



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



March 15, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos -

At The University of New Mexico, we are proud that “each of us defines all of us.” When it comes to our incredible faculty, that has never been truer. A university is many things at once—from cultural epicenter to community oasis—but at its heart, it’s a place for expanding minds, encouraging exploration, and inspiring imaginations. That puts our faculty at the very center of our mission as a university—and they deliver every day. As we begin this year’s Spring Break and catch our breaths, I want to take a moment to celebrate some of the recent accomplishments of our remarkable Lobo faculty.

There are almost too many to count, so I’ll limit my scope to the past month or so—beginning with UNM’s Formula Society of Automotive Engineers (FSAE), led by John Russell, professor of mechanical engineering, which recently [placed in the top five in the world in two categories](#) at the [International FSAE Knowledge Event](#). Our LOBOMotorsports team placed first in the electric vehicle category, and fourth in the internal combustion category, beating out teams from MIT, Duke, Berkeley, and Georgia Tech, to name only a few. Our team was hailed for considering the demographics of our state when developing their project, as well as for their communication and teamwork—a hallmark trait of the Lobo pack.

Our faculty also continue to change the way we look at the world—all while bringing their incredible insights and awareness to the research being conducted right here at UNM. With worldwide interest in cryptocurrency surging, researchers and economics professors Robert Berrens, Andrew Goodkind, and Benjamin Jones are working to [determine the health and environmental impacts of cryptocurrency mining](#), putting a tangible environmental price on the virtual currency. Their work has been cited around the world, showing up recently in [The Guardian](#) and [CBS News](#), bringing their research to more than 141 million people. Our Lobo researchers are telling their stories in new and compelling ways, making science and academia accessible to a broader audience.

At other times, that storytelling involves putting a human face on a gigantic problem, as did UNM professor of sociology Eli Wilson, who [looked at worker inequities in the restaurant industry](#), even as the industry struggles to stay afloat during the COVID-19 pandemic. By focusing on low-income employees working at high-end restaurants in Los Angeles, Wilson explores race, class, and gender inequalities in the food-service industry, and highlights why these inequalities persist. As our nation begins to pull itself out of the pandemic and we work to re-orient our economy, Professor Wilson’s work is influencing the national conversation with detailed research and compelling, relatable storytelling, a far too rare combination.

These are only a few of the remarkable achievements of our extraordinary faculty, and I continue to appreciate each of you. I also know the last 12 months have been exceptionally challenging, especially as you were compelled to pivot to remote instruction with very little notice. I continue to be impressed and inspired by your expertise, enthusiasm, and absolute commitment to serving the educational needs of one of the most curious and diverse student bodies in the nation. Your compassion and professionalism are a true reflection of our objectives as a university, and make me proud to be your president.

Welcome to New UNM Regents

I appreciate that Governor Michele Lujan Grisham has been thoughtful in her nominations for the UNM Board of Regents, all of whom are committed to serving UNM and the people of New Mexico. Last Friday, the [Senate Rules Committee approved the governor's nominations of Jack Fortner and Bill Payne, and student Randy Ko](#), to fill three Regent seats and the full Senate endorsed their nominations unanimously. It is an honor to welcome them to the Board, and I look forward to working with each of them to advance our state's flagship university. I also want to recognize and thank Regents Melissa Henry, Marron Lee and Rob Doughty for their leadership and dedicated service to The University of New Mexico.

Deb Haaland Confirmed as U.S. Secretary of the Interior

We received the exciting news this afternoon that [U.S. Congresswoman Deb Haaland has been confirmed by the U.S. Senate](#) to serve as our nation's Secretary of the Interior. There is so much to be proud of: Secretary Haaland is a Lobo alum and a member of Laguna Pueblo, which gives her the long-overdue honor of being the first Native American Cabinet secretary in U.S. history. Secretary Haaland grew up in a military family and attended 13 public schools, eventually graduating from Highland High School in Albuquerque. She received her B.A. in English from UNM in 1994 and her law degree here in 2006. I send my warmest congratulations to Secretary Haaland, and I know the entire Lobo community is proud of her and celebrates her appointment.

The Lobo Life Makes It Easy to Hit the Road

For many of us, Spring Break is a time to relax, recharge, and road trip—and there's no better place to travel than our own backyard. The Land of Enchantment is home to some of the world's most beautiful vistas and engaging things to do, whether you're looking for mountains, lakes, or a quiet place to unwind. [The Lobo Life offers several ideas for road trips to safe, outdoor locations](#), spotlighting some hidden, and not so hidden, gems around our state, from day hikes to overnight fishing trips. Enjoy the break, and safely explore our wonderful state.

Finally, I want to take a moment to thank you all again for your patience, professionalism, and perseverance over the last year. It was a year ago last week that the first case of COVID-19 was reported in New Mexico; one year later, nearly 4,000 of our fellow New Mexicans have been lost. Please take a moment to reflect on and remember lost family, friends, and fellow citizens, and keep wearing your masks, washing your hands, and maintaining a safe physical distance.

Have a safe and healthy Spring Break, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President