THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

Business and Economic Summit

Translating New Mexico Technologies into Job Creation — Impact of Research and Development in New Mexico

Thursday, November 19, 2026 | 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (MST) | Lobo Rainforest Building

SPEAKER BIOS

8:30–8:45 AM Welcome & Opening Remarks



Barbara Rodriguez, PhD

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, The University of New Mexico

Barbara Rodriguez, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, is proud to be a native New Mexican, growing up in Española. She has been senior vice provost since 2018, and in her role, she oversees faculty personnel matters, including tenure and promotion; faculty labor relations; and academic policies and procedures.

Rodriguez is a professor of speech and hearing sciences at UNM, joining the faculty in the department in 1999. Before joining the faculty, she worked as a bilingual clinician throughout New Mexico, including in K-12 public education settings, and directed the UNM Speech Language and Hearing Clinic from 1992-1994.

She earned both her bachelor of arts and master of science degrees at UNM and her Ph.D. in speech-language pathology from the University of Washington. She considers UNM her academic home and feels fortunate to have been able to return to UNM as a tenure-track faculty member after earning her doctorate.



Victor W. Hwang

Founder & CEO, Right to Start

Victor is an economic growth expert. His ideas have shaped the economic lives of millions of people worldwide.

His work has helped over 300 communities, cities, states, companies, and even entire countries in creating greater economic prosperity.

His economic development clients have included the World Bank, Ford Foundation, Inter-American Development Bank, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. He has also worked with corporate clients seeking to grow entrepreneurial innovation, including Accenture, IBM, and Microsoft.

He is founder and CEO of Victor & Company, an economic growth consultancy.

He is founder and CEO of Right to Start, a campaign fighting to expand entrepreneurial opportunity for all. Right to Start seeks to level the playing field by lifting the voices of everyday entrepreneurs, grassroots mobilizing and organizing, and engaging with policymakers at all levels.

Previously, he was Vice President of Entrepreneurship at the Kauffman Foundation, the world's leading philanthropy supporting entrepreneurs with an endowment of $2 billion. At Kauffman, he led initiatives that impacted over 200,000 entrepreneurs, including efforts in catalyzing capital formation, transforming economic development practices, launching a national policy roadmap, and breaking barriers for underserved entrepreneurs.

Victor has created two leading conferences on unleashing innovation and entrepreneurship: Global Innovation Summit and ESHIP Summit. The Global Innovation Summit became Silicon Valley's leading conference on building innovative economies, with over 1,000 delegates from 50 nations. The ESHIP Summit, during Victor's term at the Kauffman Foundation, became the nation's leading conference on building entrepreneurial communities, with over 1,200 attendees from all 50 states and over 100 mayors and key staff.

Victor was co-founder and CEO of the startup Liquidity, a Silicon Valley venture-backed firm making safe drinking water filtration based on nanotech manufacturing. He led the company through product launch, early revenues, and winning the TechCrunch Disrupt startup competition.

He was CEO and co-founder of T2 Venture Creation, a venture firm that built startup companies and designed ecosystems that fostered entrepreneurial innovation in dozens of countries and cities. He was President and Chief Operating Officer of Larta Institute, an organization commercializing technology from key government agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. He was chief strategy officer of Veatros, a video startup where he led the company's acquisition by a public company. Victor practiced corporate and technology law with the firms of Mayer, Brown & Platt and Irell & Manella. He has been a contributing columnist to Inc., Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, TechCrunch, and Entrepreneur, and his opinions have been cited in The New York Times and the Los Angeles Times, among others. National Public Radio named his graduation address to Austin Community College one of "the best commencement speeches ever." Victor pioneered the use of the metaphor "rainforest" in a business context. He applied it to show how communities can replicate the historical innovation dynamics of Silicon Valley. His co-authored book, The Rainforest, was awarded Book of the Year, Gold Medal, by ForeWord Reviews for "a big idea that defines a way of thinking."

Victor received his bachelors degree (with honors) from Harvard University, where he studied Government, plus additional studies in Computer Science. He received his law degree from the University of Chicago.

8:45–9:45 AM Commercialization Impact of Research Universities & Labs Panel



MODERATOR

Lisa Kuuttila

CEO & Chief Economic Development Officer, UNM Rainforest Innovations

Lisa Kuuttila joined UNM Rainforest Innovations (UNMRI), the University of New Mexico's technology-transfer and economic development arm, as President & CEO in 2003. She is currently CEO & Chief Economic Development Officer of the organization. She works with the UNM Rainforest Innovations Board of Directors in developing strategies for implementing UNMRI's vision to play a vital role in New Mexico's economic development and to be a leader in technology commercialization. Under her leadership, UNM Rainforest Innovations is substantially growing its program using the Rainforest model to develop an innovation ecosystem in New Mexico.

Ms. Kuuttila has more than 30 years of prior leadership experience in technology commercialization and entrepreneurial ecosystem development. This includes positions as Assistant Vice President for Technology Commercialization at Purdue Research Foundation; Director, Technology Commercialization, University of Georgia; and Director, Office of Technology Commercialization, Center for Advanced Technology Development, Iowa State University. Her prior experience also includes a consulting practice that provided strategic marketing and technology-transfer consulting services for a wide variety of well-known technology corporations, universities and foundations, including Stanford University. She began her career in industry in several engineering and technology-marketing positions. Lisa received a B.S. Electrical Engineering from the University of Michigan and an M.S. in Public Administration from Iowa State University. She is also a graduate of the Venture Capital Institute.

Ms. Kuuttila has published extensively in her field, is an active speaker and has made presentations throughout her career to many organizations, such as the Association of University Technology Managers (AUTM), the Association of University Related Research Parks (AURRP), the Licensing Executives Society (LES), and other national and international conferences and forums. Ms. Kuuttila serves on the boards of the New Mexico Angels, a private membership organization for qualified angel investors, and the Coronado Ventures Forum, a non-profit corporation focused on development, education and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and angel and professional investors. She is also affiliated with a number of other initiatives.



Lique Coolen, PhD

Vice President for Research, Provost, and Acting Director, Office of Innovation and Commercialization, New Mexico Tech

Dr. Coolen joined New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (New Mexico Tech) in January 2025. She serves as Vice President for Research overseeing all research activities and funding across New Mexico Tech, including ten Research Centers, sponsored projects, research safety and compliance, and tech transfer and commercialization. Since August 2025 she also serves as Provost and Vice President for Academic affairs at New Mexico, overseeing all academic programs and faculty affairs.

A neuroscientist with academic leadership experience, she previously served as Associate Dean of Research and Faculty Development, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, director of the School of Biomedical Sciences, director of the Office of Postdoctoral Studies at Kent State University, and as Associate Dean of Postdoctoral and Professional Development and director of Research Development at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Most recently prior to joining New Mexico Tech, Dr. Coolen served in the Division of Academic Affairs as Assistant for Special Projects to the Provost and Senior Vice President at Kent State University, where she directed numerous initiatives to enhance student enrollment and workforce development for STEM trainees, to enrich professional development for postdoctoral trainees and faculty, and to develop projects for economic and community engagement. In addition, she served as Assistant Director of the Brain Health Research Institute at Kent State University where she developed and directed a neuro-imagining core facility and undergraduate student research program. Finally, she has held multiple leadership roles in professional societies and currently serves on Council for the Society of Experimental Biology and Medicine, Science Policy Council for the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, and as Chair of the Neuroscience Training Committee for the Society for Neuroscience and develops professional development and responsible conduct of research curriculum for students, faculty, and administrators in higher education.

Dr. Coolen holds faculty positions in the Biology and Class departments at New Mexico Tech and has previously held faculty positions at the University of Cincinnati, University of Western Ontario, University of Michigan, University of Mississippi Medical Center, and most recently at Kent State University. She has mentored 30 graduate students,17 postdoctoral fellows and over 50 undergraduate and high school students in her research laboratory. She has received numerous awards for her research, teaching, and mentoring and has published over 140 original peer-reviewed publications and book chapters describing her research on neuroendocrine function, spinal cord injury, and drug addiction. Her research has been continuously funded by multiple federal agencies and foundations and is currently funded by the National Institute of Health. Dr. Coolen's research has been widely cited with an H-index of 59 and she is recognized as one of the world's top 2% scientists in her field by Elsevier and Stanford University.

Dr. Coolen received Bachelor of Science and Masters degrees in Psychology from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands, a PhD in Medical Biology/Neuroscience from the Radboud University in Nijmegen in the Netherlands, completed postdoctoral training at Yale University and the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and an Executive Master of Business Administration degree at Kent State University.



Mary Monson

Sr. Manager, Technology Partnerships and Business Development, Sandia National Labs

Mary Monson has over 25 years of management experience at Sandia National Laboratories in technology partnerships, intellectual property (IP), commercialization, and business development. She is the Senior Manager and ORTA Program Director for all technology transfer and business development activities at Sandia. This $30 million program fosters partnerships with industry, academia, government, and other laboratories and is responsible for deploying Sandia's IP portfolio of 3000+ patents/copyrights. Previously, she was responsible for managing and licensing Sandia's IP portfolio which led to an increase in commercial licensing by 130%. She established the business development capability at Sandia, which is now over 100 staff and supports all Sandia mission portfolios. Mary serves on the executive board of the DOE Technology Transfer Working Group (TTWG) and has served as chair of the National Laboratories Technology Transfer (NLTT) executives. In support of economic development in New Mexico, she also serves on the board of the state's Technology Research Collaborative and the executive board of the New Mexico Biotechnology and Biomedical Association (NMBio). Prior to joining Sandia, Mary worked for a decade in high tech companies including Unisys Corporation, Texas Instruments, and Digital Equipment Corporation.



Carlos Murguia

Economic Development Officer, Sr, Arrowhead Center, NMSU

Carlos Murguia is the Director of the Technology and Innovation Gateway and the Hunt Center for Entrepreneurship. In this role, he leads a portfolio of programs that support technology commercialization, innovation, and entrepreneurship, including small business assistance, clean energy and resilience initiatives, prototyping, and technology-focused accelerators across New Mexico and the Borderplex. As part of the Arrowhead Center, Carlos works closely with startups, researchers, investors, and regional partners to advance innovation-driven ventures, strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and expand access to capital and technical assistance for founders statewide.



Candice Siebenthal

Program Manager, Technology Engagement & Entrepreneurship, Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation, Los Alamos National Laboratory

With ~15 years of expertise in technology commercialization and business development, Candice currently serves as Commercialization Manager at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Her work focuses on driving innovation to market and mission-driven applications through strategic negotiations, robust product management practices, and cross-functional team leadership. She is passionate about fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems and connecting cutting-edge technologies with industry and government partners to achieve impactful outcomes aligned with the organization's mission.

At Los Alamos, Candice leads initiatives that enhance technology licensing agreements and implement product-management methodologies to optimize product-market fit for R&D portfolios. By aligning technical teams, executive leadership, and external stakeholders, she facilitates the successful commercialization of high-priority innovations. Her efforts have empowered the organization to bridge the gap between science and market impact, advancing both national security and private-sector collaboration.

9:45–10:30 AM Quantum & Artificial Intelligence Panel



MODERATOR

Robert “Bob” Ledoux, PhD

Director, Quantum New Mexico Institute (QNM-I)

Ledoux comes to UNM after serving as program director at the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E). He oversaw several programs, including the ARPA-E ONWARDS program, which aims to reduce the disposal impact of advanced reactor waste, INTERMODAL, which models resiliency and decarbonization pathways for intermodal freight, and the LENR study of low-energy nuclear interactions for possible use as an energy source. During his tenure at ARPA-E, Ledoux also made remarkable strides in the development of the QC3 program, a groundbreaking initiative designed to propel quantum computing software into new realms of possibility, particularly within the fields of chemistry and materials science.

Prior to joining ARPA-E, Ledoux served as CEO and founder of Passport Systems, a pioneering technology company specializing in non-intrusive cargo inspection. Ledoux was responsible for co-inventing new technologies with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office to aid in the non-intrusive inspection of cargo. He has also co-authored more than 20 U.S. and international patents.

In 1981, Ledoux received his doctorate in experimental nuclear physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and brings with him more than 30 years of professional and entrepreneurial experience.



Quintin Rizek

Manager of Investment Analysis, Roadrunner Venture Studios

Quintin Rizek is Manager of Investment Analysis at Roadrunner Venture Studios, where he supports deal evaluation, financial modeling, and portfolio company development.

Prior to Roadrunner, Quintin spent over a decade at Baobob, the family office of Wes Edens, most recently as Chief of Staff, where he led M&A execution, corporate development, and business development. His experience spans energy infrastructure, healthcare, and sports and entertainment, with a focus on deal execution, financial modeling, and board and investor communications.

Quintin holds a degree in neuroscience from Brown University, where he played Division I football.



Stephen Buchanan

Co-Founder & CEO, Bandelier Technologies

Stephen Buchanan is a CPA, Green Beret, and Harvard MBA. After letting go of his dream to become a professional basketball player, Stephen began his career as a CPA in Chattanooga, TN. Seeking a greater sense of mission, he joined the U.S. Army. Stephen spent two years as a paratrooper stationed in Italy before earning a place among the U.S. Army Special Forces. As a Green Beret, he spent time throughout the Middle East, working closely and developing relationships with partner nation special operations forces.

Following his military service, Stephen began his MBA at Harvard Business School and will graduate in May 2026. Building on a family legacy of entrepreneurship, Stephen is the founder and the CEO of Bandelier Technologies.

Stephen currently lives in Boston with his wife and their two daughters, and they are making plans to move to northern New Mexico in the near future. Together, they share a love for the outdoors and active adventures.



Denis Seletskiy, PhD

CEO, SELA Photonics

Denis Seletskiy is currently an Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of New Mexico. Seletskiy received his PhD from the Optical Sciences and Engineering program at the University of New Mexico in 2010 (advisor: Mansoor Sheik-Bahae; with distinction), followed by a National Research Council postdoctoral fellowship at Air Force Research Laboratories (2010-2012) and a 5-year junior group leader position and Marie Curie Zukuntskolleg Research fellowship at the University of Konstanz, Germany.

From 2017-2025, Seletskiy was a faculty at Polytechnique Montreal (Canada) and a holder of Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in "Ultrafast and Quantum Photonics", where he also founded femtoQ.Poly research laboratory. He is currently heading femtoQ.UNM research laboratory and a user facility, dedicated to fundamental studies and technology-driven investigations of ultrafast and quantum phenomena, following the research lines stated in the profile above. The femtoQ lab advances theory, laser technology and metrology protocols for ultrafast quantum photonics and related fields.

Seletskiy's scientific contributions span topics such as experimental quantum electrodynamics [Science (2015), Nature (2017), Nature Physics (2019), Phys. Rev. A (2020), Phys. Rev. Research (2023)]; extreme nonlinear and quantum optics [Scientific Reports (2016), Phys Rev Lett (2021), Nature Physics (2024)], femtosecond frequency combs [Optica (2015), Opt Lett (2017), Phys Rev Lett (2019),Laser Phot Rev (2023)]; ultrafast science and technology [Eur. J. Phys. (2017), Laser Phot Rev (2025), Ultrafast Science (2025), Optica (2025)], and other topics. For more information, please visit our website (coming soon). Since October 2022, Seletskiy is leading a European-Canadian Quantum Flagship Consortium in Mid-Infrared Quantum Technologies for Sensing (MIRAQLS).

10:45–11:30 AM Advanced Energy Panel



MODERATOR

Charles Call, PhD

CEO, Pii Energy

Dr. Charles Call is an experienced technology business leader and a technical expert on the transmission, sampling and identification of infectious organisms. He is currently serving as the CEO of GridFlow and Pii Energy. He previously held leadership roles at Integrated OffGrid and BioFlyte, Inc. Dr. Call earned a PhD in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Davis, and a B.S. in Chemical Engineering with Highest Honors from Montana State University-Bozeman. With expertise in general management, leadership coaching, and technology commercialization, he is bringing innovative lithium-sulfur flow battery technology to market.



Mariano Fernandez

Business Developer, Liberty Fusion

Mariano Fernandez is a business developer and entrepreneur working at the edge of emerging technology, economic development, and systems thinking. His work focuses on turning complex ideas like fusion energy, space computing, and advanced R&D; into real-world impact. With an MBA from the University of New Mexico and roots in San Felipe Pueblo, Mariano brings a grounded, future-focused perspective to innovation. He's driven by the commitment to help New Mexico become a place where cutting-edge technologies are not just invented, but purpose built, deployed, and scaled. Creating durable & lasting economic pathways for the people rooted here.



John Chavez

CEO, Osazda Energy

John Chavez is the CEO of Osazda Energy where he directs the company implementation process and secures capital. In addition, John is responsible for managing Osazda Energy's overall resources and operations as well as marketing the company's metal matrix composite (MMC) technology.

11:30 AM–12:15 PM Biosciences & Agriculture Panel



MODERATOR

Janeth Peña, PhD

NMBio Executive Director, Chief Scientific Officer, Sandia Biotech

Janeth J. Peña, Ph.D., is a leader in New Mexico's life sciences sector, currently serving as the Chief Scientific Officer at Sandia Biotech and the Executive Director of NMBio (New Mexico Biotechnology & Biomedical Association). At Sandia Biotech, Dr. Peña leads the development of FluorAbodies®, a proprietary line of recombinant, fluorescently labeled antibodies, and other protein-based reagents that streamline biomedical research. Her technical expertise is grounded in a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of New Mexico, specializing in molecular biology and parasitology. As Executive Director of NMBio, she bridges academia, industry, and government to accelerate the growth of New Mexico's bioscience economy. Dr. Peña is dedicated to fostering small business success and developing a robust workforce pipeline to advance New Mexico as a hub for global biotechnology innovation.



Rick Thomson

CEO, Sandia Medical Technologies

Rick Thomson is CEO of Sandia Medical Technologies with 30+ years experience in medical device commercialization from start-ups to multi-billion dollar corporations, acceleration and optimization of manufacturing and finance. He has extensive experience with medical device engineering, research and development, and regulatory processes and is currently leading Sandia Medical Technologies for all elements establishing go-to-market and business development, IP, fund-raising and finance.

Steve Kanzer,CPA, JD

CEO, Ironiks, Inc.

Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, Steve Kanzer has served as the chairman and chief executive officer of the New York City-based investment banking company Accredited Ventures, Inc., since 2001. Under his leadership, the venture capital group focuses on investments in the life sciences sector. Steve Kanzer is responsible for all daily operations of the company, including licensing, investment, and business management activities. He is also responsible for identifying relevant emerging technology.

During his time with Accredited Ventures, Steve Kanzer has licensed numerous life science technologies from universities throughout the United States. He has launched 23 biotechnology companies and has served in various

leadership capacities. His many business ventures include Adeona Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Accredited Ventures, Inc., and Developmental Therapeutics, Inc.

Steve Kanzer studied accounting at Baruch College, with a computer science minor, as a Baruch scholar. He graduated magna cum laude at the top of his accounting class. He went on to earn his juris doctor at the New York University School of Law. While a student he was a member of the university's law journal, the Annual Survey of American Law.



Sarada Kuravi, PhD

Associate Professor, New Mexico State University

Dr. Sarada Kuravi is a tenured Associate Professor of Renewable Energy and Thermal Sciences at New Mexico State University, where she has built a research program at the intersection of clean energy, thermal engineering, and sustainable water technologies.

Her research covers concentrating solar power, geothermal energy, cryogenic heat recovery, and solar-driven water desalination. A central focus of her work is solar still technology, including Fresnel lens-enhanced designs, low-cost solar evaporators, and treatment of high-salinity produced water from oil and gas operations with zero liquid discharge. This work addresses water scarcity challenges in the American Southwest and has been supported by DOE, NREL, and NSF. Several papers in this area rank among her most cited, including work on low-cost solar evaporators, Fresnel lens-enhanced solar stills, and comprehensive reviews of solar-enabled desalination technologies. Her work in this space spans both fundamental research and field-scale applications, and includes active collaboration with NREL.

Her research group at NMSU has developed technologies that are actively being pursued for commercialization, including novel surface engineering for heat exchangers that enhance heat transfer performance, reduce fouling, and improve corrosion resistance, as well as multifunctional glass technologies including low-cost privacy glass currently supported by an NSF grant. Industry partners interested in licensing or co-developing these lab-developed technologies are encouraged to reach out.

Her 2013 review on thermal energy storage for concentrating solar power plants, published in Progress in Energy and Combustion Science, has over 1,700 citations and remains a foundational reference in the field.

She is a co-author of The Future of Geothermal in New Mexico (Project Innerspace, 2025), a statewide report on New Mexico's geothermal energy potential. She serves as Faculty Lead for the Aggie I-Corps program at NMSU's Arrowhead Center, part of the NSF I-Corps Southwest Hub, and reviews research proposals for NSF, DOE, and USDA.

She welcomes collaborations with researchers, national laboratories, and industry partners working on clean energy, thermal systems, water technologies, and the commercialization of university-developed innovations.

12:45–1:15 PM Remarks and UNM Economic Contribution Report Announcement



Steven A.N. Goldstein, MD, PhD

President, The University of New Mexico

Dr. Steve Goldstein became the 24th president of The University of New Mexico on July 15, 2026. A nationally recognized physician-scientist, educator, and higher education leader, he brings more than three decades of experience advancing research universities, academic health systems, and student success.

Goldstein's leadership aligns with UNM's mission as New Mexico's flagship R1 research university, Hispanic-Serving Institution, and academic health center dedicated to serving communities across the state. His experience working with federal research agencies and translating scientific discovery into community impact complements UNM's partnerships with Sandia and Los Alamos National Laboratories and its commitment to advancing New Mexico's economy.

As vice chancellor for health affairs and a member of the University of California, Irvine's senior leadership team, Goldstein helped advance university-wide initiatives spanning education, research, healthcare, and community engagement while leading a $5.5 billion academic health enterprise integrating education, research, and patient care. During his tenure, the College of Health Sciences expanded through the creation of schools of pharmacy and public health, research funding increased by 72%, philanthropic support exceeded $1 billion, and clinical services grew fourfold to serve more than five million patients annually.

Throughout his career as a pediatrician, scientist, and academic leader, Goldstein has focused on the mission of research universities: expanding opportunity, generating new knowledge, and improving lives. His leadership is grounded in student success, interdisciplinary collaboration, shared governance, and strategic investment in research, teaching, and innovation.

Goldstein is committed to creating an environment where students, faculty, and staff thrive while expanding the University's impact on the communities it serves. He believes the nation's public research universities have a unique responsibility to expand opportunity, drive innovation, strengthen communities, and prepare the next generation of leaders.

He has held senior leadership roles at Yale University, the University of Chicago, Loyola University Chicago, and Brandeis University, where he served as provost overseeing academic affairs, including undergraduate and graduate education.

A distinguished physician-scientist, Goldstein has made foundational contributions to understanding ion channels and their roles in diseases affecting the heart, lungs, and nervous system.

Goldstein earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Brandeis University and M.D. and Ph.D. degrees in immunology from Harvard University. A Fellow of both the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Academy of Pediatrics, he has served in national advisory roles for the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation.

Goldstein is committed to working alongside students, faculty, and staff to advance the institution's academic, research, and healthcare priorities, and is eager to engage with stakeholders—including alumni, tribal nations, community partners, and policymakers—to further strengthen The University of New Mexico's mission of education, research, healthcare, and service.

He and his family look forward to becoming part of the New Mexico community.

1:30–2:15 PM Creative Arts Panel



MODERATOR

Larry Sklar, PhD

Rainforest Ambassador and Distinguished Professor Emeritus, The University of New Mexico

Dr. Sklar came to New Mexico to lead the National Flow Cytometry Resource at Los Alamos National Lab and to develop a biotechnology research program at the University of New Mexico. Beginning in 1998, Sklar and teams of colleagues and collaborators developed high throughput flow cytometry for drug discovery. The resulting patents led to 1) the formation of the startup company IntelliCyt which was bought by Sartorius, an international biotech company; 2) startup companies and clinical trials for membrane steroid receptors and the repurposing of ketorolac; 3) real-time methods to examine receptors in cell adhesion. The team used high throughput flow cytometry for small molecule discovery in the NIH Roadmap Molecular Libraries Program which served as the basis for the formation of the UNM Center for Molecular discovery and contributed at UNM to the Comprehensive Cancer Center, the Clinical and Translational Science Center, and the NCI Experimental Therapeutics Program. Recognition of Sklar's activities include UNM awards for Excellence in Basic Science, as Lobo Rainforest Innovation Fellow and Lifetime Achievement Award, UNM Presidential Award of Distinction, as well AIMBE and National Academy of Inventors Fellow. Dr. Sklar is currently Distinguished Professor Emeritus and the UNM Rainforest Ambassador.



Shelle Sanchez, PhD

Arts Advisor & Creative Facilitator

Dr. Shelle Sanchez has more than 30 years of professional experience in arts, education, and public service including executive leadership in the public sector. Her experience and success in building successful programs with a focus on partnership building, intentional collaboration, project oversight, project management of capital projects, and resource management has resulted in a lifelong commitment to community building, mentorship, education, creativity, and optimism. As former Director of City of Albuquerque Arts & Culture, she has extensive experience with local, state, and national projects which has resulted in a strong personal network of artists, professionals, and organizations for project development.



Johanna Stein

Founder, Blue Sky NM

Johanna (Jo) is an accomplished marketer credited with building and leading high-performance data-driven marketing teams in developing and managing domestic and international product launches and innovations. She has a twenty-year career launching new products into competitive markets to drive revenue growth in consumer technology, natural products, and consumer packaged goods industries. Currently Johanna is focused on running a community oriented coworking space, Blue Sky NM, and multi-family real estate investing in the Albuquerque metro. She has a continued passion for philanthropy and impact investing focused on urban innovation, outdoor access, and eldercare.



Bryant Johnson

Founder, Salad Bowl America Foundation

Bryant Johnson is an Albuquerque-based entrepreneur, media founder, and community organizer dedicated to celebrating cultural diversity across New Mexico. He is the founder and Creative Director of Salad Bowl America, a cultural organization, magazine, and media platform built around the mission of "one community, many cultures."

Through the Salad Bowl America Cultural Foundation, Johnson organizes major local programming—including the annual Humankind Day weekend and black-tie gala—and actively collaborates with local organizations such as the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce and the Black Chamber of Commerce of New Mexico. His entrepreneurial ventures also extend into Downtown Albuquerque’s hospitality scene as the founder of the Pour Decisions Wine Club.

2:15–3:00 PM Indigenous Entrepreneurship Panel



MODERATOR

Kimberly Baca

President and CEO, KB Consulting

Kim Baca (Navajo/Santa Clara Pueblo), an award-winning writer and KB Consulting owner, providing services based on years of media experience that includes The Associated Press, The Santa Fe New Mexican and El Paso Times. Kim Baca has also been a marketing and communications director in the higher education and nonprofit sectors, and served two years as interim executive director of the former Native American Journalists Association before the organization moved to Oklahoma. Kim has also conducted public relations and legislative work at the National American Indian Housing Council in Washington, D.C., and at the former New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs in Santa Fe, N.M. KB Consulting is an award-winning, Albuquerque-based company with more than 20 years of experience in public relations, communications and marketing in mainstream markets and Indian Country.



Henry Jake Foreman

Program Director, New Mexico Community Capital

Henry Jake Foreman MCRP is a specialist in facilitation, development, and implementation of engaging learning experiences for students of all ages and has created a variety of curricula around education, health, and entrepreneurship. He is the founder of Karuna Colectiva, a social enterprise that delivers the principles of engagement, innovation, and application through mentorship, bicycling, and cooperative economics.

He is also the Program Director of New Mexico Community Capital and manages the Financial & Business Basics course that is designed to help build a solid foundation to form and grow business ideas with a personal financial plan for success. Participants learn the tools used to effectively conceptualize, plan and implement their financial goals and business ideas through hands-on learning experiences with a community of peers and mentors.

Henry recently developed the Digital Media & Marketing Basics course and just launched the Native Farmer In Residence program earlier this year. Indigenous methodologies and epistemologies guide his research approaches to working with youth trainers and communities to promote the health of our biosphere.



Janice Lucero

Founder, Cotton Blossom Gardens

Janice Lucero, also known as Cotton Blossom (Dah-khee-pauff), is from the Pueblo of Isleta. In 2020, during the pandemic, Janice felt an urgency to start a garden. With the uncertainty of COVID-19, increased anxiety, and challenges accessing food, she found comfort and purpose in growing her own. At the time, she was working full-time for PNM as a Senior SCADA Network & Security Specialist. After 20 years in the Information Technology industry, the demands of her career had taken a toll on her mental and emotional well-being. In June 2021, she made the difficult decision to resign and pursue a path that brought her happiness and fulfillment.

Taking a leap of faith opened new doors. Shortly after leaving her corporate career, Janice became a Hike Crew Leader, mentoring youth from her own community, the Pueblo of Isleta. The experience was rewarding and created a safe space for exploration, curiosity, vulnerability, and growth.

In April 2021, she was also selected to participate in the New Mexico Community Capital Native Farmer in Residence (NFIR) Program. Through mentorship, financial assistance, shared knowledge, and connections with Indigenous farmers, she gained valuable resources and a deeper relationship with the land.

Although farming had always been part of her life, in 2021 it became a way of life. Janice became more intentional about self-sustainability and growing healthy food for her family, friends, and community. She farms on inherited ancestral land passed down from her late paternal grandparents, Tata Joe D. Lucero and Nana Lupita Lucero, honoring the generations and connections rooted in that land.

For Janice, farming is about much more than growing food. It is about healing, honoring her ancestors, reconnecting with culture, and creating a sustainable future. Her goal is to share knowledge, empower youth, build community, and grow healthy food for future generations.

3:00 PM Closing Remarks



Teresa Costantinidis

Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, The University of New Mexico

Ms. Costantinidis currently serves as University of New Mexico's Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration. She is responsible for the units that provide financial, administrative, and operational support functions to the UNM Community including the Financial Services Division, Human Resources, Information Technologies, Police Department, Environmental Health & Safety, Policy, Strategic Initiatives, and Institutional Support Services. In addition, she works closely with senior leadership, including the President, Provost, EVP for Health Sciences, Deans, Regents, and the UNM Foundation.

Ms. Costantinidis has higher education budget, financial, and administrative management experience spanning over 35 years. Prior to this position, she was the University of California, San Francisco's Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, responsible for planning and administering the overall campus operating and capital budgets, costing policy, federal indirect cost rate negotiations, recharge, enterprise-wide decision support, risk management, insurance services, and planning and institutional analysis. At the UC Berkeley campus, she served as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Budget & Resource Planning and Senior Assistant Dean and Chief Operating Officer for the Haas School of Business.

Ms. Costantinidis is an active and contributing board member to professional and community organizations including the Western and National Association of College and University Business Officers, Lobo Energy Incorporated, UNM Rainforest Innovations, Lobo Development Corporation, the Harwood Museum, and the New Mexico Public Broadcasting Service.