



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 29, 2020

Good afternoon.

With cases of coronavirus on the upswing in New Mexico, Governor Lujan Grisham recently announced she has put the reopening of New Mexico's economy on hold while she and state health officials monitor transmission rates. The current restrictions on businesses—such as limited capacities and use of masks—were initially expected to change on July 1, though at the moment, it's unclear when restrictions will be loosened, tightened, or lifted entirely.

What does this mean for The University of New Mexico? Every day, we are vigilantly examining the latest health information provided by federal, state, and local officials, and we continue to monitor trends regarding both transmission and outbreaks—especially in counties where UNM has facilities. We will be carefully considering the impact of these trends on our Fall operations, and it will be more critical than ever that we continue to adhere to health and safety protocols on campus, including social distancing and the wearing of masks.

UNM and its Health Sciences Center are continuing to “Bring Back the Pack” responsibly by following [our comprehensive plan to move our campus back to fully operational status](#). However, please keep in mind that while UNM is continuing to implement this blueprint for reopening slowly and safely, we are also planning for a continuum of scenarios, with the utmost of deference to public health and safety. We will, of course, comply with any additional federal, state, and local guidance required beyond our already strenuous restrictions.

As we approach July 1, here's what you need to know:

- Summer courses, which began on June 1, are being conducted remotely, while [some laboratory and research facilities continue to ramp up their activities](#).
- Facilities Management has established [a request process to re-open individual departments](#), designed to organize and prioritize the areas that can move towards an increased on-campus presence. Once a department's Return to Operations plan has been approved by the appropriate dean/director, the next step towards increasing specific department's on-campus presence will be to [submit a formal Facility Re-open Request on the Facility Re-open Request website](#).
- UNM's Main and Branch campuses are continuing with a [daily e-mail 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](#).
- The Main Campus and Medical/Legal Bookstores are both open, though with [limited hours and public health/safety restrictions in place](#).
- 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 will 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.

We'll be paying close attention to the Governor's guidance this week, and should the state require additional restrictions, we'll adjust our plan to [Bring Back the Pack](#) accordingly. We will keep you posted.

Celebrating a Decade of UNM's LGBTQ Resource Center

Congratulations to our LGBTQ Resource Center, [now marking the beginning of its 10-year anniversary with a year-long celebration](#) – and what a difference a decade has made in the lives of our LGBTQ students, faculty, staff, and their families. The Resource Center is helping LGBTQ students not only to survive, but to thrive. Through the current pandemic, for instance, they've offered graduate students emergency scholarships and are constantly creating online content to ensure continual support and access for all students. I am grateful for the center's guidance and compassion—something we need now more than ever—and so appreciate the leadership, advocacy, and support of Dr. Assata Zerai and Frankie Flores who have helped make the center such a success.

UNM Names Distinguished Professors

Four professors were selected by the Provost on June 24, 2020, [for promotion to Distinguished Professor](#)—the highest faculty rank attainable at UNM. My warmest congratulations to **Dr. Yemane Asmerom**, Professor of Earth and Planetary Sciences; **Dr. Claudia Isaac**, Professor of Architecture and Planning; **Dr. Terry Loring**, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics; and **Dr. Sherman Wilcox**, Professor of Linguistics for this remarkable achievement. At the UNM Health Sciences Center, [three professors were conferred with the title of Distinguished Professor on June 19](#): **Dr. Mauricio Tohen**, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences; **Dr. Eve Espey**, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; and **Dr. Arup Das**, Division of Ophthalmology, Department of Surgery. You make all Lobos proud, and your commitment and passion to your profession and to your students are an inspiration.

July 4th Holds Special Meaning in 2020

On July 2, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to declare our nation's independence. Two days later, delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence that proclaimed, "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by the Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

Now, 244 years later, we find our country in the midst of a pandemic, facing economic uncertainty, and calling for a national response to racial and social inequities and injustice. Those words that declared our independence from tyranny and oppression are a timely reminder that we are strong if we stand together and underscore the need for us to lean into the resilience, compassion, and commitment to a better world. That same resilience and determination inspired our Founders to fight for freedom, as well as to trust that future Americans would continue the fight for equality and those self-same unalienable rights.

This July 4, on Independence Day, please take some time to reach out to family and friends—maybe even someone you haven't talked with in a long time—and enjoy each other's company and laughter while still being safe and responsible. Celebrate the American experiment, even as we're writing a remarkable new chapter in the story of our nation.

UNM Newsroom Series on Race and Racism Continues

The UNM Newsroom continues with its [*Racism: An Educational Series*](#), which will run regularly through the end of August to coincide with the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington. This past week's feature explored [the Black Lives Matter movement](#), with context provided by Associate Professor Finnie Coleman. Please continue 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!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President