



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



April 6, 2020

Good afternoon.

I want to welcome our students “back” today to the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. We have officially started our remote instruction, and though it’s not the UNM experience that we all have looked forward to, we will approach it with the same Lobo spirit and drive that has been a part of our DNA for over 130 years. Our faculty has done an exceptional job of transitioning nearly all of their coursework online and anticipating remote instruction at least for the first part of the summer session.

While we may not physically be together at this time, we are together in this fight to slow the spread of COVID-19. For questions and guidance please continue to check the [UNM COVID-19 web page](#) as well as [recently updated FAQs](#). I continue to be impressed and inspired by what the UNM community is achieving under these extraordinary circumstances. I can’t express the depth of my gratitude to each and every one of you and am so proud to be President of the University for New Mexico.

Employee Guidelines During Period of Limited Operations

Last week I announced that we have [extended our period of limited operations through April 30](#), which is in alignment with our Governor’s announcement this afternoon to extend her public health emergency order through the end of the month. While we navigate our way through a time of remote instruction and teleworking, we also continue to have Tier 1 employees providing critical healthcare and operational functions on our campuses and at our clinical components. Our Human Resources Department has been working incredibly hard to ensure that our employees are supported and well-informed. Last week [a communication was sent to staff and student employees](#) regarding [guidelines and measures for compensation during this time period](#). In anticipation of possible budget reductions, we are taking proactive measures to evaluate staffing needs and pause hiring where possible. Also distributed by HR was guidance regarding [New Paid Leave Options](#) available to support eligible employees impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as provided by the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).

Pathway to Enhanced Student-Faculty Communication

The [new Student-Faculty Facilitation Network \(SFFN\) has been created](#) as an informal mechanism to assist with the implementation of Faculty Senate Resolution, “COVID-19 Emergency Measures for Student Academic Success.” It is built to facilitate communication between faculty and their students, who may face unprecedented barriers toward their academic success during these extraordinary times. Students, please feel free to contact Rodney Bowe (rbowe@unm.edu) should you need support.

UNM Health Sciences Demonstrates Mission-Driven Commitment

I want to give a shout out to Dr. Paul Roth and our entire Health Sciences Center during this global pandemic. Our team members at UNM Health are on the front lines of patient care, working closely with the State to ensure New Mexicans can get the treatment they need. I want to thank every health care worker

who continues to come to work to take care of us and urge all Lobos to please stay home for them.

With the Health Sciences leadership transition announced in the fall, we had hoped to spend this spring semester celebrating Dr. Roth's many accomplishments. Instead, Dr. Roth's full attention is being devoted to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Dr. Roth's disaster medicine experience, including as the head of medical response teams after the 9/11 attacks, multiple hurricanes, and a major earthquake, have prepared him for a moment like this, and we are lucky to have him.

As the state's only academic health center, our leadership and preparedness has shown through during this time. I have watched as the clinical operations have come together to address personal protection equipment, prepare for a patient surge, and support each other outside of work. Our team at Health Sciences has also: helped place nearly 500 children with caregivers so their parents can continue to work clinically; brought the large health systems together to create messaging that thanks workers and educates the community; launched potentially life-saving clinical trials in record time and advocated to receive the necessary pharmaceuticals; and created a COVID-19 block, one of a handful in the nation, so medical students can learn from an unprecedented experience.

Outside the HSC, Lobos have also stepped up in numerous ways to support our colleagues and friends in the clinical environment, from using 3D printers to make face shields to ordering meals for our health care providers. It's remarkable how adaptive everyone has been, and I am confident that our actions will make a difference and save lives.

Supporting our Lobo Community

UNM has had to pivot quickly and responsibly during the past month, and there are many ways in which we continue to support our students on their academic journeys, as well as their personal and mental well-being. I have heard so many stories of incredible generosity and selflessness, such as our [UNM Army ROTC cadets raising \\$2,500 for UNMH](#). In this time of uncertainty, you too may be looking for ways to help. The [UNM Foundation has created philanthropic pathways](#) to support the health and stability of our Lobo family. From providing much needed support for equipment, supplies and other resources to care for our patients and protect our staff, to assisting students who are navigating financial difficulties such as housing and food insecurity, reduced job hours and income, to making available technology for remote learning and medical care and prescriptions, your gift can make a difference in someone's life today.

I'll hope you'll join me in wearing teal tomorrow, April 7, [in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month \(SAAM\)](#) and post your support to social media using #SAAM2020 and tagging @lobospect.

Thank you, and please stay healthy and safe.

Garnett S. Stokes
President