



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



April 20, 2020

Good afternoon.

With each passing week of this pandemic—and the social distancing and self-quarantining that comes with it—one thing becomes clearer and clearer: we are, indeed, stronger together. The dedication, diligence and creativity of the entire Lobo community – that’s each and every one of you – has enabled The University for New Mexico to advance our public mission through outstanding education, research, and clinical care. I have watched all of you serve our community and our state, and I’m both humbled and inspired by what you do: the heroic efforts of our academic medical center, the innovative research partnerships to provide frontline solutions, and the compassion and volunteer efforts to care for our most vulnerable.

The UNM administration has taken a measured and pragmatic approach to evaluating University operations over the past several weeks, and we have made every effort to clearly and effectively communicate about any decisions that are made, and to explain the rationale behind them. In consultation with UNM leadership, I have decided to extend the period of limited operations to May 16. Only Tier 1 UNM personnel should continue to report to work on campus, with all others working remotely as they have been doing. Human Resources will be communicating with both supervisors and employees. As conditions continue to evolve, please check with your supervisor to verify information. As I mentioned before, it is now more vital than ever for us to thoughtfully consider what our immediate and long-term circumstances may look like as we enter the FY21 budget year. Factors such as enrollment, state appropriations and our current fiscal and operational models will need to be carefully assessed to align with and effectively support our mission – all the while taking into account the impact on our students, employees and broader University community.

Believe me, I know these communications can in no way convey the deep empathy and respect for our employees’ varied circumstances that I have seen demonstrated by campus leaders as we’ve worked to implement policies to protect our mission and our people. While your health and safety remain our highest priority, these ever-changing circumstances naturally create anxiety about what the near- and long-term future hold. Every Lobo matters – and as we work to understand what our needs will be and explore options for recovery, we will do so with transparency, integrity and understanding. I thank you for your continued patience, courage, and kindness – and as I continue to say: we **will** get through this together.

Building Strong Lobo Leadership

While we are continuing to flatten the curve, we are also ensuring that we are advancing the leadership searches currently underway to support our mission. On Friday, Provost Holloway announced the first appointment of four ongoing dean searches. I am pleased to welcome [Dr. Hansel Burley](#) as Dean of the newly renamed [College of Education and Human Sciences](#), effective July 1, 2020. Professor Burley is currently Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership at Texas Tech University, where he has also served in multiple Associate Dean roles. Professor Burley has studied issues of mentoring, student belonging, resilience, and student achievement, as well as self-efficacy and commitment to teaching

as a profession. The College of Education and Human Services is critically important to both UNM and to our state, and I am confident the outstanding and dedicated faculty, students and staff of the College will thrive under Dr. Burley's leadership.

[Executive searches continue](#) for Deans of the Schools of Architecture and Planning, Fine Arts, and the Anderson School of Management. The search for UNM's next Executive Vice President for Health Sciences is also still moving forward; the committee continues to meet and we are using the virtual tools we have available to us to adapt to this new way of connecting and engaging. My thanks to the members of all of our search committees, as well as those participating in the process, for their resilience and commitment during the current health crisis.

Agora Crisis Center Keeps People Connected

The [Agora Crisis Center at UNM](#) is the oldest campus-based crisis center in the United States, and its advisors have been providing emotional support and crisis intervention for the Albuquerque community for nearly 50 years. As we go through this pandemic together, the levels of trauma we may feel we are facing alone can pose potential challenges to our mental well-being. While the volunteers at Agora are joining in the effort to flatten the curve through social distancing, they also [continue to field calls on their help-line and offer emotional support via on-line chat](#) - all at a time when people may be at their most vulnerable or may simply need to connect to their community. If you are struggling with worry, anxiety or depression, Agora, [Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#), and [Counseling, Assistance and Referral Services \(CARS\)](#) all offer resources to support your mental well-being and keep you connected.

Space and Beyond: Virtual Fair Aims to Launch Careers

Our students have had to deal with a high degree of uncertainty and change over the past weeks - including thinking about how the pandemic will continue to affect our economy and their futures. Practicing social distancing while looking for a job - and all without leaving your home - is possible, thanks to virtual career fairs.

UNM is part of the [STEM Boomerang program](#), established to create career networks for STEM professionals within New Mexico, as well as for those from outside the state who are looking to return home. STEM Boomerang is partnering with [NewSpace New Mexico](#) to host the [Space and Beyond virtual career fair](#) on April 30 from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., sponsored by the New Mexico Economic Development Department. The event will connect STEM students and professionals with over a dozen companies and organizations, including Virgin Galactic, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Northrup Grumman, and Air Force Research Labs. These exciting opportunities support UNM's critical role in educating and retaining students by preparing them for the workforce, right here in New Mexico.

Please stay safe and healthy, and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes
President