



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



April 12, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

A cornerstone to our success as a top-tier public research university is a culture of inclusivity. A broad representation of people participating at all levels of the research enterprise results in a deep diversity of experiences, perceptions and knowledge informing policies and decisions that impact the communities we serve and leads to transformative discoveries. As each of us defines all of us, both our individual and collective actions and influence bring about the greatest and most meaningful change.

We take significant pride in cultivating an innovation culture that thrives on diversity and empowers breakthroughs in some unexpected places. Whether it's radical thinking about how to [land payloads on Mars](#), or rising to meet [our ambitious Grand Challenges](#) here on Earth, Lobo researchers have the support and resources needed to change thinking, change lives, and change the way we look at each other and the world.

For example, four UNM researchers from several disciplines were recently awarded a three-year National Science Foundation grant for a project that combines New Mexico traditional crafts with modern technology. The project, Expanding Rural Ceramics Craft and Computational Fabrication: A Synergy, creates new career opportunities for rural craftspeople by [blending traditional craft practices with computational fabrication](#). Spanning across disciplines as diverse as computer science, Native art, and modern architecture, this exciting project teaches us how to think differently about the relationship between technology and tradition.

We are also fortunate to find Lobos leading the way in national organizations, bringing these groups their unique—and sometimes much-needed—cultural perspectives, expertise, and points of view. Just last week, UNM Regent and alumna Sandra Begay (BS 1987) was asked to serve on the [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's Committee on Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine](#). The Committee collects and disseminates data and information on the education and employment of women scientists, engineers, and health care professionals, and promotes ways to increase the participation and advancement of women in all fields of science, engineering, and medicine. This is a tremendous honor for Regent Begay, and for the University of New Mexico, and it's a privilege to congratulate her on this accomplishment.

Finally, I continue to be inspired by the innovative approaches our students take to solving problems and they bring those creative ways of thinking to the development of new businesses and industries. At this year's Rainforest Pitch Deck competition, sponsored by [UNM's Rainforest Innovations](#), our students recently had a chance to shine with their 90-second pitches to industry leaders—think Shark Tank for STEM—with [three student pitches being awarded the top cash prizes](#). The winning pitches were for a liquid metal that can be used for repairs; an app that helps New Mexicans invest in real estate; and a video chat/gaming platform to help combat the loneliness and isolation of senior citizens. Amazing!

For Lobos, innovation isn't a concept; it's a way of life. Thanks to the new ways of thinking by our students, faculty, and leaders, our own lives continue to get better and always more interesting.

It's Registration Week!

Although it seems as if we were just welcoming everyone back for the start of the Spring 2021 semester, it's already time to start thinking about the next academic year—and [Monday, April 12 marks the beginning of Registration Week](#) for both Summer and Fall 2021. On the heels of our planned-for in-person Spring Commencement for the Class of 2021, we're optimistic that New Mexico will stay on track in its fight against COVID-19 so that we can return to a (mostly) in-person mode of instruction for Fall 2021, though our Summer semester will remain as hybrid instruction. I can't tell you how excited I am to see our Lobos return to campus—but of course, we want to make sure we do so responsibly. As always, our decisions will be based on the best federal, state, and local health guidance, as well as our state and national progress on combatting the virus. Please keep watching for further updates.

Please Participate in UNM Vaccine Survey

On a related note, we are continuing to encourage all Lobos to register to be vaccinated to literally give us the best shot at a successful return to campus in the fall – it's easy and it's free. With New Mexico now opening vaccine eligibility to all New Mexicans aged 16 and over, we have launched a website where faculty, staff, and students will be asked to update their vaccination status; you will also receive a notification by e-mail. This information will be included on the UNM COVID-19 dashboard and used as an additional variable to inform decisions related to campus health and safety, as well as for research purposes. I urge all members of our community to [visit the site and report on their status](#).

Join the Innovation Academy Database

One of the clear lessons of the last 12 months is that we all have a responsibility to look out for one another, and the [UNM Innovation Academy](#) wants to ensure that means supporting our fellow Lobos who are small business owners and entrepreneurs. The Innovation Academy has begun collecting information from UNM-affiliated business owners in anticipation of creating a searchable database of Lobo entrepreneurs to help consumers more easily find and support local small businesses that meet their needs. While the database is still in its early stages of development, the Innovation Academy is looking to gather as many Lobo-owned businesses as possible. If you or someone you know owns a business and is affiliated with UNM—whether student, alumni, faculty or staff--the Innovation Academy needs your help. Have them [fill out this short form](#) to add their business--and we can all keep seeing our UNM entrepreneurial community thrive.

STEM Career Fair Brings Opportunities Home

Sometimes innovation takes a little networking. In this regard, our alumni continue to connect with our Lobos, providing great opportunities to engage and explore career opportunities across the State. On April 22, the [UNM Alumni Association](#) will host a [virtual STEM Career Fair](#) to highlight job opportunities in New Mexico's innovative STEM job market, including space, tech and biotech industries. This fair is open to all UNM alumni, including recently graduated and graduating seniors who are interested in learning more about and checking out career opportunities in STEM industries. [New Mexico Tech Council](#), [NMBio](#) and [NewSpace](#)

[New Mexico](#) will lead the career fair, while being moderated in-part by [Boomerang New Mexico](#). I appreciate the leadership of the Alumni Association and New Mexico's STEM industries in making this event possible.

As always, please be sure you're [registered and ready](#) to receive your vaccination. Keep wearing your mask, washing your hands, maintaining a safe physical distance, and taking care of yourself and each other.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes

President