



October 18, 2019

## **University of New Mexico Faculty Win Historic Vote to Unionize**

A decisive majority of faculty at the University of New Mexico voted for a union this week in a historic election victory overseen by the UNM Labor Management Relations Board, with votes counted this afternoon. Two UNM bargaining units consisting of more than 1,600 full- and part-time faculty across five campuses—UNM’s main campus, in Albuquerque; UNM-Gallup; UNM-Los Alamos; UNM-Taos; and UNM-Valencia—voted by a 70 percent margin to join the AAUP and our organizing partners, the American Federation of Teachers.

The victory marks the culmination of a years-long organizing push, with thousands of conversations with full-time and part-time faculty. Faculty won despite the UNM administration's opposition, which it expressed by hiring the notorious union-busting firm Jackson Lewis in February 2019 and erecting legal and other challenges to delay the election. Ironically, the administration’s actions underscored the reasons why faculty decided to organize in the first place.

United Academics of the University of New Mexico will begin bargaining with UNM to win a first contract that will strengthen student supports, tenure and promotion, faculty retention, and job security to ensure the best environment for teaching, learning, research and outreach across the state. The union seeks to make UNM the institution it strives to be, with a strong faculty-led voice that is committed to serving students.

### **American Association of University Professors President Rudy Fitchenbaum said:**

"The AAUP and our partners have worked with UNM faculty since the early 2000s to address the failure of administrations to adequately address faculty concerns regarding shared governance and the growing salary gap. Faculty are the heart and soul of the university, and by standing together united, they have demonstrated their understanding that the power of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. We are excited by today’s victory and look forward to working with UA-UNM as they fight to get a contract that will make student learning and research priorities at UNM."

### **AAUP-Collective Bargaining Congress Chair Paul Davis said:**

"This is a great victory for higher education in New Mexico and across the country. It is important for the future of this country to provide faculty with the tools necessary to educate our students and to do the research needed to solve the problems of our communities and our country. This can only be done with the ability to codify shared governance, academic freedom

and tenure. It is also critical to reward faculty with fair compensation and benefits. All of this can be accomplished with a fair collective bargaining agreement."

**Hilary Lipka, temporary part-time faculty, religious studies, said:**

"This is a historic moment for faculty at UNM. Our victory reflects how important it is that the university treats faculty with dignity and respect. We look forward to sitting down with the administration and negotiating a contract that acknowledges the work and value that part-time faculty contribute to the university."

**Myra Washington, assistant professor, communications and journalism, said:**

"The win today signals a victory not just for me and my colleagues who have worked together to build United Academics of UNM, but for all of us at UNM. Our fight for the recognition of the power of our collective faculty voice, our push for transparency, and our desire for more equitable working conditions—these have taken a huge step forward. We look forward to sitting down with the administration to bargain a fair collective agreement for our faculty."

**American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said:**

"For decades, UNM faculty members have wanted their voices to be heard on an array of issues from academic freedom, to compensation, governance and transparency. Today, they won a first big step in that righteous fight. Through the power of organizing, faculty demonstrated that when you stand up and raise your voice, you can accomplish far more than you could ever achieve alone. As they move to the bargaining table, rest assured that I and their national union will have their backs as they work to have their concerns addressed. Addressing their concerns will make this great university an even better place to teach and learn. I am so proud of the UNM faculty effort, and of how they put hope over fear and aspiration over adversity in this fight. It is a victory not only for themselves, but for the students they teach and the community they serve."

**AFT New Mexico President Stephanie Ly said:**

"All of AFT New Mexico, and in fact all of New Mexico's unions and our families, are excited to welcome the faculty members of United Academics of UNM into our ranks. This successful vote is the result of years of hard work and organizing by dedicated leaders across New Mexico. By choosing to form a union, UNM faculty members have taken an important first step toward greater decision-making in their workplace, better learning conditions for students, and increased transparency at all five branches of UNM. We applaud the results and call upon the management of UNM to work quickly and in good faith to negotiate and implement a first contract for the members of the faculty."