



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



December 13, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

Congratulations to our latest Lobo graduates! I'm so proud of all you've accomplished, and I'm looking forward to seeing you at an actual indoor, in-person celebration in the Pit (University Arena) for the first time in two years. This Thursday and Friday, [we'll be celebrating the UNM Classes of 2021 and 2020](#) in two commencement ceremonies, with our graduate students being honored on Thursday evening, and our undergraduates on Friday night. In the days leading up to the celebrations, I hope you'll take a moment to [read the stories of some of our incredible inspiring graduates](#).

We're taking extra precautions on those two evenings to protect the health and safety of the Lobo community, so please make sure you've familiarized yourself with the [requirements to attend](#). For those not attending in person, the ceremonies will be live-streamed on the [Graduations Events web page](#) as well as [UNM Facebook](#) and [UNM YouTube](#) channels. Thank you so much for keeping our community safe!

To our graduates, let me say that you have succeeded during a period of extraordinary challenges and unexpected obstacles. With much of your last few semesters conducted remotely, under hybrid instruction, or under restrictive health and safety protocols, you successfully adapted to new ways of thinking, new ways of learning, and new ways of communicating. As administrators and educators, it has been a privilege, and truly awesome, to watch you adapt and thrive under these most unusual circumstances.

But it was more than just classroom instruction that changed; your entire Lobo experience was also intractably altered. The kinds of in-person gatherings that traditionally define college life shifted online. Formative events were scaled back, experienced remotely, or canceled altogether. But you went through it all together; your shared experience as Lobos is like no other, and for the last 19 months, you've been at each other's sides and had each other's backs. Your unique Lobo experience is defined not only by your academic success, but also by your compassion for the greater community and your empathy with each other.

That's why I am confident that you will all go on to do great things and will succeed at whatever it is you choose to do. You've been prepared to meet the future head on by great faculty, staff, and administrators, and helped every step of the way by so many others who believe in you. These last two years have proved you can take on any challenges that might come your way.

Whatever the future may bring, know this for certain: You're always Lobos. And The University of New Mexico will always be here for you.

Celebrating the 2021 Gerald May Award Winners

One of my great privileges as President of The University of New Mexico is helping to select the [recipients of the Gerald W. May Awards](#), presented annually to staff who have made significant contributions to

the University. Each year, we ask for nominations for this award, which may be submitted by any UNM staff, faculty member or students. This year, we received 23 nominations from across all departments and divisions, and as you can imagine, given the caliber of our staff, it's always a close contest—so close, in fact, that this year we selected six winners instead of five. I'm proud to announce that this year's recipients of the Gerald W. May Award are Diana Martinez, HSC Learning Environment Office; Julie Morrison, Physics and Astronomy; Dr. Stephanie McIver, Student Health and Counseling; Katie Williams, Alumni Relations; Winton Wood, Pediatrics Center for Development; and Dr. James Wilterding, Student Health and Counseling. Congratulations to our 2021 winners; UNM is a better place because of you.

UNM 2040 Survey Extended

As we wind down this year and look toward the next, I remain optimistic about our future. Work continues on our roadmap for our next two decades, [UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined](#), and I am grateful to those of you who have responded to [our survey](#) and provided us with your thoughts and comments. If you haven't responded yet, don't worry - we want to hear what you have to say, and have extended the deadline to give you until December 22, the day before winter break, to complete the [brief survey](#). Please take a moment to [review the UNM 2040 plan framework and send us your thoughts](#); it shouldn't take more than five minutes of your time and it is very much appreciated. Next semester, there will be more opportunities to engage in the process, learn about the plan, and provide feedback. Thank you for helping us forge the path to our future!

Feeling Sick? Stay Home.

Not feeling well? UNM encourages you to please stay at home. Symptoms aren't always from the flu or COVID-19--but with cases on the rise in New Mexico, it's important we're mindful of others when feeling symptoms. Whether your symptoms may be "just allergies" or the common cold, [as an employee it is important to stay at home](#). Employees who aren't feeling well may be able to utilize situational telecommuting, permitting them to work from home rather than coming to campus or taking leave. Employees who are unable to telework may be eligible for additional paid time off via [UNM's Additional COVID Paid Leave program](#). Staying home when you're feeling sick is a foundational COVID Safe Practice, and still one of the best ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases.

Student Affairs Recognizes Excellence with the "Lucy" Awards

Here's a feel-good story for you: each year, the Division of Student Affairs recognizes its employees by handing out "Louie" Awards for employees who demonstrate noteworthy leadership, exceptional motivation, and outstanding integrity and generosity. While these awards are normally presented in person, the pandemic forced the division to take the ceremony online and rebrand the award--at least for the moment--as the "Lucy." This year's [hybrid ceremony presented Lucy Awards](#) to Pam Agoyo of American Indian Student Services; Tonia Trapp from the Accessibility Resource Center; Vanisha Neva from American Indian Student Services, who was honored as the outstanding student employee; and the entire SHAC Clinical Team. Congratulations to the winners, and my thanks to Student Affairs Program Planning Manager Dorene DiNaro, who created the award, for her creative approach to valuing and acknowledging staff.

UNM Gives United Way Campaign Open Through December 17

Although the [UNM Gives United Way Campaign](#) has formally ended, we are keeping our giving portals open through Friday, December 17, for those who still wish to give. For over 27 years, UNM's partnership with the United Way of Central New Mexico has helped support those in need. Even a contribution of \$5 each week can make a difference, as it allows United Way to purchase shoes for eight students or provide bus passes and transportation for a month for families in shelters. Please consider [making your pledge](#) to the United Way of Central New Mexico or the non-profit of your choice by December 17. And remember, the one department with a notable level of donations to the campaign will receive lunchtime pizzas, delivered personally by Executive Vice President for Health Sciences Doug Ziedonis and me, public health restrictions permitting. Thank you for all you do to give back to our community!

State of the University Address Scheduled for 2022

I'll be delivering my annual State of the University address on February 24, 2022, the week before UNM's birthday. In reflecting upon the last year and our future, I believe we have every reason to be optimistic. I hope you'll join me as I share where we've been, where we are, and where we're going as UNM enters its 133rd remarkable year.

This will be my final message to you for 2021. As we bid this year farewell, Jeff and I offer our best wishes to you and your families for a safe and comforting holiday season.

Good luck with final exams, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President