



## President's Weekly Perspective

Good afternoon, and welcome back from spring break!

We are half way through the semester, and I hope that everyone is feeling good about class progress so far. I know that many of you are still preparing for midterms, so I wish the best for you in your studies.

Spring break is a relaxing time for most of us. Now that classes are back in session, there is another opportunity for stress relief on campus. Tomorrow, [Cuddle a Canine](#) will be held in front of Zimmerman Library from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Thank you to University Libraries for bringing this group of therapy dogs to campus again this semester. They volunteer their time for several semesters to bring this popular event to students who just need to decompress after class or get re-energized before heading to the next one.

### Mountain West Conference Tournament

Congratulations to the Lobo women's basketball team on advancing to the finals in the Mountain West Conference Tournament last week. Although we did not leave Las Vegas with any championship titles this year, I commend both the men's and women's teams on playing excellent games. I wish the best of luck to our women who will be playing at Johnson Center on Wednesday in the [Women's Basketball Invitational](#).

I would also like to congratulate our women's coach, [Yvonne Sanchez, who received the Mountain West Coach of the Year honor](#). She has led the team in a particularly impressive season.

### Emergency Preparedness Exercise

On Wednesday, March 18, UNM will be working with several government agencies in an emergency medication Point of Dispensing (POD) exercise. This will be a full-scale exercise, which will simulate the distribution of medication to a specific group of individuals. Practicing these carefully developed plans for a public health emergency will allow us to assess opportunities to strengthen them.

I would like to commend our University Emergency Manager, Byron Piatt, for his diligence in ensuring that UNM has thorough plans to handle a disaster. We show gratitude for heroic leadership in times of stress, but we rarely take the time to thank those who are proactive in making sure that we are prepared for a worst-case scenario. Byron is a proven leader who has handled past emergencies with confidence, and his forethought and expertise could mean the difference between a contained incident and a catastrophe.

### Benefits Calculator

Many Universities are faced with the need to be creative in developing alternate health plan designs for faculty and staff. Managing increasing health care expenses has become an imperative for the University, while at the same time ensuring high quality health care, fair allocation of expenses, and remaining a competitive employer. Last Fall I established a Health Plan Committee to begin evaluating ways in which we could approach these issues. I would like to express my thanks for their expertise and hard

work in developing a broad list of options for consideration and deliberation. Last Monday, the Board of Regents adopted the package of recommendations presented to them. Visit [changes to health care benefits adopted](#) for more information.

In an effort to simplify the way in which we might view our benefits, our HR staff have also recently added a [benefits calculator](#) to their toolbox, allowing current or prospective employees to estimate their deductions and their comprehensive compensation package and distribution based on their salary and selected benefits.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob