

## State of the University Address

PRESIDENT GARNETT S. STOKES  
JANUARY 21, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos, and wherever you may be while watching this: welcome to the 2021 State of the University.

In 2020 and these first few weeks of 2021, we have endured one of the most disruptive eras in our nation's history. From a global pandemic and a summer of social unrest, to the recent shocking assault on the seat of our government, the last twelve months have challenged all of us, and further exposed the divisions and inequities in our society.

As human beings, we have rightly felt fear, anger, and sadness—but also hope, solidarity and kindness. We have had to expand our circles of responsibility, to protect the health and defend the basic liberties of others. We do so willingly.

Through it all, I've learned that even in the face of adversity and uncertainty, the state of our university continues to be one of resilience, optimism, curiosity, and extreme compassion. To be sure, we haven't always gotten it right the first time; we have had to make some hard, and sometimes unpopular, pivots to deliver on our mission to serve the public good. But our business as a university is one of exploration and discovery—and therefore we have learned and grown to become better and stronger, in the very way we ask and encourage our students to do the same.

So today, I come to you with a sense of renewed determination to keep us connected in every way possible. Since March of last year, the Lobo experience has looked very different for all of us. We had to change the way classes were held, ensure vital research continued, and do everything we could to support our Lobos as we all adjusted to what has been called the “new normal.”

### CONNECTED BY THE UNEXPECTED

To begin with, The University of New Mexico quickly rose to the challenges of navigating the global pandemic, as we found truly ourselves “connected by the unexpected.”

From that moment in late March, when the world changed almost overnight, our Health Sciences Center, and our doctors, nurses, researchers, and clinicians, have heroically been on the front lines of our COVID response. HSC plays a vital role in our underlying mission to provide quality and compassionate health care services, not just to our community, but to the nation and the globe. Our health-care providers have been working tirelessly—and fearlessly—to tend to patients, and I'm so grateful to all of them for their dedication and compassion. As I speak with you today, our doctors and nurses have received the COVID vaccine so they can continue their work much more safely—and as a university, a state, and a nation, I don't think we can ever adequately convey our gratitude and admiration

I also want to celebrate a different kind of front-line worker, our faculty and staff, who quickly pivoted to life under lockdown. You were our rock, working tirelessly and creatively to ensure students remain educated and engaged as they adapted to their new circumstances. I'm proud of all we've accomplished together and pleased to call you colleagues.

And then there are our remarkable students, who not only had their academic journeys unexpectedly disrupted, but also much of their Lobo experience—the traditions, the rites of passage, and the unscripted encounters that shape us as global citizens for the rest of our lives. While we can empathize with all they've been through, I don't think we appreciate how much they've sacrificed, as they have learned and grown in an environment of constant challenge and change.

Our Alumni Association did their best to bolster the student experience—and faced with the challenges of no in-person events, reimagined homecoming, for example, with a drive-in movie. They even raised a record amount for student scholarships through a ‘green chile roast by post,’ mailing more than 3,000 rations of green chile to every state in the Union, plus Puerto Rico and the UK. Your efforts truly made a difference in the lives of our students living and learning under these most challenging circumstances.

In that same regard, I also want to applaud the invaluable assistance our students received from Student Affairs, the Student Activities Center, Residence Life & Student Housing, as well as from support organizations like African American Student Services, American Indian Student Services, El Centro de la Raza, and the LGBTQ Resource Center. They put in long hours to help the strange feel much more familiar for our students—and if things began to feel overwhelming, Student Health & Counseling and AGORA were always there to ensure they had someone to talk to. Thank you all for taking such great care of our students.

## MIRABILE DICTU

You may be familiar with the Latin *mirabile dictu*, meaning something marvelous to relate. While it often seems we are swamped with negative news, I never want us to lose sight of the fact that at UNM there are many fantastic stories to tell, and wondrous discoveries to relate.

## ENRICHING THE LOBO EXPERIENCE

Let me take a moment to recognize some significant milestones and achievements:

Our Africana Studies Program celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020, and I am delighted that work is under way to transition the program to a department driven by a strong research agenda and tenured faculty.

The Native American Studies Program also celebrated 50 years of excellence, and is on its way to graduating its first generation of students with Master’s degrees.

Also marking its 50th anniversary is our nationally-recognized AGORA Crisis Center, which has served as a lifeline for countless New Mexicans, and provided much-needed help during this extraordinary year.

And celebrating its tenth anniversary is our LGBTQ Resource Center, which is helping our LGBTQ students to not only survive, but to thrive.

## BY THE NUMBERS

As an institution, UNM continues to be recognized globally for its world-class education, cutting-edge research and creative approaches to solving some of society’s toughest problems.

UNM has moved up 31 spots to number 187 in the U.S. News and World Report’s “Best Colleges” rankings. We also had five programs and schools ranked among the top in the nation.

UNM has among the highest number of Fulbright awardees in the country, reflecting the expansive reach and engagement we have in our world as the University for New Mexico.

Project ECHO is one six national finalists for the prestigious MacArthur 100 & Change competition. Their proposal focuses on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing to scale the development of ECHO’s collaborative model of medical education to programs in Africa and India.

Since 2010, our Clinical & Translational Science Center has grown the UNM research mission and launched collaborations throughout New Mexico.

Our Center for Quantum Information and Control has been selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to receive a five-year, \$115 million project that will create new technological solutions to harness quantum information science.

## R1 FACULTY

As a Research 1 institution, our faculty are dedicated to driving new knowledge, which enriches the experiences and futures of our students and communities.

In 2020, Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition Dr. Jose-Luis Hurtado was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship for exceptional creative ability in the arts—one of only 175 people in the U.S. and Canada honored with the prize.

Seven of our professors from across disciplines were selected by the Provost and the Executive Vice President for Health Sciences for promotion to Distinguished Professor—the highest faculty rank attainable at UNM.

Distinguished Professor Emeritus Carlton Caves, in our Department of Physics and Astronomy, was elected to membership in the National Academy of Sciences, and was also recently awarded the Micius Quantum Prize for his breakthrough work in the field on quantum meteorology and quantum information theory.

In addition to their research and scholarship, our faculty are also the voices of public trust, offering their expertise, opinions and analysis in areas of topical interest on a global stage.

Opining on issues related to the 2020 election and the current U.S. political landscape, UNM School of Law professors Joshua Kastenberg and Sonia Gipson-Rankin have appeared on BBC World News, and political science professor Lona Atkeson was cited by the Washington Post.

On the health front, Tracie Collins, who just recently transitioned from Dean of Population Health to Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, was a TRT World panelist discussing the racial disparities in people dying of COVID-19.

From natural and health sciences; to the humanities and the arts; to social and behavioral sciences, the work and talent of our faculty catalyzes public discourse.

## AN INSPIRED ENVIRONMENT

We are also fortunate to be located in one of the most beautiful and inspiring places in the world—and even with fewer Lobos on our grounds, we've continued to improve our campus environments.

This past fall saw the long-awaited re-opening—at least temporarily—of the improved and expanded Johnson Center, which includes amenities like an indoor running track and an outdoor adventure center.

The Physics and Astronomy and Interdisciplinary Science building, which opened last October, is the largest investment in science in the history of the state of New Mexico, thanks to a GO bond passed by its residents in 2016.

Work on the Hospital Tower, which will provide some much needed relief from crowded corridors and hospital beds, also continued through 2020—and I'm optimistic we'll stay on our timeline and see construction begin later this year.

And in 2020, the voters again generously approved General Obligation Bond C, which will provide funding for more than 60 projects across our state, including \$51 million for 13 projects at UNM.

## AN ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

But our campus community is, of course, much more than its infrastructure. One of the most powerful things about community is that it connects individuals across dimensions of purpose, and an engaged community is one that is

measured by both its stated and lived principles and values. UNM was one of 119 U.S. colleges and universities to receive the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, a designation that indicates a commitment to community engagement, and recognizes that our efforts are changing lives across our state—and around the world.

### **AMPLIFYING THE STUDENT VOICE**

Among the things I have missed most over the last year are the many opportunities for in-person interaction with our students. While it doesn't compare to the real thing, I've been visiting online classrooms and holding meetings virtually—and I've been savoring such moments when I can really listen.

What I've learned is that our students need assurances that their voices have been heard. It's not just raising their voices on matters of social inequities or injustice; they want a seat at the table. They want to make an impact on the institution—and we need to create spaces that allow them to do so. I've also met with representatives of the student body and I want to make sure our conversations continue, because they're some of the most rewarding and enriching experiences I've had here at UNM, and I am a better president for them.

A university is a place where voices and perspectives are empowered and amplified—and where ideas are tested and put into action. As a result of student engagement, The University of New Mexico is moving to address a wide variety of concerns regarding campus culture, from campus safety to issues of mental health and representation.

### **SPEAKING OUT FOR CAMPUS SAFETY**

In that regard, we have heard you when it comes to the critical matter of campus safety and community policing. Law enforcement policies and practices are under scrutiny nationwide, and things are no different here at The University of New Mexico, especially as we continue our search for a new campus chief of police. We've engaged our students and our community, asking for input through a Town Hall on Promising Practices in Campus Public Safety, and we're closely examining our own practices and community relations.

Already, we're taking steps to make the physical environment of our campus safer, adding cameras and lighting that have contributed to marked reductions across several categories of crime, including property crimes. Still, many challenges remain, and our ongoing efforts for keeping our campus safe will remain a priority.

### **BLACK LIVES MATTER. PERIOD.**

On a similar matter: know, too, that I have heard the fear, despair and grief in response to many of your experiences with systemic racism and social injustice. UNM joined the countless voices expressing shock and outrage sparked by the brutal killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, and condemned police brutality against any and all communities of color.

But racism isn't something that happens somewhere else; in the last year, several members of our Lobo community were subject to acts of racist violence and harassment. I am appalled by this. At UNM, we believe that Black Lives Matter—and that the Black Lives Matter movement compels us to enact meaningful and fundamental change.

Last Spring, we hosted a town hall on Combating Anti-Blackness at UNM, where we heard compelling stories from those who have encountered racism, institutional or cultural bias, harassment, or violence—not only in the Black community, but also in intersectional communities like the LGBTQ community. More broadly, our Division for Equity and Inclusion is working to provide workshops for faculty members on how to enhance a sense of belongingness and success among underrepresented students.

### **A CAMPUS CULTURE OF MUTUAL RESPECT**

Along these same lines, we're also working through our Office of Equal Opportunity and the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center to ensure that our protocols for reporting and investigating sexual violence or misconduct are fair, thorough, and effective. I'm pleased that, based on our straightforward approach to compliance, we were honored last February to co-

host with the U.S. Department of the Navy a regional conference on sexual assault and harassment at America's colleges, universities, and service academies.

As part of our ongoing efforts to inform and protect our community, we are also collaborating with campus partners to draft a rapid response protocol for faculty and staff facing harassment, bullying, racially-based threats, and even online attacks.

## ACCESS INTO EXCELLENCE

And, of course, we're also working to ensure we provide support for students and faculty when it comes to coping with the challenges of academic life under COVID. Our students have had a range of experiences in our classrooms this year; some have enjoyed asynchronous classes, and some have found them arduous. Some have thrived in the remote learning environments, and some have not.

As I noted earlier, I spent some time visiting our classrooms virtually, experiencing some of what our students were experiencing. Our faculty did an amazing job preparing for remote instruction, with some 750 instructors participating in workshops over the summer to learn best practices in remote instruction, and even more engaged over fall term.

Yet, while many students have been comfortable in the digitally-mediated environment, some have struggled to find adequate internet or a laptop. UNM provided hundreds of laptops and WiFi hotspots to students, sometimes mailing equipment to students at Pueblos and the Navajo Nation, even across the country.

We're realistic about the impact COVID has had, and will continue to have, on our student population, as well as on graduation and enrollment. It might surprise you to learn that our four- and six-year graduation rates stand at highs of 35 and 56 percent respectively for the recently graduated class in May 2020. I'm proud that our graduation rates among all populations of students have remained relatively steady, and even risen slightly, in the face of this crisis, but we must continue to focus on student success. Frankly, these rates are not high enough—and there is every reason to believe that the impact of COVID will apply downward pressure on these rates over the next few years.

Due to the work of our Division of Enrollment Management and others, our Fall 2020 enrollment for freshmen at our Albuquerque campus increased by 7.56 percent, over the Fall 2019 freshman class. More encouraging, this class was one of the most diverse classes ever. We will have to work hard to help all of our students succeed beyond that disrupted first semester in Fall 2020. Fortunately, some help is on the way. The Lobo First-Year Promise is UNM's commitment to support low-income, first-year students starting in Fall 2020 through Fall 2021. Tuition and fees will be covered, making an excellent four-year education accessible to all New Mexicans.

Still, we remain concerned by the negative trends we, and all universities, face for future enrollment. We continue to refine our own enrollment plans, with an emphasis on both undergraduate and graduate enrollments. We take our role as the University FOR New Mexico to heart, and are working hard to ensure every student has access, and the assistance they need, to attain a great education as a Lobo.

## ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITIES

This is just one reason why UNM's branch campuses in Gallup, Valencia, Taos and Los Alamos are so vital to our mission. We are developing new joint programs that allow us to better unify the Albuquerque campus with our four branch campuses—as well we should. Our branch campuses keep us rooted in diverse regions and communities steeped in our State's unique culture. They not only enrich us with their history and vibrancy, but they embody our commitment to educational excellence and a healthier, more prosperous state. For example:

- UNM-Gallup is finalizing a new certificate program called Process Technology—a first of its kind in the state of New Mexico—which will include eight core classes that students must pass to earn their certificate.
- Up at UNM-Los Alamos, efforts continue to meet the workforce needs of Los Alamos National Labs, with a pilot project underway to expand the existing two-year UNM-Los Alamos pre-engineering program to a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering.

- At UNM-Taos, its nursing students are completing the NCLEX-RN exam with a 100% pass rate, and are quickly obtaining employment at local hospitals to provide valuable assistance in the local COVID response.
- And at UNM-Valencia, two students were nationally recognized by Phi Theta Kappa, the national honor society for two-year colleges, as 2020 New Century Pathway Scholars.

We value and need our branch campuses, and have worked with our branch campus chancellors to develop a UNM Branch Strategy Document under the UNM 2040 strategic planning process. A draft document was completed this past fall and is currently being vetted and refined.

## THE HEART OF THE LOBO NATION

It goes without saying that COVID is the toughest opponent our Lobo athletes have ever faced. Our Spring sports started out promising, before COVID cancelled seasons across the board. Just as disappointing, UNM was set to host the 2020 Indoor NCAA Track Championships, with a real chance to compete for a national championship, before COVID forced canceling the event.

And yet, our student-athletes brought their drive and determination to the classroom this year as well. The Athletic Department had its second consecutive semester of breaking their overall academic record in the Spring of 2020.

Lobos continue to lead both on and off the field. Weini Kelati, two-time NCAA cross country Champion and multi-time All-American, began her professional running career with the Dark Sky Distance Team. And earlier this month, we received the exciting news that Lobo offensive lineman Teton Saltes had been selected to receive the prestigious Wuerrfel Trophy, honoring him for combining exemplary community service with outstanding leadership on and off the field. I want all our athletes to know how proud I am of them.

## A CULTURE OF PHILANTHROPY

Building a culture of philanthropy not only keeps us connected to each other, but it builds institutional resiliency and long-term sustainability for UNM. Philanthropy is in all of us—a voluntary giving of what is within our means to advance the public good. But it's not just about raising money; it's about impact. Alone, most individuals can't create new pathways for students to access a world-class education, build cutting-edge public research facilities, develop breakthroughs in medicine, or support the arts. But through UNM and the UNM Foundation, they can.

Under the leadership of CEO Jeff Todd, the UNM Foundation continues to change worlds for so many Lobos through its comprehensive fundraising efforts, connecting donors to what they value in our mission. UNM's Changing Worlds 2020: The Campaign for UNM included 77,000 generous supporters, each committed to changing lives and changing worlds. And it all starts with a single dollar and a single donation.

## THE UNIVERSITY FOR NEW MEXICO

As you can tell, I'm very proud of what we've accomplished this year. Whether it's our dedicated faculty, staff, students, and athletes; our commitment to social, behavioral, and institutional change; or expanding our culture of community and community service, Lobos are leading the way out of the darkness that often shaped 2020.

Leadership begins with great people—and since my arrival at The University of New Mexico nearly three years ago, I've had the opportunity to build a transformative leadership team of visionary leaders from diverse backgrounds who bring enriching experiences to the entire campus community.

- Dr. Doug Ziedonis joins Loretta Martinez, James Holloway, Teresa Costantinidis, and Assata Zerai as the newest additions to the President's leadership team selected during my tenure, along with Jeff Todd, who was hired by the UNM Foundation last fall.
- Dr. Ellen Fisher will join UNM as Vice President for Research next month.
- We've also seen changes in other key leadership positions across the university since my arrival at UNM, including the

hires of Dan Garcia, and Deans Hansel Burley, Robert González, Mitzi Montoya, Harris Smith, Christine Kasper, Tracie Collins, and Donald Godwin.

- The search for College of Libraries and Learning Sciences dean is underway, and searches for School of Law dean and Chancellor of UNM-Taos are being planned.
- And I would be remiss in not including UNMH CEO Kate Becker and Lobo alum and current head football coach Danny Gonzales as great new UNM leaders.

Combined with the talents and institutional knowledge of other senior leaders and the University community, this team is dedicated to student success, supporting diversity and inclusion and making positive contributions to our culture that will impact UNM for years to come.

## THE UNIVERSITY FOR A HEALTHY NEW MEXICO

As we've come to truly appreciate during the last year, there is perhaps no challenge larger, more ambitious, and more important than improving and maintaining the health of our citizens. UNM Health Sciences Center has developed programs and initiatives central to increasing health equity and improved health outcomes among underserved populations in our state—part of its proud tradition of meeting the health needs of our communities.

UNM Health Sciences has also been pivotal to responding to the pandemic, truly DELIVERING MORE with compassionate, high-quality health care across the state and around the world. Our doctors, nurses, researchers, clinicians and staff have been on the front lines of New Mexico's COVID response, and I'm grateful to them for their dedication and compassion. Among some of their noteworthy work, HSC has been:

- Identifying and testing potentially lifesaving therapies to treat COVID-infected patients.
- Sequencing the genetic code of the coronavirus to anticipate where the virus may mutate or migrate.
- Harnessing 3-D printing technology to print face masks and shields.

As the only academic medical center in the state—and home to New Mexico's only NCI designated Comprehensive Cancer Center—education, research, and clinical care are seamlessly combined to provide the best possible clinical care, using cutting-edge technologies, resources, and therapies, all in the hands of compassionate health care providers.

I'm also proud of the innovative approaches that our health professionals continue to develop to provide improved care. In particular, I want to applaud the work that's being done by one of our world-renowned programs, Project ECHO, which last year received \$237 million in federal funding to help train local staff to fight outbreaks of COVID in nursing homes across the nation.

We remain steadfast in our long-standing commitment to address the health needs of our community. We are truly proud to be The University for a Healthy New Mexico.

## WE R1

Curiosity is not a feeling; it's a call to action. The transformative research conducted at UNM is helping address societal problems and needs, improving countless lives and even shaping the way we see the world and each other. With 12 research centers and institutes rooted in broad interdisciplinary representation, our students are given the opportunity to study, explore and create with faculty who are at the forefront of their disciplines.

Our researchers have addressed water rights in indigenous communities and explored the causes of mass extinctions in the ocean. They've found new galaxies hidden behind the Milky Way and shed new light on human aging. They've learned how stress affects the size of newborns, and led the pack on innovative substance use disorder research initiatives.

## (GRAND) CHALLENGES ACCEPTED

Clearly, Lobo researchers aren't afraid to take on the big questions—which leads me to our Grand Challenges. As you know, our Grand Challenges continue to drive our research, spur innovation, and create collaboration. I'm encouraged by the institutional success we're seeing across disciplines—and our faculty and staff have many accomplishments this year in support of our Grand Challenges goals.

- They sponsored 25 pilot research projects, engaging 60 researchers.
- They submitted 32 manuscripts for publication and made 14 conference submissions, resulting in 27 publications and presentations to date—with more on the way.
- Participants submitted 66 external research grant proposals for more than \$64 million, with five more proposals currently in development.
- Grand Challenges teams received funding for 23 external research grants, totaling more than \$20 million.

And now I want to challenge us all to do even more.

## INNOVATION THAT SUPPORTS NEW MEXICO

Despite the healthy financial outlook that New Mexico enjoyed a year ago, we have not been immune from COVID-inflicted economic decline experience around the world. However, through it all, we've continued to strengthen our State's economy at this critical time by working with industry partners, small businesses, and state and federal agencies to conduct world-altering research, solve challenges related to national security, and to assist businesses. For example:

- Last fall, we signed a ten-year MOU for a strategic alliance with Sandia National Labs focusing on how UNM and Sandia can collaborate to solve challenges related to national security. I'm excited by the possibilities presented by this collaboration as we extend our mutual reach and share expertise to meet national needs.
- We also continue to use our reach and influence to assist small businesses struggling around our state during the current economic downturn. We recently received \$300,000 in federal CARES funding to provide businesses with expertise in e-commerce that will enable them to take more of their business activity online.
- And just this past week, UNM hosted a 3rd Business and Economic Summit to continue our statewide dialogue about ways to grow our New Mexico economy and our innovation ecosystem.

UNM Rainforest Innovations, in particular, has been a catalyst for the creation of new and innovative economies.

- A recent report titled *The Innovation Impact of U.S. Universities* ranked UNM 27th out of 195 prominent institutions as “a university with great innovation impact productivity,”—and 2nd on the same list among mid-sized universities.
- For the 6th year in a row, UNM appears on the list of top 100 Worldwide Universities with the largest number of issued U.S. patents.
- And for the 8th year in a row, UNM ranks among the Top 100 Worldwide Universities for the number of U.S. utility patents granted — a testament to UNM's innovative community of inventors.

## FORWARD TOGETHER

As we continue to face headwinds on the financial front, we are also engaging with another important group of critical partners: our legislators, including elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels.

Among our most critical tasks this year is working with the Governor and State Legislators on shoring up our budget. Naturally, we were not alone in experiencing budget woes due to COVID, which changed the trajectory of both our short- and long-term budgeting. The State of New Mexico, which started 2020 looking at encouraging increases in revenues and state spending, has seen revenues spiral downward by nearly \$2 billion in the face of the pandemic.

To meet the new fiscal realities, the state's FY2021 budget was revised to cut spending by \$415 million. Those cuts crash

landed here at The University of New Mexico, with UNM and our Health Sciences Center starting the year with almost \$44 million less in the budget than originally planned. Especially disappointing was the withdrawal of state funding for the much-needed four percent salary increase for employees that was approved in the budget in early 2020 for FY 2021.

In light of these state mandated reductions, as well as a parallel, COVID-induced deficit in tuition revenue, we were forced to go back and re-examine our budget and spending priorities for 2021. The Board of Regents voted unanimously to approve a Budget Readjustment Request to bring our budget in line with revenue losses. As a result, we have greatly slowed hiring of the essential staff and faculty who are the heart and soul of the university. We have restructured offices, and reallocated budgets to protect the core of our academic mission. These budget adjustments were, and remain, hard.

Given the current economic outlook, it is likely we should brace for additional reductions. Still, there is some good news. At HSC, a target was set of \$190 million in external funding during FY2020—a figure HSC exceeded by 8.3 percent.

Moving forward, part of our job will be to reflect carefully on our budget priorities. As the State Legislature and Governor get to work this week, we'll look carefully not only at what it is we can afford to do, but also what we can't afford not to do. Multiyear budget forecasting and planning has been introduced by EVP Holloway and SVP Costantinidis. Introducing long-term modeling and thinking has been a novel approach for the university, but we continue to progress. Looking both inward and outward, I am confident we'll respond to our fiscal challenges with strength and adaptability.

## OPPORTUNITY DEFINED

Addressing long-term fiscal challenges requires long-term planning. Our new strategic plan, *UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined*, is being coordinated by our provost, Dr. James Holloway, working closely with our new EVP for Health Sciences, Dr. Doug Ziedonis, and will be an iterative, inclusive and collegial process. While a turbulent 2020 has necessitated immediate strategic focus on moving to limited operations and remote instruction, many of the foundational activities to support UNM's strategic planning are underway. This includes a process to articulate and affirm our core values, a diversity plan, and, with our new vice president of research coming on board soon, a planning process around supporting major research opportunities.

For instance, we have utilized the Budget Leadership Team to implement guiding principles that will drive our strategic financial planning during the short-term crisis and our new multi-year fiscal template. This provides a foundation for decision-making based on mission-driven priorities in any environment. We also have a process for adjusting financial and capital plans if adverse economic circumstances arise—and there is little doubt that such circumstances did arise!

The UNM Foundation, too, recently underwent a similar strategic planning process to advance the ways in which we align the resources, passion, and commitment of our donors with the needs of students and the strategic direction of the university.

Finally, we have developed long-term financial planning models as a standard expectation in our budgeting. This helps us understand the long-term impacts of current decisions and better assures we make decisions that provide robustness against future events.

We have much work before us, but I remain optimistic about the future; our outlook as Lobos and as The University of New Mexico remains bright. And as we very slowly emerge from the darkness of the pandemic, I'm grateful we're at each other's sides, and have each other's backs.

The State of The University of New Mexico lives through our work, our successes and our stories—as well as our struggles and setbacks—year-round. What I've shared with you today is only a mere snapshot in time; the state of our university is an ongoing conversation that will continue in many different spaces throughout the year.

I cannot express how proud I am to be President of this University and how profoundly thankful I am to all of you.

Thank you for listening, and let's go, Lobos!