



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



September 27, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

Our efforts to advance our flagship mission have included actively promoting education and medical expertise regarding all aspects of COVID-19—including providing patient care for nearly two years under the strain of a pandemic—and all within a culture that emphasizes care, compassion, and commitment to each other within our communities. We now have an important deadline looming this week, as September 30 marks the date when all students, faculty, and staff must be fully vaccinated for COVID. As we make our way toward Thursday, there's plenty of good news to report, along with a reminder of what's yet to come.

First, the good news: As of Monday afternoon, our [COVID dashboard](#) shows that across all UNM campuses, nearly 76 percent of our students are fully vaccinated—and in our residence halls, that number stands at 94 percent—along with 88 percent of staff, and 95 percent of faculty. Add in the number of approved exemptions for religious or health-related reasons – which require regular weekly testing to keep the community protected—as well as those who are entirely remote and online, and the number of those complying with the mandate moves even higher. I truly appreciate so many of you doing your part to keep our campus and our community safe. Thank you.

Still, while those numbers are encouraging, our goal is for those numbers to be *100 percent*. I am most concerned about the number who have not yet let us know of their vaccination status at all. Please, even if you are not yet fully vaccinated, log into our [vaccination verification site](#) and check the appropriate box to indicate either that you are partially vaccinated or intend to be vaccinated shortly. If you won't have your second shot by September 30, don't worry; just let us know you've had the first shot, and update your status the moment you get that second one, even if it's after the September 30 deadline. Doing so helps us make sure we know of your correct vaccination status.

Keep in mind, too, that if we have not heard from you by midnight on September 30, you'll receive an e-mail first thing October 1, letting you know that there could be [serious consequences for non-compliance](#). If this happens, *don't panic*, but do take the notice seriously; we want to work with you to make sure we're keeping you and our community as safe as we possibly can.

To make it as convenient as possible to get vaccinated, we are continuing to offer a free vaccination clinic in the SUB Atrium daily from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. through September 30. Our vaccination incentive program also continues right up until the September 30 deadline, so [get your documentation uploaded](#) in time to receive yours. Finally, please also remember that masks continue to be required indoors at all UNM facilities, except when eating, drinking, or in an office alone.

Thank you, Lobos, for looking out for yourselves, and our pack. I appreciate it.

UNM Comprehensive Cancer Center Awarded Highest NCI Designation

One of the crown jewels of UNM's health facilities is our world-class [Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) (UNMCCC), which, almost uniquely among cancer treatment facilities, provides treatment designed with the whole person in mind. I am so proud that our center has once again been awarded by the National Cancer Institute the [highest designation and rating in the United States for cancer treatment and research programs](#), one of only 51 leading cancer centers in the nation to be so designated, and the only such cancer center in New Mexico. Comprehensive designation is a rigorous process, with a meticulous on-site evaluation—all of which had to be conducted remotely due to the pandemic. Congratulations to UNMCCC for this elite designation and for your commitment to providing the best care, anywhere.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Every year, 10 million people are physically abused by an intimate partner. October 1 marks the beginning of [National Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#), a time to show our support for victims of domestic violence by raising awareness, getting informed, and learning more about vital bystander intervention. [Please visit LoboRESPECT for more information](#) and links to support and resources. For those affected by domestic violence or needing support, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233. If you are unable to speak safely, text LOVEIS to 1-866-331-9474. All calls are free and confidential; and please remember this: you are not alone.

Water Resources Grand Challenge Team Leads \$15M NSF Project

As New Mexico's only R1 institution, innovation, research, and collaboration are at the very core of our mission as a university. Our [Grand Challenges research initiative](#), in particular, has been effecting meaningful change across our communities since launching in 2019—and lately, some of our most [successful and impactful research has been carried out by our Sustainable Water Resources challenge team](#). One of the largest accomplishments of the group to date is the securement of a [\\$15 million, five-year project](#) from the National Science Foundation, with UNM researchers leading the effort to engage communities in the American Intermountain West to collaboratively address the impacts of climate change, including drought, wildfires, and community well-being. This is a far-reaching project that will have a long-lasting positive impact on our region.

College of Nursing Spotlit in New Commercial

While it's no secret that our [nationally recognized College of Nursing](#) continues to redefine compassionate, quality health care, it never hurts to say it out loud from time to time. The college recently released its [first commercial](#), "This is the College of Nursing," created and produced internally by our [Communications and Marketing team](#). It's exciting to see our nurses in the well-deserved spotlight; keep an eye out for the 30-second version of the commercial on our local television stations—and thank you, nurses everywhere, for all that you do.

Hispanic Heritage Month Continues Across UNM

Part of our experience as Lobos involves celebrating our state and campus history that spans more than three centuries of diverse and colorful cultures. As National Hispanic Heritage Month continues, it's a perfect time to enjoy the countless [opportunities presented across our campuses to celebrate our Hispano/Latinx](#)

[heritage](#). From conversations on how Hispano/Latinx culture has enriched lives and experiences and UNM to gatherings on Cornell Mall, you're sure to find something to inspire you.

Enjoy the Salsa Showdown and Support the UNM Gives United Way Campaign Kick-Off

Giving back to the community is one of the hallmarks of Lobo spirit, and we are particularly proud that one of our long-standing traditions is the [UNM Gives Campaign](#), which benefits the United Way of Central New Mexico. Our annual campaign begins on October 1, and to kick things off, we're bringing back the popular—and competitive—Salsa Showdown! Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to stop by the SUB Atrium on October 5 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to grab a bag of salsa and chips while supplies last, then savor the flavors of your fellow Lobos' recipes and vote for the best. The winner receives one year of free parking, courtesy of PATS, while helping to raise awareness for a great cause.

Sarah Belle Brown Award Still Open for Nominations

There's still time plenty of time to [submit nominations for the Sarah Belle Brown Award](#), which I have the pleasure of presenting annually to one faculty member, one staff member, and one student for outstanding service to the community. Nominations are due September 30; let me know about an extraordinary Lobo.

Free Flu Shots Available This Fall

The arrival of Fall means the arrival of flu – and as part of our commitment to public health and wellness, [UNM will be offering several free flu vaccination clinics](#) at various campus locations, between September 29 and November 3. While the CDC has advised that you can receive your COVID vaccine and your flu shot at the same time, please check with a trusted health care provider for more information if you have questions about your ability to receive this year's flu vaccine.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President