



## PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon.

### What is a University For?

The role of universities and institutions at large is being examined and challenged. While serving as your provost, I often wrote to you about the challenges universities are facing and always tried to bring the conversation back to the fundamental question: what are universities for? This seems to be the most basic question we must answer as we discuss our financial situation, and our rights and duties as citizens of the United States and the world. I have collected various articles on the subject as we grapple with this question in the hope that we can engage in this discussion at UNM and beyond.

Without advocating a specific position, I ask that you read some of the following (contradictory) articles, while keeping in mind the following:

*"Although these incidents may differ by target, type of attack, location, and scale, they are part of a single global phenomenon of increasing attacks on higher education, a crisis marked by widespread violence and coercion to silence inquiry and discourse. Responsible states, higher education leaders, and civil society are called to respond to this crisis – to reject the use of violence to restrict peaceful expression, and to reaffirm publicly their support for the principle that critical discourse is not disloyalty, that ideas are not crimes."*

[Free to Think: Report of the Scholars at Risk Monitoring Project](#) – Scholars At Risk

[What is a University For?](#) – Wall Street Journal

[What is a university for?](#) – The Guardian

[GLOBAL: What are universities for?](#) – University World News

[What are universities for?](#) – GlobalHigherEd

[What is a University For?](#) – Hoover Institution

[Why Universities Must Choose One Telos: Truth or Social Justice](#) – Heterodox Academy

## Protecting the Pack

The members of our campus and surrounding community are important partners in the shared goal of working toward a safe living environment for all -- one that we work hard to create every day. We have made a commitment of University resources to improve campus and community safety. However, we know that creating a safe environment will also require our continued engagement in many issues that broadly affect our community.

We have invested in our people [LoboRespect Advocacy Center](#), our [campus safety resources](#) and our [LoboGuardian technology](#), in order to provide a foundation for a safe and secure environment. We must also not forget what perhaps can be the most effective safety precaution — to keep an eye out for ourselves, and for one another. With cooperative and concerted effort, we can continue to ensure this is a safe place to live, study, and work.

## UNM Town Halls

I would like to thank all of you who were able to attend the first campus Town Hall earlier today. Communicating with our campus is a top priority for me, and this includes not only disseminating information but inviting feedback, with the goal of having a more informed and engaged community.

For those of you who were unable to make it, the event was recorded and will be made available on the [Office of the President's website](#). I will be having a similar event at the [Health Sciences Center next Monday](#), and will continue to provide face-to-face opportunities for us all to participate in sharing our perspectives on and concerns about UNM.

Chaouki T. Abdallah

Acting President

Follow me on Twitter [@chaoukita](#)

*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.*