



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



October 5, 2020

Good afternoon, Lobos.

Two and a half years ago I came to UNM as your president and a new citizen of our wonderful state. I did so with the deepest respect for the culture, history and traditions of UNM and New Mexico, and also with the knowledge that the success of our public research mission requires an environment that encourages collaboration, innovation, and communication.

A university of our size and complexity often sees significant changes in administrative and academic leadership, but it is less often that the chance occurs to make transformative changes at the highest levels of the administration across the entire university structure. I have had the extraordinary opportunity in this short time to build a diverse and dynamic leadership team that is collaborative, inclusive, and adaptable to new situations.

Earlier today, I sent an announcement welcoming Dr. Douglas Ziedonis as the new [EVP for Health Sciences & CEO of the UNM Health System](#). Dr. Ziedonis joins [Loretta Martinez](#), [James Holloway](#), [Teresa Costantinidis](#), [Assata Zerai](#) and [Barbara Damron](#) as one of the newest additions to the President's leadership team selected over the past two years, along with [Jeff Todd](#), who was hired by the UNM Foundation last fall. We've also seen changes in other key leadership positions across the university since my arrival at UNM, including the hires of [Dan Garcia](#), and Deans [Hansel Burley](#), [Robert González](#), [Mitzi Montoya](#), [Harris Smith](#), [Christine Kasper](#), [Tracie Collins](#), and [Donald Godwin](#). And I would be remiss in not including UNMH CEO Kate Becker and Lobo alum and current head football coach Danny Gonzales. Our leaders are fully committed to advancing our mission and embracing our responsibilities as New Mexico's flagship university and the state's only Research 1 institution.

Identifying and selecting the best possible leaders is a rigorous process that includes asking for tough and frank opinions, gathering information and ideas, and ensuring that our university community is included, heard, and valued in the identification and selection of candidates. I have always believed in the power of listening and inclusive excellence, and I have worked to ensure that the Lobo community has had countless and comprehensive opportunities to participate in a transparent search process.

Combined with the talents and institutional knowledge of other senior leaders and the University community, this team is dedicated to student success, supporting diversity and inclusion and making positive contributions to our culture that will impact UNM for years to come.

The future may seem uncertain in many ways right now, but one thing is clear: our shared sense of unity and purpose, curiosity and commitment – along with our desire to not only do well but to also do good – will ignite

transformative success for UNM and the many individuals and communities we touch.

## **UNM is Pro-actively Meeting the Challenges Facing our University and Community**

In the face of the global pandemic, we are carrying out the university's crucial business safely and smartly—which, in many cases, means remotely and virtually. Recently, for example, the Division of Equality and Inclusion conducted a critical [Townhall on campus safety entirely online](#), while the Provost and I participated in [a virtual conference on advanced modeling and simulations](#) hosted by our colleagues at UTEP. Through it all, the health and safety of faculty, staff, students and the community remain our most important priority, and we convene regularly to review safe and effective instructional and educational needs, assess campus health protocols, and responsibly implement our plan to [Bring Back the Pack](#). None of this could have happened, however, without all of us in the UNM community working together; I'm very proud of all we've done as Lobos to keep our university open safely and doing the work that changes lives, and our planet, for the better.

And the work to keep our campus and our community safe continues. While I know the unprecedented is beginning to feel routine, please continue to be diligent about protecting your health and safety, and the health and safety of others. Respond to your daily screening e-mails. Visit our [COVID dashboard](#) for the latest information on cases on campus and in the community, and check out our [COVID-19 FAQs](#) for answers to any questions you might have.

We're also continuing to look for ways to provide faculty and staff with the time and flexibility needed to meet personal obligations during this stressful time. You may have recently received [a message from Human Resources](#) informing you of a program that allows regular staff, who may need a high level of flexibility to address family care and other COVID-related issues, to request a voluntary and temporary reduction in work hours with a corresponding reduction in pay. I heard some concerns when this message went out, so let me stress that [participation in this program is entirely voluntary](#); staff who choose to participate in this temporary program are entitled to return to their regular hours and compensation at the completion of the reduced time period.

I'm grateful for your continued dedication, flexibility, and hard work.

## **Three UNM Professors Honored Among '100 Inspiring Hispanic/Latinx Scientists'**

In recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month, faculty from The University of New Mexico—**Gabriel López, Maggie Werner-Washburne and Fernando Valenzuela**—were [recognized by Cell Mentor as three of the 100 Inspiring Hispanic/Latinx Scientists in America](#). The 100 Inspiring Hispanic/Latinx Scientists list was created to address the misconception that there are not enough Hispanic or Latinx people to serve as experts on panels and in scientific leadership positions, speak at conferences, and provide insights toward science policy. Here at UNM, we regularly belie those assumptions. I'm so proud of our diverse and talented faculty, and I hope you'll join me in congratulating these three exceptional members.

## **PAIS Building Officially (and Virtually) Opens**

Three decades ago, a new Physics and Astronomy and Interdisciplinary Science (PAÍS) building was simply an idea; on Friday, October 2, I had the pleasure of [officially cutting the ribbon to celebrate the newest addition](#).

[to our beautiful campus](#). PAÍS is more than just an acronym; it's also the Spanish word for *nation or country*, reflecting our ongoing commitment to come together as one – to share knowledge, research and space, as well as to acknowledge our designation as a Hispanic-serving institution. The opening of our newest building on campus could not have come at a more vital time in our nation's history, as we grapple with the need to produce clear and accurate science to address the very real needs of our communities. This cannot be done without major collaborative efforts, which is exactly what PAÍS is intended for. As part of the grand opening celebration, [you're invited to take a virtual tour](#) of this spectacular building, any time through National STEM Day on Sunday, November 8.

### Dean of Arts & Sciences to Step Down in 2021

I was recently informed by Provost Holloway that Dr. Mark Peceny, who has served as dean of the UNM College of Arts & Sciences since 2011, will be stepping down from his position as dean to return to the faculty, effective next summer. Dr. Peceny has been a professor in the UNM Political Sciences Department since 1992, where he also served as chair. During his decade-long tenure overseeing UNM's largest degree-granting college, he has guided Arts & Sciences through a complex period of growth and retrenchment, seeking always to advance a strong, fully developed college that spans the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Please join me in thanking Dean Peceny for his leadership and vision.

### EthicsPoint System is a Valuable Tool for Accountability and Transparency

An environment of trust, respect and accountability is crucial to not only our public mission but to the way we connect and work with one another. To that end, all of us have a stake in promoting a positive and ethical work environment. In addition to the many resources found within our [institutional policy](#) and guideline documents, our [Faculty Handbook](#), and [Pathfinder Student Handbook](#), UNM continues to utilize the EthicsPoint system, a 24/7 compliance hotline for anonymously reporting actions or behaviors that may violate [institutional policies](#) or local, state, and federal laws and regulations. Reports of alleged misconduct are then forwarded to appropriate University officials for review and action. Reports can be made toll free via telephone to 1-888-899-6092 or by accessing the [Ethics Point Website](#). UNM employees must also continue to report incidents of misconduct to the [UNM Compliance Office](#). Please also feel free to contact [Francie Cordova](#), Interim Chief Compliance Officer or [Rob Burford](#), Compliance Director, directly. I appreciate everyone's ongoing efforts to adhere to the highest level of ethical practices at UNM.

One last thing: please remember that this Wednesday, October 7, is one of our two break days this semester. Enjoy your day!

Until next week, stay safe, stay healthy, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President