



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 31, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos –

Tomorrow, February 1, marks the beginning of Black History Month, a time of dedicated reflection and the opportunity to celebrate and commemorate the Black experience. As James Baldwin once wrote, “History is not the past. It is the present.” And at The University of New Mexico, we are grateful for the countless Black students, faculty, and staff and other members of our Lobo family who make our lives richer, and who bring their stories, experiences, and expertise to our campuses.

While Black History Month was formally designated in the United States 46 years ago by President Ford, UNM has celebrated Black history, and Black lives, for more than 50 years. In 1970, following the lead of our students, faculty, and staff, UNM created its Afro Studies program, as it was called then, which was the first ethnic studies research program at UNM, and it remains one of the oldest Black studies programs in the nation.

Over the next decade, Afro Studies would grow and evolve, becoming African American Studies in 1982, and then a degree-granting program in 1993. Designated today as the [Africana Studies Program](#), the program is in its sixth remarkable decade of facilitating academic freedom of Black faculty and building Africana, African Diaspora, and African American Studies as viable and vibrant academic disciplines. I am delighted that it is soon to become its own department, and I want to welcome and congratulate Dr. Kirsten Buick, who is presently serving as the interim director of Africana Studies and will soon step into the notable role as The University of New Mexico’s inaugural chair of our Africana Studies Department.

Black history has long been a part of the history of The University of New Mexico—and today, as we look at the events in the world around us, we’re reminded why, perhaps more than ever, that Black Lives Matter, that Black History matters, and that Black History IS American History. Black History Month is a regular and much-needed reminder that our history as a nation is multi-cultural, that the Black experience is the American experience, and that there is unity to be found in our plurality.

Global Education Office Offers Study Abroad Fair

The University of New Mexico has a long tradition of encouraging and supporting students who wish to study abroad, and our [Global Education Office](#) (GEO) is always busy developing, promoting, and implementing international education initiatives across our campus and around the world. Lobos interested in studying abroad are invited to attend GEO’s semiannual [Global Fair: Study Abroad Opportunities and Cultural Exchange](#) for more information and guidance. The fair will be held in person in the SUB Atrium on Wednesday, February 2, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and [virtually on February 9 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.](#) Learn more about the critical role international education plays in fostering mutual understanding and how you can [be ready to study abroad in ten easy steps](#).

Lobo Wins Brooke Owens Fellowship for Space/Aviation

Congratulations to Lobo senior Raven Otero-Symphony, who was recently selected for a Brooke Owens Fellowship, providing undergraduate women and gender minorities with opportunities in the space and aviation industry. Otero-Symphony was one of more than 1,000 applicants to the program—the largest pool of applicants yet—and is the first New Mexican selected to receive this honor. The Fellows were selected based on their commitment to their communities, stand-out creative abilities, record of leadership, incredible talent, and desire to pursue a career in aerospace. Otero-Symphony is a senior studying Statistics, and she will use her fellowship to work at the Avascent firm in Washington, D.C.

Be a Part of UNM Innovation on Ideascale and Bring your Best Ideas to UNM 2040

As we continue our work on UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined, our multi-year plan for UNM's future, your voice is more critical than ever. We are soliciting further community input through [our new UNM innovation management platform](#) powered by IdeaScale, a collaborative space for engaging with the entire UNM community. [It's easy to get started with IdeaScale](#), where UNM students, faculty, and staff can generate new ideas, upvote or comment on ideas, and provide transparent, real-time feedback to inform the process. I'm encouraged by the ideas I've seen so far, and your active engagement will help guide the further direction of this work and inform our ongoing priorities. I strongly encourage you to participate. And you might even find the IdeaScale platform fun to use! The UNM 2040 Goal campaigns will be open for innovation through February 7, 2022. As always, you may still provide feedback on the [UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined webpage](#).

Kicking Off the WeGiveUNM Campaign

On February 1, UNM will launch its 2022 [WeGiveUNM campaign](#), where faculty and staff can show their support for the academic programs and schools, student life, health system, and community programs that make The University of New Mexico a great place to work, learn, and thrive. The WeGiveUNM campaign is an annual effort supporting [UNM2040: Opportunity Defined](#), and gifts will be used to provide scholarships, investments in education and innovation, patient resources, and enhanced academic programming. Prizes will be awarded to the top five departments, schools, or units with the most participation--and to make it even more interesting, I've provided an additional \$10,000 in gift funds to be split among the winners. [Make your donation](#) before February 28—and thanks for supporting Lobo life!

Lobo Alumna Named Director of Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

What a thrill it is to learn that [UNM alumna Cynthia Chavez Lamar has been named director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian](#). A doctoral graduate of UNM's American Studies program and an enrolled member at San Felipe Pueblo—with ancestry that includes Hopi, Tewa, and Navajo on the maternal side of her family—Chavez Lamar is the first Native woman to be named as a Smithsonian Museum director. It's a fitting honor, and so inspiring to hear how Lobos are breaking barriers and leading the way. Congratulations, Director Chavez Lamar; you make all Lobos proud!

Legislative Update

As we approach the mid-point of this year's 30-day Legislative Session, our Office of Government and Community Relations (OCGR) is hard at work in Santa Fe, representing UNM and our priorities. The following information is excerpted from [OGCR's January 30 legislative update](#):

Topping the list of our [state legislative priorities](#) are our two General Obligation requests, including a \$65 million request for the College of Fine Arts Center for Collaborative Arts & Technology and a \$40 million request for a completely new Children's Psychiatric Center. If adopted by the legislature, these proposals would appear on the November 2022 general election ballot. Both new facilities requests have been many years in the making, alongside a number of other capital improvement projects. We are also supportive of ASUNM and GPSA and student-led initiatives regarding the expansion of available student scholarships.

On the workforce front, UNM is also demonstrating leadership with several initiatives that are designed to address statewide shortages of pre-K-through-12 teachers and nurses. UNM is also supporting a 7% increase for recruitment and retention of faculty and staff. Significant inflationary pressures are affecting state budgets in virtually every sector, and UNM will continue pushing for full funding of a 7% compensation increase and a 10% Instruction & General (I&G) increase to help sustain the Lobo mission. We particularly want to thank our UNM Regents, Lobo alumni, retirees, and other supporters for their ongoing advocacy on various opportunities this session.

The issues that affect higher education and, in turn, our state are shared by all of us, and we have a collective stake in finding solutions. At UNM, we have prided ourselves on Lobo success, including supporting our students to attain their degree as quickly as possible. We support opportunities for free college for all New Mexicans, as well as easy access to educational and financial support, and will continue to follow our guiding principles in our recommendations to the UNM Board of Regents.

Much of UNM's success at the legislature hinges on our ability to be nimble and responsive to emergent opportunities, both favorable and unfavorable. UNM is proudly supporting a proposal to launch a School of Public Health to be housed at the University of New Mexico in partnership with New Mexico State University. UNM has long-sought transformation of our College of Population Health into a high-impact, accredited School of Public Health. If the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has taught the state one thing, it is that proactive investments in population health and public health initiatives are critical, particularly in regard to disease prevention, data collection, health equity, and pandemic preparedness.

I encourage everyone to stay informed about our priorities, as they affect all our students and employees in some way. OGCR provides [several ways to keep informed about legislation](#) affecting UNM during the session, including a UNM bill tracking service and a listserv to receive updates.

As we enter the third year of the pandemic, I want to thank you again for the continued care you have shown for the entire Lobo community by getting vaccinated and boosted and wearing your upgraded masks indoors at all UNM facilities. Your ongoing diligence ensures we can continue to safely provide face-to-

face instruction as well as the kinds of in-person events that enrich our mutual experience as Lobos. I truly appreciate it.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes

President