



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

"There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Good afternoon and welcome back to everyone –

First, let me say it is an honor to be acting president of The University of New Mexico, and I am looking forward to opportunities for continued dialogue and engagement among all of us over the next several months. In keeping with the tradition of starting the week off with a presidential communication to the UNM campus community, I will continue to provide the President's Weekly Perspective, beginning today. There are some important points with which I'd like to start off that I feel will color many of our most important conversations and subsequent actions.

When I was a finalist for interim provost, I stated that I only had one goal: to advance the Academic mission. I also stated that "by the first year, I would like to have made progress on the following three fronts: work with the other NM schools to increase class offerings and capabilities, to have acted on the Honors program (college) task force recommendations and to initiate an Academic strategic plan." I believe that UNM has made considerable strides toward the last two goals, and some progress towards the first.

I also stated that "the Academic Mission of the University supersedes every other function." I have attempted to live up to those ideals in the last 5.5 years, and with the help of many, have focused on improving student success and rebuilding faculty and academic staff strength. In the last couple of years however, we have faced headwinds due in large part to financial pressures but also to social and campus challenges that have eroded some of our success and the trust in our ability to emerge with our values and mission unscathed.

As I assume the acting presidency, I have the same concerns and goals, with the added complexity of a more challenging fiscal and social environments. I believe my responsibilities during my acting appointment are as follows: to focus on campus climate and culture, to address our financial challenges responsibly, and to continue seizing opportunities for academic improvement. These issues are interrelated and none of them may be addressed without rekindling a culture of trust and respect for the various actors and constituencies.

We need to reaffirm our commitment to UNM's role as a public research university. We need to build bridges between our faculty, staff, and administration; between our faculty and our students; between our faculty and our board of regents; and between all members of the university community and our external constituents. At times, the conversation and decisions will become difficult and will test our civility and our core beliefs, but at no time should we relinquish the role of UNM as a playground for ideas and a center for the freedom of speech and thought.

UNM, and other public universities, must continue to play the critical role of fostering a hospitable-and-

challenging intellectual climate for all viewpoints to enter public discussion. But for this kind of intellectual climate to be accessible to all, the social climate at the university must positively embrace all comers and ask for their best contributions to the academic community. Public universities are uniquely positioned to both welcome people from across all our social diversities and to challenge all to live up to our democratic ideals. Increasingly, the United States and the world will urgently need such spaces and UNM will serve as one such setting by being a place where ideas are debated and where everyone can participate.

In order to accomplish this, I will need your help, advice, feedback, trust and support. I will have many open forums with all of you in the next few weeks and months, so that we may expand upon the above and solicit more specific help. I would also encourage you to (re)read the following the [speech](#) by UNM President Popejoy at a similarly challenging time for the nation, and the [article](#) by President Hutchins of the University of Chicago regarding challenges (at a different time but still very relevant) for our society and our university.

2017 New Mexico Legislative Session

Today our state policy makers begin what will be, without a doubt, a challenging 60-day legislative session. For many months, you have been hearing and reading about the revenue decline and budget shortfall the state faces. How that affects higher education, along with the solvency of the NM Legislative Lottery Scholarship Program, will be critical priorities for all of our state's colleges and universities. The problems we face as a state are shared by all of us, and all of us have a stake in finding solutions.

We will be working closely with UNM students, faculty and staff to advocate on behalf of our key legislative priorities. The UNM Office of Government and Community Relations ([OGCR](#)) works diligently at the Roundhouse to represent the best interests of the UNM community, and keep all of us informed on bills and other activities that affect our students, staff, faculty, retirees and patients. OGCR provides several ways to keep informed about [legislation affecting UNM](#) during the session including a UNM bill tracking and a listserv to [receive updates](#).

UNM Welcomes Back Our Students

Spring Welcome Back Days are a perfect opportunity for students to discover programs, organizations and new ways to get involved on the UNM campus. Finding something outside of one's primary concentration of study only enhances the college experience. Events will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 18 and Wednesday, Jan. 25 in the SUB Atrium from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Tomorrow's event will feature information tables from UNM departments and programs as well as fraternities and sororities. Student organizations will host information tables on Jan. 25 so that students may explore opportunities to become involved on our campus. Both days will have free Pepsi products distributed beginning at 11:30 a.m. For more information, please contact the [Student Activities Center](#) at 277-4706.

Chaouki T. Abdallah

Acting President

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There is so much more that happens on the UNM campus than can be conveyed in a weekly message. To find out about the latest stories and events, please visit the [UNM Newsroom](#), the central source of news and information for the UNM community.