



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

August 24, 2020

Good afternoon, Lobos.

I hope your first week back, whether you were here on campus for in-person classes, taking them remotely, or doing a bit of both, has gone smoothly. As campus residents ourselves, I can't tell you how excited Jeff and I are to see our students here at UNM, even in reduced numbers or virtually. We're glad to have you back—and by most accounts, it was a pretty good week here in Albuquerque and at all of our branch campuses.

For the most part, everyone has been good about wearing their masks in public; in New Mexico weather, I know things can heat up fast, so thank you for your diligence through the discomfort. I was also heartened to see students outside the SUB and around the Duck Pond in physically-distant-but-still-social gatherings. It's been a long summer of quarantine, so I'm pleased to see you all responsibly enjoying each other's company.

One of our objectives with our hybrid instruction is to keep the number of people on campus as small as we can at any one time—generally under 2,000 people, if possible. Right now, that seems to be holding; at any given time, about 70 percent of our students are taking classes remotely and 5 percent are taking classes entirely in-person, while 20 percent have a true hybrid schedule. Additionally, we're also complying with [orders from Governor Lujan Grisham](#) to limit access to campus to only essential personnel and campus residents. These protocols keep our campus population low and—when combined with mask-wearing, regular hand washing, abiding by signage regarding pedestrian traffic flow, and distancing—keep our community as safe as possible.

While we're always guardedly optimistic, we also know no system is perfect. We're continuing to closely and carefully study and monitor everything from state data to local health protocols in the name of your health and safety. We've also established a [targeted interventional COVID-19 testing program](#) where our students who are either symptomatic or have been potentially exposed to the virus, and have been directed to do so, can be tested by appointment; we have also recently issued [guidance for instructors](#) on what to do when a student tests positive. By working together and following all health protocols, we continue to [bring back our pack](#) safely and responsibly.

Thank you for helping make our first week a success, Lobos. Keep looking out for each other.

## Get Registered to Vote. Your Voice Matters.

Civic participation is the cornerstone of our democracy. I encourage all Lobos to stay informed, engage in civil conversations and, most of all, exercise your right to vote in the upcoming 2020 General Election on **Tuesday, November 3**. The State of New Mexico permits any registered voter to request a ballot by mail or to vote in person—but you'll need to register to vote by Tuesday, October 6, which is also the same day that absentee voting begins. New Mexico residents who need to register may do so by [mail](#) or [online](#); and if you're attending

UNM from out-of-state, please be sure you [register to vote in your home state](#) and familiarize yourself with your state's requirements for [voting absentee](#). I urge everyone to vote and let your voice be heard for the future of New Mexico and our country.

## **General Obligation Bond C for Higher Education on November Ballot**

In the upcoming general election, we will have a very full and important ballot before us. One of the statewide ballot issues that will impact UNM, as well as most institutions of higher learning in New Mexico, is the [General Obligation Bond C for Higher Education](#). The passage of Bond C will provide more than \$155 million to New Mexico's colleges, universities and specialty schools for facility updates and new technologies. Additionally, this investment in higher education across the state will support the New Mexico economy with approximately 1,500 new jobs in 23 cities across the state.

For UNM, \$30 million will support our Colleges of Nursing and Population Health, 13.2 million will support academic and research infrastructure upgrades, and over \$8.2 million will support our branch campuses. The state's system of higher education is a critical component to making New Mexico more economically innovative and competitive with surrounding states and allowing us to help our students compete in today's economy. Importantly, the GO Bond will not raise taxes. I strongly encourage you to talk with your family and friends about [GO Bond C](#) and why it is important for our students and for New Mexico.

## **Seeking Nominations for the Sarah Belle Brown Community Service Award**

As President, it's my honor to present each year the [Sarah Belle Brown Community Service Award](#), which recognizes exceptional volunteer service work undertaken by members of the UNM community. This year in particular, when everything, it seems, is a challenge, I've been constantly inspired by the selflessness and compassion of our UNM faculty, staff, and students in helping others and positively motivating their communities through these uncertain times. If there's a UNM faculty member, staff, or student who amazes you with their generosity of time and volunteer spirit, [please nominate them for the award](#). There's even a cash prize, generously endowed by UNM Regent President Doug Brown and his wife Sarah Belle Brown. Serving New Mexico is central to our mission as a university and as individual Lobos. Let me know who inspires you.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President