



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 18, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Welcome to the first day of classes for the Spring 2022 semester! We're delighted to be back again with in-person instruction and to continue to provide a safe and supportive Lobo experience. That we can do so is because of you. With your help and continued vigilance, we've been able to return to more traditional instruction, as well as many of the events and traditions we couldn't enjoy over the last 22 months, and I can't thank you enough for helping us keep our campus as safe as possible.

For so many of us, this has been a far longer haul than we ever dreamed of. With COVID-19 and its evolving variants still very much on the rise, however, we are sticking with a data-driven, evidence-based approach to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on our community. While life on campus will look much as it did last semester, I want to take a moment to update you on some of our revised health protocols and to provide some guidance for making your return to campus as safe as possible.

First, our requirement for all Lobos to be fully vaccinated means making sure you also receive your booster shot, when eligible. We have been amazed and inspired by the response of students, staff, and faculty to our vaccination campaign, which has seen more than 96% of our faculty and staff, and 93% of our students, get vaccinated. The next step is to receive a vaccine booster as soon as you can once you are eligible, then let us know by reporting it on the [Lobo Vaccine Verification portal](#). If you're not certain when you're eligible to receive your booster, you'll find more information in our [Student Guide](#).

And if you're presently eligible for your booster, The University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) will be running a [vaccination clinic in SUB Ballroom C](#) this coming Saturday, January 22, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event code for the campus community is vaxthepack, and you'll be able to use that code to schedule an appointment through the [state website](#). The SUB clinic is also equipped to provide first or second Pfizer vaccination shots on that day as well, so there's no better time to ensure you're on your way to full vaccination.

While our vaccination requirement remains our most powerful tool in looking out for the safety of our community, a close second is our masking requirement. I'm pleased that our Lobos have been so conscientious about complying with the requirement for wearing masks indoors at all UNM facilities--but with new COVID-19 variants emerging, the cloth masks we've grown used to wearing just aren't getting the job done in keeping out highly transmissible, smaller aerosols. As of today, UNM is requiring [all students, staff, and faculty to wear three-ply \(or better\) medical/health procedure masks](#). Masks will be available for students in a variety of locations, including Johnson Recreation Center, the SUB, and high-traffic classroom buildings like Mitchell, Dane Smith, and Woodward Halls, and the Collaborative Teaching and Learning Building (CTLB).

I know this is a lot of information to process—and we've only been back on campus for one day! You'll find lots more information on our [Bringing Back the Pack website](#)—including new [state requirements for quarantine or isolation in the event of exposure to COVID or a positive test](#) and some [useful guidance for instructors](#), including syllabus language and assistance with semester planning. And if you're feeling stressed out and need someone to talk to, UNM offers [a wide variety of mental health resources and support](#).

We are continuing to closely monitor public health conditions, trends, and related public policies and recommended health protocols, and will continue to inform you of any changes to our current protocols or guidance. We recognize that there will be challenges for our community at home and on campus in the coming weeks as the pandemic continues, and we are committed to being as flexible as possible.

As always, my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your support for each other--and particularly for your support for our students—as well as for being mindful of the roles we each play in supporting the health and success of our community. Our ability to provide our students with a safe, in-person college experience depends directly on your continued diligence.

Here's to a safe and successful Spring semester, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes
President