



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 28, 2019

Good afternoon.

In his 1976 message on the national observance of Black History Month in the U.S., President Gerald Ford [stated](#) that “We can seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” Each year since, February has been a time during which we reflect on and celebrate the many contributions African-Americans have made to American culture, science, politics, economy, and society. At The University of New Mexico each day offers us opportunities, both subtle and profound, to learn about distinctive and shared histories of those within our community as we learn how each of us defines all of us. I would encourage all Lobos to take time this month to learn more about African diaspora and the historical events and people who have shaped it.

Celebrating Black History Month at UNM

The University of New Mexico joins higher education institutions across the nation in observing Black History Month. This weekend I attended the [34th Annual Black History Month Kickoff Brunch](#), hosted by the Africana Studies program. Dr. Iva E. Carruthers gave an enlightening keynote on the difficulties and responsibilities currently facing Africana Studies, and how individuals and institutions can address Afrophobia – a timely topic. There are a number of [activities and events](#) highlighting Black History Month at UNM, celebrating both the accomplishments and perseverance of those who have paved the way, and also those who continue to make history today.

UNM Day at the Legislature

The Roundhouse in Santa Fe was a sea of cherry and silver today as Lobos from all across campus told our story through informative and interactive displays on [UNM Day](#) at the capitol. The energy was amazing, and I can't overstate how proud I am to be this university's president. Legislators also took time to honor students and faculty on the house and senate floors today: [Goldwater Scholars Esteban Abeyta \(Española\) and Lauren Zundel](#); [Gold Humanism Honors Society](#) inductees and School of Medicine (BA/MD) students Jaron Kee (Crystal, Navajo Nation) and Sumit Patel (Gallup, NM); professor [Vanessa Svihla](#) (Organization, Information & Learning Sciences (OILS) program and Chemical and Biological Engineering) and [Dr. Leslie Strickler](#) (Department of Pediatrics). Recognizing the exceptional work of our students and faculty is one of the many reasons UNM Day serves to show our citizens and legislators that UNM is the University for New Mexico, leading the state in education, innovation and research.

Remembering the Honorable Henry “Kiki” Saavedra

This morning, New Mexico lost a legendary statesman and true New Mexican, the Honorable State Representative and past Chairman of the House Appropriations and Finance Committee, Henry “Kiki” Saavedra. Although I never had the opportunity to meet Chairman Saavedra, his legacy is woven into the history of UNM and New Mexico. In his 38 years in the state legislature he was known for being inclusive,

decisive, quick with a joke, and most of all, for making a difference in so many people's lives. During his career at Albuquerque City Parks and Recreation, he ensured that young people had access to sport and recreational opportunities, and sought to instill leadership and community-building skills into those experiences. A star athlete himself, and honorary UNM letterman, he was a strong supporter of Lobo Athletics, and responsible for the funding of numerous major capital improvements at UNM, including the Tow Diehm Athletics Facility, Championship Golf Course and renovations to Johnson Arena. Chairman Saavedra was also recognized as a passionate advocate for the UNM Health Sciences Center, helping the HSC secure legislative funding for many programs including the BA/MD program, the Comprehensive Cancer Center, College of Nursing, Newborn Intensive Care Unit and Office of the Medical Investigator. Please join me in taking a moment to reflect on his impact and be inspired by his life of service.

Green Zone Training is Coming Up

Part of being the state's flagship university is creating a safe and supportive space for all our students to come and learn. The Veteran's Resource Center is once again [hosting a Green Zone Training](#), which gives staff and faculty tools for helping Veteran and military students transition into our community. There is no formal registration for the training; one needs only to come to the Santa Ana Room in the SUB on Friday, Feb. 1 at 10 a.m. The training will last about two hours but could make a world of difference in the lives of our military students and student Veterans. I hope to see many of you there.

Inclement Weather Plan Reminder

Although we're nearly in February, we all know the weather in New Mexico has a mind of its own. On the days that [UNM closes for inclement weather](#), there are several essential employees who are still required to come in to work. I'd like to extend a personal thank you to those employees, who keep our health clinics open, our campus safe, and our facilities in working order – among many other jobs. Your dedication to UNM is part of what allows us to create a thriving city within a city for our students and patients, no matter the weather. In addition to planned communications, updates are made on UNM Newsroom on inclement weather days.

Have a great week, and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes
President