



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



December 14, 2020

Good afternoon, Lobos.

The Fall semester is finally coming to an end and with it what has seemed like an impossibly long 2020 calendar year. This has been, without a doubt, one of the most extraordinary years in the history of both our university and our nation. As the nation and the world responded to the COVID-19 pandemic back in March, I'm not sure there were many of us who anticipated we'd still be working, conducting classes and graduating remotely in December.

And yet here we are, and through it all, the Lobo community has never stopped working, achieving, striving, and succeeding. As the state's only Research 1 institution, Lobos have continued with research vital to our University and critical to the well-being and future of our State. Our Health Sciences Center has been pivotal to responding to the pandemic, truly [delivering more](#) with compassionate, high-quality health care in communities across the state as they grapple with COVID-related challenges. Our faculty and staff continue to work tirelessly and innovatively to ensure our students remain educated and engaged while adapting to their new circumstances. I'm so very proud of all we've accomplished together and grateful to every one of you.

Last Friday, we celebrated the graduation of the Fall Class of 2020—all 1,819 of them. While ongoing public health orders meant we couldn't celebrate the occasion in person, we were still able to mark the event virtually. And if you missed it, the [Fall 2020 Lobo Grad Stream](#) is available to watch in its entirety. Although it's no substitute for taking those life-changing steps in person in The Pit, I'm so pleased we were still able to celebrate with our graduates in a virtual arena. All of you are an inspiration to us and to each other, connected by the unexpected, so we've taken the opportunity to [showcase and share some of the incredible stories](#) that brought you to UNM and to this remarkable day. Congratulations to our 2020 graduates---you're definitely one of a kind!

As you prepare for the well-deserved Winter Break next week, know that the entire Lobo family is thinking of you, and we can't wait for the day when we can all safely be together again.

COVID-19 Vaccine Information for the UNM Community

As New Mexico, and the rest of the country, continue to weather the surges of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is no doubt about the calamitous toll it has taken on the health and lives of many of our fellow citizens. Thus, we eagerly look forward to the new promising vaccines that will become available to our communities, especially our most vulnerable populations, in the coming weeks and months.

The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) is working to ensure that the approved vaccines can be allocated and distributed to priority populations and is [continuing to share information about the COVID-19 vaccine](#). Based on State and CDC guidelines, vaccines will be distributed in a phased approach that

prioritizes health care workers who are most likely to be exposed to the COVID-19 virus while providing care to patients, as well as high-risk individuals.

For us at UNM, this means that the vaccine will be available to many of our frontline employees in clinical areas who have been working tirelessly and selflessly throughout the pandemic.

It's important for the rest of us to know that distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine to the general population will take some time to fully roll out. I understand that the fatigue is very real, especially at a time of year that traditionally brings us closer together, but we must remain vigilant and continue to take care of ourselves and each other. This includes wearing a mask, washing our hands, and avoiding large gatherings and unnecessary travel.

I will continue to provide regular communications to keep you informed, given that guidelines and processes are changing continually as more information is promulgated by the biopharmaceutical companies manufacturing the vaccine and the Federal Government. We have also created a [COVID-19 vaccine page](#) on our Bringing Back the Pack site that will be updated with information to help you understand how UNM is preparing for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine once it is available and will allow us to respond to questions as they arise.

On behalf of The University of New Mexico, thank you for all you are doing to keep yourself, your family and our community safe.

UNM's Carlton Caves Awarded Micius Quantum Prize 2020

Last week, the [Micius Quantum Foundation](#) in Beijing, China, named three scientists, including University of New Mexico Distinguished Professor Emeritus Carlton Caves, as [winners of the Micius Quantum Prize 2020](#). This prestigious award, which focuses on the field of quantum metrology, recognizes scientific advances ranging from early conceptual contributions to experimental breakthroughs and is dedicated to promoting quantum information science and technology research. "We always worked on what we thought was most interesting and most important," says Professor Caves, "with the goal of understanding how the world works." The entire UNM community congratulates Dr. Caves and celebrates his remarkable achievement—yet another in an extraordinary year that also saw Professor Caves elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Gabriel Lopez Steps Down as VP of Research

This Thursday, UNM will be honoring Dr. Gabriel Lopez as he steps down from his post as our Vice President for Research, a position in which he has served with distinction since 2016. During this time, he has steered The University of New Mexico into a period of transformative research and has advanced our mission and global standing as a Research 1 institution. I've been especially proud to work with him on our Grand Challenges, which he has helped shape into a foundational part of our research across disciplines as well as a showcase for some of our most innovative and far-reaching initiatives. Dr. Lopez will return to the School of Engineering where he will continue his research on biomaterials and self-assembly. Please join me in thanking Dr. Lopez for his leadership and service; he truly embodies the very best of the Lobo spirit of intellectual curiosity.

State of the University Address Scheduled for 2021

I'll be delivering my annual *State of the University address* on Thursday, January 21, 2021; it's been an unusual year, and there's plenty to talk about. Given the current conditions, we won't be gathering in the SUB; instead, I'll be sharing where we've been, where we are and where we're headed in a video feed on our Facebook page.

This will be my final message to you for 2020. As we bid this year farewell, Jeff and I offer our best wishes to you and your families for a safe and comforting holiday season.

Let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President