



STATE OF THE  
UNIVERSITY

2022

## State of the University Address

PRESIDENT GARNETT S. STOKES  
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Good afternoon, Lobos! I am so pleased to welcome you to our 2022 State of the University Address. I'm once again coming to you virtually, which is a reminder that over the last two years, we've found many new ways of doing things in the interest of keeping our community safe—different ways of communicating, learning, collaborating and even different ways of celebrating. In short, when faced with new challenges, we don't just improvise, we innovate.

Innovation is such a powerful tool for improving our society. And as a university, we often use the word to describe what we do—whether talking about advances in science or medicine, developing a more sustainable future or improving our own institution.

But there are also ways we can talk about innovation that are inherently related to our own culture and community.

Last year, I read a great article in our newsroom about linguistic anthropology, in which Catherine Rhodes, an assistant professor in our Department of Anthropology, described it as the “study (of) how living people use language and other things to make meaning in their lives.” This got me thinking about how innovation at UNM is really like a shared language, derived of many histories, experiences and cultures, that we use to create meaning in our own community and in the world through the expressions of ideas and actions.

The past year has been a reflection of the polarized times in which we live. But innovation also drives introspection; using our curiosity and passion to improve the world around us by understanding why and how we innovate is the first step in determining how we can help bring people together to translate ideas to action. If innovation is our language, then ideas are our lexicon, and the actions we take are our story.

### OUR STORY MATTERS

We talk a lot about what to do, but sometimes we forget to talk about why it matters.

Let's put the last 14 months in context. Unlike 2020, we started 2021 with at least a twinge of optimism, with several COVID-19 vaccines bringing a palpable sense of relief. We were optimistic life might return to something approaching normal—but even as more of us were vaccinated, we found that our hopes of bringing back our pack had to be moderated by the reality that COVID-19 wasn't going anywhere. And so, plans had to be changed or managed—but through it all, Lobos kept aspiring, kept innovating, and never stopped acting nobly.



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### BY THE NUMBERS

Even in the face of a pandemic, The University of New Mexico continued with its tradition of extraordinary research and cutting-edge innovation. As the State of New Mexico's only Research 1 institution, our brainpower, work ethic, and commitment to our community has earned us national recognition from some eminent and diverse organizations. For instance:

- UNM received the U.S. Industry Cogswell Award, the highest award bestowed by the U.S. Department of Defense and Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency on so-called "cleared industry."
- The UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center was awarded the National Cancer Institute's highest designation and rating for its cancer treatment and research—one of only 51 centers in the nation so designated.
- Here's another one I'm very proud of: VIQTORY, an organization that connects the military community to civilian employment and educational opportunities, recently named UNM a Military Friendly Gold University. As a member of a military family, I really like hearing that.
- And more good news: Our College of Nursing was recently ranked 43rd out of nearly 700 collegiate university nursing programs by *U.S. News & World Report*, placing it in the top 6% of all bachelor of science in nursing programs in the nation. As we strive to address the critical shortage of healthcare professionals, our nursing program continues to produce exceptional nurses and clinicians to meet the vital needs of communities across New Mexico, and the nation.
- Elsewhere, *Hispanic Outlook on Education* magazine recognized UNM across several categories as an institution working to meet the needs of Hispanic students.
- In the fall, UNM was recognized as a Fulbright Hispanic Serving Institutions Leader, one of only 35 institutions nationwide to earn this distinction.
- And finally, a Bush Institute and Opus Faveo report ranked UNM 2nd for Innovation Impact Productivity among mid-sized research universities. Whether we're helping build parts for the Mars rover, or designing video games on Earth, our students like our facilities, our instructors, and the way we approach problem solving—and that's paying dividends both now and in the future.

### TRAILBLAZERS

What makes The University of New Mexico's story truly great, however, will always be its Lobos. With nearly 10,000 faculty and staff, and more than 20,000 students across all our campuses, it's our students, faculty and staff who truly define who we are as a university—and your accomplishments over the last year have been beyond inspiring. Here are just a few of your noteworthy achievements:

- 2021 was barely a month old when the NASA rover Perseverance touched down on Mars and did some exploring with the help of UNM scientists, professors, graduate students and alumni. Lobo teams were highly involved in the mission, including helping to determine the ideal sites for the rover to explore and the development of the rover's "Supercam."
- Lobo student Emma Hotz was selected as one of only 62 national Truman Scholars honored in 2021.
- We also were honored to have two student Fulbright Research Award winners, who earned this prestigious recognition in one of the most competitive cycles in the 75-year history of the program.
- Jane Lancaster, Distinguished Professor Emerita of Anthropology, was elected to the Academy of Arts and Sciences, one of only 252 outstanding individuals elected nationally in 2021.
- All four of our student nominees for the Goldwater Foundation Award were selected as national winners, the first time UNM has had all its nominees win this highly selective award, which went to only 410 students in the nation.
- Twelve faculty members were honored by Advance UNM as Women in STEM Award Winners, and three professors in the College of Arts & Sciences were given one of our highest honors and named as Regents Professors.



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### “HOW CAN I HELP?”

Reflecting on this past year, I will also be forever grateful for the way our university community came together in the face of ongoing COVID-related challenges. As a university, *How can I help?* became the rallying cry of the Lobo community, and boy, did you deliver.

- In January 2021, our students moved into their campus housing two weeks early, so they could safely quarantine before classes began.
- That same month, we opened The Pit as a vaccination site—and I was never prouder than I was to see our Lobo health care workers and volunteers working to administer more than 3,000 doses of vaccine daily.
- We successfully completed a Spring semester of hybrid instruction and were even able to hold several in-person events safely.
- Over the summer, we introduced our vaccination incentive program, asking all students, faculty and staff to report on their vaccination status.
- With the start of the Fall 2021 semester, we successfully rolled out a vaccination requirement that eventually saw vaccination rates across our campuses exceed 90 percent.
- Additionally, academic and integrated advisors upped their game to address pandemic need.
- Consequently, we were able to safely return to largely in-person instruction and provide a safe, live commencement celebration in The Pit for the Classes of 2020 and 2021—our first major indoor gathering as Lobos in nearly two years.
- And as the Spring 2022 semester began last month, our vaccination and masking efforts have helped us ensure we have had no major outbreaks, which could potentially scuttle all in-person events and send us back to all-remote instruction.
- Through it all, our Health Sciences Center—doctors, nurses, researchers, clinicians—have heroically been on the front lines of our COVID response, providing quality and compassionate health care services to our community—and beyond.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to protect the health and safety of our campuses and the greater Lobo community. I appreciate it.

### CELEBRATING ALL CURIOUS MINDS

As I think about our successful response to the pandemic, one of the things I have come to truly appreciate about college is that it is about so much more than a college education; it is also about a college experience—the shared moments that unite us all as Lobos and bring us together as human beings. For many, COVID has inalterably impeded or denied some of those formative experiences.

This is one of the reasons why our vaccination and masking requirements are so important; working for a safe campus meant we could offer students the foundational experiences that define life as Lobos—whether it was in person commencement, tailgating before football games, or just being able to walk into Zimmerman Library again.

Prior to COVID, it seemed that institutions across the nation were gauging success by how many services could be offered online, and how much of a college degree could be achieved remotely. What has been made clear to us over the last two years, however, is that online services are certainly appreciated, but, when given the choice, our students clearly also want face-to-face interaction with faculty and with each other.

Put simply: the college experience matters.



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The University of New Mexico is proud to continue to safely provide our students with a memorable college experience—ensuring a healthy, safe, and supportive campus environment where ideas can be discussed freely and openly; where students have access to state-of-the-art facilities and a greener campus; and ensuring college remains accessible to those who desire it, regardless of socioeconomic status. College is a place where curiosity is celebrated and rewarded—and the joy and energy we get from each other is a vital part of the Lobo experience.

## EACH OF US DEFINES ALL OF US

As one of the most diverse campuses in the nation, The University of New Mexico will always be a place where all are welcomed, all are valued, and all are supported, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or gender identity. This past year has seen us reaffirm our commitment to being an ally, and to advancing the cause of equality and acceptance.

- The most recent QS Top University rankings, which examine how well universities drive diversity while enhancing employability, placed The University of New Mexico at number 74 on its list of more than 350 institutions.
- UNM's Health Science Center is one of only five institutions in the country to be honored by the Association of American Medical Colleges with its Nurturing Experiences for Tomorrow's Community Leaders (NEXT) Award, in recognition of our efforts to address COVID-19 inequities and systemic racism through collaborative community partnerships.
- Early last year, we unveiled our Office of Compliance, Ethics & Equal Opportunity, a new division that successfully merges our existing offices of Equal Opportunity and Compliance into a single, more efficient unit.
- This past fall also saw the opening of our UNM Asian Pacific American culture center, designed to create community and foster success in students of Asian American, Pacific Islander and Desi American heritage.
- UNM's Anderson School of Management received a multi-year \$200,000 grant from Bank of America to support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across the state, consistent with our ongoing mission to stimulate our state's economy and support the growth of local, minority-owned businesses.
- And sometimes, even the smallest of things can make a big difference, as we updated LoboWeb to provide greater flexibility in self-identifying demographic information, including gender non-binary designations, affirmed pronouns, Tribal affiliation, disability, or veteran status—whatever information you choose. However you prefer to identify, know that we see you.

## A GREAT CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT

We are fortunate to be home to some of the most beautiful campuses anywhere, whether it's the high mountains of Los Alamos and Taos, the open desert of Valencia and Gallup, or our oasis in the city of Albuquerque. Our campuses are always growing and evolving to meet the changing needs of our students, faculty, staff and communities—and the last year has been no exception.

Just recently, we broke ground on the expansion addition to Domenici Hall, which will turn an already-remarkable facility into a national base for brain and substance abuse research.

I also had the absolute pleasure of helping to cut the ribbon on the new UNM Center of Excellence for Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation at the Sandoval Regional Medical Center. This facility is a crown jewel among our health facilities, bringing together under one roof our educational, research, and creative resources to bring services like health care, rehabilitation, and support for "successful aging" directly to our citizens.



- Work is also underway on construction of the new UNM Hospital Tower—you can see the cranes in our skyline right now, in fact. The project includes a much-needed new parking garage, a utility plant and the 96-bed hospital tower itself.
- In the process of building facilities that support teaching, research, creative activity and learning, some of UNM's most recent Capital Projects have been honored with multiple awards.
  - First, our new Physics & Astronomy and Interdisciplinary Sciences building, PAIS, was awarded the "2020 Best Building over \$20 million" by the Association of General Contractors, as well as receiving the "2020 National Association for Industrial and Office Parks Signature Chairman's Award" that celebrates projects that have had the most positive impact on the physical and economic development environment.
  - In addition, the renovations to Johnson Center received the prestigious "Eagle Award" from the same organization in January of 2021, as well as an Association of General Contractors "Best Building" Award.
  - In keeping with our commitment to environmental sustainability, these two buildings, as well as our recent major renovations to Clark Hall, all achieved a LEED Gold-level green building standard.
- To foster a more supportive creative environment, we recently opened The Adobe Creative Commons, located in the Zimmerman Library, to create a digital media workspace and resource center for all creative pursuits on campus.
- It may be that some of our most significant improvements of the year, however, are the steps we have taken to align our campus facilities with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring our beautiful campuses remain open, accessible and supportive of all students, faculty and staff.

## ENROLLMENT: BUCKING THE TRENDS

While I remain optimistic about life post-pandemic, I am also realistic about the impact COVID will likely continue to have on our enrollment.

But let me start with the good news. UNM remains very fortunate in that our campuses have seen several successes this year, defying some of the downward trends being seen across the state and nation by our peers.

- While public four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. saw a half-percent decrease overall in new first-year student enrollments for Fall 2021 compared to the prior year, UNM's Main Campus realized a 10% increase. This year also marks the first time since 2017 we have exceeded 3,000 new freshmen.
- The growth in new graduate students at UNM Main Campus also reflects a major increase.
- And truly a pleasant surprise, international student enrollment, which suffered significant declines in 2020 due to the pandemic and challenges with the student visa process, also improved in Fall 2021.
- UNM branch campuses, like so many two-year colleges in the nation, were hit hardest in enrollments during 2020. This year, however, our branches have collectively seen a modest rebound after substantial headcount declines in 2020, with enrollments rising by 12 percent across campuses.
- At the same time, however, we have also experienced some of the same impacts the pandemic has had on most U.S. postsecondary institutions.
- In Fall 2021 UNM Main Campus's total enrollment followed the national trend of declining college enrollments, which dropped nationally by 2.7 percent overall. In Fall 2021, we did just slightly better than that, marking a decline of 2.43 percent.

In recent years, we have found that more residents of New Mexico are choosing UNM. Why? Because UNM, with five campuses around the state, provides an exceptional educational experience at an exceptional value.

We are also proving to be competitive in terms of scholarship and financial aid packaging, as well as total cost of attendance. Moving forward, I'm confident that we will continue to buck the national trends and see enrollment successes.



## A VITAL PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Our branch campuses remain an attractive option to many of our students, not only because of their value and the strength of their programs, but because they're rooted in the diverse regions and communities many of our students call home. These campuses not only enrich us with their history and vibrancy, but they embody our commitment to educational excellence and a more prosperous state. For example:

- **UNM-Taos** received \$500,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a workforce training certificate program that supports the local food and small-scale farming economy of the region. The UNM-Taos Digital Media Arts Program also received \$80,000 in funding from *Better Call Saul* to prepare students for careers in film and media.
- At our **UNM-Valencia** campus, we were thrilled to open the new and long-planned 18,850 square foot Workforce Training Center, which will serve as a base for invaluable assistance for small businesses in Valencia County and surrounding communities.
- At **UNM-Los Alamos**, we were delighted to celebrate the first year of our Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree, an exceptional collaboration that makes it possible for students at UNM-Los Alamos to obtain a four-year BSME, without obligating them to make the trip to UNM's campus in Albuquerque. Even better, this collaboration helps meet the very real workforce needs of a local employer and key partner in this initiative: Los Alamos National Laboratory.
- And at **UNM-Gallup**, we recently hosted a Diversity Summit to discuss and explore how we practice diversity in our community, how it connects with community activism, and how it reflects itself in culture.

## HAIL TO THEE, NEW MEXICO

After having their seasons cut short or canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, 2021 saw Lobo athletes back in action again—and it was as if they had never been away. One Mountain West title after another rolled in throughout the calendar year, with our Lobos clinching nine conference titles, eleven NCAA postseason appearances, and a third-place national finish by our Cross-Country team. And off the field, our teams were truly spectacular, earning a two-year combined GPA of 3.41, the best in Lobo history.

I also want to recognize the leadership of UNM Vice President and Director of Athletics Eddie Nunez, who was honored with the Mountain West Conference's prestigious Commissioner's Award, only the third recipient of the award in the conference's 21-year history. In presenting the award, the conference made particular note of his success steering our student athletes and coaches through the COVID pandemic. What a pleasure it was to see him receive this unique and well-deserved recognition.

## A FOUNDATION OF SUCCESS

We also saw remarkable leadership and creativity at the UNM Foundation, where 2021 was an exceptional year. During a difficult time of trying to secure private funds from donors during the pandemic, our University still managed to record sixteen gifts that were \$1M or more totaling \$25.7M. What's even more incredible, our Foundation processed 26,344 donor gifts during the year. Gifts from alumni, parents, family, friends, grateful patients, faculty, staff and students were all part of this

Over \$85 million in new commitments benefiting UNM were made through private support, surpassing our goal by \$5 million. And talk about giving back: when combined with current use funds, the Foundation distributed \$40.7 million to UNM in FY21. This year also saw more than 100 Presidential Scholarships awarded to New Mexico high school graduates, from every corner of our state, continuing one of our proudest and long-standing benchmark programs, reflecting our investment in New Mexico, and in New Mexicans.

All of this is a true testament to the partnership between our UNM and Foundation colleagues working together to advance philanthropic and other forms of private support for the University.

## LOBO ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

And what a year it was for some of our Lobo alumni:

- How thrilling it was to see Deb Haaland confirmed by the U.S. Senate as President Biden's Secretary of the Interior. Secretary Haaland is not only a Lobo alum, but also a member of the Laguna Pueblo, which gives her the long-overdue honor of being the first Native American Cabinet secretary in U.S. history.
- U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo honored us as the featured speaker at the 10th annual Rudolfo and Patricia Anaya Lecture on the Literature of the Southwest—the first lecture since the passing of Rudolfo Anaya in 2020. And what an appropriate way to celebrate his memory.
- And just last month, Cynthia Chavez Lamar was appointed the new Director of the Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., the first Native woman to lead a Smithsonian Museum.

## FORGING THE FUTURE

Clearly, it has been a remarkable year, made even more so because so much of what we've accomplished happened in the face of challenges presented by the pandemic. As I reflect on all we've done this past year, you all have inspired me to be even more optimistic about our future than before.

As we've seen, innovation requires sweat, resources, and—one of the most important ingredients—visionary leadership. We are incredibly fortunate, and I am incredibly grateful, to have such a remarkable team of leaders, whose energy, expertise, and enthusiasm spark innovation, strengthen our University and enrich our entire community.

- Over the last year, we filled a number of critical positions with some outstanding new Lobo leaders:
  - At UNM-Taos, we are very fortunate to have a dynamic new Chancellor, Mary Gutierrez.
  - Ellen Fisher was formally named as Vice President for Research.
  - Dr. Eric Lau is our new Dean of the Honors College and Dean of University College, while Dr. Leo Lo has taken the reins as Dean of the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences.
  - This coming summer, Camille Carey will officially take on her new role as the Dean of our nationally ranked School of Law.
- We're also seen major changes in key leadership positions across the University, with the hiring of Connie Beimer as the director of Alumni Relations, Victor Griego as our Director of Internal Audit, Major Jeffrey Meinders as the new Commander of the Army ROTC program; and Joseph Silva as the new Chief of Police.
- A number of positions remain to be filled, but I am grateful for the incredible work that's presently being done by our interim directors at Government Relations and Human Resources.
- I also want to acknowledge all the hard work that resulted in the UNM Administration and UA-UNM completing our first collective bargaining agreements—the beginning of a new era at UNM.
- And I would be remiss if I didn't mention that *Forbes* recently named The University of New Mexico as one of the Best Employers in the State—a testament to the supportive environment created by Lobos everywhere, from our students and staff to our faculty and leadership team. Thank you for your care and commitment; it is a privilege to work with every one of you.



## WE R1

We take significant pride in cultivating a culture of innovation that thrives on diversity and empowers breakthroughs in some unexpected places. Whether it's radical thinking about how to land payloads on Mars or rising to meet our ambitious Grand Challenges here on Earth, Lobo researchers have the support and resources needed to change thinking, change lives, and change the way we look at each other and the world.

With twelve designated research centers, institutes, and networks rooted in broad interdisciplinary representations, our students are provided with the resources and the opportunities to explore and create with faculty at the forefront of their respective disciplines. And the results speak for themselves:

- UNM's Formula Society of Automotive Engineers placed in the top five in the world in two categories at the International FSAE Knowledge Event.
- Some of our Lobo researchers are working to determine the health and environmental impacts of cryptocurrency mining, putting a tangible environmental price on the virtual currency.
- Others are looking at worker inequities in the restaurant industry, exploring race, class, and gender inequalities in the food-service industry, and highlighting why these inequalities persist.
- The UNM CHILI HOUSE team of undergraduate, graduate and faculty researchers from across various disciplines won the national NASA MINDS Challenge for their proposal to teach robots to care for New Mexico chiles on the surface of Mars.
- And as you can imagine, our researchers are also on the leading edge of COVID research and response:
  - Project ECHO, The University of New Mexico's groundbreaking telementoring program, is partnering with a consortium of global health organizations to ensure that all countries receive support in their COVID-19 vaccine rollout efforts.
  - In May, UNM HSC received \$1.4 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health as part of the national effort to understand and overcome vaccine hesitancy.
  - In September, our School of Medicine was selected as one of only 88 sites to participate in Moderna's vaccine study, conducting clinical trials of vaccine for children.

## GRAND CHALLENGES

Curiosity isn't just about asking questions; it also takes genuine courage—courage to think differently and act boldly. These are the benchmarks of our Grand Challenges, which empower Lobo researchers to address some of New Mexico's most pressing issues. Together, Lobo researchers are conducting the kind of transformative research that defines our role as the State's only Research 1 institution.

- This past year, we were proud to kick off the Substance Use Disorders Grand Challenge Graduate Student Scholars Program, providing funding and mentoring to graduate student researchers examining health equity and inequity among historically disadvantaged groups.
- Our Southwest Environment Finance Center received \$3.7 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure communities around our state have access to clean water and safe wastewater treatment.
- Our Sustainable Water Resources Challenge Team is leading a \$15 million, 5-year project funded by the National Science Foundation that engages seven universities and their communities across the region to address the impacts of climate change, including drought, wildfires and community well-being.
- As part of the Substance Use Disorder Grand Challenge, researchers at UNM's Center on Alcohol, Substance Use and Addiction received a grant for more than \$10 million from the National Institutes of Health for the creation of a treatment





and recovery center. The new center will focus on innovative ways to help people overcome experiences with chronic pain or opioid use, with one trial looking expressly at Indigenous communities. This is the kind of compassionate curiosity that defines who we are and what we do.

## BOLDLY RETHINKING OUR ECONOMY

You don't need me to tell you that these last two years have been tough on our economy. The pandemic hit particularly hard here in New Mexico, partly because we still hadn't fully found our economic footing after the Great Recession of 2008 before being knocked down again by COVID.

Economic development has always been one of our most important objectives as a university, but any playbook we may have had for that post-Recession recovery had to be scrapped during the very first moments of the pandemic. Clearly, as we move forward, we must think differently about how we carry out the business of New Mexico's business. And with the leadership of UNM's Rainforest Innovations, the Anderson School of Management, and others, we're doing exactly that.

- Rainforest Innovations continues to serve as one of the state's leading catalysts for creative and forward-thinking economic development, forging relationships with businesses across our state, sparking technology transfer, encouraging start-ups, and generally acting as our economy's most enthusiastic cheerleader.
- We also completed an updated master plan for Innovate ABQ, a collaborative initiative among UNM, city and county government, and the business community, to create a highly connected community where people can live, work and play.
- Similarly, we are very excited about the South Campus Tax Increment Development District or TIDD, a Public-Public collaboration between UNM and the City of Albuquerque to enhance community services, create new jobs and stimulate economic activity. The TIDD will revitalize an underutilized, unsightly portion of the City—but more importantly, we expect it to spur the creation of more than 4,000 new jobs with over \$3 billion in wages.
- Anderson School of Management recently announced the launch of the Center for the Future of the New Mexico Economy, with a mission of harnessing the expertise of New Mexico universities, in partnership with regional economic developers, the state and the business community to mutually support the goal of advancing New Mexico's economy.
- To expand the collaborative strength of the long-standing partnership between UNM and the Sandia National Laboratory Advance Materials Laboratory, we are in the conceptual design stage for the creation of the New Mexico Research Innovation Collaborative facility.
- And finally, one of the things we re-confirmed this year is the vital role UNM plays in our state's economy. Rainforest Innovations' 2021 report on UNM's economic impact showed that even through a global pandemic, UNM's economic footprint has continued to grow, increasing from an economic output of \$3.1 billion in 2018 to \$5.2 billion in 2021.

## CONCLUSION - UNM 2040: OPPORTUNITY DEFINED

Without a crystal ball, peering into the years ahead is hard work. But with *UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined*, we're doing just that, as we craft a multi-year plan to shape our future as the University for New Mexico. After working tirelessly over the last year with an engaged university community and the remarkable individuals tasked with drafting our plan, I can say with absolute certainty that our *future is bright*.

*UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined* has presented us with a chance to think hard and think differently about how UNM can be more relevant, more visible and more competitive as we make our way toward the middle of the 21st century.



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For one thing, if the last two years have taught us anything, it's that the health and well-being of our state, and our republic, are directly linked to the health and well-being of our citizens, and that a healthy New Mexico is a prosperous New Mexico. *UNM 2040* ensures that even as we strive to meet our goals, we never forget that the most valuable asset we have in attaining our goals is the very citizens of our state. Their health and well-being is paramount. Simply put, public health is the public good.

This is one of the reasons UNM is proudly supporting a proposal to launch a School of Public Health to be housed at The University of New Mexico. UNM has long-sought transformation of our College of Population Health into a high-impact, accredited School of Public Health. We know that proactive investments in population health and public health initiatives are critical, particularly in regard to disease prevention, data collection, health equity and pandemic preparedness.

These are just a few of the many ways we're boldly forging our own future—partly by carefully considering not only where we're going, but where we've been. Our process in creating the *UNM 2040* plan has been thoughtful, deliberate, and, at times, exciting, with multiple opportunities to engage with our focus groups of students, faculty, staff, and supporters and learn of their aspirations for our university. The results reflect the serious care, contemplation, and community engagement that went into this process, helping us forge a path forward that not only truly reflects UNM's institutional goals and aspirations, but our unique culture and character as well.

I'm very proud of *UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined*. And with our ever-evolving language of innovation, we will continue to express meaningful and powerful ideas and translate them into action and impact.

I have never been more optimistic about our future as Lobos. Moving forward, we're going to do great things together.