Alza Council includes faculty, staff, and students who are committed to supporting UNM's ongoing efforts to strengthen community engagement, inclusive practices, and institutional excellence.

Alza Council meets the **first Wednesday** of each month during the academic year from 11:30-1:30PM in the Roberts Room of Scholes Hall (suite 204), with the first half hour reserved for 'Comida y Conexiones', a time to share a meal and build alliances across faculty and staff at UNM. For more information regarding the Alza Council, to receive the calendar invitations for AY25-26, or to be placed on the agenda, please contact Donna Lopez at dmlopez50@unm.edu.

Please note that our October 1st Alza Council Meeting will not be a regular meeting in Roberts Room. Instead, we will be joining the LGBTQ Resource Center for their Pride Flag Raising ceremony in the courtyard of Scholes Hall. Details in the flyer below.

Mark Your Calendars!



Lobo Pride Celebration

Wednesday, October 1st 2025

PRIDE FLAG RAISING & NAME UNVEILING

11:30 AM

Scholes Hall South

PRIDE MARCH

Depart from Scholes Hall Immediately

After Flag Ceremony

PRIDE HOWL

DRAG SHOW & DANCE PARTY

12:00pm

SUB Mall



For more
information,
contact us at:
[505.277.LGBT\(5428\)](mailto:505.277.LGBT(5428)@unm.edu)
or
lgbtqrc@unm.edu



DIVISION
FOR CHANGE
& EMPOWERMENT



OPEN HOUSE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

8-30AM – 10-30AM

8:00AM - 10:00AM
SCHOLES HALL - ROBERTS ROOM

Breakfast provided

What's Happening @ the LGBTQ Resource Center



Welcome Back
2025



A huge **THANK YOU** to all who
joined our Welcome Back event!
Your love, energy, and allyship
help keep our community
thriving. 🌟🌈

**WE ARE
HIRING**

**OPEN POSITION FOR:
OFFICE ASSISTANT**

The LGBTQ Resource Center is hiring an undergraduate student to work at the LGBTQ+ Center.

We're looking for someone who has workstudy, is good at interacting with people on a daily basis, and wants to take initiative to enhance the Queer and Trans experience on campus.

IF THIS IS YOU APPLY AT UNMJOBS.UNM.EDU
REQ:34527



LGBTQ
RESOURCE
CENTER

Virtual Open Safe Zone

September 19th
9 am- 12pm

Register for the
virtual workshop

Here

or by scanning the QR code





LGBTQ
RESOURCE
CENTER

In-Person Open Safe Zone

**November 17th
1-4PM**

Register for the
virtual workshop

Here

or by scanning the QR code



M
mpower

HIV Testing

Provided by MPower

Every 2nd Tuesday 10am-2pm:

09.09.25

10.14.25

11.11.25

12.09.25

**Come to the UNM LGBTQ Resource Center to get
FREE confidential rapid HIV testing.
No appointment needed!**



Juniper Reimagined is a queer and

**trans student alliance that serves as
a safe and welcoming community
space for all Lobos.**

- **Learn about community support and advocacy**
- **Get free food**
- **Make friends and form lifelong connections**

Join Us This Year!

**Wednesdays 6-9pm
LGBTQ Resource Center**



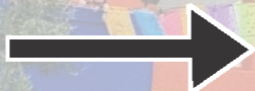
linktr.ee/juniperreimagined

**The Association
for Joteria
Arts, Activism,
and Scholarship**

and Scholarship

Join AJAAS to find
queer-trans Latino/a/e
community on campus
and participate in
events to uplift our
gente!

<https://tinyurl.com/InterestAJAAS>



Fill out the form and let
us know what events
you want to see!



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