



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 22, 2020

Good afternoon.

Even in the middle of a national pandemic, our Lobo faculty continue to inspire and innovate, and I'm pleased to announce that eight of our remarkable faculty members have been selected for the [2020 Women in STEM Awards](#), hosted by [Advance at UNM](#) in collaboration with the UNM Office of Academic Affairs.

Advance is a five-year National Science Foundation program to recruit, retain and promote women and minority STEM faculty—and the Women in Science awards, now in their fifth year, have presented recipients with more than \$266,000 to date. In 2020, Advance has also partnered with the College of Arts & Science and the School of Engineering to offer additional awards, as part of an on-going effort to provide support for the important work of assistant and associate professors during this difficult time. Rebecca Bixby, Tara Drake, Heather Edgar, Tamar Ginossar, Maryam Hojati, Mousumi Roy, Lani Tsinnajinnie and Jin Zhang were selected as recipients of the 2020 Advance awards.

I am incredibly proud of these amazing women and their exciting proposals that will further enhance our understanding of our communities, ourselves, and our planet—and beyond. Congratulations to our eight winners, and my thanks as well to Julia Fulghum, director of Advance at UNM, for all the work Advance does to encourage and reward women in science.

It's the Week of June 22nd. 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 fully operational status](#). This week, here's what you need to know:

- Summer courses, which began on June 1, are being conducted remotely, while [some laboratory and research facilities are continuing to carefully ramp up their activities](#).
- UNM's Main and Branch campuses are continuing with 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.
- 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](#).
- Residence Life and Student Housing has [issued guidance for the Fall 2020 semester](#).
- Parking enforcement has resumed its [normal summer schedule](#).
- Lobo Athletics has issued [guidance for the Lobo football home opener](#) at Dreamstyle Stadium on August 29.
- The Fall 2020 instructional schedule maintains the same start and end dates for the term, and the same number of instructional days as required by our regional accreditor—but will spread the two fall break days

out over early October and early November, including making election day a non-instructional day. We also end in-person instruction just before Thanksgiving. Finals will take place from December 7 through December 12.

- Social distancing and the use of masks continue to be required whenever individuals are working or spending any time around others.
- To help slow the spread of infection, we are continuing with our [policy of self-reporting](#) either symptoms of or a positive test for COVID-19.
- We're also constantly updating our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) as new questions arrive.

Supreme Court Hands Down Key Rulings on Dreamers, LGBTQ+ Rights

Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down two monumental decisions, one advancing the employment rights of the LGBTQ+ community and the other providing continued protections for the nearly 650,000 young people who were brought to the United States as children of undocumented immigrants, often called “Dreamers.”

The first of these historic decisions, *Bostock v. Clayton County*, holds that federal law prohibits employment discrimination against LGBTQ+ workers. I'm proud New Mexico has had such legal protections for the LGBTQ+ community in place since 2003, and I'm pleased this policy is now the law of the land. Full equality for our LGBTQ+ community is long overdue. But while this decision moves us closer to the ideal, more work remains, and we must continue to strive for fundamental rights and fairness.

The second decision, *Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of the University of California*, prevented the dismantling of the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, ensuring that the countless “Dreamers,” including many here at the University of New Mexico, and their families can continue to live, work, and learn in the United States.

UNM has led the way in serving undocumented students long before DACA, and we will remain steadfast in our commitment to continue making education more accessible and inclusive. When we say, “each of us defines all of us,” this includes our undocumented students and their families who demonstrate courage and resiliency on a daily basis and are truly part of the united spirit of UNM. We will continue to stand with you, just as we will also continue our efforts to work with Congress, other institutions and national organizations to ensure our students remain protected as they successfully pursue their dreams of higher education, and, ideally, a genuine path to well-deserved citizenship.

NIH Director Addresses APLU on National Health Crisis

During last week's virtual meeting of the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities, I had the distinct pleasure of introducing Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health, to more than 125 university presidents and chancellors. Collins—the winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom who also led the initiative to successfully map the human genome—generously made himself available to the organization to discuss the national response to the COVID-19 health crisis and the issues facing colleges and universities as they continue to carry out their important research missions. As a longtime admirer of Dr. Collins and his work, having the opportunity to introduce him to a group of colleagues was a genuine honor.

HR Announces Temporary Increase in Maximum Annual Leave Accrual

With the COVID-19 pandemic causing an increased workload for some employees, and an inability to utilize annual leave for many others, many of our faculty and staff have expressed concern to Human Resources that they may soon exceed the current 252-hour cap on annual leave. In response, HR is temporarily raising the cap on the Maximum Allowable Balance by 56 hours, to a total of 308 hours. This temporary increase recognizes those employees who are not able to take their annual leave due to the exceptional circumstances of our current environment and ensures they will continue to earn leave that otherwise would have been forfeited. I appreciate our employees for bringing this important issue to our attention. My continued thanks to all of our Lobo employees for your dedication and hard work over these past months.

UNM Newsroom Begins Series on Race and Racism

Starting last Friday—the 155th anniversary of Juneteenth—and running through the end of August to coincide with the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington, the UNM Newsroom is running an ongoing feature called *Racism: An Educational Series*, spotlighting pieces by many of our faculty exploring, among many other topics, the history of the civil rights movement and the origins of Juneteenth, race-related protests in the United States, and anti-Blackness in the media. I'm very proud of the ongoing work that's being done to educate and raise awareness of some of the fundamental issues related to race and racism in New Mexico and the United States – including gaps and omissions in our cultural knowledge that we need to fill in now more than ever. I encourage everyone to check in with the Newsroom for regular updates as this important series unfolds over the coming weeks and months.

Take care, stay safe, and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes

President