

PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



July 11, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Each week seems to bring more news about the accomplishments of our amazing Lobo faculty, who make The University of New Mexico such an extraordinary institution. I am proud that UNM remains a place where each of us truly defines all of us, and where we as a pack find joy in celebrating the achievements of individual Lobos.

Two weeks ago, I was pleased to see [12 faculty members honored with 2022 Women in STEM awards](#), hosted by [Advance at UNM](#) in collaboration with the [UNM Office of Academic Affairs](#) and the [Office of the Vice President for Research](#). Some of this year's winning projects look at patterns of cancer disparities in New Mexico, consider an interdisciplinary lens for algorithmic justice, examine the importance of plant-rich diets, and explore the possible role of plastic and fiber particles in chronic respiratory inflammation. Impressed? That's only a start.

This year's winners are **Diana Dragomir**, assistant professor, Physics and Astronomy; **Eliane El Hayek**, research assistant professor, Pharmaceutical Sciences; **Maricarmen Hernández**, assistant professor, Sociology; **Yan Lin**, assistant professor, Geography and Environmental Studies; **Hannah Marx**, assistant professor, Biology; **Jami Nelson-Nuñez**, assistant professor, Political Science; **Kathy Powers**, associate professor, Political Science; **Sonia Gipson Rankin**, associate professor, School of Law; **Vanessa Svihla**, associate professor, Organization, Information and Learning Sciences and Chemical and Biological Engineering; **Shuya Wei**, assistant professor, Chemical and Biological Engineering; **Janet Vassilev**, associate professor, Mathematics and Statistics; and **Marygold Walsh-Dilley**, associate professor, Geography and Environmental Studies.

I am incredibly proud of these amazing women and their thoughtful proposals that are enhancing our communities and improving our planet. Congratulations to our winners and my thanks, as always, to Julia Fulghum, director of Advance at UNM, for all the work Advance does to encourage and reward women in science.

More recently, The University of New Mexico bestowed its highest faculty honor on seven professors selected after a rigorous nomination and review process as our newest group of Distinguished Professors. Each year, a select number of our faculty are awarded this distinction in recognition of outstanding achievements at UNM, as well as for their national and international renown as scholars.

This year's Distinguished Professors are **Ronald Christensen**, Mathematics and Statistics, College of Arts and Sciences; **Kimberly Page**, Internal Medicine, School of Medicine; **Akshay Sood**, Internal Medicine, School of Medicine; **Angela Wandinger-Ness**, Pathology, School of Medicine; **Karen Westlund-High**, Anesthesiology and Critical Care, School of Medicine; **Cosette Wheeler**, Pathology, School of Medicine; and **Katie Witkiewitz**, Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences.

Congratulations to all of our honorees. You are an inspiration to The University of New Mexico community and a credit to Lobos everywhere.

UNM Engineers Win Grants for Rocketry Research, Nuclear Technology Development

Lobo engineers were recently selected to receive multiple federal grants to explore new ways of looking at rocket engines and for the development of innovative technologies in civil nuclear capabilities. [Dr. Daniel Banuti](#), assistant

professor of mechanical engineering, has been selected as the principal investigator of [a three-year, \\$600,000 grant from the Department of Defense to examine high-pressure injection in rocket engines](#), which can inform multiple applications, such as green technology. [Multiple awards were also granted to UNM engineers by the U.S. Department of Energy for nuclear-related projects as part of \\$61 million awarded to 74 projects across the country.](#) Lobo engineers will be designing and developing safer and more efficient nuclear reactors, as part of the federal initiative to expand clean energy and move the nation toward the goal of net-zero emissions. This is research that not only changes lives, but which also modifies the way we look at the world.

Lobo Team Places Third in National “Solar Splash” Competition

As New Mexico's only Research 1 institution, we're used to rising to a challenge and solving problems in creative new ways. Not only are our engineering professors improving rocket engines and changing the way we think about nuclear energy—as you read above—but our engineering students are exploring new and award-winning ways to build more efficient and nimble solar vehicles. At this year's national [Solar Splash solar-powered boat competition in Ohio](#), [UNM's team of engineering students placed third overall in the multi-day contest](#), with a solar-powered boat that was hailed for its electric system design, as well as for its solar endurance. Despite supply chain issues, which compelled the team to rethink its original design, our Lobo engineers placed in the top three in multiple events and were presented with the Most Improved Team Award. Congratulations to our outstanding Lobo team for their showing in the competition in Ohio.

Sandoval Regional Medical Center Celebrates a Decade of Quality Health Care Services

Last Friday, I had the pleasure of helping mark the [10th anniversary of the Sandoval Regional Medical Center](#) (SRMC) at an onsite celebration at the center in Rio Rancho. Among its many accomplishments over the last decade, we've seen the SRMC grow to become a Level III Trauma Center, serve as the anchor of our expanded our Rio Rancho Campus, and add important new and innovative services like its Center of Excellence for Orthopaedic Surgery & Rehabilitation. Through it all, SRMC continues to have a positive impact on our region by improving health outcomes and providing quality and compassionate health care services to those that need it the most in our community--and beyond.

Masks Recommended for All UNM Campuses

As of July 5, The University of New Mexico is recommending that **masks be worn indoors at all UNM campuses**, as Bernalillo, McKinley, Valencia, Taos, Los Alamos and Sandoval counties are categorized as “high COVID-19 community levels” by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As always, we are continuing to monitor conditions around the state, and around the nation, which may require us to revisit our mask protocols from time to time. [Please continue to check our Bring Back the Pack website for the latest updates.](#)

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President