



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 17, 2020

*"It is understanding that gives us an ability to have peace. When we understand the other fellow's viewpoint, and he understands ours, then we can sit down and work out our differences."*

- Harry S. Truman

Good afternoon.

Engaging with each other to develop understanding and to allow our own voices to be heard is a meaningful way to build strong successful communities.

## **Native American Studies Celebrates 50 Years at UNM**

It should come as no surprise that The University of New Mexico has one of the most extraordinary Native American Studies programs in the nation, and this year, [we're proud to be celebrating 50 years of excellence](#). Established in 1970 at the urging of UNM's Native American students, our Native American Studies program has grown from a small program to a full-fledged department, offering a minor in 1999, graduating its first BA recipient in 2005, and is now on its way to graduating its first generation of students with Master's degrees. Over the last half-century, the Native American Studies program has made UNM a richer, smarter, and more culturally diverse place.

## **Climate Change Research Intersects Science and Society**

Time and again, the global scope of our research enterprise has been demonstrated through powerful collaborations and impactful studies. ["Intertropical Convergence Zone Variability in the Neotropics During the Common Era,"](#) co-authored by UNM Professor Yemane Asmerom and [recently published in Science Advances](#), suggests a warming climate could lead to drier conditions in the Neotropics, including Central America. It also points to the potential for exacerbating social tensions within the region, especially those who depend upon subsistence agriculture, and possibly triggering further mass migrations. This research is at the intersection of societal and scientific interests, offering data that could affect future economic stability and policy in the region.

## **Exploring Spanish as a Heritage Language**

The field of teaching Spanish as a heritage language is growing in the U.S., and at UNM there is a deeply rooted cultural connection to the Spanish language. This year we are hosting the 7th National Symposium on Spanish as a Heritage Language, which will be held February 27-29. The symposium offers a common forum for scholars, students, and educators interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise in the field of learning and instruction of Spanish as a heritage language and related fields.

## Green Zone Training is Coming Up

Part of being the state's flagship university is creating a safe and supportive space for all our students to come and learn. The Veteran and Military Resource Center is once again hosting a [Green Zone Training](#), which gives staff and faculty tools for helping Veteran and military students transition into our community. If you are interested, please register for the training, which will be in the SUB, Santa Ana Room on Friday, March 12 at 1:30 p.m. The training will last about two hours but could make a world of difference in the lives of our military students and student Veterans.

## University Community Integral to the Future of UNM

I have emphasized the power of listening as an ingrained part of my leadership style since the time I first visited campus as a candidate for president more than two years ago. There are now several important opportunities for the many of you who care deeply about the future direction of the University to engage in setting its future course.

- The general public is invited to attend two community listening sessions regarding the [search for the next Executive Vice President of Health Sciences](#). The first will be held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center on February 24, followed by a second on February 25 at the National Hispanic Cultural Center; both will begin at 5:30 p.m. and [will be livestreamed](#). [A survey](#) to provide feedback will be available through February 28.
- [Four finalists for the position of Dean of the College of Education](#) have been invited to visit campus during the weeks of February 24 and March 2. The candidates will participate in a presentation open to all faculty, students, staff, and community members.
- And finally, following several open forums to discuss the City of Albuquerque's proposed Gateway Center, a [survey](#) was sent university-wide this past Friday to solicit opinions regarding UNM-owned land being used as a potential site. The survey will remain open through February 28.

I appreciate the time and thoughtful participation of our community in guiding us forward - there will continue to be many more ways to stay engaged and be a part of ensuring we are The University for New Mexico.

Have a great week and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes  
President