



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



August 29, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

I hope you've had a great first week of your Fall 2022 semester. I have enjoyed speaking with so many of you and I love hearing your stories about your Lobo experiences. I've also heard many of you say that there's something special about the mood and energy of our campus this year—and as someone who not only works on campus but also lives here, I can tell you that I've felt it, too. I'm looking forward to a great year.

Every day you tell us that The University of New Mexico is a great place to learn, work, and grow. But it's very gratifying to be reminded that, as our state's flagship university and only Research 1 institution in New Mexico, we're also used to looking at, and engaging with, the world differently. UNM is a comprehensive, Carnegie-designated Research 1 university—[one of only 146 in the nation](#)--which means we are considered to have "[very high research activity](#)." What this means in practice is that innovation infuses everything we do, from business to biochemistry, English to engineering. Our diverse research and creative works enable student success, engage local and global communities, foster innovation, and create new knowledge.

Nearly every week, we see Lobo faculty recognized for their exceptional research; most recently, a [team of our researchers received \\$4 million from the National Science Foundation](#) to advance quantum photonic technology research and to establish a quantum science and engineering graduate program. Other times, our researchers are honored for their [influential contributions to their fields of study](#), recognized by their peers through our [Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Achievement Award](#), or celebrated for [a lifetime of achievements](#). And all this just in the span of a week.

There is perhaps no initiative that embodies our culture of inquiry and innovation quite like UNM's [Grand Challenges](#), which encourages our researchers—faculty, students, staff and community members alike—to work across campuses, across disciplines, and across New Mexico on some of the state's toughest problems. When we launched the Grand Challenges in 2019, we focused on three big issues—Sustainable Water Resources, Substance Use Disorders, and Successful Aging—and now, three years later, we're looking to expand our Grand Challenges, investing in exciting new ideas and new initiatives. On Thursday, [we'll be introducing ten new Level 1 concept teams](#), who will work with the [Office of the Vice President for Research](#) and others to further develop their plans.

By expanding and reimagining our Grand Challenges for the coming decades, we are encouraging and celebrating innovation at UNM, while creating exciting new opportunities for the citizens of New Mexico. Our innovation is as limitless as our imagination, and I can't wait for us to continue to advance New Mexico with this work.

New Leadership at School of Medicine, CULLS, UNM Hospital

An exciting new era begins at The University of New Mexico School of Medicine, as [our new dean, Patricia W. Finn, MD, officially takes the helm on September 1](#). She will be the fifth dean in the UNM School of Medicine's 61-year history, and I am confident she will enrich the school's proud legacy.

Elsewhere, some familiar faces will soon be seen in new roles on our campuses, as several longtime Lobos move into leadership positions. First, at the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences (CULLS), Dean Leo Lo has appointed associate professor [Laura Soito as interim Associate Dean for Collections and Digital Scholarship](#), where she'll oversee our expansive collections across a wide variety of formats. She previously served as Director of Collections and LIBROS Consortium Coordinator.

Over at UNM Hospital, [Dr. Steve McLaughlin will assume the role of chief medical officer of the hospital](#), effective January 1, 2023. Dr. McLaughlin currently serves as the chair of the UNM Department of Emergency Medicine, as well as the interim senior associate dean for Clinical Affairs in the UNM School of Medicine. Congratulations to all our new Lobo leaders.

Nominees Sought for Sarah Belle Brown Awards

Each 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.

Celebrating Labor Day

Next Monday, September 5, is Labor Day, which means for many of us, we have 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.

This Week's Traveling Office Hours

My traveling office hours provide me with some of the best, and most interesting, opportunities for learning more about our campus communities and engaging in an ongoing dialogue with those who understand Lobo life the best: *you*. My next traveling office hours will take place this Wednesday, August 31, at 10:30 a.m. in Acoma A and B at the SUB. While this meeting is at the invitation of ASUNM and representatives of Greek life, all Lobo students, faculty, and staff are invited to attend—and I look forward to seeing you there.

An Update on COVID and Monkeypox

The University of New Mexico recommends that masks be worn indoors on its Gallup campus, as McKinley county, as of this morning, is still presently [categorized as "high COVID-19 community levels" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

With Monkeypox slowly on the rise nationally—though there have thankfully been few cases reported in New Mexico—the CDC has launched [a new landing page to provide students, university health centers, and administrators with best practices to prevent the spread of Monkeypox](#). The All-University communication on Monkeypox that was distributed on August 18 has been [updated to reflect this new information](#); thank you for your continued diligence.

Get Vaccinated by September 30

Finally, this is 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