



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



May 17, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

What a fantastic week it was as we concluded our Spring 2021 semester. Final exams were administered, papers and projects were turned in, and there is much to celebrate as the summer officially begins at The University of New Mexico.

For starters, it was terrific to commemorate our first campus-wide in-person event in more than a year as [we honored and bid farewell to the Class of 2021](#). It was wonderful to see so many of you in cap and gown at University Stadium. This was also one of the first outdoor graduation ceremonies in a long time—normally we're in The Pit—and we couldn't have asked for more accommodating weather, or a more enthusiastic crowd of graduates. Congratulations again to our Lobo Class of 2021, some extraordinary graduates for an extraordinary year, and I hope you'll take a moment to visit the UNM Newsroom to read the stories of some of our recent [Inspiring Graduates](#).

And even as we send the Class of 2021 on their way, life is slowly returning to normal on campus again. Following the newly revised CDC guidelines and the latest public health orders issued by the Governor last week, masks will no longer be required on campus or in most campus buildings [for those who have been vaccinated](#). This allows vaccinated persons to forego mask-wearing both indoors and outdoors, except in those places where explicit policy requires it. Mask wearing will still be required on UNM shuttle busses, in the UNM Health System and other UNM Health Care settings, and some designated areas, so please continue to follow all appropriate signage.

And if you've been vaccinated but are still more comfortable continuing to wear your mask, please do so. For the latest information on campus policies and protocols, [please refer to *The Pack Is Back: A Safe Return to Campus*](#).

Meanwhile, we're continuing to prepare for a fully in-person Fall 2021 semester, and I can't wait to see you all back on campus.

Dr. Cheryl Willman to Lead Prestigious Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Center

After 20 years as the Director and CEO of UNM's Comprehensive Cancer Center, Dr. Cheryl Willman will be [taking a position as Executive Director of Mayo Clinic Cancer Programs and Director of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center in August](#). Although Dr. Willman will be leaving her role as Director and CEO at UNM, I am happy to share that she will retain a faculty appointment with us at the UNM HSC. The journey to becoming New Mexico's only NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center – and one of only 51 in the country – has included a focus on cancers that disproportionately affect New Mexicans and has attracted top oncologists and millions in Federal research funding. Dr. Willman is truly a visionary leader and has been a significant agent of change for not only the UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center, but also for our University

and the entire state of New Mexico. Her contributions and those of the incredible team she has brought together have helped to shape the world-class cancer care our patients experience today. Please join me in congratulating her and wishing her well in her new role.

UNM Advances in Latest QS Rankings

While The University of New Mexico takes pride in its [nationally-ranked education and research programs](#) befitting our role as the state's only R1 institution, we're equally as pleased to be recognized for our efforts to celebrate our diversity and the strength we take from cultivating an environment of tolerance and acceptance. I'm very proud, then, that the latest [Quacquarelli Symonds \(QS\) Top University rankings](#), which examines how well universities drive diversity while enhancing employability, placed [The University of New Mexico at number 74 on its list of more than 350 institutions](#). This is a jump of more than 75 positions from last year, and UNM stands as the only university in the state ranked in the Top 100. I am pleased to see UNM climbing in these rankings, as it truly reflects our commitment to reducing gender and racial inequities and fostering greater equity and diversity across the entire Lobo community.

UNM Receives EPA Funding for Water Projects

As an oasis in the desert, we know that clean water is vital to our success as a community and critical to our survival as a population. Ensuring we have safe drinking water and treated wastewater is one of the many priorities of our [Southwest Environment Finance Center](#), which [recently received \\$3.7 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) to ensure communities around our state have access to clean water and safe wastewater treatment. The research and training provided under this grant is part of a \$17 million national funding initiative sponsored by the EPA to improve public health and environmental protection. This exciting project builds upon the innovative work of our [Sustainable Water Resources Grand Challenges](#) team, as well as our [students at the Environment Focused Learning Academy](#), and I am so proud UNM is taking the lead in making communities healthier and happier across our state.

Wishing you a great start to your summer, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President