



University of New Mexico Staff Council 2026 #6

Name: FY2027-28 Mass Salary Update Public Ask Resolution

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Adopted on: 09/15/2026

1. WHEREAS, the UNM Staff Council, established by the UNM Board of Regents in 1989 and governed by a Constitution ratified by the Board of Regents, is the duly elected governing body representing over 4,000 University of New Mexico staff employees through 60 elected Councilors, and exists to represent the interests and general welfare of all UNM staff, to serve as a full partner in the shared governance of the University, and to advise University administration and the Board of Regents on matters directly affecting staff employment;

2. WHEREAS, the University of New Mexico's Fiscal Year 2026-27 Mass Salary Update (MSU) guidelines, issued consistent with the UNM 2040 Strategic Framework and UAP 3500: Wage and Salary Administration, guaranteed all eligible staff employees only a 1% salary increase, with increases above 1% (up to a maximum of 4%) available solely at departmental discretion and contingent on internal funding availability, meaning the large majority of UNM staff received a guaranteed floor increase of only 1%;

3. WHEREAS, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the West Region, which encompasses New Mexico and the Albuquerque metropolitan area, rose 3.0% for the twelve months ending July 2026, while national headline CPI-U inflation registered 3.4% over a comparable period, meaning the guaranteed 1% MSU floor failed to keep pace with the regional cost of living by a margin of approximately two percentage points;

4. WHEREAS, UNM Human Resources confirmed that active employee health insurance premiums increased by 13.1% for both the UNM LoboHealth and Presbyterian medical plans for the 2026-2027 Plan Year (effective July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027), a cost increase borne directly by staff through payroll deduction, which for employees who received only the guaranteed 1% MSU floor resulted in a further, compounding reduction in real, spendable take-home pay beyond the erosion already caused by inflation;

5. WHEREAS, UNM's contribution toward employee health insurance premiums ranges from 60% to 80%, meaning that the 13.1% increase in employee premiums further reduced the effective compensation of staff during FY2026-27; and

6. WHEREAS, the combined effect of a 1% guaranteed MSU floor, 3.0% regional inflation, and a 13.1% healthcare premium increase constitutes a real, measurable shortfall in FY2026-27 staff

compensation that has not been addressed or restored, and that directly reduced the purchasing power and financial stability of UNM's lowest- and middle-income staff;

7. WHEREAS, independent economic forecasters, including the Federal Reserve's Summary of Economic Projections, the OECD, and private-sector economic forecasting groups, project continued inflation in the range of approximately 2.2% to 3.0% through calendar year 2027, indicating that the erosion of staff purchasing power documented above will continue into Fiscal Year 2027-28 absent a corrective MSU sufficient to both restore the FY2026-27 shortfall and keep pace with anticipated inflation;

8. WHEREAS, national research on higher education workforce turnover, including analysis published by Ithaka S+R and workforce data aggregated by CUPA-HR and SHRM-affiliated sources, documents that the true cost to replace a departing higher education employee typically ranges from 50% to 200%, or more, of that employee's annual salary once recruitment, committee time, vacancy coverage, lost productivity, and onboarding ramp-up are accounted for, meaning that allowing compensation to fall behind inflation and benefit costs is measurably more expensive to the University than proactively funding a competitive MSU;

9. WHEREAS, positions in the \$40,000-\$50,000 salary range continue to experience the highest rates of staff turnover at UNM, and each such departure results in the loss of undocumented institutional knowledge, compliance expertise, and student- and department-facing continuity that cannot be replaced simply by filling the vacant position;

10. WHEREAS, advance, public notice of a specific FY2027-28 MSU ask allows UNM's Board of Regents, President, and Executive leadership to incorporate a fiscally responsible and competitive salary adjustment into budget planning and forecasting cycles beginning in Fiscal Year 2027-28, reducing the risk of disruptive, reactive compensation decisions later in the cycle; and

11. WHEREAS, the UNM Staff Council has a responsibility to ensure that its compensation advocacy reaches not only University administration but the full UNM staff body and the New Mexico Legislature, both of whom play a role in securing adequate funding for competitive staff compensation;

12. WHEREAS, Staff Council previously adopted a resolution addressing rising living costs, employee healthcare costs, recruitment and retention, and the need for competitive compensation, establishing these issues as ongoing priorities of Staff Council; and

13. WHEREAS, building upon Staff Council's prior compensation advocacy, this resolution seeks to establish a specific FY2027-28 Mass Salary Update request that addresses the documented loss of purchasing power experienced by staff during FY2026-27 and provides University leadership with advance notice for budget and legislative planning; and

14. WHEREAS, the Council of University Presidents (CUPS), which represents the presidents of New Mexico's seven public universities, serves as a statewide forum for collaboration,

strategic planning, policy development, and advocacy concerning public higher education, making coordinated statewide support for competitive compensation an important component of maintaining a strong and sustainable higher education workforce;

15. WHEREAS, New Mexico's strong revenue position is substantially supported by revenues associated with oil and natural gas production, including severance tax and federal mineral leasing revenues, and the State has historically used its General Fund and other state resources to make significant investments in public higher education and employee compensation; and

16. WHEREAS, New Mexico enters Fiscal Year 2027-28 with historically strong fiscal reserves and recurring revenues, including a Fiscal Year 2027 General Fund budget of approximately \$11.1 billion while maintaining reserves equal to approximately 26.4% of recurring appropriations, demonstrating the State's continued capacity to make strategic investments in public institutions and the workforce necessary to deliver essential public services; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED

17. RESOLVED, The UNM Staff Council respectfully and formally requests that the University of New Mexico Board of Regents, the President, and University executive leadership publicly commit to a one-time, FY2027-28 Mass Salary Update of no less than 7%, applied as a guaranteed minimum floor for all eligible staff employees; and

18. RESOLVED, The Staff Council clarifies that the 7% Mass Salary Update requested by this resolution is a one-time compensation request specific to Fiscal Year 2027-28, intended to restore lost purchasing power and address the documented compensation shortfall from FY2026-27, and is not intended to establish a permanent 7% annual salary increase or a recurring percentage commitment beyond FY2027-28; and

19. RESOLVED, The Staff Council requests that this 7% minimum MSU be explicitly justified to University leadership as necessary to (a) restore the real compensation shortfall created in FY2026-27 by the combination of a 1% guaranteed MSU, 3.0% regional inflation, and a 13.1% healthcare premium increase, and (b) keep pace with anticipated FY2027-28 inflation of approximately 2.2% to 3.0%, so that staff compensation does not fall further behind the cost of living for a second consecutive fiscal year; and

20. RESOLVED, The Staff Council requests that University leadership consider the impact of UNM's salary-based health insurance premium cost-sharing structure when evaluating the FY2027-28 MSU, particularly on lower-paid staff who bear a greater share of employee health insurance costs; and

21. RESOLVED, The Staff Council directs that this resolution and its requested FY2027-28 MSU percentage be distributed to all UNM staff via a special, standalone UNM Staff Council email communication, separate from routine Staff Council correspondence, so that all staff are directly informed of Staff Council's public compensation ask and the reasoning behind it; and

22. RESOLVED, The Staff Council directs that the special, standalone UNM Staff Council email communication regarding the FY2027-28 Mass Salary Update request shall be crafted by the Staff Council Executive Committee, in coordination with appropriate Staff Council leadership and staff, to ensure that the communication accurately reflects the intent, substance, and rationale of this resolution; and

23. RESOLVED, The Staff Council directs the Staff Council Government Relations Committee to include the requested FY2027-28 MSU percentage on all Government Relations Committee flyers and printed materials distributed at UNM Legislative Day, and to include this ask in the Staff Council's 2027 Legislative Literature, so that the request is communicated directly to New Mexico legislators and included in the University's broader legislative funding conversations; and

24. RESOLVED, The Staff Council requests that UNM's Office of Human Resources and Budget Office incorporate the requested FY2027-28 MSU into University budget planning and forecasting beginning immediately, so that departments and units have adequate notice and resources to meet payroll obligations without disruption.

A copy of this resolution shall be sent to, the UNM Board of Regents; Dr. Steve Goldstien, President; Teresa Costantinidis, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Barbara Rodriguez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Mike Richards, Executive Vice President for HSC and CEO of the UNM Health System; Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President for Division for Change and Empowerment; UNM Chief Marketing and Communications Officer; Kevin Stevenson, Vice President for Human Resources; Heather Jaramillo, Director of Equal Opportunity & ADA Coordinator; Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott, Vice Chancellor and Executive Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, HSC; Sidney Mason-Coon, University Policy Officer; Council of University Presidents (CUPS) and The Daily Lobo.

Resources / Sources

UNM Staff Council, About the Staff Council and Staff Council Constitution, Article II, Section 1: <https://staffcouncil.unm.edu/about/index.html>

UNM Human Resources, "Open Enrollment Ahead: Understanding Your Benefits and What's Changing": <https://hr.unm.edu/articles/newsletter/open-enrollment-ahead-understanding-your-benefits-and-whats-changing>

UNM Human Resources, UNM's Contribution to Insurance (tiered 60%-80% cost-share by salary): <https://hr.unm.edu/benefits/unms-contribution-to-insurance>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index, West Region (July 2026): https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_west.htm

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index Summary (July 2026): <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.nr0.htm>

Federal Reserve, Summary of Economic Projections (June 17, 2026):

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/fomcproptab120260617.htm>

UNM Office of Human Resources, FY2026-27 Staff Compensation Increase Guidelines memorandum.

Ithaka S+R, "The Great Resignation and Higher Education Employees":

<https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/the-great-resignation-and-higher-education-employees/>

CUPA-HR, Higher Education Workforce Turnover research:

<https://www.cupahr.org/resource/higher-ed-workforce-turnover/>

NASPA, "Understanding Turnover in Higher Education":

<https://www.naspa.org/blog/understanding-turnover-in-higher-education-causes-consequences-and-solutions>