

## ALL UNIVERSITY MESSAGE

Dear Members of the UNM Community,

I know this has been a very stressful few weeks, and I deeply appreciate you and the resilience you have demonstrated. We have moved quickly and responsibly to address the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in our University community, state and nation, and I'm grateful for your continued strength and patience.

These difficult but critical decisions, such as moving to limited campus operations and remote instruction, and imposing restrictions on our on-campus housing, were the right choices and I appreciate everyone who acted swiftly in response to rapidly changing circumstances. Our actions have been grounded in our responsibility to protect our community, support the success of our students, and advance our work as a public research university and academic medical center. No course of action will be ideal, but I appreciate all Lobos being flexible, courageous and kind as we rise to meet these challenges together.

As the number of cases identified by the New Mexico Department of Health increases, I cannot overemphasize that social distancing is an imperative for us to limit and slow the spread of COVID-19, especially among our most vulnerable. Just this afternoon, New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham [issued a stay-at-home order and limited the number of public gatherings to no more than five people](#), which will take effect tomorrow. We are immediately exploring what effect, if any, this new order will have on our limited operations and student housing environment, and will provide further updates, guidance and instruction as quickly as possible.

The governor also gave a shout out this afternoon to employees who remain on the job to provide essential services — those who show up to work every day and engage in safe behaviors while performing jobs that are critical to the community. Many of these extraordinary employees work for UNM, and I want you to know how grateful and proud I am of each and every one of you. [Thank you](#) for everything you do.

### Today's Actions and Updates:

**Commencement:** It is with sincere regret that I share with you the **decision to postpone the Spring 2020 commencement ceremony** scheduled for May 16, and all related activities, including college and school convocations and student services centers' celebrations. I know that walking across the stage wearing your cap and gown to accept that hard-earned diploma is one of the most significant and memorable parts of the University experience. We want to ensure that our



March 23, 2020

Lobo class of 2020 is properly recognized and celebrated, especially under these particularly challenging conditions. In the coming weeks, we will engage our students to help develop a creative strategy to honor our spring graduates.

**Graduation and Completion of Coursework:** UNM is committed to ensuring that those students who are approaching graduation will be able to receive their degrees, within the constraints imposed by professional accreditation and licensure, and that your coursework can continue to the fullest extent possible through remote instruction. We are grateful to the UNM Faculty Senate for developing a resolution to address the issues of grading and granting of course credit for this term. Provost Holloway and I fully endorse this resolution and hope to see its adoption at the March 24 Faculty Senate meeting.

**Remote Instruction:** Academic courses will continue to transition to remote instruction to the fullest extent possible. Many are beginning today, March 23, in this new format and others are continuing to make the transition. Look for direct communication from your faculty instructors on how your individual courses are being transitioned.

Remote instruction will continue through the end of the term on May 16. In-person group educational experiences will need to be replaced with other forms of instruction or eliminated. Students should stay connected with their faculty, and both faculty and students can address questions to their department chair and dean. Please know that we recognize the stress created by the transition to remote instruction and we continue to welcome ideas and feedback about how best to serve our students in their varying circumstances.

**Limited Operations:** UNM employees have been directed to work remotely, unless specified as [Tier 1 employees](#). Importantly, [student services, libraries and University support units are offering remote services and limited office hours](#) that are being updated regularly.

**Research Facilities:** To assure the safety and well-being of our students, we will be temporarily restricting the presence of students in our research facilities. [Students will not be permitted in research laboratories](#), to work on clinical trials, or perform in-person community-based research, effective beginning at 5 p.m., Monday, March 23. This limitation will remain in effect for 2 weeks, until the close of business on April 5, and will be re-evaluated at that time.

**UNM Housing:** In the interest of the safety of our students, our community and state, it is necessary to reduce the number of students who are living in University housing. Self-isolation, including the Governor's recent directive that all persons traveling into New Mexico from outside the state must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor themselves for symptoms, will be difficult to implement for students living on-campus due to the shared environments of hallways, bathrooms and other common areas. Therefore, all residents living on main campus in Alvarado,



March 23, 2020

Coronado, Hokona, Laguna/DeVargas, Redondo Village Apartments, Santa Clara, SRC Apartments, and Casas del Rio have been asked to move off campus by Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

*We recognize that for some students the residence halls will remain the safest or most stable place to stay, and we are providing housing to these students on a by-request basis.* For the limited number of students who remain on campus, it may still be necessary to reassign housing to ensure student health and safety. If you are remaining on campus, please continue to practice social distancing, and avoid gatherings of five or more, per the Governor's order. This restriction applies to both indoor and outdoor areas.

For those students who move out, a prorated refund for your housing and meal plan (if applicable) and charges for the spring semester will be posted to your student Bursar account.

I want our students to know just how appreciative I am of your flexibility and quick action. Given the nature of the declared state and local emergencies, we were given a very short time frame in which to respond — and while it hasn't been easy, you have helped us respond rapidly and decisively. Thank you.

**University Dining Services:** Food options will continue to be available via the SRC Market and/or La Posada via take-out only.

**Mental Wellness:** Please continue to look out for yourselves and each other. Again, social distancing does not mean social isolation — please look for ways to stay mentally and emotionally healthy during this trying time. If you require additional counseling services, or just need someone to talk with, students may contact Student Health and Counseling Services, while faculty and staff may consult with our Counseling, Assistance & Referral Services.

**Campus Safety:** The UNM Police Department remains fully staffed and fully operational, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Click here to view a message from UNM Police Chief Kevin McCabe.

Decisions continue to be made with careful thought and deliberation. We have consulted with and followed the guidance of New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Albuquerque Mayor Tim Keller, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the health care professionals at UNM Health Sciences, as well as heeding the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — all to ensure we adopt appropriate protocols and take the actions necessary to protect community health and safety.

I know that some of these decisions, particularly those related to campus housing, commencement ceremonies and the transition to remote instruction, may cause anxiety, frustration and disappointment. There will, no doubt, also be ongoing



March 23, 2020

concerns and questions, especially as the situation continues to evolve in the coming days. I will continue to provide regular campus communications, as will various departments and units across campus, so remember to watch your inbox, stay connected via social media for updates, and [keep checking the UNM COVID-19 website](#) for more information.

“Each of us defines all of us” has never been truer, and I’m grateful to all of you in the UNM community for your strength and support, as well as the collaboration you have engaged in. There are so many people working under extraordinary circumstances and time constraints. Let’s keep working together to keep the Lobo pack safe, healthy and connected. We will get through this together.

Sincerely,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President

