



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*September 28, 2020*

Good afternoon, Lobos.

This week, [we're celebrating Homecoming 2020](#)—and like nearly all of this year's major milestones, we're having to mark the occasion creatively, finding new ways to come together safely and responsibly. But even if we can't be together to celebrate in person, that doesn't mean we still can't get together to enjoy the occasion and each other. That's why we're celebrating Homecoming 2020 as the year we are all truly "Connected by the Unexpected."

As we've worked to meet the challenges of living with an unprecedented pandemic, we've found strength in our mutual struggles and our mutual successes. We've been connected by unexpected but shared experiences. No matter the circumstances, we Lobos have never wavered in our ability to change, adapt, and conquer the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. From the very start, UNM engineers, biologists and mathematicians have engaged with community partners to study, design, and produce effective face masks and assess ways to safely disinfect them for reuse. Dozens of our students have worked at or with the New Mexico Department of Health tackling critical tasks like contact tracing and data analysis. This resilience in the face of adversity not only defines us as Lobos, but improves our community, state, and nation. It truly connects us all.

We've also connected in completely unforeseen ways as we find new, physically distant ways to meet with and support each other. This year, for example, on October 3, we'll be hosting a virtual Homecoming tailgate party. That's simple, but exciting; through technology, we've opened our Homecoming festivities up beyond the physical boundaries of our UNM campus to a limitless, virtual space that can be enjoyed by any and every member of the Lobo community, no matter where they might be. Moving forward, it's vital we continue to lean into exciting new ways to engage with and bring together our global network of Lobos and Lobo alumni.

And so, what we've come to appreciate through this unexpected connection is that we clearly don't all need to be present in University Stadium to celebrate Homecoming. Because Homecoming is bigger than any single place. It's bigger than any single event. Homecoming doesn't take place at a tailgate party or a football game or a dance. Rather, it happens in our hearts, and resides in that sense of family, that sense of community and belonging we feel from being a member of the Lobo pack.

For Homecoming 2020, I hope you will connect with friends, family, and peers—maybe even some you haven't connected with for a long time. Share your stories, share your enthusiasm, and share your pride in being part of our Lobo community, no matter where you are. This year, we're connected by the unexpected, but through it all, we remain Lobos for life.

## Get Your Free Flu Shot to Protect Our Pack

This year, The University of New Mexico's office of Benefits & Employee Wellness is encouraging all employees, including faculty, staff, and students, to [take advantage of no-cost flu shots available in the community](#). The flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of having to go to the doctor with flu by 40 to 60 percent. A flu shot protects you, your family, and the Lobo pack. There are many options for the UNM campus community, including [drive-thru clinics](#) available through October 31, and [walk-up clinics](#) offered October 20 and October 21. Additional options are also available for faculty and staff enrolled in a UNM medical and prescription drug plan. You can learn more about the flu shot and options for faculty, staff, and students at our [2020 Flu Shot webpage](#).

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Each year, 10 million people are physically abused by an intimate partner. This year, the COVID-19 health crisis, which resulted in countless victims being quarantined with their abusers, has caused incidents of abuse to spike at an alarming rate. This is a critical time for survivors, and this October, we can show our support for victims of domestic violence by raising awareness, getting informed, and learning more about vital bystander intervention. [Please visit LoboRESPECT](#) for more information and links to support and resources. For those affected by domestic violence or needing support, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. If you are unable to speak safely, text LOVEIS to 1-866-331-9474. All calls are free and confidential; and remember, you are not alone.

## Last Day for Census is September 30

The deadline to submit your Census information is this Wednesday, September 30. Census data drives the annual allocation of billions of dollars in federal funding—dollars that are critical not only to colleges, universities, and libraries, but also to roads, childcare, health clinics, and vital programs like Medicare, Head Start, and block grants for mental health services and child nutrition. Getting counted is your Constitutional right, but it's up to you to [complete your Census form](#). Please do so before the end of the day on Wednesday.

Happy Homecoming 2020, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President