



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*November 15, 2021*

Good afternoon, Lobos –

The University of New Mexico is fortunate to serve the educational needs of one of the most curious and diverse student populations in the nation. We see the wonderful diversity of our state's population reflected across our campuses, and we regard ourselves as The University for New Mexico with considerable pride.

But we also appreciate that meeting the educational needs of our students is about more than classroom instruction and facilities. We know that food and shelter are also basic educational needs, and that when our students are food or housing insecure, it can lead to lower grades, poor health, and less engagement with campus life and campus services.

The basic needs of our students are our basic needs as well, and to help us better understand and respond to the experiences and essential needs of our students, The University of New Mexico created the [UNM Basic Needs Project](#) in the Spring of 2020. This is an interdisciplinary collaboration of UNM faculty, staff and community members committed to improving the basic needs security of students across our state through a combination of data collection, research, and the development of, and advocacy for, sustainable solutions.

One of the Basic Needs Project's first initiatives was to examine the food, housing, and financial needs among our students. The resulting report, [Basic Needs Insecurity at UNM](#), shows that food, housing, and financial insecurity are higher among our students than in the at-large population of our state, and in New Mexico, our statewide numbers are already [well above the national average in these categories](#).

Already in 2014, our team at the [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#), including Lisa Lindquist and Olivia Torres Jojola, showed foresight and generosity in creating the [Lobo Food Pantry](#), where any student can go to pick up groceries. With help from ASUNM, we recently created a new Lobo Food Pantry location in the Student Union Building at the heart of our campus, making it an even more visible part of our campus environment. The UNM Foundation is also engaged in fundraising activities for the pantry, providing designated support not only for food, but also hygiene and school supplies, and food storage items—and [your contributions](#) will make it possible for us to meet our 2021 fundraising goal.

Help is also available through need-based scholarships and emergency funding from the UNM Dean of Students, as well as assistance targeted at specific communities like our American Indian and LGBTQ students. Our Women's Resource Center can also help qualified students in applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. As an institution, we have also [added our support](#) to the national movement to raise the maximum amount of the federal Pell Grant, which would help students cover more of their basic costs of education, including food, shelter, and childcare.

I am also pleased to see our students raising their voices and lending their talents to efforts to spotlight

issues of food and housing uncertainty, such as the [student-developed interactive exhibit Food for Thought](#), presently on display at Zimmerman Library through November 30.

By working collaboratively across disciplines and across our community, we are continually striving to fully understand the student experience, advocate for students' educational needs and provide a seamless system of support.

## **Rainforest Innovation Leads Statewide Summit on Economic Development**

[As a key driver of New Mexico's economy](#), The University of New Mexico regularly convenes business leaders, policymakers, and other stakeholders to discuss the economic future of the state and UNM's role as [one of New Mexico's largest employers](#). On Tuesday, November 16, UNM Rainforest Innovations is hosting the [Business and Economic Summit: New Mexico's Statewide Recovery and Long-term Plan](#) to focus the conversation on the new [Statewide Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy from the New Mexico Economic Development Department](#). As the state's only Research 1 university, we are uniquely poised to stimulate economic growth statewide, though, as the state report identifies, there are several key challenges to surmount. I'm honored to be providing the keynote address for the summit, where I'll discuss how UNM is already addressing some of these challenges, and what we can do to take on those that remain. The virtual summit begins at 9 a.m. and is free and open to the public, but please [make sure you've registered to attend](#).

## **New Partnership Expands Access to Speech-Language, Audiology Services**

As the University for New Mexico, we are constantly striving to meet the needs of citizens across our state by providing communities with access to vital services and resources. This week, the [UNM Department of Speech and Hearing Services will formally launch a new partnership with UNM Medical Group](#), which will make its clinical services more widely available to New Mexicans across the state. This partnership will permit the clinic to provide speech-language pathology or audiology services to more patients, while also giving our students practical experience in clinical care and healthcare practice management.

## **Gerald May Awards Nominations Due November 19**

Do you know of a member of our UNM staff who has made a significant contribution to The University of New Mexico and the Lobo community? Someone who inspires you with their leadership, vision, empathy, and enthusiasm? If so, I encourage you to nominate them for the [Gerald W. May Outstanding Staff Award](#). Since 1994, Staff Council has been recognizing outstanding staff members with this prestigious award, created and funded by former UNM President Gerald May in 1990, with additional funding from the Regents' Endowment Fund. Staff Council will review and screen the nominees and submit the final recommendations to me, where I have the honor of choosing the three award winners. Nominations can come from faculty, staff and students, but the deadline is this Friday, November 19, at 5 p.m. so please [get those nominations in as soon as possible](#).

## **UNM Celebrates International Education Week**

The week of November 15-19 is International Education Week across the United States, and the UNM Global Education Office (GEO) invites all students, staff and faculty to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. [Join GEO for in-person and virtual events throughout the week](#), including two study abroad fairs, lectures on international topics, an International Feast of Friends and more. Please check the [IEW event calendar](#) for a complete list of events.

## National Transgender Day of Remembrance

This coming Saturday, November 20, is the National Transgender Day of Remembrance when we come together to commemorate transgender people lost to violence. This solemn occasion was founded by advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor her memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. Please take a moment to honor the memory of the lives that have been lost, and to celebrate those who are still here. And to the transgender people who are our family, friends, and colleagues: we see you, and you matter.

## Congratulations to our Post-Season Lobo Student-Athletes

Our Mountain West Champion [Women's Cross Country team placed first in the NCAA Mountain Regional](#) on Friday in Provo, Utah, earning their second regional title in four years, and an automatic bid to the NCAA Championship on November 20 in Tallahassee, Florida. This is the 17th time in program history, and the 14th time in a row, that the Women's Cross Country team has advanced to the NCAA Championship. Congratulations to Coach Joe Franklin, the coaching staff, and the entire team for an incredible, record-breaking season.

Our Mountain West Champion [Women's Soccer team also took to the field this weekend in the first round of the NCAA Tournament](#), where our tenacious team and strong defense made things tough for number four seed BYU, before finally falling in the opening round. But I want our team to hold their heads high; it has been an amazing season for our Lobos, who led the Mountain West in total goals, were undefeated in conference play at home, had 14 total wins—the second-most in program history—along with a program-record eight-game winning streak, six all-conference players, three all-tournament players, the offensive player of the year, the newcomer of the year, the coach of the year, and made it to the NCAA Tournament for the fourth time in program history. You made us proud, Lobos; thanks for a fantastic season.

Please remember The University of New Mexico presently requires all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to wear masks at all times in UNM buildings—including [The Pit](#)—unless they are eating, drinking, or in an office alone. Please help us continue good public health practices (handwashing; staying home when ill; physical distancing, when possible; mask-wearing, etc.) so we all stay safe and healthy. As always, I appreciate your continued care and diligence in looking out for yourselves and our pack.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President