



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 11, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos.

Welcome back! I hope that everyone had a restful and relaxing winter break, and here's hoping for a healthy and productive spring semester. As always, I'm so glad we'll be making our way through it together.

While classes don't begin for another week, there's already plenty going on in the lead-up to our own version of Opening Day on January 19, 2021. Our outstanding faculty are putting final touches on curricula, and our wonderful staff continue with the daily work that keeps The University of New Mexico running seamlessly and efficiently. And, of course, our healthcare professionals and researchers continue to work tirelessly to provide world-class and compassionate healthcare, under the pressures of the pandemic.

I also want to applaud our students for their constant patience and flexibility. In particular, I want to thank our resident Lobos who are moving into their campus housing this week for the purpose of quarantining for two weeks before the start of any in-person instruction—this keeps not just them, but our entire community safe and healthy.

With the Winter Break concluded, you should once again be receiving that morning COVID screening e-mail—please continue to be diligent about responding if you intend to come to campus. And regardless of where you are, please keep wearing your mask, washing your hands, and maintaining a safe physical distance. If you develop any symptoms of COVID, please contact your health care provider immediately.

I'm excited about having you all back, and I'm looking forward to us all working together to make 2021 a terrific year.

Events in Washington, DC: A Time for Reflection

Like most Americans, I was appalled and heartbroken by what took place in Washington, DC, last week, as the U.S. Capitol building was overrun by rioters attempting to stop the Congress from certifying the results of the 2020 election. While I generally do my best to refrain from expressing an opinion on political matters, what I saw in the Washington last week transcends politics. My message to you, then, is to reflect on what is human and decent, and also on what is inhuman and indecent. The world witnessed a stark juxtaposition of the justice, and injustice, of how a federal insurrection was handled compared to the many protests throughout the past year that were mostly peaceful. While these efforts to obstruct democracy failed, they are both a reminder that we cannot take our precious liberties for granted and that we have much progress to make in achieving racial equality and social justice.

[I hope you'll take a moment to view my full recorded statement.](#)

Register to Receive the COVID-19 Vaccine

With the good news that a COVID-19 vaccine is available, the New Mexico Department of Health is leading our state's COVID-19 vaccination planning and implementation, with a [four-phase vaccination plan for getting all New Mexicans vaccinated](#). As of the second week in January, the State is in the second phase, [Phase 1B](#), which prioritizes vaccination of individuals 75 years of age and older, individuals over 16 with underlying medical conditions, frontline essential workers who cannot work remotely, and vulnerable populations. If you have not already done so, [please register with the State Department of Health](#) to be notified of when you are eligible for vaccination. Please note that The University of New Mexico does not independently administer the vaccine. Please also continue to regularly check our [Bring Back the Pack website](#) for the most up-to-date information, including [COVID-19 vaccine information for the UNM community](#).

UNM's Teton Saltes Honored with Wueffel Trophy

The entire Lobo community is swelling with pride at the news that [Lobo lineman Teton Saltes has been honored as the recipient of the prestigious Wueffel Trophy](#). This national honor is bestowed on a player who exhibits exemplary community service as well as exceptional positive leadership on and off the field. Saltes is the first major award winner in the history of Lobo Football – but more than this, he's a modest and impressive young man, who embodies the very best of the Lobo spirit. He was also voted as the 2020 Allstate American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Good Works Team Captain for his community service contributions. The entire Lobo family warmly congratulates Teton Saltes and takes pride in his extraordinary accomplishment.

Silver Linings to 2020

With all that we are looking forward to in 2021, now is also a great time to reflect on the positive stories and impact – the [silver linings](#) – generated by Lobos in 2020. University Communications and Marketing also annually compiles both a [Year-in-Review list for news stories](#) and [Year-in-Review list for research stories](#), highlighting the major news, feature, and research stories across campus during the calendar year. While 2020 was a long year, there were plenty of worthy notable successes to celebrate.

2021 Legislative Session

Next Tuesday, January 19, marks the opening day of the 55th New Mexico Legislative Session. This year, the 60-day session will be held virtually. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we will unfortunately not be able to hold our annual UNM Day at the Capitol and legislative alumni reception, but we will be working closely with UNM students, faculty, and staff to advocate on behalf of our key [2021 legislative priorities](#). The UNM Office of Government and Community Relations (OGCR) works diligently with the Governor, Senators, Representatives, and associated state staff to represent and defend the best interests of the UNM community, and keep all of us informed on bills and other activities that affect our students, staff, faculty, retirees, and patients. OGCR provides several ways to keep informed about legislation affecting UNM during the session including [UNM bill tracking](#) and a [listserv to receive updates](#).

State of the University Set for Noon on January 21

Finally, as a reminder, I'll be delivering my annual [State of the University](#) at noon on Thursday, January 21.

With health restrictions still in place, I won't be coming to you live from the SUB; instead, the speech will be broadcast on UNM's YouTube page, and will also be distributed across social media platforms as well.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President