



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



March 16, 2020

Good afternoon.

I would like to thank the entire UNM community for your vigilance, patience and compassion over the past week as we have responded rapidly to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic by moving to a period of limited operations through Sunday, April 5.

I am acutely aware of how important communication is in a time such as this. We will continue to communicate plans and directives as quickly as possible, so please be sure you are checking your email, referring to [UNM's dedicated COVID-19 web site](#) and following [UNM social media platforms](#). Supervisors [have been provided with guidance](#) for managing employee expectations during this period of limited operations. Instruction from both the Human Resources Department and Provost will go out over the next few days to faculty and staff regarding how the University will operate for the next few weeks.

Please note that UNM is not closed: student residence halls and [campus dining facilities](#) remain open, as do [Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) and [Johnson Gym](#). Other operations and services may be modified – please check their websites for hours and restrictions – but we will continue to support academic excellence, research and the health and well-being of all Lobos.

Understandably, there is much anxiety among us – about the health of our loved ones and ourselves; and for some of us, about not being able to be near those loved ones during uncertain times. There's stress over what this means for completing studies, work assignments and caring for school-aged children; and about what the future holds as we proactively try to slow the spread of this virus. Counseling and support services are available to all members of the UNM community. Students can reach out to [Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) or our [UNM resource centers](#), and [Counseling Assistance & Referral Services \(CARS\)](#) is available to staff and faculty.

Many are also asking what they can do to support and care for our community. I urge all members of our caring community to follow, for your own health and others, the [Centers for Disease Control's \(CDC\) COVID-19 prevention and public health recommendations](#) we have been promoting.

Most of all, I urge everyone to be patient and kind to one another. Social distancing does not mean social isolation. One of our faculty members in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, [Shawn Sidhu, MD, recently offered advice for staying mentally and emotionally healthy during this time](#).

Additionally, if you are healthy and willing, the need for [blood donations](#) for trauma victims and other seriously ill patients remains constant.

“Each of us defines all of us” has never been truer. Please take care of yourself—and look out for each other.

## **UNM No Longer in Consideration for City Gateway Center Site**

The discussions surrounding the City of Albuquerque's proposed site for the Gateway Center being located on UNM land have resulted in many weeks of gathering information and input from our community. After much deliberation and consultation, I spoke with the Mayor to advise him that this site could no longer be included as an option for the 300-bed shelter that is currently envisioned, and last Friday, the City of Albuquerque announced our decision. In listening to the University community, it is clear that many people support UNM being a part of tackling the issue of homelessness and serving the various vulnerable populations in our City. I want to thank all of you who took the time to make yourselves heard - at public forums, through the community survey, or via personal communication. There was, however, not a single variable that led to this decision. Ultimately, our concerns about enrollment and future needs of our health system had to be considered in our determination of whether the UNM site was appropriate for the City's plans. Although the use of UNM land for the Gateway Center is not a viable option for us, we will continue to work closely with our partners in solving the challenges of homelessness in our community and in serving vulnerable populations.

Again, I know this is an exceptionally challenging time for not only our campus, but for many communities throughout the world. Thank you all for demonstrating courage, creativity and common sense as we work collaboratively to navigate our ongoing response to COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President