



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 8, 2021

Good afternoon, Lobos –

I'll say it: we've all got COVID fatigue. When we went into lockdown in March of 2020, few of us could have anticipated we'd still be here nearly a year later—but better days are ahead. The current vaccination efforts here in New Mexico and around the country mean there is light at the end of the tunnel.

However, even if you've been vaccinated, your care and commitment to public health and safety doesn't end with a shot in the arm. Our campus policies still require everyone to wear masks and maintain physical distancing. I anticipate this policy will stay in place for the foreseeable future.

As always, we will be consulting with health officials in the New Mexico Department of Health and at the Centers for Disease Control to determine the best course forward as more and more of our fellow citizens receive the vaccine. We're continuing to update our [Bring Back the Pack website](#), often on a daily basis, to ensure we bring you the most up-to-date information on campus policies, class schedules, testing sites, and even places you can go to study quietly and safely.

I know it's been a long eleven months. We're all itching to move on, get together with family and friends, go to restaurants and movies, or go watch a basketball game. While the end seems to be in sight far off in the distance, this isn't the time for us to let down our guard. Your health and safety will always be our top priority.

For the good of our pack, then, please continue to take care of yourself, and look out for others. Wear your mask. Maintain a safe physical distance. And encourage others to do the same.

Update From The Roundhouse

We're about a third of the way into the 55th New Mexico Legislative Session, which means our Office of Government and Community Relations (OCGR) has been [working tirelessly](#)—and, for the first time ever, *virtually*—with our Governor, legislators, and state staff to represent, and advocate for our 2021 legislative priorities. This week, committees in both the House and the Senate are considering bills on a wide range of topics from financial aid and education loan repayment to suicide prevention and civil rights. There is much to do during this session, and I'm proud of the work being done by our Chief Government Relations Officer Barbara Damron, her staff, and countless members of the UNM community across the state. If you'd like the latest news from Santa Fe, OGCR [provides regular updates to subscribers](#) at its listserv, and also maintains an up-to-the-minute [UNM bill tracking service](#).

UNM Honored for Addressing COVID-19 and Systemic Racism in Communities

The University of New Mexico's Health Science Center was recently named as one of five institutions to be honored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) as a recipient of its [Nurturing](#)

[Experiences for Tomorrow's Community Leaders \(NEXT\) Award](#). Supported by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the NEXT Award provides honored institutions with \$10,000 to put toward addressing COVID-19 inequities and systemic racism, through collaborative community partnerships. At UNM, our Health Sciences Center will adapt and pilot our existing “Tools for Community Empowerment and Social Change” community-based participatory research curriculum to a COVID-19 health equity context. Congratulations to our hard-working team at UNM HSC; this is an exciting and innovative step toward addressing racism and eliminating inequities in health care in our communities—truly continuing our goal of delivering more to the far reaches of our state.

Lobo Athletes Post Third-Highest GPA in Program History

Even as most of our Lobo athletes saw their Fall 2020 seasons cancelled due to the pandemic, they continued to bring their drive and determination into the classroom, recording as a group [a 3.34 GPA, tied for the third-highest GPA in Lobo history](#). Fall 2020, in fact, marked the 25th straight semester that Lobo student-athletes turned in at least a 3.0 GPA, dating back to the fall of 2008. Particularly noteworthy is our women's tennis team, which turned in the highest GPA by any program in the history of Lobo Athletics with a 4.03 GPA – continuing testament to the leadership of coach Vicky Maes. Congratulations to all our Lobo athletes, and their coaches, teachers, trainers, and mentors, who helped ensure Lobo leadership continues both during athletic competitions and apart from them.

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

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President