



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



September 6, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos--

I'm always proud that UNM is regarded as a great place to learn, work, and live—and I am delighted that, once again, *Forbes Magazine* seems to agree, as it continues to rank [The University of New Mexico as one of the best employers in our state](#).

*Forbes* rankings are the result of surveying 70,000 Americans working in businesses with at least 500 employees. This year's results spotlight the 1,382 employers in the nation that received the most recommendations from employees, taking into consideration [several important factors](#), including how well employers support and engage with their communities. I am pleased that UNM ranks as the number six employer in the state and is the only educational institution in New Mexico represented on the list.

While I'm thrilled with our ranking, I'm also not surprised. Our designation by *Forbes* is a direct reflection of the incredible work our employees do every day. You make us the world-class institution we are, and will always aspire to be, and I appreciate all of you.

## Suicide Awareness Week at UNM

September is National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month — a time to spotlight resources, share stories, and support those whose lives have been affected by suicide. The State of New Mexico has the second-highest suicide rate in the nation, and we must remain tireless in our efforts to inform and refer family, friends or colleagues who may be in need to any of the countless [resources and support services available at UNM](#) or at the [state](#) and [national](#) levels.

From September 10th to 16th, The University of New Mexico will be hosting [a week of suicide awareness activities](#), beginning with the UNM Walk for Suicide Awareness on Saturday, September 10th. I also encourage you to attend the webinars we'll be making available to educate and inform about suicide awareness and intervention. As part of Suicide Awareness Month, we offer our solace and support to those who have experienced the loss of a family member, friend, or colleague.

## Lobo Football Opens Season with a Big Win

Lobo football got off to a great start this weekend with [a thrilling 41-0 win over Maine](#)—a terrific way to begin the 2022 season, and the third under Coach (and Lobo alum) Danny Gonzales. It was a beautiful evening for it, and I was delighted to see such a good turnout from our students as they and the marching band cheered on the team from their new spots in the north end zone. Lobo football will be at home for the next two weeks, facing off against Boise State this Friday at 7 p.m., and then again on Saturday, September 17 against UTEP.

## UNM Seeks Input from Faculty with Disabilities

Inclusive Excellence is such a vital part of who we are at The University of New Mexico that we've put it in writing by building it into the [UNM 2040 plan](#). To learn more about how our faculty with disabilities

experience UNM, and to identify any strategies for improvement, UNM's [Division for Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\)](#) is seeking input from any UNM faculty with disabilities. Faculty are encouraged to [complete the survey by October 1, 2022](#). By completing the survey, participants not only help us better perceive your experience, but also help DEI understand the diversity of disabilities, including cognitive, emotional, mental, and physical disabilities, among others. This is the first time such a survey has been administered at The University of New Mexico, and it will produce data that will be vital in starting meaningful discussions with our faculty with disabilities.

## Lobo Rainforest Celebrates Five Years, Looks to the Future

Last week, I had the pleasure of speaking at a celebration of the fifth anniversary of the [Lobo Rainforest Building](#), our unique “human innovation ecosystem”—a combination of [student housing](#), business support, lab space, and tech engagement--in the heart of [Innovate ABQ](#), a seven-acre “Innovation District Core” in downtown Albuquerque. Even as we celebrated where we are, we also got a look at where we’re going, as [Meow Wolf co-founder Vince Kadlubek](#) previewed the next phase of Innovate ABQ, a [high-tech space called The Jungle](#), which is designed to attract and support ~~creative entrepreneurship in New Mexico~~. As is always the case with our work in the Innovate ABQ zone, I’m excited by the endless possibilities.

## HSC Launches New Workforce Diversity Center of Excellence

The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in our Health Sciences Center has been awarded a five-year, \$3.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ [Health Research and Service Administration](#) to launch the New Mexico Workforce Diversity Center of Excellence. This new center will serve as a catalyst for institutionalizing our commitment to diversity and health equity, with a particular focus on Native American, African American, and Hispanic faculty and students to improve recruitment, mentorship, training, and retention. Congratulations to Dr. Valerie Romero-Leggott and her entire team for their leadership on this multifaceted community-engaged effort to increase diversity in New Mexico’s healthcare workforce.

## Nominations Sought for Honorary Degrees

Awarding a UNM honorary degree is a valuable way we recognize those among us who exemplify our mission to advance education, innovation, and collaboration in New Mexico. Each year at Spring commencement, Honorary Degree recipients are recognized for the ways in which they impact the Southwest through cultural, scientific, spiritual, or material means. [The Honorary Degrees Committee invites you to nominate candidates](#) who have significantly contributed to our communities and our greater society. Nominations should be sent to the Office of the University Secretary, Scholes Hall, Room 103 or [univsec@unm.edu](mailto:univsec@unm.edu) no later than **Friday, October 7, 2022**.

Have a great week, and let’s go, Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes  
President