

A newsletter to keep you informed.

September 2026

President's Message

Hello everyone!

I am the new President of the Association, and I will try to keep you up-to-date with developments as we work on your behalf to further the interests of UNM Retirees.

Here is a little information about me. I retired after 25 years in the Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine, where I was a physician and professor. I was brought up in the UK, where I did all my medical training, and I have adult twin daughters. My interests include walking the foothills trails, singing in NM Symphonic Chorus, and going to shows.

Your Board of Directors has several projects in the pipeline. I will touch on a few of them in the hopes of whetting your appetite; there's lots to do and we always look for more volunteers for the board and committees!

I hope you have noticed the plethora of interesting activities arranged by the Programs and Services Committee. You will see a mix of in-person and Zoom events, and we are planning to coordinate casual lunchtime or evening get-togethers for members.

The Benefits Committee is in close communication with HR. The University is working hard to make sure retirees have reliable

choices for healthcare and prescription plans, and we are communicating with them particularly with the current uncertainty regarding Medicare 'Advantage' plans. We are also working on improving benefits, such as reduced-price tickets to Popejoy. We think of these as 'Retiree Rewards' — we have earned them!

Over the summer, members of the Legislative Committee has been very busy making plans for improving the ERB pension. We are in the process of showing members of the legislature that the buying power of our pension has dropped dramatically over the past 13 years since our cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) was reduced. The next step is to craft a bill aimed at addressing that shortfall.

Lastly, our Communication and Development Committee is undertaking a major website overhaul, developing program flyers, as well as producing this newsletter.

As you see, there's a lot to do in our Association. Think about how you would like to join in, share your skills and talents, and help us plan activities for the 2026-2027 year. Also, don't forget that we support a Presidential Scholarship and donations may be made directly to the 'UNM Retirees Project' via our website at retiree.unm.edu.

See you at the next retiree social event!

Janet Brierley
UNM Retiree Association
President



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Board of Directors

President	Janet Brierley
President-elect	Amy Neel
Immediate Past Pres	Gene Henley
Treasurer	Walter Gerstle

Board Members

Janet Brierley
Gene Henley
Walter Gerstle
Mark Reynolds
Les McFadden
Ava Lovell
Alfred Mathewson
Kim Jarigese
Amy Neel
Vanessa Hawker
John Barnes
Walter Miller
Eliseo Torres
Mary Clark
Joyce Phillips

Committee Chairs

Benefits	Janet Brierley
Programs & Events	Mark Reynolds
Membership	Gene Henley
Comm & Marketing	Kim Jarigese
Legislative	Alfred Mathewson
Assoc. Bylaws	Gene Henley

Your Voice Matters

Help Shape the Future of UNM Retiree Programs

You spent years, maybe decades, contributing to the University of New Mexico. Now the University wants to give something back, and to do that well, it needs to hear from you.

The UNM Retiree Association has launched a survey designed to better understand the needs, interests, and ideas of UNM's retiree community. Whether you're a longtime Association member or have never attended a single retiree event, your input is equally important, and equally welcome.

Why does this survey matter? Because the results will directly shape programs and services for retirees going forward. The Association is asking about everything from the kinds of activities and wellness programs that interest you, to how you prefer to receive communications, to which campus facilities and services would be most valuable to you. If there's something missing from UNM's retiree offerings, this is your opportunity to say so.

The survey covers a wide range of topics:

- Lifestyle and interests — what you enjoy and how active you want to be
- Campus connection — how often you visit and what brings you back
- Health and wellness — programs that support a fulfilling retirement
- Giving back — mentoring, volunteering, and sharing your expertise
- Future vision — where you see your relationship going with UNM

This isn't just for retirees who are already plugged in. If anything, the Association especially wants to hear from those who haven't been engaged — because understanding what's kept you away is just as valuable as knowing what keeps others coming back.

Participation is confidential, takes only a few minutes, and can make a real difference. Every response helps build a clearer picture of what UNM's retiree community looks like today and what it needs tomorrow.

You gave UNM your best years. Help make sure the next chapter reflects what you and your fellow retirees actually want.

To take the survey, visit:

https://unm.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6G9p00kDxikWXQO

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR UNM RETIREE ASSOCIATION.

Attend monthly events:

arts | entertainment
cultural | historical
recreational | environmental
health | education

Join a committee:

Programs & Events
Legislative
Member Benefits
Marketing & Communications

Become a Retiree Association Board Member
and help us develop resources and
opportunities for our members.

Contact Gene Henley
for more information:
ghenley@unm.edu



*Retire from UNM.
Never from the Pack.*

55+ Job Seekers in Albuquerque



Looking for work after 55? You're not alone. This private group is a supportive place for Albuquerque-area job seekers aged 55+ to connect, share opportunities, exchange advice, and help one another navigate today's job market. Our goal is to help experienced Albuquerque job seekers find meaningful work while building a respectful, supportive community.

This group is for:

- Local job leads and hiring opportunities
- Part-time, full-time, temporary, and flexible work
- Networking and professional connections
- Resume and interview tips
- Sharing experiences and resources
- Encouragement and support from people who understand the challenges and advantages of being an experienced worker

Questions: Contact Mark Reynolds at reynolds@unm.edu

Join our facebook group: **55+ Job Seekers in Albuquerque**



*Kathy Meadows, UNM Retiree
who works at Animal Humane
New Mexico, was a tour guide
for our May event.*

Fall 2026 - Spring 2027 Program Events

Join the UNM Retiree Association for any or all of the monthly events. Topics include: arts | entertainment, cultural | historical, recreational | environmental, health | education.

- September 30** Amazing World of Amazon Operations – Facility Tour
(This tour has a wait list. We hope to offer it again during the Spring.)
- October 8** Let's hit the Mother Road – A journey into the past through NM
photographic collections. A special viewing at the UNM Southwest
Special Collections at Zimmerman Library.
- November 12** Behind the Curtains tour at Popejoy Hall
- December 6** Holiday Party
- January 27** FAA Tour – Western District Air Traffic Control Center
- February TBD** Decisions in Care – A Zoom information session with Susan Stuart

If you have ideas for future programs and events, email
Mark Reynolds, program committee chair, at reynolds@unm.edu.
Better yet, join the program and events committee and get involved!

For updated program information, visit the website at: retiree.unm.edu
and facebook page (UNM Retiree Association).



*Tour of Wheels Museum in Albuquerque
January 2026*

*Retirees who attended the
CNM Culinary Tour, November 2025*



Speak out on current issues (Op-ed)

by *Walter Gerstle*
Professor Emeritus
UNM Department of Civil
Engineering

The UNM Retiree Association (UNMRA), created in 2003, promotes the welfare and interests of UNM retirees. The UNMRA has been active in protecting the pension, providing opportunities for entertainment and education, providing social events for our retirees, and contributing to the UNM Foundation in support of student scholarships. The UNMRA has an advisory capacity with the UNM Board of Regents and with the university administration.

By its actions, the current US federal administration has made it clear that it does not support diversity, equity, inclusion, public education, public health programs, international development, immigrants, environmental protections, and climate action. Over the 38 years that I have been at UNM, I have been proud of our progressive values of inclusivity, our outreach to public schools, our support for our international and local students, and our support for a livable world for all. Our university has been a leader in bringing knowledge and understanding to our world.

I recognize that our country is currently reacting to “woke” attitudes. “Woke” means “alert to and concerned about social injustice and discrimination”. UNM

must continue to strive for social and environmental justice. Our university should not acquiesce to reactionary powers in Washington.

The state of New Mexico currently receives about 30% of its revenue from the oil and gas extraction industry. The University of New Mexico has historically benefited from this fossil fuel revenue. Nevertheless, we also understand that humanity and nature suffer from the global warming resulting from burning these fuels. This is a dilemma: shall we keep fossil fuels in the ground to save the climate and much of humanity, even if this will hurt our fiscal bottom line in the near future? To date, UNM leadership has opted to tolerate and abet the fossil fuel industrial complex, while knowing that the products of this same industry compromise the future of humanity, fauna and flora.

Energy analytics firms expect NM oil production to peak in a few years. When our gas and oil revenue diminishes, we will need

to develop other sources of revenue. The university is essential for developing new commercial prospects.

The members of the UNMRA are mostly old and mostly wise. We should be weighing in on the most imperative issues of our times. Yes, advocating for UNM retirement income is essential. As well, our cost of living adjustment (COLA) must keep up with inflation. In addition, we should provide social and educational opportunities for our retirees.

However, none of this matters if our democracy falters, if our communities self-destruct, and if our land, water, and wildlife are ruined. Understandably, UNMRA has been reluctant to wade into politics. Nevertheless, we must do our duty to speak out on pertinent controversies.

We have a responsibility to speak out on the important issues of our times. The public, our regents, our university administrators, and our legislators should hear the voice of the UNMRA. The members of the UNMRA have substantial knowledge and wisdom. We should share this wealth with the public.



UNM Arboretum Tour - July 2026

Stay Informed: ERB Connect Is a Must-Read for UNM Retirees

As UNM retirees, our pensions come through the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board — which means ERB news is our news. Yet many members don't know that ERB publishes a free newsletter, ERB Connect, packed with timely information directly relevant to your retirement benefits. If you're not already receiving it, now is the time to sign up.

What Is ERB Connect?

ERB Connect is the official newsletter of the New Mexico Educational Retirement Board, published several times a year and available by email. Each issue covers benefit updates, policy changes, webinars, retirement planning tips, and important alerts — all written specifically for ERB plan members like us.

What's in the Latest Issue?

The May 2026 issue has several items every UNM retiree should know about.

Your July pension check will look different. ERB has announced Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increases taking effect with July payments. If you have 25 or more years of service credit and a monthly benefit of \$1,834.85 or less, your COLA is 1.80%. All other eligible retirees receive 1.60%. Disability retirees who have been retired at least three years receive 2.00%. COLAs are set by state law and calculated to reflect inflation while keeping the fund healthy for future retirees.

Beware of scam emails targeting ERB members. ERB is warning members about a wave of third-party solicitations — emails offering “pension reviews” or “retirement consultations” that mimic official ERB communications. These are not from ERB. The red flags to watch for: false urgency (“act now to claim your benefits”), phony familiarity (they may use your name), and a small disclaimer buried at the bottom admitting they have no government affiliation. If you get one, delete it. If you're ever unsure, call ERB directly at 1-800-663-1919.

Free webinars are available through the end of the year. ERB hosts monthly webinars on the third Tuesday of each month, 4:00–5:00 p.m., with ASL interpretation provided. Retirement Readiness Webinars are scheduled for June 23, August 18, October 20, and December 15. Early/Mid-Career Webinars run July 21, September 15, and November 17 — useful if you have family members or colleagues still in the classroom who could benefit.

Thinking about returning to work? UNM is an ERB employer, which means going back to work at UNM — even part-time — can affect your pension. ERB strongly encourages you to contact them before accepting any position with an ERB-covered employer to avoid interruptions to your benefits.

How to Sign Up for ERB Connect

Subscribing is simple and free. Visit ERB's website at www.erb.nm.gov and look for the ERB Connect sign-up option, or contact ERB directly:

- Toll-Free: 1-800-663-1919
- Call Center: 505-585-3510
- Email: member.help@erb.nm.gov
- Web: www.erb.nm.gov

You can also follow ERB on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram to catch news between issues.

Don't Miss Out

The information in ERB Connect — COLA rates, benefit changes, scam alerts, webinar schedules — affects your financial security directly. It takes five minutes to subscribe and a few minutes each issue to stay current. We encourage every UNMRA member to sign up today and share this resource with fellow retirees who may not yet be on the list.

For questions about your ERB benefits, contact ERB at 1-800-663-1919 or member.help@erb.nm.gov. ERB offices in Santa Fe and Albuquerque are open Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Your Association Needs You and You Need Your Association

Dear Fellow UNM Retirees,

You gave years — maybe decades — to the University of New Mexico. You built careers here, shaped students' lives, and helped make this institution what it is today. When you walked out the door for the last time, that connection didn't have to end. That's exactly why the UNM Retiree Association exists.

But here's the truth: the UNMRA is only as strong as its membership. And right now, we need you.

What We Do for You

The UNMRA isn't just a social club — it's your voice. When UNM's administration considers changes to retiree policies or benefits, when the New Mexico State Legislature takes up issues affecting the Educational Retirement Board (ERB), the UNMRA is at the table advocating for you. Without a strong, active membership, that voice gets quieter. The stakes are real: your retirement security, your benefits, your COLA.

Beyond advocacy, membership connects you to a community of people who understand exactly where you've been:

- Stay informed. Members receive timely updates on policy changes, benefits news, and anything else that affects UNM retirees.
- Engage with ideas. Monthly programs bring fascinating speakers and experiences — this year alone, members have explored Albuquerque's transportation history at the Wheels Museum, toured the Telephone Museum, heard about Paleoindian research in the Southwest, received free hearing screenings, and got an insider look at Animal Humane New Mexico.
- Make a difference. The UNMRA contributes annually to the Presidential Scholars Fund, supporting a UNM student each year. Your membership makes that possible.
- Stay connected. The Annual Membership Meeting, monthly programs, small-group tours, and the

holiday party keep you part of the Lobo community long after retirement.

The Cost? Less Than You Think.

Annual individual membership is just \$15 — that's about the price of a lunch. Household membership is \$20. If you'd rather set it and forget it, a lifetime individual membership is \$100.

Term	Individual	Household
1 Year	\$15	\$20
2 Years	\$25	\$35
3 Years	\$35	\$50
Life	\$100	\$135

Who Can Join?

- Any retired UNM faculty or staff member (including branch campuses and affiliated organizations)
- Spouses, partners, widows, and widowers of retired UNM employees
- Retirees from any four-year institution of higher education
- Currently employed UNM employees who are eligible to retire or within one year of eligibility — don't wait until you're out the door!

Join or Renew Today

Please don't put this off. Annual renewals are due on the anniversary of your membership — if yours has lapsed, now is the perfect time to come back.

Join or renew online: retiree.unm.edu

Download a membership form:

Membership Application (PDF)

Mail to: UNM Retiree Association, P.O. Box 25601, Albuquerque, NM 87125-5601

Questions? Email us at retiree@unm.edu

We spent our careers building something worth caring about. Let's keep caring about it — together.