



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



August 22, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Welcome to the start of the Fall 2022 semester! For many Lobos, the beginning of a new semester comes with a number of *firsts*: the first time away from home, the first time being in charge of your own schedule, the first time living with a roommate, or the first time facing a room full of unfamiliar faces. Something that never fails to inspire me is how involvement in the Lobo community can transform and add immense value to a student's university experience. Whether it's through student organizations, community service or service-learning, Greek life, or student employment, I encourage you to make the time to connect with your amazing fellow Lobos and [explore opportunities to learn more about yourself and our community](#). It's going to be a terrific Fall, and we're thrilled to have you as part of our Lobo family.

## Howl for Welcome Back Days – and Beyond

Last Friday we kicked off our annual [Welcome Back Days](#), which offer countless opportunities to explore the UNM campus, make new friends, and get involved with all that The University of New Mexico has to offer. It was great seeing so many of you at First Year Convocation on Sunday and at today's Ice Cream Social; it is truly special to have our pack back together again.

As you learn more about UNM, be sure to [familiarize yourself with the wide variety of resources, services and programs available to you](#), from career services and counseling to advocacy groups and student support organizations. There will be plenty of opportunities to celebrate Lobo life as the semester continues, so be sure to grab a Student Activities Calendar for the most up-to-date listing of activities for Fall 2022; you can pick one up at the Student Activities Center in the Student Union Building (SUB), or [download a printable version](#). You're going to love what we've got in store for you this semester.

## Prioritizing Lobo Mental Health and Wellbeing

As we talk about the excitement of beginning a new semester, we also know that stress and anxiety can be a part of the experience. At The University of New Mexico, we're proud to make [a wide range of mental health services](#) available to our students, faculty and staff who may need it—but we also know that looking out for the continued mental health and wellbeing of our pack means that we constantly gauge the success of the services we provide and examine our capacity for supporting our community. More importantly, once we have assessed our needs, it is vital that we work quickly and compassionately to address them.

Under the leadership of Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and Dr. Stephanie McIver, Interim Director of Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), we're doing just that: examining our current support system, and working together with Student Affairs, DEI, HSC Psychiatry, HSC Medical

Group and others to strengthen UNM's delivery of mental health services and resources to promote student wellbeing. As part of this new mental health initiative, we will be investing in more staff and providing additional resources needed to increase the capacity of our support system, ramp up provider access, and better coordinate services across our academic and health systems.

This new investment will mean shorter wait times at SHAC, greater assistance for students with substance use issues, new resources to assist with mental health crises that occur after traditional business hours, and improved support for populations more at-risk for suicide. Just as important, it will be a system that will be quicker and more responsive to the very real needs of our students. We are presently in the process of hiring new mental health providers and additional SHAC professionals and should have everyone in place by October.

I am grateful to Dr. Zerai and Dr. McIver for their insightful work on this new initiative and thankful for the support of and guidance from our Board of Regents. This is a major investment in the mental health and wellbeing of our Lobos, and your peace of mind is worth it.

## Lobo Athletes Back in Action

Football season officially begins in 12 days, as [our Lobos take on Maine in the home opener](#) on Saturday, September 3, at 6 p.m. at University Stadium. A week later, we'll host Boise State in our opening game of Mountain West conference play in a "Red Out" where fans are encouraged to wear their red Lobo gear. Look for our team to wear Lobo red helmets that night as well, which haven't been seen on the field since 1973—truly a night for the record books!

Later this week, you'll find our women's [soccer](#) and [volleyball](#) teams in action, with the soccer team taking the field in Lubbock to battle with Texas Tech, and the volleyball team playing in The Pit on Friday night against Cal State-Fullerton and on Saturday afternoon against Abilene Christian. Full-time student tickets are free, whether it's for one game or the whole season--[just access your Paciolin account if you've got one set up, or create a new one with your student credentials](#). And don't forget to download the [Lobo Sports app](#) for live broadcasts, ticketing, and up-to-the minute scores and stats for all our teams. It's going to be a great year for Lobo sports.

## UNM's Black History Now at Your Fingertips

At The University of New Mexico, we are grateful for the countless Black students, faculty, staff, alumni and other members of our Lobo family who make our lives richer, and who bring their stories, experiences, and expertise to our campuses. The history and legacy of the Black experience at UNM is a proud part of our Lobo DNA—UNM's [Africana Studies program](#), for instance, is one of the oldest Black studies programs in the nation—and our African American Student Services (AASS) office is making it easier than ever to explore this part of our history through the [Black History at UNM touchscreen project](#), now accessible in Mesa Vista Hall. This interactive virtual tour of the Black experience at UNM is the result of a collaboration between AASS and UNM's Communications and Marketing Department web team. Come find yourself swept up in a vital part of UNM's story with the swipe of a screen.

## HSC Pilots CDC Joint Fellowship Program

As New Mexico's only teaching hospital and home to the state's only medical school, UNM's Health Sciences Center is constantly striving for new ways to prepare physicians to meet ever-changing public health care needs. With the recent rise of infectious diseases, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has selected UNM's Infectious Diseases (ID) Fellowship program as one of only 11 centers nationwide to [pilot a new federal program](#). The [joint Infectious Diseases/Epidemic Intelligence Service \(ID/EIS\) Fellowship](#) provides career opportunities for infectious disease physicians by combining UNM 's ID fellowship program with the two-year CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service. This joint fellowship will inform participants about their career plans for the next four years and help us produce health care providers prepared to meet the challenges presented by infectious diseases not only in our local communities but around the globe.

## A Reminder About Masks and Vaccinations

The University of New Mexico recommends that masks be worn indoors at UNM's campuses in Gallup and Valencia as McKinley and Valencia counties, as of this morning, are still presently [categorized as "high COVID-19 community levels" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

This is also your regular reminder that all UNM faculty, staff and students who access campus facilities, housing, programs, services, and activities in person must be up to date on their COVID-19 vaccinations, subject to limited exemptions, before September 30. Please continue to refer to our [Bring Back the Pack website](#) for more information on masking protocols, the vaccination requirement, and the latest updates on our ongoing efforts to keep our campus safe and our community healthy.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President