

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO-GALLUP
2026 STATEWIDE DIVERSITY SUMMIT

Day 1 Keynote Program

April 17, 2026 | Calvin Hall Center Auditorium

Friday Morning 9 a.m. - 10 a.m.

Master of Ceremonies

LD Lovett, Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, UNM-Gallup

Invocation

Joe Kee, Associate Professor, Navajo Language and Culture, UNM-Gallup

Land Acknowledgement

Nia Harrington, Lecturer, EMS I-Best, UNM-Gallup

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Sabrina Ezzell, Chancellor, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Dr. Antoinette Abeyta, Associate Professor, Earth Science, UNM-Gallup

Keynote Address

Dr. Patricia Trujillo, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department

Friday Afternoon 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Mistress of Ceremonies

Mona Frazier, Community Activist and Former President of NAACP Gallup Branch

Keynote Speaker Introduction

Donna Lopez, Project Manager, Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE), UNM, Albuquerque, N.M.

Keynote Address

Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President, Division for Change and Empowerment (DiCE) UNM, Albuquerque, N.M.



The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
Keynote Speaker

Dr. Patricia Trujillo



Presentation Details

9 a.m. Friday
April 17, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

Solidarity in Action

Lessons from the New Mexico Basic Needs Movement

Speaker Biography

Patricia Trujillo, Ph.D., is the deputy cabinet secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department. She is a state leader and advocate focused on expanding access and affordability, advancing social justice, and supporting historically underserved communities in higher education. Dr. Trujillo was on the leadership team that secured tuition-free college and the Higher Education Trust Fund for New Mexico — the most comprehensive college promise program in the United States. Once tuition-free college became law, her work focused on the everyday realities students face beyond tuition — food, housing, mental and behavioral health, transportation, and family responsibilities. She has helped direct over \$5 million toward basic needs supports statewide and built shared infrastructure, including a basic needs survey across 27 institutions and the co-founding of the New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium. A native of the Española Valley, she is a tenured professor, was the founding director of the Office of Equity and Diversity at Northern New Mexico College and is a published scholar.

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
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Keynote Speaker

Dr. Assata Zerai



Presentation Details

12:30 p.m. Friday
April 17, 2026
Calvin Hall Center
Auditorium (CHC 248)

Presentation Title

Elevating Experiences of Black and Indigenous Students at Hispanic Serving Institutions

Intersectional Identities and Agentic Responses to Structural Constraints

Speaker Biography

Dr. Assata Zerai is vice president and professor of sociology at The University of New Mexico. She also holds the titles of visiting professor in Human and Community Development at University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa (2020-2026) and Professor Emerita at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Zerai is a founding member of the Feminist Decoloniality as Care transnational community of practice with colleagues at universities in South Africa and in the U.S. Zerai's strong record of leading, resourcing, and documenting the impact of efforts in the Division for Change and Empowerment have expanded UNM's programming and strategies to enhance institutional climate and inclusive excellence.

Zerai's research deploys decolonial feminist research methodologies to analyze inclusion in complex organizations, access to information and communications technologies, novel contributions of Black women's scholarship globally, and structural impediments to maternal and child health. She has published six books and numerous articles in academic presses spanning these topics. Her latest is, *Black Feminist Interventions to Decolonize the Westernized University* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2025).