



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon.

I want to assure you, the UNM community, that my highest priority is to unite this campus in providing a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for everyone who works, studies, and visits here. Our dedication to excellence in education, research, and public service requires our concerted effort to ensure that basic rights are afforded to every member of our community.

Diversity of Gender Expression

Among those basic rights is the ability to choose an appropriate bathroom. While Federal guidance on transgender rights has recently changed, the University of New Mexico continues to uphold state law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual identity (NMSA Section 28-1-7(F)) and our own [Regent's Policies 2.3, 2.4](#), and [2.5](#) regarding equal opportunity, diversity, and sexual harassment. In a correlated action, we recently responded to broad input from our campus in creating a new [Administrative Policy 5300](#) regarding universal restrooms. Our existing policies and practices regarding campus accommodations will not change. Individuals on this campus are free to select the bathroom that is best for them.

I would also like to state UNM's support for the preferred name initiative that was proposed by the LGBTQ Resource Center, along with the resolve of Academic Affairs and the Office of the Registrar to implement it, as a reflection of our commitment to an inclusive student records philosophy. Our goal is to work with IT to have this option available as soon as possible within the next year.

We welcome and support our transgender and gender non-conforming community members. Like all members of our community, they must be able to work, learn, and thrive here without fear of harassment or discrimination. Please join me in upholding the principles of inclusiveness and respect that guide The University of New Mexico. Remember, each of us defines all of us!

Changes to Seal Reflect Changes to Institutional Identity

The Board of Regents passed a resolution on Nov. 15, 2016 that directed the Provost to "appoint an inclusive committee to determine an appropriate mechanism to design a new University of New Mexico seal and to engage in a comprehensive cost analysis to determine the phase-out plan for eliminating the seal and replacing it." In my role as provost, I appointed such a committee.

That committee has met, and recommended as a first step in the phase-out of the old seal, that the University begin using its current "commercial seal" in place of the University Seal while the university implements a process to determine the design of a new seal. This recommendation is consistent with the

regents' request that we move towards a new seal that reflects our current values and identity. As you will recall, in his Albuquerque Journal editorial, published May 16, 2016, Regent Doughty wrote, "The American flag has changed numerous times over the years and even the U.S. Constitution has been amended not once or twice, but 27 times. It only makes sense that we look at the seal to make sure that it continues to reflect our values. If it doesn't, we should change it. We have embarked on a branding exercise to convey a more accurate representation of our identity in the marketplace and began evaluating a change to the UNM logo earlier this spring. The seal ought to be part of that discussion."

I have therefore requested that UNM offices immediately begin substituting the commercial seal for the current seal everywhere possible while we pursue the process directed by the regents to create a new seal and phase-out the old one.

Step Afrika! at Popejoy Hall

Experiencing cultural events from around the world is one of the many valuable benefits we offer to our community. We are excited to welcome [Step Afrika!](#), one of the top 10 African American dance companies in the United States, to Popejoy Hall on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:30 p.m. The show blends percussive dance styles practiced by historically African American fraternities and sororities, African traditional dance and influences from a variety of other dance and art forms. This event is produced by ASUNM Student Special Events (SSE), and UNM student tickets are free at the UNM Bookstore with a valid Lobo ID. General admission to the public is \$5 through unmtickets.com or the ticket offices at WisePies Arena, The PIT or the UNM Bookstore.

Mountain West Tournament Begins - Go Lobos!

Congratulations to the UNM men's basketball team on a great senior night winning game against San Diego State University on Saturday. It was great to look out over the sea of red cheering on our Lobos, including the many parents who joined their students, at the best attended game of the season. Let's all wish both our men's and women's teams the best of luck in the Mountain West Tournament that begins this week.

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.