



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



September 4, 2020

Good afternoon, Lobos.

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the three-day Labor Day weekend, which means we're closing in on the end of the Summer of 2020—surely one of the most unusual Summers we've ever experienced. Labor Day is also a uniquely American event that we've been commemorating as a federal holiday since 1894, taking the day to pay tribute to the social and economic contributions and achievements of the American workforce, and at the moment, I can't think of a group more worth celebrating.

As we begin our Labor Day celebration, then, I'd like to take this opportunity to say *thank you* to all UNM employees across our campuses and our state, and acknowledge all the hard and amazing work that goes into being the University *for* New Mexico. I also realize that, for many of our essential employees—especially our tireless healthcare providers and staff—Labor Day is another working day. So, a special thanks to all of you for your contributions and dedication to keeping our University and our community a safer place.

This past Spring, the entire world was suddenly upended in the face of a global pandemic, and our day-to-day lives and routines had to be necessarily altered. Yet, you stepped up and made adjustments, came to campus if required, adapted to new ways of working and applied your creativity and passion to keep this University thriving in the face of adversity. Even as UNM continues to move forward—under controlled circumstances—to conduct cutting-edge research, deliver compassionate and first-rate health services, and educate our students remotely, you have delivered. And you continue to deliver to this day.

And so: thank you.

Thank you for taking care of our campus, our colleagues, our students, and our community. Thank you for following the necessary safety precautions every day and encouraging others to do the same.

I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate your commitment and your courage, as you strive to maintain a balance among the demands of your work, responsibilities to family and friends, and self-care. You and your colleagues are the backbone of our University; we truly would not have made it through this very challenging moment in time without your strength and support.

On behalf of the entire Lobo community: We're proud of you. We're grateful to you. And we thank you again.

## **Committee Begins Work to Move Africana Studies to Departmental Status**

I'm delighted to announce that the Office of the Provost, with full support from College of Arts & Sciences Dean Mark Peceny and from me, has established a committee to plan for the transition of our nationally recognized Africana Studies program to a full department by the 2021-2022 academic year—coming on the

heels of the program's 50th anniversary at UNM. Provost Holloway has appointed an outstanding African Studies Departmental Transition Committee, to be chaired by Professor Hansel Burley, Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences, who I know will lead this effort with both the enthusiasm and the gravitas it deserves. I am also grateful for the work of Charles Becknell, Director of Africana Studies, who has helped bring the program to national prominence and authored the proposal to move Africana Studies to full departmental status. I look forward to receiving the committee's recommendations on the best way to move forward with this exciting addition to our academic departments.

### **Join Provost Holloway in the (Virtual) Lobo Living Room**

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs James Holloway will be the featured guest on the next virtual Lobo Living Room, starting at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10. He'll be joined by Executive Vice Chancellor for UNM Health Sciences Center, Dr. Richard Larson, and UNM alumnus Peter Hicks, an epidemiologist and informaticist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where they'll discuss UNM's response to the pandemic, research being conducted at the University related to treatment and a vaccine, as well as insights into how the CDC is working to control the spread of COVID-19 in different populations and geographic areas. Space for this event is limited to 500 guests, so please [RSVP now.](#)

Finally, I appreciate your dedication to keeping yourself and those around you safe. I implore you to remain vigilant and sustain the positive efforts of our University community to protect the pack by continuing to practice physical distancing, limiting the size of social gatherings, wearing a mask and looking out for one another.

Stay safe and stay healthy, enjoy your Labor Day weekend, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President