

## ALL UNIVERSITY MESSAGE

Good afternoon Lobos -

As COVID-19 conditions in New Mexico continue to improve, and with the [latest New Mexico Public Health Order](#) expected to expire after March 18, I am happy to announce that The University of New Mexico is lifting its indoor masking requirement effective March 19, 2022, for our campuses located in counties that are [considered at low or medium COVID-19 community level by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), excluding the facilities associated closely with the health system and HSC academic and research spaces where close contact with the clinical environment requires continued masking, in alignment with current public health orders. As of today, McKinley County is still at high COVID-19 community level, so UNM-Gallup will still require masks indoors.

Throughout the pandemic, UNM has remained aligned with current guidance provided by the CDC, the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), local public health authorities and our own medical experts. The University continues to make decisions guided by expert advice, while ensuring that members of our community have the resources they need to protect themselves and those around them.

Starting March 19, face masks will be optional in classrooms, laboratories, studios, libraries, residence halls, dining facilities, the Student Union Building (SUB), Johnson Recreation Center, offices, conference rooms and extracurricular activities held in indoor on-campus spaces. However, face masks will still be required at some campus locations, including in health care and related health sciences settings and on public transportation (UNM shuttles and buses), in adherence with local and federal guidelines. Because of their close interaction with the clinical enterprise, masks will continue to be worn in the north campus HSC academic and research facilities, as well as at the HSC Rio Rancho campus.

Some large campus venues have updated their COVID-19 protocols, dictated by contractual or other considerations. Be sure to check with the venue and event before attending.

Several important UNM COVID-19 policies will remain in place:

- Full vaccination is still required, including the booster when eligible, unless one has an approved exemption.
- Those who are exempted from the vaccination requirement for religious or medical reasons must [continue to test weekly](#) for COVID-19 and report their results.

- Please refer to [CDC guidance if you are sick with, test positive for, or are exposed to COVID-19.](#)
- Please stay home if you are sick.
- [Special COVID-19 leave remains available.](#)

As our response to COVID-19 now permits us to ease some of the protective measures we've put in place to safeguard our community, we understand that there will still be those who feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask or those who will be advised to do so by their health care provider. These are personal decisions that the University wholeheartedly supports and welcomes, and masks will still be made available for free to those who need them. Recognizing that lifting the masking requirement may cause anxiety for some, I would ask that we are all especially mindful of the importance of respecting the choices of our students and colleagues and treating each other with continued kindness and support. Unvaccinated or un-boosted individuals are still strongly encouraged by the University to continue masking while inside UNM facilities, and to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

After two long years, since the pandemic first sent us into remote operations, this is very welcome news and reflects the exceptional dedication and consideration of the Lobo community, over 95% of which I can proudly say is vaccinated. My deepest appreciation to all of you for protecting the pack.

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President

