



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



August 30, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

I hope you had a fantastic first week of your Fall 2021 semester. It is wonderful to see our campus filled with life again, and it has been a joy to speak with so many of you and hear the stories of your life over the past year—and hear how happy you are to be back on campus.

We know The University of New Mexico is a great place to learn, work, and grow—you tell us that every day. But it's also very gratifying to be reminded that, as our state's flagship university and only R1 institution, UNM is also making a very real impact on our state's economy and improving the lives of New Mexicans in communities across the state every day.

Last week, I had the pleasure of joining UNM Regent Sandra Begay, the Board Chair of UNM Rainforest Innovations, Lisa Kuuttila, CEO and Chief Economic Development Officers of UNM Rainforest Innovations, and Jorge Ayala, U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration, to announce [the findings of the most recent study of UNM's statewide economic impact](#). The final report, [The Statewide Impact of The University of New Mexico](#), commissioned by UNM Rainforest Innovations, quantifies the impact of the entire UNM enterprise, including our Health Sciences Center, branch campuses, and the contributions of our alumni, on the greater New Mexico economy.

The [2018 Statewide Economic Impact of The University of New Mexico](#) was the first of its kind to quantify the economic contributions of the entire UNM system, and what a difference we've seen over these last three years. Even through a global pandemic, UNM's economic footprint has continued to grow, increasing from an economic output of \$3.1 billion in 2018 to \$5.2 billion in 2021. In fact, our numbers are up almost uniformly across the board as we look at data like the economic output of our purchasing--\$3.2 billion in 2021, compared with \$2.1 billion in 2018—or the economic impact of Lobo alumni in our state, who accounted for \$1.85 billion in additional economic activity, an increase of more than \$900 million from 2018 levels.

There's plenty more to read and lots of good news to digest, so I hope you'll [give the full report a closer look](#). Through it all, one thing remains clear: UNM remains one of New Mexico's most valuable assets. The University of New Mexico continues to be a leading driver of our state's economic engine, stimulating economic progress and personal prosperity for all New Mexicans. We truly are the University for New Mexico.

## **Changes at Government Relations, Human Resources**

After serving as UNM's Chief Government Relations Officer for the past two years, [Dr. Barbara Damron has decided to return to her faculty role full-time](#), beginning November 1. I had the pleasure of appointing

Dr. Damron as the head of our Office of Government and Community Relations in October 2019, where she has done a fantastic job of building and fostering great relationships with our legislators at all levels of government; while we'll miss her expertise in the halls of the legislature, I am delighted she will remain a member of our distinguished faculty in the UNM College of Nursing. We'll be considering options for filling her position in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, with the departure of Dorothy Anderson as vice president for Human Resources on August 30, I'm pleased to announce that the department has been placed in incredibly capable hands, as [Kathy Agnew and Kevin Stevens have been appointed as interim assistant vice presidents](#). Agnew will oversee many of the HR services, including Client Services, the Service Center, Compensation and Labor and Employee Relations, while Stevenson will provide oversight of Benefits & Employee Wellness, along with Business Services. I continue to be grateful we have such a deep bench of experienced and dedicated staff to ensure we continue to provide first-rate services to the entire Lobo community.

### **UNM Art Museum Reopening on August 31**

After more than a year of darkened windows and empty galleries, the [UNM Art Museum is reopening its doors on Tuesday, August 31](#), and welcomes the community to explore its new exhibition, Visionary Modern: Raymond Jonson Trilogies, Cycles, and Portraits, featuring the work of New Mexico's leading abstract painter in the 20th century. Jonson's paintings were selected from the UNM Art Museum's collection, which is the world's largest repository of Jonson's work, including more than 600 paintings, drawings, and prints. And of course, you can also continue to visit the museum's four [virtual exhibitions](#), as well as experience the wonderful virtual community space celebrating the Rio Grande, [There Must Be Other Names For The River](#). Enjoy your visit, and please be mindful that masks are required inside the museum, [just as they are inside all other campus facilities](#).

### **Nominees Sought for Sarah Belle Brown Awards**

Every year, I have the honor of recognizing one student, one faculty member, and one staff member as recipients of UNM's [Sarah Belle Brown Award](#) presented to those in the Lobo community who serve as examples of social responsiveness and who have donated considerable personal time and effort advancing The University of New Mexico's public service mission. [Nominations are due September 30](#), so [let me know who inspires you](#). The faculty and staff recipients each receive a cash award of \$1,500 and the student recipient receives a \$1,500 scholarship, all generously endowed by Doug and Sarah Brown.

### **Salsa Showdown Kicks Off UNM Gives Campaign**

As we kick off the annual UNM Gives Campaign to raise funds for the United Way of Central New Mexico, we're inviting all students, faculty, and staff to dazzle us with the best salsa recipe on campus. If you've got an old family recipe—or maybe it's the “famous salsa” you're always asked to bring to parties—[submit it](#) by September 22. The first six entries will be prepared by UNM's Chartwells Catering, and on October 5, Lobos can grab a bag of chips and salsa in the SUB atrium and vote online for their favorite. It's a great way to get your salsa fix and support a great cause.

## Celebrating Labor Day 2021

Next Monday, September 6, is Labor Day, which means for many of us, we've got a three-day weekend coming up. I want to take a moment to say *thank you* to all UNM employees across our campuses and our state and acknowledge all your hard work that goes into making us the University *for* New Mexico. I also know that for many of our essential employees—especially our tireless healthcare providers and staff—Labor Day is another workday. So, a special thanks to all of you for your contributions and dedication to keeping our university and our community a safer, stronger, better place.

As always, please remember that masks are required at all indoor locations at all times, except when eating, drinking, or in an office alone. Please remember, too, that [The University of New Mexico requires all students, faculty, and staff to be fully vaccinated by September 30](#). Make sure also that you consider that the required time between your first shot and your second can sometimes be as long as four weeks, so get that first shot as quickly as possible to ensure you'll make the deadline. Our on-site vaccination clinic at the SUB Atrium reopens on September 1 and will be available weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. through September 30 (except for September 10, 13, 20 and 21).

Finally, [UNM's vaccination incentive program](#) has also been extended through September 30, so get your shot and then upload your proof of full vaccination at our [vaccination verification site](#).

My next Monday message will arrive in your inboxes on September 13; until then, enjoy the coming three-day weekend, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President