



## PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon.

The summer has given me the opportunity to really reflect on the role that UNM has as a public institution to be accessible to both our current and prospective students. The opportunity to attain a degree, and do so affordably, has become increasingly critical to improving one's employment and economic prospects. A recent calculation by Student Loan Hero on New Mexico's average return on investment of a [college degree five years after graduation](#) showed that those who had attained a bachelor's degree earned 68 percent more than those who hadn't. Another [paper put out by the Brookings Institute](#), emphasized the public and economic benefits that higher education provides, including that "universities act as ladders for social mobility," as well as laboratories for research and knowledge creation. UNM was included as a "leader in equal access to higher education," being a place where important research is conducted, while at the same time extending social opportunity to low-income students.

### The State of Higher Education in New Mexico

The past week was all about higher education policies, plans, and panels. It started on Monday with a [Council of University Presidents \(CUP\)](#) meeting, which includes New Mexico's seven four-year institutions. The CUP discussed three main topics: the legislative lottery scholarship, dual credit courses, and IT projects across the institutions. We are developing a unified CUP position regarding the first one, and a proposal to the State regarding the last two.

On Tuesday, HSC Chancellor Paul Roth and his team, as well as EVP David Harris and I, went before the State Board of Finance (SBoF) to seek final approval for the Physics, Astronomy, and Interdisciplinary Science (PAIS) building and to update the board on the adult replacement hospital. We received unanimous approval for PAIS and had a vigorous exchange of ideas regarding the hospital. We were asked to inform the SBoF prior to bringing it before the full Board of Regents.

On Wednesday night, I participated in a panel discussion organized by the Albuquerque Journal, which focused on the [challenges facing Higher Education in New Mexico](#). The [Journal ran a subsequent story](#), which includes a link to a recording of the panel.

### Inaugural Lobo Cancer Challenge Bike Ride

The UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center is kicking off a new cycling fundraising event to support New Mexicans with cancer. The [Lobo Cancer Center Challenge](#) will be held on Saturday, Sept. 23, and offer riders a choice of 25-mile, 50-mile and 100-mile routes, all starting and finishing at Dreamstyle Stadium. All proceeds support cancer treatment, cancer research, clinical trials, and education for cancer healthcare professionals. This is a great way to work as a team for a cause that makes a difference in the lives of so many in our state.

Until next time.

Chaouki Abdallah  
Acting President  
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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.