



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



May 11, 2020

Good afternoon.

When the current academic year began last autumn, I thought I knew exactly where I would be on Saturday, May 16, 2020: on a stage in a packed Dreamstyle Arena, handing out diplomas and [celebrating the graduates of the UNM Class of 2020](#). We will still be honoring the Class of 2020 over the next two weeks, with numerous programs, department, school and college celebrations and a virtual University celebration on May 30.

## **Planning for the Future of UNM Continues - Flexibility is Key**

At the beginning of the year we also thought we would be in the midst of a dynamic strategic planning process by now, but the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to contemplate a number of ways to operate differently. In consultation with University leadership, I have made the decision to further extend our current limited operations from May 18 to June 1. We will continue to evaluate a phased in return to campus that is aligned with local, state and federal guidance regarding COVID-19 and recommendations to protect the health and safety of our community. It's looking more and more likely that even by fall, much of the state will still be operating under some type of social distancing requirements, as well as some limitations on group sizes. But when we think about returning to UNM campuses under such conditions, we must consider much more, for example, than just how we move students safely in and out of classrooms and lecture halls, or conduct top-tier research with scientists six feet apart. UNM operates much like its own kind of city—open 24 hours a day, with its own citizens and visitors, infrastructure and transportation, police department and parking services, restaurants and gyms, housing and warehouses, libraries and theaters, football fields and hospitals . . . the list goes on.

Returning—in any capacity—means having comprehensive and flexible plans for all areas of our enterprise. These include: how we manage housing, dining and other student services; how we safely conduct events; how we develop a process and protocol for testing our Lobo community for the COVID-19 virus...and what happens in the event of another sudden outbreak? These are questions and scenarios we have got to deal with—all while coordinating with and following directives from state and local government. Working together, we're always hoping for the best, but smartly preparing for the worst—your health and safety, and our ability to weather the challenges ahead demands it.

It is also very likely true that UNM—and every university in the state and across the nation—will be doing its long-term planning amid a budget shortfall. Moving forward, we'll be making both short- and long-term plans for budgets and operations, enrollment, personnel, instruction, research capability, health care services, and so much more - and some of the decisions we will have to make will likely be painful. There is little question that the budget challenges that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic are becoming painfully obvious, both here at UNM and across New Mexico. With less than two months left in this fiscal year, I would

like to ask all of you to show the same level of innovation and commitment to our mission that you have shown for the past several weeks and apply it to how you evaluate and determine necessary expenditures.

However, we are committed to working together to ensure that any revisions to our budget and operations are enacted responsibly and in ways that continue to advance the mission of the university.

## **Lobos Win Fulbright, Udall Foundation Honors**

Even in the middle of a lockdown, our students continue to inspire and succeed, with [three current Ph.D. students and two recent graduates selected for the prestigious Fulbright Awards](#), and [three students recognized by the Udall Foundation](#).

Honored with Fulbright Scholarships—the largest U.S. exchange program offering opportunities to undertake international graduate study, advanced research, university teaching, and primary and secondary school teaching worldwide—are Carter Barnwell, Jacqueline Hirsh Greene, Emmalee Johnston, Laura Steele, and Martin Watkins.

The Udall Foundation, which awards scholarships to college sophomores and juniors for leadership, public service and commitment to issues related to Native American communities or to the environment, awarded a scholarship to Jakeem Paul—one of only 55 scholars nationwide—with Chenoa Scippio and Dora Bean receiving Honorable Mentions. Congratulations to these remarkable Lobos—we're proud of you.

## **Virtual Town Hall Meeting on Combating Anti-Blackness in New Mexico**

As part of our efforts to be responsive to the recent malicious acts of racist violence and to heal our community, we at UNM are engaging in self-reflection and in a larger conversation about the history of threats and violence against African Americans in our country.

I would urge our community to attend a virtual town hall being held on [Combating Anti-Blackness at UNM, on Tuesday, May 12, from 4:30 to 6 p.m.](#) This event is hosted by the UNM Division for Equity and Inclusion (DEI), the Black Faculty Alliance (BFA), University Libraries, and other collaborators working to effect institutional transformation. In addition to addressing specific acts, participants will also examine the recent increase in anti-Blackness at UNM, and what the University is—and should be—doing to respond. We vow to work both within our own community as well as with partners to take proactive measures to ensure that, from micro-aggressions to targeted attacks, there is no room for racism at UNM.

## **New Leadership at Anderson School of Management and School of Architecture and Planning**

It's no secret that The University of New Mexico is a dynamic part of the engine that drives our state's economy. One of the many ways we do this is by cultivating today's great ideas that become tomorrow's successful industries and businesses—and nowhere is our commitment to business and industry more active and steadfast than in the Anderson School of Management.

I am delighted to welcome [Dr. Mitzi Montoya as our next dean of the Anderson School of Management](#). A respected educator and administrator, and valued for her leadership and business acumen, Dr. Montoya

comes to UNM from the Carlson School of Business at Washington State University, where she also served briefly as Provost.

Architecture within our communities – buildings and designed environments – are both artistic and scientific reflections of our culture and experiences. UNM's School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P) is the only such school in New Mexico, a state known for its architecturally significant sites – from ancient ruins, to historic buildings, to modern urban spaces. I am pleased to announce that [Dr. Robert González will be joining us as SA+P's new dean](#). Dr. González has served as the Director of the Texas Tech University (TTU), College of Architecture – El Paso, located on the U.S.-Mexico border in one of the largest bi-national metropolitan areas in the world for the past several years. He is passionate about the future of the architectural profession, and how architectural education can be more inclusive and engaged with communities.

Both Deans will begin their tenure on July 1. My thanks to Provost James Holloway and the committee members for their time and commitment in bringing new leadership to our academic enterprise.

Have a great week and let's stand strong together, Lobos.

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President