



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



April 5, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

At UNM, no matter what the circumstances, we always manage to find our sense of community not only in the usual, but also in the unexpected. Even as classes and in-person gatherings transitioned to remote learning and virtual meetings, what remains consistent is that Lobos create community wherever we are – to connect, debate, celebrate, protest. . . and also to heal.

The Lobo community was stunned by the violence last month in Atlanta, which targeted Asian-American women and continued a pattern of crimes against the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Here at UNM, our students, colleagues, and friends of Asian descent are fearful, even as they are grieving. As a community, we mourn with them, taking strength in our pack, and solace from our shared experience as Lobos. Our AAPI students, faculty, and staff are not just valued members of our community; they are members of our family.

And so, we do what families do: we lean on one another and take strength from each other. I hope you will [join us on Friday, April 9, at 5:30 p.m. as we participate in a virtual vigil to honor and mourn in solidarity with the AAPI communities in Albuquerque.](#) On campus, the distinctive “U” outside of Hodgin Hall will be lit in white for four days as a public display of grief and to honor all victims of violence in the AAPI community. You may also want to watch the [recent installment of New Mexico In Focus](#), in which members of the AAPI community talk about their experiences with racism and violence – and why they hope speaking up and speaking out will begin to change behavior.

## **Sexual Assault Awareness Month Focuses on Safe Online Spaces**

One of the best ways we can increase awareness of sexual assault on our campus is by coming together as a community. April is [Sexual Assault Awareness Month \(SAAM\)](#), and The University of New Mexico is joining with other institutions across the nation to support this year’s national theme, [“We Can Build Safe Online Spaces.”](#) Online spaces have become the new public square for connecting with the people in our lives, from friends and family to potential romantic partners, to those we have never met, but have shared interests. The virtual technology so present in our everyday interactions has opened many doors to new relationships, but it has also created new channels for potential abuse, including sexual violence.

SAAM kicks off tomorrow, April 6, with the National Day of Action, and the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center is encouraging Lobos to wear the color teal and post their support to social media using #SAAM and tagging @UNMLoboRESPECT. [There are a variety of events being hosted this month by several of the centers on campus](#) to positively spread knowledge about sexual violence and raise awareness for sexual assault survivors. As always, please know that we have [many resources and advocates available to support all Lobos.](#)

## Denetdale Receives Community Engaged Research Lecture Award

I am delighted to announce that [UNM American Studies Professor Jennifer Nez Denetdale](#) will be honored at the sixth annual [Community Engaged Research Lecture](#). This award, one of the highest honors UNM bestows on its faculty, recognizes exceptional scholarly work that embodies UNM's commitment to community engagement and profoundly, and positively, affects the relationship between the university and the larger community. As part of the honor, Denetdale—the first Dine/Navajo to earn a Ph.D. in history—will discuss *Dikos Ntsaaígíí - Building the Perfect Human to Invade: A Diné Feminist Analysis of the Pandemic and the Navajo Nation*. The virtual celebration takes place on Thursday, April 8, at 5 p.m.

## Reminder: Be Registered and Ready to Get Vaccinated for COVID-19

As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes increasingly available to the general public, including our students, I want to reemphasize that you need to register on the [NM Department of Health \(NMDOH\) COVID-19 Vaccine Registration web site](#) to be contacted for a vaccination. The State announced last week that anyone over the age of 16 is now eligible for vaccination, and that those who have received a first dose - either within the [vaccineNM.org system](#) or elsewhere - may now [self-schedule their booster doses](#). So, if you have not yet done so, please register.

NMDOH also announced a [new vaccine information website](#) that addresses frequently asked questions about COVID-19 vaccines, including eligibility, registration, and other health-related topics. The site offers testimonials on COVID-19 vaccines from trusted voices in communities across New Mexico, including some of our fellow Lobos!

## UNM Emotional Well Being Survey

Understanding how UNM can better understand and support the emotional and mental well-being of our University community is imperative to helping all of us to be resilient and thrive. The American College Health Foundation (ACHF) chose [UNM as one of 10 universities across the country to participate in its Emotional Well-Being survey](#), which launched last Tuesday and will run through April 13. I appreciate the initiative shown by our [Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) staff, who saw the opportunity to serve our community and applied to take part in this program. To the several thousand students, faculty and staff who receive the randomized invitation: your honest, confidential responses will help us understand and plan services to support you and your fellow Lobos' well-being now and into the future. Thank you for sharing your experiences.

UNM Clinical Law Program Students and Faculty Assist Pueblos in Fight to Protect Clean Water  
New Mexico's pueblos, tribes and nations have known for centuries that 'water is life.' [UNM's Clinical Law Program](#) recently played an instrumental role in [assisting the Laguna and Jemez Pueblos in their fight to protect clean water in New Mexico](#). Under the guidance of UNM School of Law professors, including Sam Winder and Cliff Villa, a group of law students and faculty drafted the 65-page complaint intended to persuade the federal courts to vacate the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, which significantly reduced federal regulations for polluted streams and runoff flowing into rivers such as the Rio Grande. Clinics within the program such as [Natural Resources and Environmental Law](#) and [Southwest Indian Law](#) offer students a collaborative teaching and learning environment where they can gain real-world experience practicing law

under the mentorship and supervision of experienced and dedicated lawyers and law professors.

This work of the Clinical Law Program, ranked 9th in the nation, has an incredible impact on our students' personal and professional journeys, as well as the communities we serve. It is also complementary to the important scholarship being produced by students and faculty through UNM's [Sustainable Water Resources Grand Challenge](#), which is conducting the research necessary to help decision-makers, communities, and individuals make better choices about how they manage water in New Mexico.

As always, stay safe, stay healthy, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President