

## Group connects administrative support staff across campuses

By SARI KROSINSKY

President David Schmidly recently signed the Administrative Support Alliance charter, establishing ASA-UNM as a professional organization. ASA-UNM is a network of administrative support professionals committed to advancing UNM's mission through service to leadership, promotion of best practices and collaboration between university offices and units.

ASA-UNM was created for "camaraderie, mentoring, information sharing and to break down the silos," said Patrice Martin, executive assistant to the executive vice president for Health Sciences.

Martin and Eileen Sanchez, executive assistant to the vice president for Human Resources, said members of ASA-UNM help each other and UNM leadership in many ways, including helping to save the university money. Examples include engaging in professional development

aimed at using technology to cut costs and preventing waste of surplus supplies.

Sheryl Cohn, administrative support supervisor at the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and ASA-School of Medicine member, helped develop the ASA-UNM charter. "It has given me an opportunity to learn, strengthen collaborative partnerships and to network in order to share ideas that can benefit all departments," she said.

A listserv with about 300 subscribers "is currently the primary mechanism we use to share information. We are exploring social networks as a communication tool as well," Martin said.

The organization began at the Health Sciences Center three years ago. "It seemed logical to tap into that collective expertise, years and years of experience," Martin said.

The original group of direct

support staff of HSC leadership became the ASA-HSC chapter. A main campus group of administrative support staff of executive cabinet members formed a year ago, now the ASA-Main chapter. The two chapters worked together to develop ASA-UNM as an umbrella organization.

The bylaws provide for the creation of affiliate chapters, such as ASA-School of Medicine. Each chapter and affiliate chapter has representatives on the ASA-UNM steering committee. "We'd like to eventually filter ASA-UNM through the whole university, including the branch campuses. I feel so much more connected, even just across the street to north campus," Sanchez said.

MaryLou Seyl, administrative assistant to the associate vice president for knowledge management and IT at the Health Sciences Library and Informatics Center, serves as ASA-HSC archivist. "With the inclusion



*From left: Matthew Gallegos, Patrice Martin, Paul Roth, David Schmidly, MaryLou Seyl, Sheryl Cohn, Monica Carlson, Eileen Sanchez and Helen Abrahamson.*

of main campus and affiliates, I have seen folks here at HSC grow, and I have been able to get to know several people on both campuses whom I had never spoken with before," she said.

Administrators have been supportive of the initiative, particularly Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Paul Roth, who has supported the group since its inception,

and Vice President for Human Resources Helen Gonzales.

At a recent ASA-UNM meeting, Gonzales said, "This is really an opportunity for us to look at what is possible, what is promising and what the future holds."

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