



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*August 5, 2019*

Good afternoon.

My time in New Mexico has renewed my optimism that UNM's best days are ahead of us - we have the incredible strength, innovation and grit of our campus community to lead our state in so many ways. A critical priority for me this year is an expanded focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. There is an unsettling climate across the nation right now which is impacting all of us, as evidenced by the horrific mass shootings in El Paso and Ohio - in addition to the one in Northern California last week. These tragedies shape our outlook, but we must not let them shake our resolve to unite as strong communities driven by mutual understanding, compassion and an unbending will to rise above hate and oppression. What we need to consider is that here at UNM, inclusion means that everyone is and feels valued - for who they are and what they aspire to; for their contributions and beliefs; and, even though we have our differences, for being a part of this singular community we call The University of New Mexico.

Our new Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, Assata Zerai, arrived on campus last week, and I look forward to the ways in which she will influence our campus and community conversations around inclusion. She has hit the ground running and will be working with the Division for Equity and Inclusion (DEI) office, as well as faculty, staff, students and the greater Albuquerque community, to strengthen existing projects and generate new initiatives. These efforts are aimed at continuing to make UNM more thoroughly inclusive of New Mexico's significant historic and dynamically changing population. I will work closely with Vice President Zerai as the University creates new strategies in the coming years to broaden our commitment to DEI and its goals.

## **Welcome to New VP of Enrollment Management**

The students we attract and enroll reflect the future of education at UNM - who we teach, and how we prepare them both intellectually and socially for life after college. Today [Provost James Holloway announced Dan D. Garcia](#) as our new Vice President for Enrollment Management. Dan brings a great deal of experience to the Enrollment Management team, along with a collaborative approach and an emphasis on strategic enrollment planning. His dynamic leadership style and organization will be a great asset to UNM once he joins us on campus Sept. 2. His hire comes following an extensive and inclusive national search. My thanks to Craig White and the search committee for their time and to the campus community for its input.

## **UNM Contributes to Proactively Fighting Wildfires**

Although we have received a lot of rain this summer, New Mexico is not always so green. The years with little rain also bring with them the increased risk of wildfires. Many of you may remember the Dog Head Fire in 2016 that consumed nearly 18,000 acres on the other side of Sandia Mountain. Our researchers here at UNM are now using economic analyses, natural science data and Earth observations to try to [predict and prevent such devastating wildfires](#). Dr. Richard Bernknopf in the Economics Department is working with the United

States Geological Survey to create a fire vulnerability map to help better inform natural resource planning and fire suppression decisions. This is just one of the many research endeavors coming out of the University for New Mexico that will directly impact our state.

### **Employee Town Hall**

I appreciate all who attended the employee town hall earlier today. We had excellent questions about compensation and benefits, campus safety, staff retention, and the campus response to the tragic events in El Paso, among other topics. If you were unable to attend in person, the recording will continue to be available on [UNM's Facebook page](#). I am also always happy to receive questions via email to [presidentstokes@unm.edu](mailto:presidentstokes@unm.edu) or through Twitter ([@PresidentStokes](#)). As we move into this fall semester, I will continue holding [traveling office hours](#) at different locations around campus, which is also an excellent time to talk to me about your questions and concerns.

Have a great week.

Garnett S. Stokes  
President