

May 4, 2026

Dear UNE Community,

I am pleased to announce funding decisions for the 2026 ORI Faculty Mini-grant program. This program is grounded by a faculty-driven peer review process, led by the UFA Research and Scholarship Committee. In this round we received 12 applications from across the university, totaling \$93,670 requested. The grant review team included UFA R&S committee members as well as ad hoc faculty reviewers who provide significant time and expertise to the review process. I am pleased to award 5 grants in this round, representing \$ 39,982 investment in faculty scholarly endeavors.

Please join me in congratulating the award recipients:

**2026-2027 UNE Minigrants awardees**

- Sarah Ebel (CAS)** *“Developing a Typology of Seaweed Harvesting Worldviews and Their Relationship to Conservation in Maine and Chile”*
- Zach Olson (CAS)** *“Food habits of the Northern bog lemming”*
- Jenn Garcia (CAS)** *“Beyond Gene Expression: RNA as a Critical Nutrient Store”*
- Ali Ahmida (CAS)** *“The Ghosts of Agaila: Recovering the Legacy of a Forgotten Colonial Genocide in Libya and the Nazi Connection”*
- Ben Harrison (COM)** *“Establishing the Feasibility of a Novel Mechanism Regulating de Novo Protein Synthesis in Sensory Neurons”*

Sincerely,



Karen L. Houseknecht, PhD  
Vice President for Research and Innovation