



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*April 4, 2022*

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Last week, [The University of New Mexico was designated a First-generation Forward Institution](#) by the [Center for First-gen Student Success](#). This designation recognizes institutions who have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students. As someone who was a first-gen student, I can't tell you how much I like hearing that.

I know from experience how important it is for colleges to engage with and support first-gen students, helping them find their way in an unfamiliar environment. That's why I'm pleased UNM provides our first-gen students with plenty of support and resources needed to help them get acclimated and comfortable in their journey as Lobos, including our [College Enrichment Program](#) and our Peer Learning Facilitator program, where many of our undergraduate facilitators are also First-gen. With their shared experiences, these facilitators can ensure our First-gen students are well-prepared not just for a college education, but the college experience.

Moving forward, as a designated First-gen Forward Institution, UNM will have the opportunity to share its experiences supporting first-gen students with other similar-minded institutions, with the goal of becoming a national advisory institution. I'm proud we've achieved this important designation, and even prouder of all our first-gen Lobos.

## **Lobo Alum Wins Prestigious Turing Award**

Some thrilling news came our way last week as we learned that Lobo alum Jack Dongarra, currently a Distinguished Professor at University of Tennessee in the Departments of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, has been [awarded a prestigious Turing Award](#) for his groundbreaking work in high-performance computing and Artificial Intelligence. This award, named for computing pioneer Alan Turing, is often referred to as the "Nobel Prize for computing" and provides honorees with a \$1 million prize. Dongarra received his Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics from The University of New Mexico in 1980, and presently holds joint appointments at the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. This is an extraordinary accomplishment by one of our most distinguished alumni, and the entire Lobo community takes considerable pride in Dr. Dongarra and this remarkable accomplishment. He personifies our foundational values of academic rigor, boundless curiosity, and culture of innovation. What an exciting and amazing accomplishment.

## **Sexual Assault Awareness Month Focuses on Online Spaces**

One of the best ways we can increase awareness of sexual assault on our campus is by coming together as a community. April is [Sexual Assault Awareness Month \(SAAM\)](#), and [The University of New Mexico is joining with other institutions across the nation to support this year's national theme](#), "Building Safe Online Spaces," which builds upon the lessons learned over the last two years for creating safe and secure online experiences.

SAAM officially begins on Tuesday, April 5, with the National Day of Action, as UNM's [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#) hosts a Day of Action and Consent Fair on the SUB Mall from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. LoboRESPECT encourages

everyone to wear teal, the color for sexual violence prevention, in a show of support for survivors of sexual violence. As always, please know that we have [many resources and advocates available](#) to support all Lobos.

## Graduate Programs Ranked Nationally

The annual *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of the nation's best graduate schools has just been published, and I'm pleased there's [plenty of good news to report](#) here at The University of New Mexico. [More than forty of our graduate programs ranked in the Top 100](#) nationally, with several in the Top 20, including Nuclear Engineering (#14), Law-Clinical Training (#8), Medical School-Primary Care (#16), Photography (#8), Nursing-Midwifery (#11), and the online master of science programs in nursing administration and nursing education ranking 20th [in the nation's best online programs](#). I'm proud of the hard work by our graduate faculty, staff, and students who make our graduate programs so exceptional. I'm also pleased to see so many of our programs making the list and climbing in the rankings. Well done, Lobos.

## Conference Showcases Undergraduate Research

As New Mexico's only Research 1 institution, curiosity and ingenuity are embedded in our Lobo DNA, whether you're a first-year student, a graduate, or a full-time researcher. This Thursday, April 7, is your opportunity to learn more about the work of our undergraduate researchers as part of our annual [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Conference](#) (UROC), a free campus-wide event to showcase UNM's student research projects. This year's conference is a hybrid event, available both in person and virtually, and will feature [112 research projects presented via Poster, Oral and/or 3-minute speech formats](#). Look for presentations in multiple rooms on the top floor of the SUB, as well as in the SUB Atrium and Ballroom C. Presentations begin at 9 a.m. and continue regularly throughout the day.

## Engineering Student Named Goldwater Scholar

I was delighted to learn that Lobo junior engineering student Christine Gleicher has been [selected as a 2022-2023 Goldwater Scholar](#). Her goals for the future reflect the caliber of such a distinction; Christine aspires to obtain a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering, conduct research in neurology and ultimately develop a company that researches, develops, and creates biomedical technologies and treatments for neurodegeneration. Goldwater Foundation Awards are given to students who intend to pursue careers in the fields of science, math, or engineering, and are chosen based on their academic and research credentials. In 2022, more than 5,000 students from 433 institutions across the nation competed for Goldwater honors; Christine is one of only 417 winners. Congratulations to Christine, and to her mentors, Professor and Regents' Lecturer in Chemical and Biological Engineering Eva Chi and Ph.D. candidate in Nanoscience Microsystem Engineering, Fahimeh Maghsoodi; the entire Lobo community is proud of you.

## Graduate and Professional Students - We Appreciate You!

Please join me in celebrating Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation Week, which begins today -- it was a pleasure to help kick things off earlier this afternoon with several wellness events. This is the first year UNM's Graduate and Professional Students Association (GPSA) has participated in celebrating this national time of recognition, and there are [plenty of great events scheduled through the week](#) to emphasize the contributions, impact and value of graduate and professional students on our campus, and at institutions throughout the United States.

## Black Alumni Honored

It was a privilege to participate in the [2022 Living Legend and Trailblazer Awards, presented by the UNM Black Alumni Chapter](#) to individuals for outstanding community service and advancement in their line of work. This year's

Living Legend Award was presented to former Lobo power forward, NBA player, and community activist Kenny Thomas, while the Trailblazer Award – presented to Black Alumni under 50 who have advanced in their field quicker than most peers--was given to state Senator Harold J. Pope. These honorees truly inspire all of us, and their commitment to their passions, their professions, and their community makes us all proud to be fellow Lobos.

## Traveling Office Hours

My traveling office hours provide me with some of the best, and most interesting, opportunities I have to learn more about our campus communities and to engage in an ongoing dialogue with those who understand Lobo life the best: you. My next traveling office hour will take place this Wednesday with the Global Education Office at 10:30 a.m.; two weeks later, I'll be visiting with administrators at the School of Medicine. While my traveling office hours are booked through the end of the semester, if you'd like to go on "stand by" in the event of a cancellation, [please let me know](#). And I look forward to seeing you.

And finally, just a quick word about UNM's policy regarding face masks: while we no longer require masks to be worn inside our facilities, there are many who will prefer to wear a mask or who may be advised by their health care provider to do so. With a formal policy no longer in place to require masks, wearing one is now a matter of personal choice, and The University of New Mexico wholeheartedly supports individuals in their decisions to mask. Please -- *no shaming of masked or unmasked individuals*. Thank you for your mutual kindness and consideration of each other.

Have a wonderful week, and let's go, Lobos!

Regards,

Garnett S. Stokes  
President