



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 25, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos -

Next Monday marks the beginning of Black History Month—and as we look at the remarkable events that have occurred in our country over the last year, we recognize that Black history isn't just something that happened 450, or 150, or 50 years ago; it's still happening right now. From protests across the nation in the name of racial justice, to the swearing in of the first woman of color as our nation's vice president, the past 12 months alone reaffirm that Black history is American history.

While [Black History Month](#) was formally designated by President Ford 45 years ago, UNM has celebrated Black history, and Black lives, for more than 50 years. In 1970, following the lead of our students, faculty, and staff, Afro Studies, the first ethnic studies research program at The University of New Mexico and one of the oldest in the country was established. Today, it's our degree-granting, Africana Studies program, and I'm proud that 2021 marks the beginning of its sixth remarkable decade of facilitating academic freedom of Black faculty and building Africana, African Diaspora, and African American Studies as viable and vibrant academic disciplines.

Black History Month is a regular and much-needed reminder that our history as a nation is multi-cultural, that the Black experience is the American experience, and that there is unity to be found in our plurality. That unity is worth striving for—but it also takes work. As James Baldwin wrote: “The paradox of education is precisely this—that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.”

I encourage us all to aspire to meet Baldwin's challenge—not just during Black History Month, but every day. Never stop exploring. Never stop learning. And never, ever stop examining the society around us.

Thanks to Our Volunteers for Making a Game Winning Assist in The Pit

With the good news that [The Pit has been transformed into a mass vaccination site](#)—and with the hopes of administering the vaccine to more than 3,000 New Mexicans every day—I was proud to hear that Lobos have responded enthusiastically to the UNM Health Sciences Center's [call for volunteers](#) to help keep things moving smoothly and safely. All volunteer slots were filled in less than a week—just another indication that Lobos are always serious about giving back. My deepest thanks to everyone for giving their time to assist our health care workers with their vital service to our community and our State.

Meanwhile, please don't forget to [register with the State's vaccination site](#) to ensure you're notified the moment you're eligible to receive the vaccine.

Stay Engaged. Stay Involved. Stay Informed.

With the first week of the Spring semester successfully behind us, I hope all Lobos are off to a great start. As

always, if you need assistance with your studies, help navigating course loads and schedules, want guidance on a good place to study, or just need someone to talk to, UNM is here to get your questions answered and provide you with the support you need. [Student Affairs](#), the [Student Activities Center](#), and [Residence Life & Student Housing](#) are all good places to start, and additional help can be found through support organizations such as [African American Student Services](#), [American Indian Student Services](#), [El Centro de la Raza](#), and the [LGBTQ Resource Center](#). And if it gets to be too much, please contact [Student Health and Counseling](#) for someone to speak with. We also regularly update our [Bring Back the Pack](#) website to bring you up-to-the-moment information on campus life and campus schedules.

And, of course, I encourage you to get involved with organizations that interest you. Most campus groups continue to meet and organize virtually, and many send out regular updates to keep you informed. [Log into our Mailing List/Listserv Manager](#), browse the many groups available to join, and sign up for more information. You might also want to consider [following UNM and its related accounts on social media](#). No matter where you reach out, I promise you'll have a great Lobo experience.

Introducing the Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity

I am pleased to announce the formal launch of the [Office of Compliance, Ethics, and Equal Opportunity](#) (OCEEO), a new division at the university that successfully merges our existing offices of Equal Opportunity and Compliance into a single, more efficient unit. This realigned office, headed by UNM Chief Compliance Officer Francie Cordova, better reflects the shared duties and compliance and reporting requirements of the two departments and will ensure a more integrated compliance culture across the university and the entire UNM community. The merger, which has been in the works for some time, will also result in a cost savings due to utilization of shared services.

In Case You Missed It: Watch the State of the University

Last week, I was pleased to deliver [my third State of the University address](#), in which I shared with the UNM community my assessment of our most unusual and challenging year of 2020, as well as my aspirations for 2021. If you missed it, [you can see it in its entirety on my website](#).

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President

