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NEWS

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Above: Dean Leo Lo visits the University of Hong Kong (HKU) where he shares UNM strategies for empowering users with AI resources and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration.

In November 2024, Dean Leo Lo had the extraordinary honor of representing the University of New Mexico on a professional and deeply meaningful journey to Hong Kong. Read the full story on page 1.



BUILDING BRIDGES: SHARING UNM'S EXPERTISE ON AI AND LIBRARIES IN HONG KONG

BY DEAN LEO LO

This past November, I had the extraordinary honor of representing the University of New Mexico on a professional and deeply meaningful journey to Hong Kong. As Dean of the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences, I was invited to share the work we are doing in AI literacy, workforce upskilling, and the evolving role of libraries at the Global AI Forum 2024, hosted by Times Higher Education. In addition, I had the privilege of delivering talks at three of Hong Kong's leading institutions: The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), The University of Hong Kong (HKU), and The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST).

This trip underscored the transformative role of libraries in shaping the future of education and technology. While my visit focused on sharing UNM's story and innovations, I was equally inspired by the incredible work happening in Hong Kong libraries, where forward-thinking projects are setting new benchmarks in the field.

Highlighting UNM's Leadership

At each institution, I shared insights on UNM's growing role in addressing critical issues in higher education, including:

- AI Literacy: Equipping students, faculty, and communities with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven world.
- Workforce Upskilling: Leveraging libraries to prepare students for high-demand careers while addressing the digital divide.
- Ethical Awareness: Promoting responsible use of technology and fostering critical thinking in AI applications.

At CUHK, I spoke about UNM's work in turning libraries into hubs for innovation and opportunity. Their librarians were particularly interested in how we are integrating AI tools into workforce development and addressing the unique challenges of under-resourced communities.

At HKU, I shared UNM's strategies for empowering users with AI resources and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. Our AI literacy initiatives, emphasizing practical applications and ethical awareness, sparked valuable conversations about how libraries can support lifelong learning.

At HKUST, I reflected on our approach to integrating AI into library services, particularly in ways that ensure accessibility and inclusivity. This resonated with their mission of preparing students for the future through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches.

The discussions made it clear that UNM is seen as a forward-thinking institution on the global stage, with a commitment to tackling the challenges and opportunities presented by AI.

[Read the full story](#)

"This trip underscored the transformative role of libraries in shaping the future of education and technology."



Dean Leo Lo pictured at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (left) and at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (below) where he shared CULLS experiences in navigating AI in higher education.





LOVE IN THE ARCHIVES

then & now

A CELEBRATION OF CREATIVITY AND CHANGE

The Center for Southwest Research and Special Collections celebrated their annual Love in the Archives event on February 13. This year's theme, Then and Now, explored how art, technology, and communication have transformed over time, reflecting the ever-evolving nature of human creativity and innovation. Visitors had the opportunity to step back in time and examine historical artifacts alongside their modern counterparts. From drawings to completed masterpieces, the first use of computers in art to AI generated art, the evolution of the campus library at UNM, and changing attitudes toward content in public television, this year's collections highlighted how the past continues to shape the present.

Love in the Archives is a cherished annual event showcasing CSWR's extensive collection of historical and digital memorabilia, offering a unique glimpse into the cultural shifts that define our shared history. In case you missed the in-person event, you can read about the featured collections at goto.unm.edu/lita2025.



Top: Attendees enjoy the arts & crafts table located outside the Frank Water's Room.

Bottom: Attendees view the collections featured at this year's Love in the Archives.

VOICES AND IMAGES FROM THE SOUTHWEST

THE VAL DE LA O SHOW AND NASARIO GARCÍA ORAL HISTORIES AND PAPERS/ HISTORIAS ORALES Y FONDO DOCUMENTAL NASARIO GARCÍA PROJECTS

By Maria Feliza Monta Jameson, Center for Regional Studies Fellow

I processed and digitized the Val de la O Show and the Nasario García Oral Histories and Papers Collections. As the CRS Manuscript Digital Imaging Fellow, I work under the supervision of Archivist Samuel Sisneros. My work involves processing, rehousing, arrangement, description, and creation of a finding guide for public access on the New Mexico Archives Online. Additionally, I transferred video and audio files to accessible formats such as MP3 and MP4 files that I upload to the UNM Digital Repository for open access.

Specifically, the Val de la O Collection centers around his variety/talk shows aired in the early 1960s in Albuquerque, NM. The Val de la O Show became nationally and internationally popular in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s as the first syndicated Spanish language program in the U.S. The Val de la O Show paved the road to future syndicated shows conducted in Spanish language within the United States. The Nasario García Oral Histories and Papers contains oral histories and participants' profiles that he compiled from elders of New Mexico and the Southwest from 1968 to 2005. Besides the ethnographic interview materials, this collection includes Dr. García's original manuscripts for his awarded publications,

correspondence with publishers and documents of his teaching and writer's career. There are about two hundred audio tapes with the interviews originally recorded in Spanish language that I digitized from tape to MP3 files, currently accessible through the UNM Digital Repository.

The fascinating part of processing and digitizing these collections has been my learning about the culture and views of the Hispanic community in New Mexico, a perspective that I as a Latin American scholar share. The richness of the accounts and dialogs in the Nasario García Papers unveil important aspects of culture, language, economy, religion, and politics of life of the Hispanic population in the rural areas of Northern New Mexico in the mid-twentieth century and early 2000s. I am incredibly grateful to the Center for Regional Studies and Samuel Sisneros at the CSWR for their support, mentorship, and professional learning I have received during this fellowship. My learnings during this fellowship contribute to my scholarship and professional career as a Sociolinguist, educator, and archivist.



Maria Feliza Monta Jameson is an Educational Linguistics PhD candidate in the LLSS Department at UNM College of Education and Human Sciences. Her dissertation research focuses on second language education policy and teaching. An avid researcher of language as social action and identity shaper, she has worked with the historical archives at the CSWR since 2012 and currently she collaborates as an Associate Paleographer and Archive Researcher with the Native Bound Unbound Digital Archive of Indigenous Slavery, a Mellon Foundation sponsored Project that supports the creation of an open-source central repository of the enslaved Indigenous in the west hemisphere. She cherishes all her experiences and skills with the historical archives as assets for her prospective academic career.

INTERVIEWS FROM THE ANSELMO ARELLANO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BY JUDY A. GARCIA, CSWR FELLOW



I was surprised but excited to find out I was working on this project as I have found many connections to my own family as Arrellano was a very good friend of one of my brothers and I met Arrellano a few times.

I have been privileged to work under the supervision of Samuel Sisneros at the Center for Southwest Research & Special Collections here at the University of New Mexico during the Spring 2025 semester.

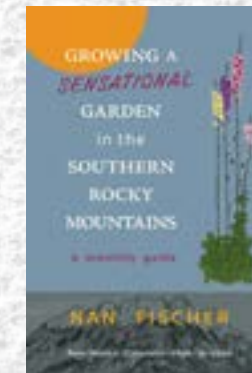
Currently I am working on digitizing interviews from the Anselmo Arellano Oral History Project. Arrellano spent many hours in the 1970s and 80s interviewing the elders of the Las Vegas, New Mexico area with the use of a cassette tape player and cassettes. It is these cassettes that I am converting to MP3 with the goal to get these stories online through the Center for Southwest Research and available to the public. Along with these recordings I am working on a database that will make locating the interviewees and topics easily available to the public. Some of the topics of discussion on these recordings are ranching, farming, genealogy, food and much more.

Dr. Arrellano was a Nuevomexicano historian who was born in Springer, New Mexico and taught at Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico. I must add I was surprised but excited to find out I was working on this project as I have found many connections to my own family as Arrellano was a very good friend of one of my brothers and I met Arrellano a few times. In fact, years ago when I started doing oral interviews of the people from the Manzano Mountains where my family comes from, Arrellano sent me a very nice letter with lots of encouragement and acknowledgement of my work. Arrellano passed away in 2021 whose celebration of life I attended.

Arrellano was dedicated to preserving the stories of the Nuevomexicano people as is evident in the number of recordings and data he collected throughout the years. I hope to make a big dent on some of these collections and make them available to the public before I leave the university as I will be graduating in May of 2025 with a MA in Spanish with a concentration in Hispanic SW Studies.

NEW RELEASE FROM UNM PRESS

CHECK OUT THESE RECENT UNM PRESS RELEASES AND FIND MORE AT UNMPRESS.COM.



Requiem for America's Best Idea

National Parks in the Era of Climate Change

by Michael J. Yochim

Foreword by William R. Lowry

Dichos en Nichos

by Sage Vogel

By (artist) Jim Vogel and Christen Vogel

Off Izaak Walton Road

The Grace That Comes Through Loss

by Laura Julier

Driving Terror

Labor, Violence, and Justice in Cold War Argentina

by Karen Robert

Airstream Country

A Geologic Journey Across the American West

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Art of Darkness

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Illustrated by Dale DeForest

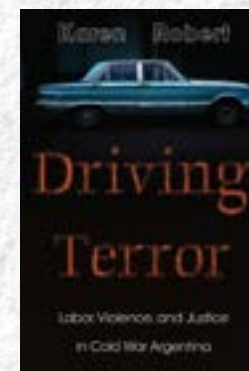
Afterword by David Heska Wanbli Weiden

The Shining Mountains

A Novel by Alix Christie

Growing a Sensational Garden in the Southern Rocky Mountains

A Monthly Guide by Nan Fischer



DR. MELINA VIZCAÍNO-ALEMÁN: A LOBO FOR LIFE AND CHAMPION OF LITERATURE



Born and raised in Albuquerque, Dr. Melina Vizcaíno-Alemán proudly considers herself a “Lobo for life.” A graduate of Albuquerque High, she earned all three of her degrees from The University of New Mexico (UNM)—an institution that holds deep personal significance for her.

“My heart and soul live at UNM,” Dr. Alemán shares. “I also gave birth to both of my children while I was an undergraduate here, so the university is more than just my alma mater—it’s part of my life’s journey.”

That journey, however, was far from easy. Juggling the demands of new motherhood while navigating the rigorous pressures of academia proved to be a formidable challenge.

She also struggled to find her academic path, changing majors several times before ultimately discovering her passion in American Studies. In 2010, she earned her Ph.D., marking the culmination of years of dedication and resilience.

“I learned very quickly the importance of community as a young mother trying to earn my degree,” Dr. Alemán reflects. “Mentors gave me the support and determination I needed to persevere.”

One of those mentors was Rudolfo Anaya, the legendary Chicano writer best known for *Bless Me, Ultima*. Alemán first met him during her second year at UNM, a moment that would shape the course of her career.

“Having read and studied his work for years, I was deeply honored not only to meet Mr. Anaya but also to work alongside him,” she recalls.

HONORING RUDOLFO ANAYA’S LEGACY

Dr. Alemán played a pivotal role in developing the Rudolfo Anaya Lecture Series at UNM’s College of Arts & Sciences—a decade-long initiative celebrating Anaya’s literary legacy. The series highlights authors, scholars, and storytellers whose work focuses on the Southwest, Chicano/a/x literature, and Indigenous storytelling traditions, ensuring that Anaya’s influence continues to inspire new generations.

When UNM’s College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences approached her about creating a dedicated space honoring Anaya’s legacy inside Zimmerman Library, she didn’t hesitate.

“Mr. Anaya did so much of his research and writing at Zimmerman Library, and libraries have always been an anchor of community for me, so I was thrilled to be part of this incredible initiative,” she says.

After three years of planning and fundraising, the Rudolfo Anaya Sala officially opened in Zimmerman Library in October 17, 2023, with prominent figures like Mayor Tim Keller and President Garnett Stokes sharing their heartfelt memories of Anaya. Dr. Alemán was proud to be among the distinguished speakers at the event.

“It was an emotional day for me, knowing how much effort went into bringing this special space to life,” she says. “My goal now is to ensure that the Rudolfo Anaya Sala becomes a vibrant space—a place where students can learn, where programs can thrive, and where people can be inspired by the incredible body of work Mr. Anaya left behind.”

Reflecting on the journey, she underscores the power of collective giving and community action.

“The Sala ribbon-cutting reminded me of what we can accomplish when we come together for a shared mission. There is something profoundly human about giving back, and the internal reward of doing so is immeasurable.”

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OILS FACULTY RECIPIENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL EARLY CAREER AWARD FOR SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS

BY CARLY BOWLING, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER,
UNM SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING



The White House named two University of New Mexico faculty members recipients of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), widely recognized as the highest honor bestowed upon early-career scientists and engineers. Professor Vanessa Svihla and Associate Professor Matthew Lakin were each nominated by the National Science Foundation.

PECASE recognizes scientists and engineers who show exceptional leadership potential early in their research careers. The award recognizes innovative and far-reaching developments in science and technology, expands awareness of careers in science and engineering, recognizes the scientific missions of participating agencies, enhances connections between research and its impacts on society, and highlights the importance of science and technology for our nation's future. Individuals can receive only one PECASE award in their careers.

The NSF selects its PECASE nominees from among its highest-achieving CAREER Award recipients. Nominees must showcase innovative research, demonstrated community service and a commitment to equity, diversity, accessibility or inclusion in STEM.

Vanessa Svihla - Framing Agency in Making and Engineering

Vanessa Svihla is a professor in the Organization, Information and Learning Sciences and holds an appointment in the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering. She also serves as special assistant to the dean for learning sciences in the School of Engineering. In 2018, she received an NSF CAREER Award for Framing and Reframing Agency in Making and Engineering.

Svihla was awarded for her work related to framing agency in engineering classrooms. Through her research, she aims to clarify and design instructional tools and activities that can help students take ownership over their learning. Because

classes are often structured around students answering problems that have a single correct answer, they don't always understand how to direct their own study when faced with real-world, open-ended design problems. Through her research, Svihla has found that engineering students who felt more responsible for framing problems in their design courses felt more confident and more like they belonged in engineering. This confidence was shown to create a stronger commitment to pursue engineering careers in students from minoritized racial and ethnic groups.

Svihla also developed the Wrong Theory Protocol. An alternative to traditional brainstorming, the Protocol asks designers to quickly frame a problem and generate ideas that would be harmful or humiliating to the stakeholder before generating beneficial ideas. She has found that the protocol helps designers develop more creative and empathetic concepts. The theory has since been featured on NPR and utilized by people outside of STEM fields.

"For me, the PECASE award adds affirmation that focusing on problem framing, rather than problem-solving, and on enhancing students' agency are valuable. The award also bolsters my commitment to understanding ways to further improve design education in engineering and our recently created undergraduate Interdisciplinary Design Certificate at UNM," Svihla said. "Doing so means we can reach more equitable and just outcomes for New Mexican students. In particular, I am investigating how we can activate students' everyday and cultural experiences by asking them to work on design problems that impact New Mexico while emphasizing *querencia*—their knowledge of and responsibility to the places they come from."

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The OILS program connects students to practical knowledge and successful careers in a variety of fields and applications. Our graduates make meaningful contributions to society. Your financial support will provide increased access and opportunity for students.

[OILS General Fund](#)

This fund provides program support to the Organization, Information & Learning Science Program.

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[Deborah K. LaPointe OILS Endowed Scholarship Fund](#)

This endowment from the family of Deborah LaPointe established a scholarship to support students in the OILS program and to commemorate the work and life of Deborah LaPointe.

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