

The University of New Mexico-Gallup
2026 Statewide Diversity Summit
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).