



## PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

**On Fear and Uncertainty:** In times of uncertainty, we tend to become wary of unfamiliar people and ideas. On December 7, 2015, the American Academy of Arts & Sciences hosted a meeting at Columbia University on the topic of fear and democracy. Ira Katznelson of Columbia University and Samuel Issacharoff of New York University School of Law discussed the state of security and freedom and the role of fear in a modern democracy. In that [discussion](#), Professor Katznelson stated that “Fear ... becomes a context that questions the legitimacy of institutions in which there is no substantive status quo, in which there is a requirement to act in a speedy way without much reflection, and in which, at least in constitutional regimes, there is enormous pressure to find exceptions and to reach expedited decisions. Fear can also be a motivation to act. It often highlights anxiety over rationality, and creates intensities of feeling. It widens the scope of available models of acting. And it sometimes creates very strange bedfellows.” It strikes me specifically that uncertainties engulfing the mission of universities, their financial models, and their role in solving societal problems, must not lead us “to find exceptions nor reach expedited decisions.” Rather, we are called upon to use our expertise to calmly yet swiftly come up with long-lasting collective solutions.

**State of New Mexico Budget Development:** An update on the budget of our state may be found at the Albuquerque Journal [article](#). The current budget proposal contains a 1 percent decrease for higher education but assumes a \$265 million package of tax and fee increases.

### Evaluation Critical for our Success

As UNM employees finish assessing their performance over the past year and focus on goals for 2017, I have also been meeting with University senior leadership to evaluate the progress of our institutional strategic plan, [UNM2020](#). As many of you know, the plan was refreshed last fall, and the institutional goals refined. We have accomplished so much over the past several years, and I would like to emphasize the institutional commitment we have to excellence in each endeavor.

The Office of Assessment has announced [UNM Graduate Student Institutional Assessment](#) for Spring 2017. The online survey offered to graduate students during the week of March 6 measures workforce-readiness skills associated with literacy, numeracy, reading and problem solving in technology-rich environments. There are a limited number of access codes available, so our grad students need to [pre-register](#) by March 3.

### Lobo Day Celebrates UNM's Birthday

Tomorrow, [UNM celebrates 128 years](#) of serving our students and community as New Mexico's flagship university. In addition to the annual Lobo Day festivities, including cake and a birthday photo, you are all invited to help color a four-foot cube mural that illustrates the UNM campus and culture. The celebration is tomorrow from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the SUB Atrium. At noon, everyone is invited to be in a group birthday

photo that will hang in the SUB for the rest of year. Many thanks to the collaborative efforts of ASUNM Lobo Spirit, the Student Activities Center, and University Communication and Marketing. I hope you will join Louie and a couple hundred other Lobos to celebrate UNM and everything that makes it special.

Best wishes for a great week ahead!

Chaouki T. Abdallah

Acting President

Follow me on Twitter [@chaoukita](https://twitter.com/chaoukita)

*There is so much more that happens on the UNM campus than can be conveyed in a weekly message. To find out about the latest stories and events, please visit the [UNM Newsroom](#), the central source of news and information for the UNM community.*