



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



March 18, 2019

Good afternoon.

As the 2019 New Mexico legislative session ended on Saturday, lawmakers passed the state budget for FY20, which includes a higher-education budget of \$838.3 million, a 4.3% increase to I&G and RPSPs. This increase is at least twice as much as higher ed received in FY19. I am pleased with our progress during this legislative session, and would like to thank everyone, especially our student leaders, legislators, Counsel of University Presidents, and the UNM government relations team, who worked tirelessly to advocate in Santa Fe for UNM. [Highlights of the session](#) include \$55.4 million in capital outlay across all UNM campuses, including \$30 million for a new hospital tower; a \$6.5 million (3.6%) performance-based increase in I&G funding for main campus; and a \$1.86 million (3.2%) increase for School of Medicine I&G. The Higher Education Department received \$20 million toward the College Affordability Scholarship Fund, which will assist students with the most financial need. The legislature also approved a 4% compensation increase for state-funded employees at the “I&G rate” which means only about half the funding needed is provided. Further details will be provided in the coming days and weeks as we move toward our budget summit and legislation is signed by the Governor.

Grand Challenges Collaboration Moving Forward

The research and discovery generated by the UNM Grand Challenges will benefit people throughout the Land of Enchantment. In order to hone our initiatives to best serve the state, we will need input from New Mexicans. As part of that commitment, there are a series of upcoming seminars that will present the proposals in greater detail and invite our communities to be a part of developing solutions. The dates and times for the guest sessions regarding Substance Use Disorders [have already been announced](#). In addition, all faculty and staff are invited to a special edition Faculty Lightning Lounge which [will focus on all three Grand Challenges research topics](#). It's an opportunity for researchers to give a more in-depth look into the cross-campus collaborations and for participants to ask questions. I'm eager to see what develops from these sessions as we continue to be the University for New Mexico.

NASA Selects UNM Team for Moon Research

As the state's leading research institution, it's always a source of pride when the quality of our faculty is nationally recognized. Last week, NASA announced a team from the UNM Institute of Meteoritics will be among those tasked with studying lunar samples that traveled back to Earth on the Apollo missions. The UNM team, along with eight others, was awarded \$8 million [to assess and examine the Moon pieces](#), which have been vacuum-sealed for nearly 50 years. The goal is to better understand lunar landslides and how they can occur in a place where there is no atmosphere, limited water and lower gravity. Looking into the past to discover possibilities of the future is one of the many ways research serves to build new knowledge.

UNM Listed Among Top Universities in the U.S.

Last week, U.S. News and World Report released its [2020 education rankings](#), which evaluate higher education institutions across the country for a variety of lists. UNM ranked in the top 10 for our photography program (No. 5) and Nursing-Midwifery program (No.7); top 50 for Best Medical School: Family Medicine (No. 8) and Primary Care (No. 21); and top 100 for Best Medical School (No. 78). Several other programs also ranked among the top 100, including Earth Sciences, History, English, Mathematics, Political Science and Physics. These rankings use indicators to compare us not only to our peer institutions, but also to schools nationwide. While rankings have a role to play in how a university is perceived, our highest priority is supporting the success of our students by providing them with the opportunities to learn from our outstanding faculty, as well as cultivating the skills they need to thrive in their careers and in life.

Board of Regents Elections

The UNM Board of Regents recently elected new officers and committee chairs. Regent Doug Brown will now serve as board president, with Regent Kim Sanchez Rael sitting as vice president and Regent Sandra Begay as treasurer and secretary. [New committee assignments have also been made](#), and I, along with the administration, am eager to work with our Board to continue making UNM a successful, thriving and impactful institution.

Have a great week, and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes
President