



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



August 23, 2021

Good afternoon and [welcome back, Lobos](#) --

It's officially the first day of the Fall 2021 semester, and I couldn't be more excited about seeing everyone in person again! After 17 months of almost eerie quiet, life has returned to The University of New Mexico—and with the recent rains, our campuses are more beautiful than ever, with some of the desert's finest colors appearing just in time to greet students, faculty, and staff after more than a year away.

It was wonderful to officially welcome our first-year students to UNM over the weekend, and I enjoyed seeing so many of you at this afternoon's ice cream social; thank you to everyone who came to say hello, and to find out more about our departments and colleges. With our [Welcome Back Days in full swing](#), there are plenty of opportunities this week to learn more about UNM, Lobo life, and what the Lobo community has to offer. For even more information on what the year has in store, [download an official student activities calendar](#).

You'll also find our dining facilities opening across campus again, including plenty of places to grab a bite from national chains and local favorites like Mandalay Express, Blake's, and Dion's. It's a great opportunity to catch up with old friends—or make new ones. To find out more about the dining options on campus, please [visit the UNM Food website](#).

Our Lobo student-athletes are also back in both the classroom and the training room, with several teams, including our women's volleyball team and our Mountain West top-ranked women's soccer team, taking to their home fields several times this week. [Check out the full schedules for our teams](#), then come out and support our Lobos – remember, student tickets are free. You can also [download the Lobo Sports app](#) to help you keep up with our teams, download tickets, and find other fans.

Over the past few weeks, I've been meeting with various groups and organizations to learn more about their expectations and hopes for the coming semester, and as always, I'm impressed with the excitement and enthusiasm about the fall, and our future. As I watch with alarm and sadness some of the violence and unrest around the world, I'm especially grateful that UNM is an open and supportive space for healthy and thoughtful discussion, debate, and disagreement. As I have listened to all of you in recent weeks, I am confident that we will continue to treat each other with the sincere respect and empathy that define us as Lobos.

As you can tell, I'm excited about the coming semester and optimistic about our future. But while it's great to be back together, things aren't *quite* back to normal. Please remember that [masks are required at all indoor locations at all times, except when eating, drinking, or in an office alone](#).

Please remember, too, that The University of New Mexico [requires all students, faculty, and staff to be fully vaccinated by September 30](#). I was heartened by today's good news that the [Pfizer vaccine has been formally approved by the Food and Drug Administration](#) for individuals 16 years and older. So far, more than 92 million Americans, including nearly 1.2 million New Mexicans, have received the Pfizer vaccine, and I am

optimistic the FDA's approval will instill further confidence in the vaccine's safety and efficacy.

To make getting vaccinated even easier, our on-site vaccination clinics will remain open in the SUB Atrium weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., through September 30 (except for August 30 and 31)—and my continued thanks to the UNM Health Sciences Center for setting up and staffing this site. [UNM's vaccination incentive program](#) has also been [extended through September 30](#). We've already processed over \$1 million in incentives to our students, so get your shot and then upload your proof of full vaccination at our [vaccination verification site](#). It's up to each of us to keep all of us safe, so thank you for doing your part.

Here's to a safe and spectacular Fall 2021!

## **UNM Leads NSF “Transformation Network” on Regional Sustainability**

As one of the West's premiere R1 institutions, UNM regularly leads the way in research and collaboration that benefit communities across the region. I am delighted that our researchers are [leading a \\$15 million, five-year project funded by the National Science Foundation](#) that will engage seven universities and their communities in the American Intermountain West to address the impacts of climate change, including drought, wildfires and community well-being. This “Transformation Network” is a multi-disciplinary research effort that represents diverse communities, sectors, disciplines, and backgrounds and is aimed at improving regional sustainability. The project, which begins September 15, is led by Mark Stone, professor in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering, and is part of [\\$30 million in funding that the NSF has provided to create two new research networks to understand and design innovative and equitable solutions that build community resilience](#). Congratulations to Dr. Stone and his team for leading this exciting and forward-looking effort.

## **WeR1 Invests in Faculty Success**

Excellence, as the writer Will Durant once noted, isn't an act; it's a habit, and at UNM, we make a habit of ensuring our faculty have the support and resources they need to continue to strive for the exceptional scholarship, research, and creative work that defines Lobo excellence. Working with the Office of Academic Affairs and ADVANCE at UNM, the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is sponsoring the [WeR1 Faculty Success Program](#) to support faculty as they rise to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Facing these unique struggles while honoring the continued achievements of our diverse faculty under difficult and changing circumstances is challenging, but the WeR1 Faculty Success Program has already made a difference in the lives of 87 faculty with Summer Research Support over the last two months. More than two-thirds of the applicants were women, and 83% of the submissions for the program were from assistant and associate professors. We recognize that the impacts of the pandemic will be long-lasting, and I am delighted the OVPR has committed over \$1 million in funding for this program over the next two years.

## **New Associate Dean for Research Named at Arts & Sciences; ACE Fellow Arrives**

A familiar face has moved into a new position at the UNM College of Arts & Sciences, as Professor Chris Lippitt was recently [named the new associate dean for research](#). Prior to this appointment, which took effect August 1, Lippitt was the founding faculty coordinator of the UNM [Interdisciplinary Science Cooperative](#) (Co-op), chair of the Co-op's executive board, and director of the [Center for Advancement of Spatial Informatics Research and Education](#) (ASPIRE). Lippitt replaces Professor Tom Turner from the Department of Biology, who served the College of Arts and Sciences as associate dean for research for nearly a decade.

Congratulations to Dr. Lippitt on his new role at Arts & Sciences.

Meanwhile, [UNM is honored to host Dr. Lisa Jasinski](#), a special assistant to the vice president of academic affairs at Trinity University, as [one of only 52 American Council on Education \(ACE\) Fellows in the nation](#). As an ACE Fellow, Dr. Jasinski will spend the 2021-2022 academic year shadowing, observing, and learning from UNM's administration, faculty and staff, as part of practical preparation for senior leadership positions in colleges and university administrations. We're delighted to have Dr. Jasinski here for the year and look forward to learning from her as well.

### **UNM 2040 Vision Framework Taking Shape**

Following several engagement sessions with students, faculty, staff, administrative and academic leadership, regents, alumni, donors, community leaders and other partners, the [UNM 2040 Steering Committee](#) held its first meeting on June 22. At that time, members participated in two breakout sessions, where they identified the opportunities, challenges, and critical issues UNM will consider in the coming months. Ten overarching themes emerged from these engagement activities, which will inform the visioning work ahead.

The vision plan framework being developed by the project team will be considered by the steering committee when it meets again on September 9. Following those discussions, task forces will build the plan in more detail, with further community engagement in the fall and winter. Through this process of “diverging and converging” and gaining feedback and insights from the UNM community, the vision plan will be finalized by February 2022.

More information is available at the [UNM 2040 website](#)—and as always, please [let me know of your thoughts and perspectives](#), both on the current plan and process, as well as your vision for UNM's future.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President