



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



May 23, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos--

As the product of a military family, Memorial Day holds special significance to me and to my husband, Jeff, a retired U.S. Army Colonel. "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid," wrote Harry S. Truman. "They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices." Let us always remember the sacrifices, patriotism, and courage of our fallen soldiers, their family and their friends. We honor those who have served, and those who continue to serve, in the name of our nation, our freedom, and our liberty.

The University of New Mexico will be closed on Monday, May 30, for the Memorial Day holiday, and I will not be sending out a President's Weekly Perspective that day. Please enjoy the three-day weekend away from the office and campus--and to those employees who work in critical areas, I appreciate your continued hard work and dedication to our institution and your role in continuing our mission of excellence.

Center for Native American Health Approved as Public Health Institute

As the University *for* New Mexico, we strive constantly for a higher quality of life for all New Mexicans, including expanding opportunities for vital health equity, which is essential to promoting stronger and more prosperous communities. This is just one of the many reasons I was delighted to learn that the [UNM Center for Native American Health](#) (CNAH) has been formally [approved as a public institute by the National Network of Public Health Institutes](#). As one of only three approved Indigenous Public Health Institutes in the nation, this designation will allow CNAH to further expand its public health activities in the new Public Health Institute for Indigenous Knowledge and Development. Having our Center for Native American Health formally approved as a public health institute is an important step in our ongoing efforts to ensure we help meet the health care needs of Indigenous people and Tribal communities across New Mexico. I appreciate all the hard work that has been done to achieve this important designation.

Wildfires Continue to Spread; UNM Supports Luján's Federal Wildfire Science Initiative

The entire Lobo community continues to watch the forest fires in northern New Mexico with horror and alarm, as the combined Hermits Peak and Calf Canyon fires have now consumed more than 310,000 acres and displaced countless of our fellow citizens. The University of New Mexico has been proud to offer its assistance, as needed, to our affected sister institutions and their communities, and we are grateful for the recent federal efforts to provide assistance to our impacted regions. Along with our colleagues at New Mexico State University and New Mexico Highlands University, UNM has endorsed legislation by a coalition of western Senators, led by [New Mexico's U.S. Senator Ben Ray Luján, to improve, and invest in, wildfire preparedness, resilience, and response](#). We are grateful as well for Senator Martin Heinrich's co-sponsorship of this legislation and appreciate the leadership of our Congressional delegation.

Heinrich Leads Funding Request for New HSI R1 Pilot Program

The University of New Mexico is proud to be one of only 20 [Hispanic Serving Institutions](#) in the nation that are also [designated as Research 1](#). Recently, we were invited by several other HSI R1 institutions to join the Alliance of Hispanic Serving Research Universities, a coalition of like-minded institutions who work together to advance research opportunities for Hispanic students. New Mexico's U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich is leading the call in the FY2023 Senate appropriations bill for funding for a new national pilot program to increase the number of Hispanic students receiving PhDs at Hispanic Serving Research 1 institutions. We are very thankful to Senator Heinrich for his leadership on this important initiative, and appreciate the support of Senator Ben Ray Luján, who has signed a Senatorial letter in support of federal funding for this program.

Lobo Entrepreneurs Honored at Pitch Deck

When it comes to new business ideas from our Lobo students, *innovation* isn't the ambition; it's the standard. Over the past three years, [UNM's Rainforest Innovations](#) has sponsored its [Pitch Deck competition](#) in which our student entrepreneurs who want to start, or are already operating, an early-stage company are given the opportunity to present their ideas and compete for cash prizes to bring their ideas to life or to invest in their companies. Several successful student businesses have already been launched by the Pitch Deck competition, and this year's winners have exciting ideas that also seem destined for success. [Congratulations to this year's Pitch Deck winners](#): first place -- **Cameron Carugati, Ngoc Nguyen, and Christopher Fetrow**; second place -- **Elias Rosales-Zaragoza**; third place -- **Gabriel G. Gurule**; and finalists **Amelia Bierle, Michael Millar, Mark Niederhaus, Dharish Totiger, and Tony Wallace**. Your creativity and business savvy are truly inspiring.

Staff Appreciation Week Continues

As we continue to celebrate and thank the incredible Lobo staff who keep the day-to-day functions of The University of New Mexico running effectively and efficiently, I hope you'll [check Staff Council's calendar of events](#) for opportunities to enjoy each other's company and celebrate life as Lobos. From ice cream socials to Isotopes games, it's a great way to support UNM and each other.

We're two weeks away from the start of the Summer 2022 semester, which runs from June 6 through August 1, and our beautiful campuses are really beginning to show their warm-weather colors. Whether you're in Albuquerque or at one of our branches in [Gallup](#), [Los Alamos](#), [Taos](#), or [Valencia](#), I hope you'll take some time over the next few weeks to explore our exceptional campus landscapes, as well as our remarkable surrounding communities.

I'll see you again on June 6. Until then, have a great *two weeks*, and let's go, Lobos!

Garnett S. Stokes
President