



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 28, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos -

In the last two months, the UNM leadership team and I have had the privilege of hosting virtual town hall meetings with our faculty and staff, providing all of us with the opportunity to hear your questions, comments, and concerns—as well as some great suggestions—regarding our return to a fully re-opened campus for the Fall 2021 semester. These sessions have been incredibly useful, and I appreciate participants being open, honest and—when it comes to ideas for moving forward into a new kind of normal—exceptionally innovative. My thanks to everyone who participated.

Among the issues discussed at [the most recent staff town hall](#) were the proposed vaccination policy, remote instruction, campus facilities, hybrid work arrangements, enrollment trends, and even a bit about our vision plan, *UNM 2040*. [Vaccines and related policies, in fact, were of major concern](#); whether we will require all faculty, staff, and students to be vaccinated by the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester is a matter still under serious discussion. We are looking at a wide variety of options, such as “partial policies” like requiring vaccinations only for those who reside on campus—that would include me—or foregoing any requirements and focusing instead on incentives and encouragement to get the community to a herd immunity level.

As we develop our final policy, we will continue to follow science-based recommendations and health orders from the state; our health advisory team, in fact, is continually reviewing information from a multitude of sources to help ensure we return to full operations safely and responsibly. Our success in keeping our COVID numbers low in the university community has been due in no small part to our team adhering to a science-driven policy. In the meantime, I encourage you to [review our draft vaccination policy](#) and let us know your thoughts. I hope to have a final decision to share with you shortly.

We also have much to consider when it comes to the workplace in the fall—not just the cleaning and safe reopening of our facilities, but also our policies regarding working remotely. Clearly, our faculty and staff have displayed a remarkable ability to adjust to working under remote or hybrid conditions. I encourage faculty and staff to continue to discuss their specific options regarding remote work with supervisors and to [review HR guidance](#). The recommendations we’ve received from many of you have been invaluable in helping us determine a reasonable remote work policy, and you can be certain we will continue to provide you with more information as we develop policies across our campuses.

There were many other questions, too, about meal and travel restrictions, tier tracking, and remote work reimbursements. [Human Resources has issued guidance](#) related to many of these issues, and we will also post updates on these, and other matters, on our [Bringing Back the Pack website](#).

I know the last year has been a tremendous challenge, and I am grateful, as always, to all of you for continuing to support the needs of our remarkable Lobo community, even as you adjusted your own life during the pandemic. It is your commitment and compassion that truly make us The University for New Mexico—and it is that same compassion and commitment that will help us define who we are as an institution as we forge our way toward the midpoint of the 21st century. It was a pleasure to hear from you, and your comments and suggestions will help us shape our university post-pandemic, and beyond.

Alumni Association Seeking Nominations for Annual Awards

By proudly giving back to their communities and constantly changing the world for the better, our alumni truly embody the very best of the Lobo spirit, and our Alumni Association works hard to make sure their accomplishments are recognized and honored. This year, the UNM Alumni Association is seeking nominations for seven of its prestigious annual awards and one brand new award to be given this year—the Research Award. I encourage you to read more about these awards and consider [nominating someone who inspires you and defines our community](#). The deadline to submit nominations is Thursday, July 15.

School of Medicine Honored as a Multidisciplinary Team of Distinction

This past week came the exciting news that our School of Medicine was recently selected as a [Multidisciplinary Team of Distinction](#) by the [North American Skull Base Society](#)(NASBS) for its commitment to educating, innovating, and collaborating across specialties to improve the outcome of patients with skull base disorders. UNM is one of just 28 such programs receiving the recognition, joining similarly prestigious programs such as Mayo Clinic and Barrow Neurological Institute. As Dr. Christian Bowers, vice chair for clinical affairs in the [UNM Department of Neurosurgery](#) put it: “It’s a big deal to have this recognition.” Congratulations to Dr. Bowers and his team at our School of Medicine; it is, indeed, a very big deal!

Celebrate the Fourth (and Fifth!) of July

This Sunday is July 4, and I want to wish everyone a safe and happy Fourth of July as we celebrate 245 years of American independence—and remind you that UNM will be closed on Monday, July 5, in observation of the federal Independence Day holiday.

No matter how you celebrate the weekend’s festivities, please take a moment to reflect on how very fortunate we are that nearly two and a half centuries ago, men and women from different backgrounds and cultures fought for the principles of liberty, freedom and democracy that unite us a nation—and have continued to fight for these noble principles every day for the last 245 years. Remember, too, that patriotism comes in many shapes, sizes, colors, and cultures--so even as you celebrate loudly, please also do so respectfully and responsibly. Enjoy the three-day Fourth of July weekend, Lobos, and I’ll be back in your inboxes on July 12.

As always, make sure you’re taking care of yourselves and each other. If you haven’t done so, please make sure [you’re registered to get vaccinated](#) and look for [a vaccination site near you](#). Please also

consider [reporting your vaccination status at LoboCheckIn](#), as tracking our community immunization continues to be one of the best ways of ensuring we have the information we need to plan appropriately, and safely, for a successful return to campus in the Fall.

Have a good week, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes

President