



FACULTY NEWSLETTER

2-3 Chancellor and Dean Update

3-4 Garden Update

5 New Grant to Support Cancer Research at the UNM-Valencia

6 Three Sisters Conference Workshop

7 Literacy Council Workshop

8-9 Library Update

10 Faculty Assembly April 2026 Draft Agenda

10-12 Faculty Assembly March 2026 Draft Minutes

APRIL 2026

Chancellor and Dean Update

Dr. Laura Musselwhite

Thanks everyone for your work this term! The end of the semester is swiftly approaching, and this last month always seems to accelerate at an unusual rate. But, I am pleased to report that everything is on track for our end-of-year activities and ceremonies. We look forward to the following:

Earth Day – April 21 at 11:30am

End-of-Year Faculty Meeting and All-Campus Conference – April 24 at 9:00am

Chicana/o Studies Day – April 29 at 10:30am

Honors Night – April 29 at 5:30pm

Nurses Pinning – May 14 at 5:30pm

Adult Education/Allied Health Graduation – May 15 at 4:00pm

***College Commencement** – May 15 at 7:00pm

*Faculty will meet in the Academic Affairs Office to robe for graduation at 6:30pm on May 15.

The End-of-Year Faculty Meeting will be paired with the All-Campus Conference on April 24. Faculty will meet in LRC101C starting at 9:00am for our meeting, which will wrap up around 11:30am. We will then take a look at the 45th campus anniversary photo display and enjoy lunch with the staff, provided by Sanchez Tacos food truck. During lunch, Anicca Cox and Dominique Rodriguez will give everyone a presentation on their community engagement work with the Tomé Land Grant. Then we will move into the All-Campus Conference. It will be a great way to wrap up the year and get set for the summer.

GARDEN UPDATE

Patricia Gillikin and Valeria Acosta-Marta

Chancellor and Dean Update cont.

I want to thank Jerry Godbout and Julia So who will be taking some of my dean's duties next academic year while I continue as interim chancellor. Their assistance will be invaluable!

It has been a fascinating month as I explore territories unknown. Thus far, I have met with the UNM governmental relations team, the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, the Secretary of Higher Education, and the other branch chancellors. Everyone has been warm and welcoming as I settle in. As I have mentioned before, my goal is to stabilize our ship and keep us moving forward. With the excellent faculty and staff that we have, it will not be difficult. It has really been a joy and a privilege to work in this capacity because I see the campus from a different vantage point and interact with the community in different way. I look forward to what the summer will bring!



On April 4, students, staff, faculty, and community members, including kids, joined a garden work party. In addition to gardeners shoveling dirt, plowing, and making plans for planting, Karen Walter, Rosa Sisneros-Jimenez and several others brought materials for egg and rock decorating and egg hunting. Rosa also led the kids in planting seeds in small containers.



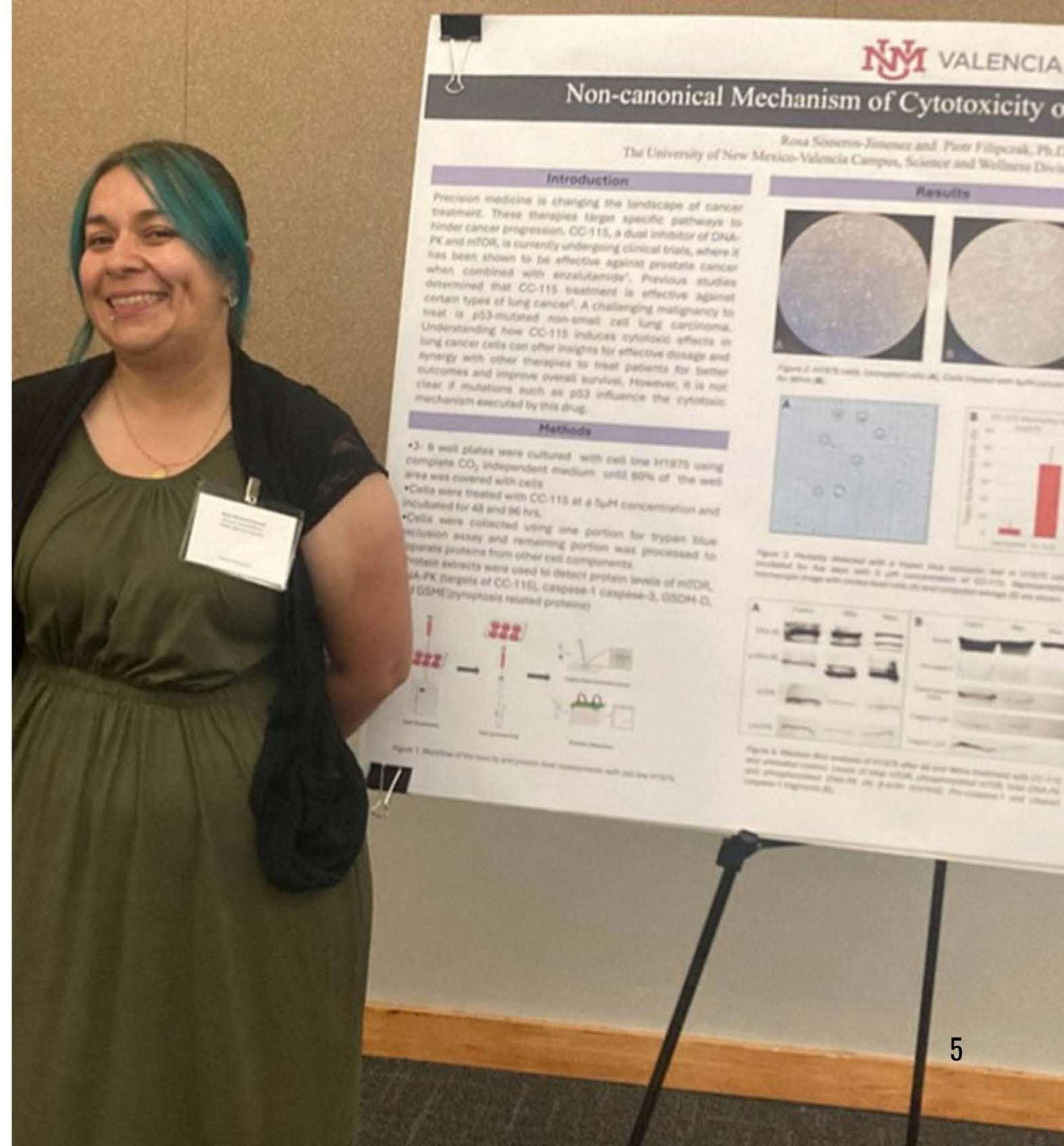
FUTURE GARDEN GATHERINGS

The next general garden meeting is Friday, May 1 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and the next garden work party is Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. In addition to these events, if you are interested in coming to plant or water in the garden, get in touch with Rosa, Wesley, Karen, Valeria, or Patricia. We have a discord server you can join if you like and there are always things to do!



New Grant to Support Cancer Research at UNM-Valencia

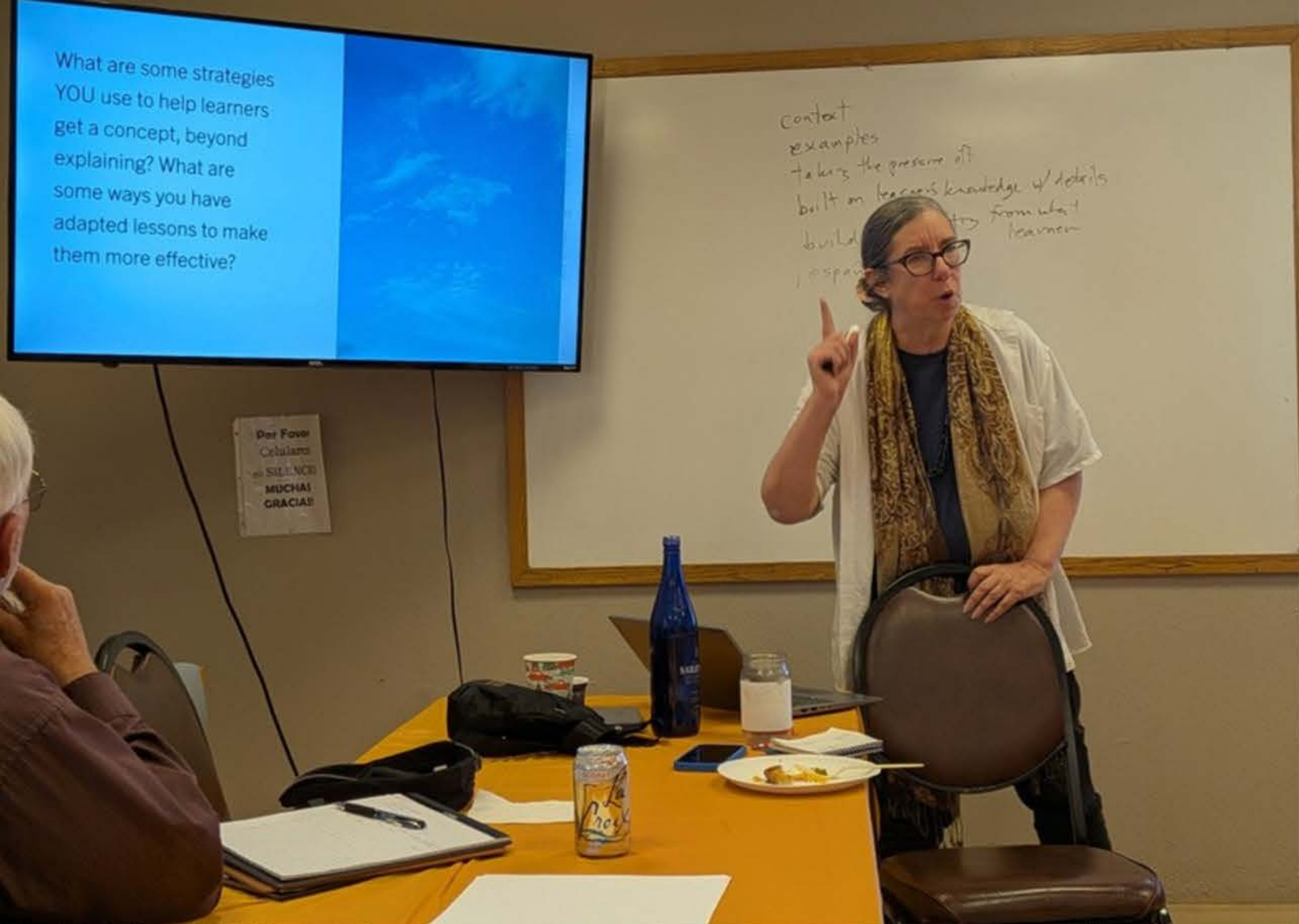
Dr. Piotr Filipczak and Rosa Sisneros-Jimenez were awarded a research grant from the Research Allocations Committee of the UNM. The proposal entitled “Non-canonical mechanism of toxicity of CC-115 anticancer drug candidate in p53-mutated lung cancers” was originally submitted during the Fall '25 funding cycle, subjected to edits after receiving feedback from peer-reviewers, and accepted for funding after resubmitting it in February of 2026. This award will support the research conducted by Rosa which aims to identify the mechanism of cell death induced by CC-115 therapeutic in lung cancer cells. Conduct of this research will take place during 2026/27 academic year and may help Rosa to enhance her findings to the form of publishable manuscript.





Three Sisters Conference Workshop

Valeria Acosta-Marta, student and Bilingual Writing Consultant, is playing a major role in the development of the garden, including in planning planting for the three sisters (corn, beans, and squash). On Saturday, March 21st, she gave a workshop at the 5th Annual Raza Youth Conference at UNM in Albuquerque on “What We Can Learn from the Three Sisters in Order to Cultivate a Stronger Community.” One of the organizers of the Raza Youth Conference is our own Professor Dominique Rodriguez.



Literacy Council Workshop

Karen Walter and Devon Hoffman of the Valencia County Literacy Council (VCLC) invited Patricia Gillikin to conduct a workshop for VCLC tutors, administrators, and board members for the organization's April 17 meeting at the El Cerro Mission Community Center. Patricia, joined by Bilingual Writing Consultant Valeria Acosta-Marta, led activities focused on adapting lessons and asking questions.



Library Updates

Kat Gullahorn & Barbara Lovato

Library Hours Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm



Celebrate 45 Years of UNM Valencia Exhibit

The library will be installing an exhibit of photos, papers, videos and realia for each decade of UNM-Valencia's 45 years. The exhibit will be available to view on April 24, 2026 and will remain up for the rest of the year.

Libraries Support Teaching and Learning

The Library is your portal to resources, collections, services, and librarians. [Check It Out!](#)

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Call the desk: 505-925-8990

Email: unmvclib@unm.edu (or contact any of us directly)

Text a Librarian: 505-916-1647

[See ALL the services available for faculty.](#)

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Faculty Assembly Meeting Draft Agenda
Wednesday, April 22, 2026 (12:00 – 1:15 PM)
Zoom Meeting URL: <https://unm.zoom.us/j/95216660903> (Passcode: Apr26)
In-person Meeting in H101

1. Call to Order (1 min) Dr. Andisheh Dadashi
2. Acceptance of Agenda (1 min)
3. Approval of Minutes (1 min)
4. Interim Chancellor and Dean of Instruction Report – Dr. Laura Musselwhite (20 min)
5. Treasurer’s Report - Dr. Piotr Filipczak (1 min)
6. Committee Accomplishments for AY25-26 (3 min per)
 - Faculty Handbook Committee
 - Faculty Communication Committee
7. Faculty Senate Report (5 min)
8. Nominations & Elections for FEC AY26-27 (15 min)
 - Faculty President-Elect/Treasurer nominees
 - Kat Gullahorn
 - Faculty Secretary nominees
 - Cindi Goodman
 - Two At-Large Representatives nominees
 - Dominique Rodriguez
 - Joshua Frank Cardenas
 - Adjunct Faculty Representative nominees
9. New Business / Announcements
10. Adjournment

Faculty Assembly Meeting Draft Minutes
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 (12:00 – 1:15 PM)
Zoom Meeting: <https://unm.zoom.us/j/97526594300> (Passcode: Mar26)
In-person Meeting in H101

1. Call to Order (1 min)
 - 12:04 Andisheh: Meeting called to order
2. Acceptance of Agenda (1 min)
 - Motion to accept: Michael Gonzales
 - Second: Ian Burch
3. Approval of Minutes (1 min)
 - Motion to approve: Ian Burch
 - Second: Mindy Schartz
4. Interim Chancellor and Dean of Instruction Report’s - Dr. Laura Musselwhite (30 min)
 - Leadership Transition & Search Timeline**
 - Permanent leadership search likely to **launch August 2026**
 - Rationale:
 - o Avoid summer when faculty are largely away
 - o Ensure meaningful faculty participation
 - Anticipated start date for permanent hire:
 - o **July or August 2027**
 - Dr. Musselwhite expects to serve **approximately one year** in the interim role
 - Timeline affected by:
 - o UNM presidential search
 - o Provost search at main campus
 - Administrative Structure Changes**
 - Decision **not to appoint a separate interim dean**
 - o Avoid overburdening faculty
 - o Avoid imposing leadership roles unexpectedly
 - New **liaison model** established:
 - o **Externally-facing academic affairs liaison**
 - Handles statewide UNM-wide committees
 - **Confirmed: Julia So**
 - o **Internally-facing academic affairs liaison**
 - Handles internal faculty issues (e.g. instructional council)
 - Provides intermediary between faculty/division chairs and Chancellor
 - Still under consideration
 - Emphasis on:
 - o Maintaining procedural protections for faculty
 - o Ensuring faculty have a safe escalation path
 - Institutional Climate & Faculty Relations**
 - Dr. Musselwhite addressed concerns about:
 - o Sudden leadership changes

- o Faculty discomfort and division
- Clarified that:
 - o Recent changes were **not abrupt**, but the result of ongoing issues
 - o A specific catalyzing event accelerated decisions
- Expressed commitment to:
 - o Collegiality
 - o Respect for differing viewpoints
 - o Rebuilding trust and morale
- Key themes:
 - o **Consistency** → **Stability**
 - o Acknowledgment of emotional impact on faculty and staff

Faculty Discussion on Healing & Communication

- **JuliaSo**
 - o Asked how administration plans to reunite faculty
 - o Emphasized value of open conversation
- **Suggestions Raised**
 - o Smaller group discussions to avoid escalating conflict
 - o Avoid large public forums that could become heated
- **Andisheh Dadashi**
 - o Proposed an **anonymous feedback platform**
 - Allows junior faculty to speak safely
 - Visible to faculty while protecting identities
- **Administrative Response**
 - o Dr. Musselwhite open to anonymous/platform-based dialogue
 - o Emphasized need for respectful, healthy discourse
 - o Commitment not to “sweep issues under the rug”
- Faculty encouraged to:
 - o Speak directly with Dr. Musselwhite
 - o Engage constructively, without fear of retaliation
- **Ana June**
 - o Offered to speak individually with faculty to explain her position

Staffing & Budget Updates

- **Library Cataloger position**
 - o Will be filled
- **STEM position**
 - o Will be filled
- Funding notes:
 - o Savings identified in library and STEM budgets
 - o Possibility of immediate hiring
 - o July 1 start dates if needed (new fiscal year)
- Budget outlook:
 - o Typical pattern of large early-year deficit shrinking by late March
 - o Current deficit considered manageable

5. Treasurer's Report – Dr. Piotr Filipczak (1 min)

- Faculty fund balance: **\$275.75**
- Residual “snack” fund: **\$78.85**

6. Committee Accomplishments for AY 25-26 (3 min per)

- Adjunct Faculty Committee: Karen Walter

Reported wins via union negotiations:

- Movement toward full-time and longer-term positions
- Compensation for pre-semester preparation week

Communication success:

- ~80% of adjuncts opened union updates

Ongoing challenge:

- Low adjunct participation in meetings

Continued efforts:

- Exploring strategies to improve adjunct engagement

- EIRG: Joshua Cardenas:

Focused on:

- Coordination with other campus committees
- Avoiding duplication of effort

Participation in cross-branch diversity committee

Internal restructuring after chair departure

Current priorities:

- Capacity building
- Strategic planning

Goal: Present clearer mission and structure in Fall 2026

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7. Faculty Senate Report (5 min)

Jonathan Sims: **Key Senate Topics**

- Health insurance changes:
 - o Four plan options
 - o Premium increases:
 - ~10% without GLP-1 drug coverage
 - ~20% with GLP-1 coverage
 - o Approx. **480 faculty** using GLP-1 medications
- Joint resolution (UNM & CNM):
 - o Opposing the Compact for Academic Excellence
 - o Cited concerns over ideological conditions
- Formation of working group:
 - o Reviewing Dean's Evaluation Surveys
 - o Open call for participation

Other Senate Business

- Breakout sessions to set priorities for next year
- Discussion of branch-to-main campus student visits
- Approval of a posthumous degree (pending Regents)
- Branch Campus Colleges Council:
 - Ongoing quorum challenges
 - Bylaw revisions underway
 - Meetings to be shared via faculty listservs
- Adjunct benefit update:
 - Benefits eligibility now at **0.5 FTE** (previously 0.75)

8. Faculty security and safety on campus – Dr. Andisheh Dadashi (5 min)

Concern raised previously about faculty safety

Recent safety trainings shared (FEMA, workshops)

Some sessions already underway

Administration invited faculty with safety concerns to:

Speak directly with Dr. Musselwhite or Rick Goshorn

9. NewBusiness / Announcements

Campus Garden

- Ongoing gardening activities and meetings
- Events:
 - Garden meeting: Friday (10AM)
 - Major work party: **Saturday, April 4, 9 AM–12 PM**
 - Snacks and egg decorating included
- Faculty encouraged to visit greenhouse and garden

Academic Events

- **All-Campus Academy**
 - Friday at 10 AM (Zoom only)
 - Presentation on **CURE in the Classroom**
- **Undergraduate Research Day (Dual Credit)**
 - April 9, 6–7 PM
 - ~40 students from Belin High School
 - Focus on microbiology and disease topics

Recognition

- **Andisheh Dadashi**
 - Recipient of Teaching Excellence award (Communication)
 - Ceremony: April 8 at 4 PM (Center for Teaching & Learning)

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:49

In Attendance:

Laura Musselwhite
 Andisheh Dadashi
 Cindi Goodman
 Piotr Filipczak
 Ana June
 Elisa DiMenna
 Andy Taylor
 Debra Venable
 Precious Andrew
 Jonathan Sims
 Michael Gonzales
 Dominique Rodriguez
 Stephen Takach
 Frances Duran
 Tim Gutierrez
 Jerry Godbout
 Renee Depres
 Joshua Frank Cardenas
 Patricia Gillikin
 Karen Walter
 Kat Gullahorn
 Ian Burch
 Ben Flicker
 Mindy Schwarz
 Julia So
 Barbara Lovato

