



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 1, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos.

I recently visited The Pit to check out our Health Sciences Center's (HSC) ongoing efforts to vaccinate New Mexicans—and what I saw was truly inspiring. Our doctors, nurses, and health care providers — with plenty of help from eager and enthusiastic volunteers—were smoothly and efficiently vaccinating more than 1,000 members of our community every day. By the end of last week, approximately 30,000 doses had been administered by UNM Health.

I'm so proud of the important part the University for a *healthy* New Mexico is playing in this effort—and equally as proud of all our Lobos who quickly filled the volunteer rosters to serve as greeters, runners, and parking lot attendants. Those who were there to receive their vaccination were genuinely grateful and so appreciative of everyone who was giving their time to lend a hand. *How can I help?* has become the rallying cry of the Lobo community; we are truly delivering more to provide compassionate, life-saving services to New Mexicans. My warmest thanks and appreciation to everyone involved.

We've been so efficient at getting New Mexicans vaccinated, in fact, that we're quickly depleting the supply of the vaccine we've received. For this reason, **we'll be briefly pausing vaccinations at The Pit** until we can better predict our supply. UNM is administering the Pfizer vaccine, which requires two shots, and the priority of the moment is to ensure we have enough on hand to provide that critical second shot. We're continuing to work with the New Mexico Department of Health and U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich to see how quickly we can get the next shipments of the vaccine so we can reopen The Pit as soon as possible.

Again, I am so impressed and inspired by what I've seen at The Pit, and so proud we could use our iconic arena for such a great effort. Well done, Lobos.

And remember, if you haven't done so already, please be sure you've [signed up with the New Mexico Department of Health Vaccine Registration System](#). You'll be notified the moment you're eligible to receive the vaccine. Getting vaccinated is important and there is little flexibility available in appointment times. To protect the pack, employees and students should be given release from other obligations so that they can receive a vaccine and make up any missed work.

Grand Challenges Graduate Scholars Aim at Reducing Substance Abuse

We are all continually concerned and devastated by the drug overdose death rate in New Mexico, which remains in the top third in the nation. At UNM, our [Substance Use Disorders \(SUD\) Grand Challenge](#) researchers strive to address this critical problem with a three-pronged, compassionate approach of *prevention, treatment, and policy*. Psychology professor Katie Witkiewitz, one of the lead conveners of our SUD Challenge team, recently announced a dynamic new project, the [Substance Use Disorders Grand Challenge Graduate Student Scholars Program](#), which is providing funding and mentoring to five graduate student researchers examining the health equity and inequity among historically disadvantaged groups

across our state. I'm excited by this project, which is putting the minds of some of our most passionate graduate researchers to work, and always so proud of the creative research supported by Dr. Witkiewitz and her team. Their work is literally saving lives.

Three UNM Online Programs Ranked Among 100 Best in the Nation

As we make the turn into our third semester online, The University of New Mexico continues to refine its online content and instruction—and the commitment, care, and expertise put in by our faculty clearly shows. The [2021 U.S. News & World Report Best Online Programs Rankings](#) has ranked our online master's in Engineering program from the UNM School of Engineering number 53 in the nation, our online master's in Nursing from the UNM School of Nursing at number 83, and our online master's in Education from the UNM School of Education and Human Sciences at number 91. In higher education's highly competitive environment, it benefits UNM to have three nationally ranked programs. This is a testament to the patience and hard work of our faculty. Congratulations--you do all Lobos proud.

OILS Faculty Recognized Nationally for Online Learning

On a similar note, leave it to our extraordinary Lobo faculty to lead the way in helping others make the adjustment to online teaching and course design. Stephanie Moore, assistant professor of the Organization, Information & Learning Sciences program, has been [nationally acclaimed for two co-authored articles on teaching during a pandemic](#), both of which have been extensively cited and hailed by colleges and universities across the nation. Her article for *Inside Higher Ed*, ["So You Want to Temporarily Teach Online,"](#) is among the top ten most-read articles for the journal in 2020, while her article featured in *EDUCAUSE Review*, ["The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning,"](#) is the site's most-viewed piece ever and won the 2020 Association for Educational Communications & Technology Annual Achievement Award. Congratulations to Professor Moore—and thanks for leading the way.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President