

Discovery & Impact
October 2026

Purpose at Work

Research rarely moves forward through discovery alone.

It takes curiosity, persistence, the right tools, strong partnerships, and people willing to help create the conditions for new ideas to take shape.

This issue of *Discovery & Impact* looks at those conditions across **UTEP**'s research community, from researchers opening new paths of inquiry and expanding the University's research capabilities to partnerships connecting expertise across the region. Along the way, we highlight the people, resources, and support that help turn possibility into progress.

Thank you for being part of **UTEP**'s research community and for the many ways you help discovery move forward.

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INNOVATION

The Curiosity to Keep Going

UTEP Faculty Elected as American College of Neuropsychopharmacology Fellow



For **Sergio Iñiguez**, a professor of psychology, election as a fellow of the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP) recognizes years of research and mentorship. The honor brings together leading researchers in neuroscience, psychiatry, psychology and pharmacology.

Iñiguez grew up in a small village in Jalisco, Mexico. As a teenager, he moved to California, learned English and began an academic journey that led him to **UTEP**. He

chose a Hispanic-serving institution where he could mentor students from backgrounds historically underrepresented in science and help them see research careers as possible.

His research examines depression and anxiety, including how age and biological sex shape responses to stress and antidepressant treatments. He encourages students to look beyond the boundaries of their own fields and stay open to unexpected results.

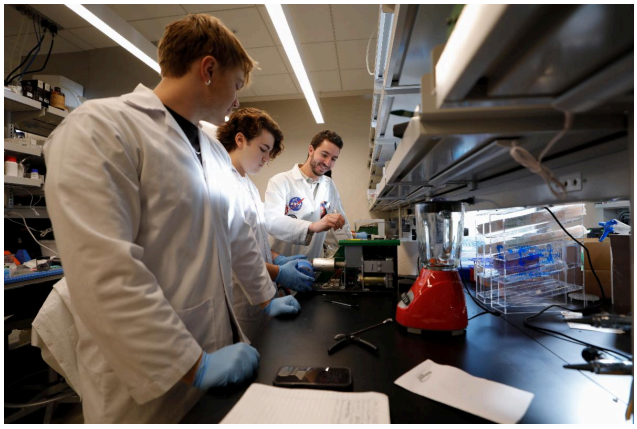
"Often, the most meaningful discoveries come from staying curious and committed when the path forward is not yet clear," Iñiguez said.

As an ACNP fellow, Iñiguez invited a recent graduate, now a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard, to attend the organization's January 2027 conference.

Read the Full Story

New Tools, New Possibilities

Two UTEP Professors Awarded Major Research Instrumentation Grants, Expanding Research Capabilities



Two National Science Foundation awards are expanding **UTEP's** research capabilities. **Alexis Maurel,** an assistant professor of aerospace and mechanical engineering, received $715,278 for a high-resolution, multimaterial 3D printer that can manufacture components from polymers, ceramics and metals. His team will use the instrument to advance research on next-generation batteries and fuel cells, while creating hands-on opportunities for students and new paths for collaboration with industry and other research institutions.

Elizabeth La Rue, an assistant professor of biological sciences, received $430,684 for a mobile laser-scanning system. The instrument will create high-resolution 3D profiles of dryland and urban environments in the American Southwest and Arctic Alaska. The data can support digital twins, or virtual models of physical environments updated with sensor information. The Colleges of Science and Engineering will share the system. **Research & Innovation** (**R&I**) helped both teams plan their proposals.

Following recent successes, **R&I** hosted an ***Insights + Impact*** workshop titled "Winning Research Instrumentation and Equipment Grants: Planning and Institutional Coordination" on October 9.

The workshop brought faculty together with representatives from Research Development, the Office of Sponsored Projects, Purchasing, Environmental Health & Safety, Facilities Services, and Information Resources to help navigate the extensive planning and institutional coordination that can accompany major equipment proposals.

Read the Full Story

DISCOVERY

Research in Conversation

What Lies Beneath West Texas

The geology beneath Far West Texas holds clues to the region's history and its future. **James "Jay" Chapman,** an assistant professor in the Department of Earth, Environmental and Resource Sciences, studies how tectonic processes formed the mountains and igneous rocks of the Borderplex.



Chapman's work connects regional field research with growing interest in critical minerals. Understanding the region's geology can help inform research and planning as domestic interest in these resources grows.

Showcase Your Research

We invite faculty to connect with the **R&I** team and share their research through a laboratory, studio, center, or program visit.

Connect

COMMUNITY

IMPACT COLLECTIVE

Ideas, Partnerships, and New Possibilities



Industry Professionals Gather in Basement of Federal Reserve for Impact Collective Excursion

On October 8, **R&I** brought faculty, industry professionals and regional partners to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas El Paso Branch for the third Impact Collective gathering. The place-based initiative creates space for people with shared interests to explore research partnerships and regional challenges.

Participants included researchers from **UTEP** and Texas Tech Health El Paso, representatives from the City of El Paso and a researcher from UTHealth Houston. Industry participants included David Marek, founder of El Paso companies HealthAtlas and DropDev. The group learned about the Federal Reserve's work on the U.S.-Mexico economy, cross-border trade and maquiladora activity.

"If the relationships keep moving forward, that's the impact we're hoping for," said JoLene Keipp, proposal development strategist and Impact Collective program manager.

The next gathering is planned for December 2026.

Read the Full Story

Translate Your Research into Broader Impacts

A Day with Susan Renoe, Ph.D.



Susan Renoe, Ph.D., is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research, Development & Strategic Partnerships at the University of Missouri (MU). She serves as Executive Director of the NSF-funded Center for Advancing Research Impact in Society and is an assistant professor of strategic communication in the MU School of Journalism.

Join **R&I** for a day of interactive sessions with Susan Renoe. Learn how to design, evaluate and communicate the broader impacts of research and create lasting benefits for communities.

Thursday, October 29, 2026
IDRB 2.204
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Attend the sessions that fit your schedule. All morning sessions are open seating.

View Agenda

CONNECTIONS

Taking STEM Education Across Borders

UTEP faculty awarded Fulbright Specialist



This November, Mourat Tchoshanov will return to Kazakhstan through the Fulbright Specialist Program. During a two-week seminar, he will work with faculty on digital STEM education and the responsible use of generative AI, building on relationships formed during earlier work in the country. The collaboration connects students and researchers in Kazakhstan with **UTEP**.

Read the Full Story

By-Demand Faculty Development Session

Bring Faculty Development Directly to Your Team



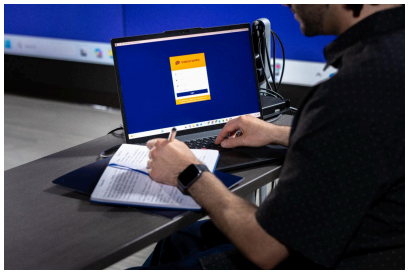
Research Development tailors faculty learning to your group's goals. Sessions can address funding strategy, proposal development, partnerships, research compliance, evaluation and impact, or innovation and commercialization. Gather at least five **UTEP** faculty members, identify the outcome you want to achieve and submit a request. The team will shape the session around your needs.

Request a Session

STEWARDSHIP

Research Built on Trust

Research Compliance and Regulatory Services



Research Compliance and Regulatory Services helps faculty, staff and students navigate requirements for human-subjects research, biosafety, export controls, animal research and research security. Its guidance helps researchers protect participants, meet institutional and sponsor requirements, and focus on rigorous work with confidence.

“Their guidance allows faculty to focus on conducting high-quality research while ensuring compliance requirements are met efficiently, responsibly and with confidence,” said Emre Umucu, associate dean for research in the College of Health Sciences.

Strong compliance protects research integrity and public trust.

Connect



Artwork in the Lhakhang Cultural Exhibit.

Research at UTEP Begins with *You*

This issue highlights research making a difference on campus and across the Paso del Norte region. Share a publication, award, research milestone, partnership, student achievement, or breakthrough for a future issue of *Discovery & Impact* and the **Research & Innovation** website. Every story helps show how **UTEP** research serves communities and expands what is possible.

Share Your Story

Your Pick

The most clicked link in the September edition of *Discovery & Impact* was PIC 2.0: Supporting Informed Research Management, which highlighted centralized project information and the new Project Burn Rate feature available through the **R&I** Dashboard.



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