



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



August 8, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos –

Today I write to you in shared dismay and concern over the recent killings of four Muslim men in our community, including the senseless and tragic death of Afzaal Hussain, a beloved UNM alum and a past president of the GPSA. Investigators have indicated that these homicides may be part of a pattern of connected crimes directed at members of our city's Muslim community. We know how deeply these events are impacting our entire Albuquerque campus community and our city, and we share in anguish and outrage. We know some of you are fearful because of these horrible events in our city. We grieve with the family, friends, and colleagues of the victims.

As President, and as someone who lives on campus, I want you to know that the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors is the highest priority for me. In coordination with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) and their Federal law enforcement partners, we are working tirelessly to [ensure that every member of our University family is safe and feels supported, even during this difficult time](#). Local law enforcement has increased patrols in the area and Governor Lujan Grisham announced that additional state police will be on patrol in Albuquerque, working in close coordination with APD and the FBI to provide any necessary support. Investigators have posted [a photo of a vehicle of interest](#), and are encouraging those who may have any information about these crimes to call 505-843-STOP (7867).

We need to meet this challenge together, and a key component of these efforts is engagement with, and within, the Lobo community. I would like to thank the more than 700 of you who attended our [UNM community safety forum this afternoon](#), where members of the Lobo community were joined by UNM, Albuquerque and Federal law enforcement as well as representatives of the Islamic Center of New Mexico. I realize that there were many more questions than we could answer in the allocated time, but we will be reviewing them and providing additional relevant information and answers in the coming days.

Albuquerque is an amazing city in the heart of the Land of Enchantment. We have an engaged and innovative citizenry and are a place where vibrant cultures and rich history fuel our now and our future. And within our city, The University of New Mexico is not only a place of higher learning and discovery, but also a truly global community, connected by our shared Lobo stories and experiences.

As we prepare our campus for the Fall semester, please remember that we are a community of learners, teachers, researchers, creators, and healers – we are human beings and world citizens – and at UNM there is absolutely no room or tolerance for hatred, violence or any form of racial/ethnic prejudice or xenophobia. In solidarity with and in support of our city's Muslim community, the “U” at Hodgin Hall will remain lit through the end of this week as a symbolic acknowledgment of the heinous attack on these men and the entire Muslim community, and as a beacon of kindness and acceptance, and of peace and equality.

I know the past several days have been very difficult. If you find yourself struggling, know that you are not alone. I encourage you to use UNM's [mental health services and other resources](#). I will continue to provide updates on this issue as they become available. Please take care of yourselves and look out for each other.

Garnett S. Stokes

President