



President's Weekly Perspective

Good afternoon!

I enjoy having the opportunity to recognize outstanding work and achievements, whether personal or academic, of the departments and individuals that make up our distinct community. We have great people doing wonderful things locally and globally, and this week I want to take a moment to applaud some of the individuals who are going above and beyond in representing the Lobo spirit.

Presidential Award of Distinction

Last year, I established and awarded the first Presidential Awards of Distinction, created as a prestigious way to recognize outstanding achievement, scholarly excellence, and leadership in a profession, noteworthy public service or humanitarian endeavor. We created this award to recognize individuals who do bold and important acts that change New Mexico.

This year I am proud to [honor two exceptional individuals](#) who have made significant contributions to the health and wellness of New Mexico citizens: Governor Susana Martinez and Dr. Howard Yonas, professor and chair of the UNM Department of Neurosurgery.

Gov. Martinez expanded Medicaid and healthcare coverage in New Mexico, providing access to up to 205,000 additional low-income New Mexicans. This was a valiant decision that opposed conventional thoughts of other Republican leaders. Gov. Martinez did not consider the politics of expanding Medicaid, only what would be best for New Mexico. She then followed this decision with a commitment to assure the state had the medicine and the work force by expanding the healthcare workforce.

A superb physician, Dr. Yonas has a long history of establishing new surgical services and education for New Mexico. He grew our Department of Neurosurgery and has initiated innovative medical practices in New Mexico and is a leader in the delivery of service. Under his direction, the UNM Health Sciences Center received a \$15.1 million grant for a statewide telemedicine network to diagnose and treat stroke and brain injury patients in areas of New Mexico that would otherwise not have access to this critical expertise.

These honorees were selected not only for their accomplishments, but also the high esteem in which they are held. The nominations received were heartfelt and compelling. I look forward to presenting these awards during the fall commencement ceremony.

Recognizing Exceptional Community Service

Thank you to everyone who nominated a student, staff or faculty member for the [2014 Sarah Belle Brown Community Service Awards](#). After reviewing several nominations, each detailing impactful community service and volunteer efforts, the award committee has selected three people who emulate Sarah's ongoing commitment to helping those in need.

The faculty award recipient is Dr. Arti Prasad, whose dedication to the health and well-being of New Mexicans as well as the education of cutting-edge health care practices has led to new healthcare programs for our community. The staff award recipient is Ashley Taylor, who not only volunteers to serve the community, but also inspires those around her to take any opportunity to give and support those in need. The student award recipient Priscila Poliana, whose service to the Graduate & Professional Student Association and volunteer groups has provided mentorship to individuals and advanced the overarching mission and goals of these community organizations.

All of these award winners exemplify the kind of involvement that makes UNM and New Mexico a better, stronger and more caring community. Their work and dedication serves as an inspiration to all of us, in our continuing efforts to fulfill our mission of service. Congratulations to this year's awardees, and thank you for your generosity.

Fresh Perspectives

After living in Albuquerque for so long it becomes easy to take some of the unique and exciting parts of this city for granted. That said, I often hear visitors remarks about some of the wonderful and interesting things that are happening or exist in New Mexico. It is refreshing to hear the opinions of our students, some of whom are not only new to the state, but also new to the U.S., as they explore campus and adventure out to surrounding area.

Earlier this year a group of student bloggers, introduced as "[The Pack](#)," began to share their student experiences. I know Trace, one of these bloggers, whose older brother roomed with my son at the University of Florida during our Gainesville days, and I have to say that [his take on Lobo life](#) is very interesting. These students come from different backgrounds, and study in different fields, which means that each member of The Pack comes with a fresh perspective on campus life and their time as a student. I encourage you to check out the blog and see UNM through their eyes. It might change your perspective on what the Land of Enchantment has to offer.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob