



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*November 16, 2020*

Good afternoon, Lobos.

It's hard to believe that next week is already Thanksgiving. Normally, Lobo students, faculty and staff would enjoy a four-day weekend, then return to campus to prepare for final exams, to be administered in early- and mid-December.

This year, of course, [things are very different](#).

This week, because of new state [executive](#) and [public health orders](#) directly related to COVID, The University of New Mexico is [modifying its instructional schedule](#) to a transition week, where instructors will be encouraged to offer classes remotely wherever possible, and to complete all in-person instruction by 5 p.m. on Saturday, November 21. Beginning Sunday, November 22 through Saturday, December 12, we will be in an entirely remote instruction and exam period.

What this means in a practical sense for most Lobos is that those leaving for Thanksgiving break won't return until the Spring semester begins in January 2021.

After the Thanksgiving break, most Lobos will be working remotely; offices and buildings will, for the most part, be physically closed. However, Dane Smith Hall will be open with limited hours after Thanksgiving to provide access to study spaces, internet, and computer labs. Other spaces are not likely to reopen until January, because of the recent surge in COVID cases and the new public health orders.

However, this doesn't mean our work as the state's premier research institution won't go on. The UNM Health Sciences Center will [continue to operate under current guidelines](#), and essential research operations will also continue, with both students and faculty working in research laboratories under COVID Safe Practices (CSP). Some fabrication and studio spaces will also remain accessible with special permission for the completion of final projects under CSP. Similarly, clinical students and students on internship experiences may also continue their work--again under CSP--while students in clinical rotations will continue until the end of the semester, as long as it is safe to do so, in order to assure that they are able to meet program requirements.

Winter break officially begins on Wednesday, December 23, 2020, and continues through January 3, 2021. Although campus will be largely closed at that time, we will have several hundred students continuing to live in campus housing. Our COVID Call Center will continue operations, the Student Health and Counseling Center will maintain its normal holiday telephone access to a medical provider or counselor and will also have on-call capacity to arrange for COVID testing as needed. And of course, our COVID Rapid Response Team will be operational.

Students from out of state who are moving back to Albuquerque for Spring 2021 should return to campus by Monday, January 11, when the dorms will also open, to provide adequate time for a two-week self-quarantine period. To accommodate their needs, UNM will conduct the first week of its Spring 2021 term classes as entirely remote instruction, from January 18 to January 22. We will return to hybrid instruction after January 22, with the remainder of Spring 2021 being similar to our Fall 2020 semester.

While the situation remains fluid, we have prepared for a number of scenarios and will keep the University community updated as information changes. We'll continue to follow federal, state, and local requirements and modify our instruction as needed. I truly appreciate the diligence, sacrifice, and hard work put in by the UNM community to keep our campus and our community safe. Meanwhile, please keep checking our COVID dashboard, and follow our [Bring Back the Back website](#) for the latest information. Thank you for your continued efforts; together, we are saving lives.

Have great week and let's go Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes  
President