



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good morning.

Whether on our main campus, our branch campuses or the farthest corners of New Mexico, getting connected – and staying connected – is a big part of my job. The driving, the discussions, the tours and the tourism all combine to tell a story of UNM's role and impact as the state's flagship university. Getting to know New Mexico's people, including the amazing UNM staff and faculty who support me on these trips, is invaluable to my understanding of what we do and what still needs to be done. Since New Mexico is the fifth largest state by area, yet has a population of just over 2 million, traveling to get to know its people has opened my eyes not only to its vast beauty, but the challenges faced in our more rural communities that are predicated on very diverse demographics and economies. [My tour blog will be updated](#) with more details and photos later this week.

Outcomes that Build Incomes

My father was in the Air Force and I grew up on military bases. Visiting Kirtland Air Force Base (KAFB) and the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL) last Monday was an honor and a reminder of the valuable research opportunities that are afforded to our students in areas such as space operations, optics and laser systems. The AFRL Tech Engagement Office does extensive work with several areas on-campus, including STEM outreach, internships through various departments and shared facilities. This summer the AFRL has 166 interns, 27 of whom are from UNM. Equally impressive are the collaborative grants that benefit both our student and faculty researchers, such as a [\\$6.7 million grant](#) awarded to AFRL and the UNM School of Engineering in May. As we look to the future, more shared spaces are opening to support collaborative research, such as the upcoming new lab at the UNM Science and Tech Park. I am grateful to the many people at KAFB and AFRL for taking the time to introduce me to their communities. As UNM continues to create outcomes that build incomes, I am eager to continue finding new ways to partner with our federal government partners.

All of New Mexico is our Campus

Approaching the end of my fourth month as president, I have visited each UNM branch campus and the communities they serve. Last week I completed the first regional leg of my listening tour, which encompassed the southeast part of the state. In four days I visited Clovis, Portales, Hobbs, Artesia, Carlsbad, Roswell, Ruidoso and Alamogordo – and many places in between. The friendliness of New Mexicans has been the hallmark of my travels, as well as the many geographic, cultural and historic landmarks that contribute to the story of our country's 47th state. State treasures, such as the world-famous Carlsbad Caverns, are also living laboratories for researchers. I had the distinct privilege of touring this natural wonder with UNM Professor Emerita Diana Northup. Among the broader topics of economic development, student debt and retaining graduates within their communities, I also heard strong sentiments expressed advocating for UNM to be more engaged and responsive. Issues included teacher education, health care and more proactively aligning some of our academic offerings with regional industry needs. Health care was a strong theme in

this region. I would like to recognize the outstanding work of Dr. Arthur Kaufman and his colleagues in the School of Medicine for creating opportunities that engage our students in the practice of rural medicine. As a result, our students, who are exposed to the challenges and rewards of rural medicine, make a true difference in these communities. I appreciate the candor, passion and generosity of the many people I met and can unequivocally say that I will be returning to this region within the year.

Have a great week and go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes

President

Feel free to reach out to me at presidentstokes@unm.edu.

Follow me on twitter [@PresidentStokes](https://twitter.com/PresidentStokes)