



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 8, 2020

Good afternoon.

[For my full remarks on this important issue, please see my recent video statement.](#)

This is a very difficult time for our country and for our community. Once again, we have come face to face with the horrific reality that our black and brown brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, and sons and daughters are far more likely to suffer discrimination and racism that lead to violence and death than is someone who looks like me.

I came to UNM from the University of Missouri in Columbia, where I served as Provost in the months following the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo. While at Mizzou, I heard the outrage, grief, and despair at a society that does not acknowledge that racism continues to impact the lives of many of our colleagues every day. I worked hard at Mizzou to actively improve the campus climate for our students, faculty, and staff of color. We made some progress, but challenges remain. I'm sharing this bit of my own personal history with you so that you understand my perspective on the future.

Our entire country is plagued by the intractable problem of racism—and New Mexico, despite the diversity in our state, is no exception. I hear the voices in our streets, on social media, and on our campus. Black Lives Matter is more than a social media hashtag; it's a social movement that compels all of us to listen, stand up, and speak out. It's a call for positive action to enact meaningful and fundamental change.

And so, I'm working with my leadership team to take both immediate and long-term action and build upon the efforts we've made – and continue to make – to unify our campus, raise and promote different voices, and ensure UNM embodies its foundational principles of strength through diversity, and progress through inclusion. This means making diversity a priority in both word and in deed when it comes to the recruitment and retention of our Black students, faculty and staff. And it means supporting critical race and intersectional scholarship, and promoting both academic freedom and free speech, while protecting those who raise their voices to be heard.

Protecting those who speak out can be a tough job – and it's an obligation we take seriously. In this, we rely on the leadership and support of our campus police department, whose mission statement embraces not just public safety, but also recognizes its duty of preserving human rights and respecting cultural differences – a point of view fitting for a public university.

The metropolitan nature of our university here in Albuquerque also means we have some very specific obligations and responsibilities to our campus – including creating a welcoming and safe environment for our neighbors and visitors. Campus safety has been identified as a top priority for UNM from my very

first visit to campus, and we have addressed it head-on with increased resources and [UNMPD's proactive measures to increasing the safety of our community](#) through greater engagement. In the coming weeks and months, as we embark on discussions with our community about what they are [looking for in police department leadership](#), we can and will be working with the greater UNM community to ensure a meaningful discussion on public safety and police enforcement both in and around our Albuquerque campus. I am prepared to ask our Campus Safety Council to explore issues related to community policing, transformative justice, and related matters, and to examine our own UNM Police Department—including looking at best practices and considering the effectiveness of arming UNM-PD.

We also will begin a broader dialogue with external law enforcement agencies about our campus values and how thoughtful consideration must be given to any real or perceived show of force that may create fear among members of our community.

At the moment, there aren't many people here on campus – but my husband and I live here, in the historic University House. It's our home. But a university isn't just about its buildings and open spaces; it's about the need to feel that our community is safe and welcoming at all times – a place where the free exchange of ideas is encouraged and value. We all deserve to feel safe and protected physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I want to end by asking you to keep talking, keep listening, and keep letting me know what's on your mind and how you're feeling. I want these conversations to continue. We will move beyond engaging these important issues only when tragedy takes the national stage - because violence and injustice happen everywhere, every day. I want us to keep working together to make a difference, and to improve the university experience for everyone in our campus community.

Keep using your voices, but please stay safe, Lobos. Protect and respect our pack.

It's June 8th. Here's What You Need to Know.

As New Mexico begins to slowly and safely re-open, The University of New Mexico and our Health Sciences Center are also working hard to responsibly “Bring Back the Pack” by [enacting a comprehensive plan to move our campus back to a fully operational status](#). This week, here's what you need to know:

- Beginning today, June 8, UNM's Main and Branch campuses are implementing a [daily screening policy for all employees](#). Employees will receive a daily e-mail inquiring whether they will be working on campus – and if so, checking to see if employees are showing any symptoms of illness.
- Summer courses, which began on June 1, are being carried out remotely, while [some laboratory and research facilities are carefully ramping up their activities](#).
- Beginning on June 8, parking enforcement resumes its [normal summer schedule](#).
- Social distancing and the use of masks continue to be required whenever individuals are working or spending any time around others.
- To the extent possible, please continue to work remotely. Some faculty and staff will need to return to campus to carry out their functions; please do so in a safe and responsible manner, following [worksite protocols](#).

- To help slow the spread of infection, we will continue with our [policy of self-reporting](#) either symptoms of or a positive test for COVID-19.

UNM Among Top 100 in the World in Patents

The important scientific discoveries generated by UNM reflect not only on the excellence of our research enterprise, but our shared dedication to finding solutions to the most challenging and complex problems facing our society. For the eighth year in a row, [The University of New Mexico ranks among the Top 100 Worldwide Universities for universities granted U.S. utility patents](#)—a testament both to UNM's innovative community of inventors and the guidance of STC.UNM. Our remarkable inventors are leading the way into the innovation economy so vital to our State and to our nation. Congratulations to our Lobo inventors, and my continued thanks to STC.UNM CEO Lisa Kuuttilla for her leadership and enthusiasm.

As always, your patience and flexibility are greatly appreciated.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President