



## PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon.

### Summer session begins

Welcome back to our all the students joining us for the summer session. Summer is a great opportunity for students to get ahead on their academic studies. For example, a number of our student success initiatives are easily achievable if students take summer classes to graduate in four years. I applaud every one of you who has committed to taking classes this summer.

Additionally, registration for the fall semester is currently open by appointment. For more information, visit [Fall registration](#).

### UNM Budget

On June 13, 2017, the regents will meet to approve our next year's budget. At the budget summit that took place on May 24, the regents approved the new student fees and tuition rates, including some differential tuitions. As expected, the governor has signed the bill that appropriates a budget for higher education that is 1 percent lower than last year's budget.

More concerning however, is the fact that the lottery scholarship will only fund about 60 percent of the tuition cost. This has resulted to a loss of about \$10 million to our students' scholarships. At UNM, our budget models have taken these cuts into account and tried to minimize their impact on our financially neediest students by diverting more funds into need-based scholarships.

While we're not able to completely counteract the effect of these cuts, I encourage all our instructors to help our students afford their education by reducing their costs of attendance, using some of the strategies I continue to advocate. One such (simple) strategy is to place your textbook orders to the bookstore early or to even use open-source material.

### Improving Critical Skills

According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, many colleges fail to improve critical-thinking skills during the course of a students' academic career. The Collegiate Learning Assessment Plus, or CLA+, is a test of critical-thinking skills from a sampling of public colleges and universities that administer it.

According to the results of the survey, UNM is ranked third among public colleges and institutions. UNM's high score affirms we provide a quality educational experience that fundamentally transforms the lives of students. Congratulations to our faculty, staff and of course our students who all play a part to make this happen on a daily basis. For more on this Wall Street Journal story, visit [Exclusive Test Data: Many Colleges Fail to Improve Critical-Thinking Skills](#).

## Acting Director of Athletics

Today, it was my honor to appoint Janice Ruggiero as the first woman in the history of UNM athletics to oversee the entire UNM program as its acting director. Janice has served the University for more than 27 years in a variety of areas including coach, advisor, compliance officer and administrator, and has supervised nearly every sport and every division in the department. Additionally, Janice has been named as one of the top 10 Senior Woman Administrators by College AD, as well as serving on numerous NCAA committees. I have every confidence in Janice's ability to lead our programs. A search for a permanent director will begin later this month.

## Festival Flamenco

Each June, National Institute of Flamenco, along with The University of New Mexico, hosts Festival Flamenco Internacional de Albuquerque. This event brings the world's best flamenco artists to Albuquerque and the UNM campus. This year, which is the 30th anniversary of this spectacular event, [Festival Flamenco Internacional de Albuquerque](#) begins on Friday June 9.

Thanks to the international recognition enjoyed by our flamenco program and our partnership with the National Institute of Flamenco, UNM is able to host a number of select festival performances on campus. UNM's flamenco program is led by our world-renowned, passionate faculty. I encourage you to attend one or more of these events for a wonderful evening of great artistry and dance.

Until next week,

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.*