

STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY



The following is a text of remarks prepared for delivery by President Garnett S. Stokes at the State of the University Address on Monday, September 17, 2018 at the UNM Student Union Building.

UNM 2018: Doing Even More

Good afternoon and thank you for joining me today. It's quite a privilege to stand before you as UNM's 23rd president, after just 200 days in office, and have this opportunity to speak about the state of OUR university.

So normally, in any traditional state of the university address, today I would take some time to reflect on what our university has achieved over the past year, recounting things such as the numbers of students we have taught, the new programs developed by our faculty, and the incredible work of staff and administrators alike to make UNM the remarkable place that it is. All of this is true, and you know this better than I.

However, in part because I am still your new president, I am going to start with something different: by sharing with you how I came to understand our university not only from within, but also from the perspective of those we serve, the people and communities who make up the great state of New Mexico. My status as a relative newcomer - with all the experience and commitment I bring to this office - has put me in a great position to listen to those people, both inside and outside the University, who have already invested so much in UNM. In these 200 days, I have worked closely with so many of you to explore and consider the state of the University, generate dialog around our greatest challenges, and propose to do even more as we move forward.

Even before I arrived, a little over six months ago, I made a promise to this university that I would take the time I needed to understand the campus, the communities that surround it, and the state of New Mexico. In my first 100 days, I participated in nearly 100 student, staff, faculty, alumni, and community events here in Albuquerque, learning as much as I could about what UNM has to offer, and listening carefully to what our campus community

needs from UNM's administrative leadership, including more transparency and better compensation. There were concerns expressed about faculty retention and staff lines being lost, resulting in people having to take on more and more work to serve the campus. There were concerns about our political environment and improving the climate of inclusion to fully realize what it means to say, "Each of us defines all of us." And there were concerns about campus safety, fiscal accountability and shared governance.



In my second 100 days, after May commencement, I hit the road on a statewide listening and learning tour. I began with our branches, where I discovered the critical work taking place at those campuses to serve the needs of New Mexicans, and then discovered many more diverse and wonderful communities around the state. By the numbers, I traveled over 4,000 miles through all 33 of New Mexico's counties, visited 38 cities, and met with more than 1,300 people. I was honestly amazed by what I saw – the incredible landscapes, the pueblo architecture, the plazuelas and acequias of the Land of Enchantment – but I was even more impressed by what I *heard*. To all those who took the time to teach me about their lives in these places: thank you! During my travels, I also witnessed first-hand what our faculty and students are doing across the state, which includes exploring new research frontiers in health care delivery, working to solve today's most pressing social and environmental issues, and seeking to preserve and understand the many cultures that sustain our communities.

UNM has so much to be proud of. But I also learned that we can do even more; in fact, people kept telling me, communities across our state want the University of New Mexico to do even more. So, on this, my two hundredth day as president, I will reflect on the state of the University by discussing its mission – what we are doing, and how well we are doing it – in relation to some of the recurring themes that emerged both here on the campus in Albuquerque and in my tour of the state. My job as your President is to lead this process, by identifying where my administration can do even more to serve our students and fulfill our mission as New Mexico's flagship research university.

I will start by telling you about some of the new initiatives I have begun or will begin to pursue by forming various advisory panels to study our challenges and opportunities and to seek inputs from university and community stakeholders to recommend strategies to address them.

SERVICE TO ALL NEW MEXICAN COMMUNITIES

Throughout my tour of the state, I heard again and again how UNM needs not only to better respond to the needs of our communities – urban and rural, native and non-native, business and non-profit sectors, immigrant and underserved – but also to build on the University’s strengths in ways that translate more effectively the value of our research and teaching to serve and support all New Mexicans.

A universal concern throughout the state focused on the need for more qualified teachers, as well as support for existing teachers’ engagement and professional development. Our very talented and experienced College of Education faculty are already engaged in improving the quality and quantity of teachers to serve New Mexico communities and are prepared to do even more to positively impact the student learning that is so critical to our future. We have the ability to apply new technological tools to help teachers form ‘communities of practice’ drawing on faculty expertise from throughout the University to support teachers (and potentially principals and superintendents) throughout the state. By building upon its recent redesign efforts, I have the expectation that our College of Education will be instrumental in determining how we move forward to meet the educational demands of New Mexico’s communities, families and youth.

Another common theme heard resoundingly across the state involved the need to expand the healthcare practitioner and educational workforce in New Mexico. UNM is focusing on these important needs in numerous ways through our Health Sciences Center, from both the clinical and educational enterprises, and I have seen, firsthand, the ways in which the people, the medicine, the science, and the compassion extend to every corner of the state. The HSC leadership, under Chancellor Roth, the clinical and academic faculty, the students and residents, and our graduates are collaborating with communities and health care providers to increase access for underserved populations. UNM has many alliances with health care educators and providers, which was evident at the medical facilities I visited in areas such as Raton, Alamogordo and Rio Rancho. In our rural communities, many citizens don’t always have quick access to health or emergency services. At the Guadalupe Regional Medical Center in Santa Rosa, headed by CEO and alumna Christina Campos, I learned from Dr. Estevan Apodaca, a graduate of the inaugural class of the UNM BA/MD program, about the challenging learning opportunities afforded to our medical students. Our continued collaborations with institutions such as the JF Maddox Foundation will broaden our reach and impact to rural and underserved communities across the areas of education, clinical service, research, and health policy.

As the only academic medical center in a state in which many New Mexico communities lack the necessary providers, the UNM Health Sciences Center is critical to advancing access to care and to improving the health outcomes of all New Mexicans through education, research and patient care.

- We are training health professionals through partnerships, such as that with the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium, and with other providers across the state, including many areas that struggle to provide access to health care;
- Many of our graduates go on to practice in these same underserved communities;

- Even in areas of the state that are particularly under-served, Project ECHO allows us to replicate knowledge across great geographic distance to address critical health and social issues;
- Our HSC and other areas of campus are focused on the bigger picture of social determinants of health such as child well-being, successful aging, building capacity for behavioral health care and the substance abuse epidemic.

EXPAND TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

Another significant opportunity that I came to understand is recognizing the importance of expanding our engagement with New Mexico's 23 Indian tribes, which represent over 10 percent of the state's population. During the summer, I was able to visit three Indian reservations and several tribal communities. I met with dozens of tribal officials and learned about the issues facing indigenous populations in New Mexico as well as their distinctive histories, and cultural, social and economic contributions to the state. What I heard was a strong desire to strengthen and improve relations and collaboration, and enhance educational opportunities in fields such as nursing, mechanical engineering, and the law.

In November, I will host a Tribal Summit focused on education and building relations with New Mexico tribes, tribal members, and communities. This event will seek not to repeat past Tribal Summits, but to build on them to forge deeper collaborative relationships that better meet the various challenges facing tribal communities. We will collaborate with our tribal partners on workforce development and economic growth that give our graduates the opportunities to contribute to their local community, economy, and culture.

With regard to doing more in service to New Mexican communities, I will be forming advisory panels to expand the university's engagement with the tribes. In addition, UNM will explore ways to improve the size and quality of New Mexico's K through 12 teaching workforce, as well as partner with branch campus leaders and local foundations to better meet the health care needs of rural and underserved communities around the state. As I have briefly described, UNM already boasts a host of important programs in these areas, but with the right planning and allocation of resources, and in partnership with the communities we serve, we can do more.

RESEARCH FOR PROSPERITY

A thriving, vibrant research community is essential to UNM and to the state of New Mexico's economy and culture. Learning and discovery are central to our mission and interconnected to driving economic and social prosperity in New Mexico. Since at least the 1940s, New Mexico has hosted groundbreaking research and creative innovation across many fields, in part due to the combination of national laboratories, research universities, creative sectors rooted in the diversity of local cultures, military labs, and the spectacular natural landscape. These have attracted talent and resources to our state and will continue to do so. Our current opportunities and challenges lie in assuring that together they generate an ecology of innovation that can foster a dynamic economy built on ongoing innovation.

In FY18, UNM faculty were engaged in a remarkable and diverse array of research and creative work at the leading edges of knowledge and innovation. This includes over 1,750 sponsored research grants with \$297 million in funding from outside the University - \$185M generated within Health Sciences and \$112M generated through our other departments and colleges.

- UNM research cuts across multiple disciplines and departments, advancing areas such as:
- bioinformatics and collections-based research;

- ecology and climatology;
- human evolution, social and behavioral dynamics, and addictions;
- materials science, optical science, and engineering;
- aging, especially successful aging;
- brain and behavioral health;
- development of cancer drugs, genome sequencing, cancer prevention and cell signaling;

We also have exceptional programs in the fine and performing arts, humanities, architecture and planning, business and many other areas as well.

The development of our Research Strategic Plan, *Research2020*, in 2016-17 made it clear that we have a robust, high-quality research enterprise led by outstanding faculty. However, it also became evident that an investment of new funds will be critical to maintaining UNM's status as a first-class research university that can lead the nation in ensuring the success of an increasingly diverse student body while generating new knowledge and understanding to benefit all. We will be seeking major funding to support our research endeavor, in part driven by a new initiative to define 'Grand Challenges' facing New Mexico, the nation and the world that our broad research expertise can help to solve.

Part of increasing prosperity is our connection to the private sector and other areas of the public sector. By next week, I will have visited all three of our national and federal labs, with which many of our faculty and students collaborate, and which offer exceptional career opportunities for many of our graduates. We have also integrated the Sandia Labs Academic Alliance New Mexico university partnership's manager onto our campus residing at the School of Engineering, but representing the entire campus, where she spends at least one day a week.

We also continue to grow business through STC.UNM and our Innovate ABQ initiative:

- STC.UNM currently has 73 active startups, 40 of which are in New Mexico and have generated 448 New Mexico jobs, \$28 million in wages and salaries, and \$56.1 million in total economic output;
- UNM Anderson School of Management's Business Plan Competition has launched nearly 24 student startups;
- UNM Innovation Academy, the University's entrepreneurial program for students, allows students to create new companies while completing their degree program. Its partnership with STC.UNM through the Rainforest Student Pitch Competitions has spun out 29 student startups.

Additionally, the HSC is taking the lead in developing a robust bioscience industry in New Mexico.

But I know we can do more. The advisory panel we create on research initiatives will evaluate how well the University promotes and supports its research enterprise, while another will study ways to increase the number and variety of student internships supported by private enterprise.

STRENGTHENING THE UNIVERSITY

In my meetings on campus and around the state, I listened with care to everyone's suggestions about how we can strengthen our university and where and how the University can improve educational and support services for

students, in part by increasing both outreach to alumni beyond Albuquerque and fundraising with the Foundation. I was especially encouraged by my visits to UNM's branch campuses, where I saw for myself the significant work that staff and faculty are doing there to meet the needs and desires of the populations they serve, even as we can do more to ensure that the University is offering relevant and applicable skills and degrees for those students. I also learned that we can do more to support vulnerable populations of students throughout the university, through initiatives ranging from prioritizing campus safety to supporting student veterans, to offering services for first-generation students, rural students, and those from underrepresented groups. As the Department of Justice investigation and other lessons have shown us, the University must urgently focus on taking concrete actions to create the most welcoming, secure and positive environment for our entire community to live, learn, work and visit. My administration's focused attention on the curricular, service and safety needs of our students will be supported in part by increasing alumni engagement in areas outside of the immediate Albuquerque area, as well as continued work with the Foundation to build on its recent fundraising success.

While there is phenomenal work taking place at UNM, it is evident that we must evolve as a higher education institution. An improving economy, stagnant demographics, increased competition and, perhaps most concerning, a diminished perception of the value of higher education, have all contributed to our declining enrollments. This trend negatively impacts our student outcomes and resource availability. With even greater challenges on the horizon we must double down on student success as "retain to complete" is paramount to our core objectives as a flagship university. Improving student outcomes will require changes to our structures and processes but I am confident our commitment to this highest priority will generate energy and enthusiasm to meet the task at hand.

Our Alumni can be part of the solution. They help create the University's reputation through their success in the real world, including right here at home. Of the more than 185,000 active UNM alumni, nearly 112,000 (a little over 60%) live in New Mexico. That means that in a state of just over 2 million people, nearly 9% of all New Mexicans are Lobos. It will be crucial that we increase our outreach and offer opportunities for our alumni to connect with the University and each other throughout the state — as role models, mentors, advocates, and supporters.

To these ends, I will be charging advisory groups to review the University's achievements and opportunities in branch campus programs, support to veterans, campus safety, alumni participation, and fundraising – so that we can better identify and meet the specific needs of our students and their communities.

BUILDING THE UNIVERSITY, BUILDING TRUST

One of the biggest challenges I have faced in these short, wonderful 200 days as your President has been that of building the kind of trust necessary to successfully manage a university – any university. As you are all aware, UNM faces continuous scrutiny from many quarters, which should never allow us to forget the urgent need to do even more to enhance communication, transparency, and accountability. If this university is going to remain accountable to the public, stakeholders, legislators, alumni, and students, we need to make sure that our decisions and how we make them are transparent. Though the road to true accountability is a long one, it starts at the top with strong administrative leadership: I have begun by hiring a new University Counsel and am forming search committees this week to fill crucial leadership positions in the Office for Finance and Administration and Academic Affairs. In addition, I will be empowering an advisory group on ethics that will guide administrative leaders and study ways to increase compliance with university ethics policies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a more traditional state of the university speech would have made clear, we at UNM have much to be proud of, and we should celebrate and build on our successes. However, we also must acknowledge the very real challenges we still face. While we continue to pursue excellence and remain affordable and accessible to the people we serve, we need to translate our value in all that we do. Our mission has never been more important in our 129-year history than it is today. Higher education has never been more needed for career success. Research and innovation have never been more needed to better understand and improve the world in which we live. UNM will be a crucial element in meeting that challenge and taking advantage of that opportunity. As one of the very few minority-majority, flagship, Hispanic Serving Institutions that also hold a Carnegie classification of Highest Research Activity (R1), UNM can help New Mexico and the nation thrive in the 21st century by shaping the next generation of leaders.

In addition to all the initiatives I have described, long-term success also requires thoughtful and continuous strategic planning, allowing us to build on our successes while reevaluating our institutional goals and strategies. In 2017, the UNM 2020 Strategic Plan Refresh was adopted, a plan developed with input from over a thousand University participants. Guided by that plan, we have achieved some remarkable things – record high retention and graduation rates, better prepared freshman classes, record-breaking fundraising, and new academic endeavors. Over the next year we will capitalize on this momentum and come together to develop a new strategic plan that will carry us beyond 2020. As a first step, the “ReDesigning the University” task force reports will be the basis for dialogue with faculty shared governance structures and campus constituencies on how to address our challenges.

After some of the decisions I had to make over the summer, I can no longer consider myself your new president. However, I am no less filled with enthusiasm for our future work together than I was when I arrived. The statewide listening tour was an invaluable experience, but it is not over yet: I have already committed to returning to Southeastern New Mexico in 2018 and will continue to pursue opportunities for outreach throughout the state. And because I also value the importance of shared governance, I will continue to learn and collaborate with all of you by holding traveling office hours later this fall – each week visiting a different location within the campus community to hear what any member of the Lobo family has to say. If you have an idea, a concern, a solution or a criticism...I want to hear it.

In closing, I would like to offer my profound thanks to the countless Lobos who have attended, who have taught at, who have worked at, and who have supported The University of New Mexico. To the citizens of our great state, I offer thanks for believing in UNM and allowing us to serve you through our mission of education, innovation, health care, and community commitment. UNM truly belongs to everyone in our state. We're not just the University of New Mexico, we are the University **for** New Mexico.

It is my sincere wish that what I have shared with you today has reaffirmed the accomplishments, momentum, and opportunity we have as New Mexico's flagship university. We choose where we go from here. However, the sentiment “do even more” sounds too much like something from the mantra guiding higher education in recent years of “do more with less.” So, let me clarify - doing more for New Mexico means doing it smarter, with courage and creativity. Doing more is doing the right thing. It is my great privilege to join with you in the work that lies ahead of us: together, we can do even more.