



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



September 12, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

National Hispanic Heritage Month begins Thursday, September 15, and runs through Saturday, October 15. Why start a celebration mid-month? September 15 marks the anniversary of independence for the Latin American countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, while Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Over the next 30 days, then, we as a nation pay tribute to and honor the cultures and contributions of Hispanics and Latin Americans.

Nationally, those who identify as Hispanic make up about 18 percent of the U.S. population; in New Mexico, however, our population is around 45 percent--and growing. As Lobos, we truly celebrate our Hispanic heritage every day as a rich and vibrant part of our cultural DNA. At UNM, we're proud to be classified as a Hispanic Serving Institution, and even prouder that our nationally recognized [Chicana and Chicano Studies Department](#) continues to explore and examine our state and nation's Hispanic heritage, while recognizing and making new contributions to Hispanic history, arts and culture, scholarship, health and countless other areas.

"It is important," wrote Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Hispanic member of our nation's highest court, "for all of us to appreciate where we come from and how that history has really shaped us in ways that we might not understand." Throughout September and early October, I encourage you to explore and appreciate the history that has shaped us, our community, and our university. Study and enjoy Hispanic art and history, for instance, or read any of our great Chicana and Chicano writers—you'll find [plenty available from UNM Press](#)—and reflect on this unique part of our legacy as Lobos.

## **New Leadership at Government and Community Relations**

After a nationwide search, I am delighted to announce the [appointment of Michael Puelle as UNM's Chief Government Relations Officer](#), beginning on Monday, October 10. With more than 30 years of public policy and government relations experience, Michael brings to UNM an ideal combination of strength as an administrator and extensive experience at all levels of government, including community relations and legislative strategy. My sincerest thanks to Interim Chief Government Relations Officer Nathan Bush for the dedicated and thoughtful leadership he has brought to the position and the University.

## **Silent Lights Returns to Smith Plaza**

One of our most unique and popular student events is back this Thursday night when the [Silent Lights outdoor silent disco returns to Smith Plaza, in front of Zimmerman Library, starting at 8:00 p.m.](#) This year's party features six DJs across three stages and an interactive display brought by Electric Playhouse. This student event is free; all you need for admission is your UNM student ID, which you'll present as you enter the event at the east end of Smith Plaza, just at the bottom of the incline. There's also no need to bring your own headphones; you'll be given wireless headphones when you enter, which you can use to tune into any of

the DJs and dance to your own beat. Have a great time, Lobos!

## Step Up to the Lobo Cancer Challenge

The [Lobo Cancer Challenge comes back this year and will be held at University Stadium on Saturday, September 24](#). Come run, walk, ride a bike, or climb all the stairs in University Stadium to help fundraise for patients and programs at [The University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center](#). [Register either as an individual or as part of a team](#), and the funds you raise will go directly to the [program or treatment area you choose](#). As the state's only NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center, your support helps our health care providers deliver the best cancer treatment and care anywhere.

## Dean of Engineering Finalists Visiting Campus

Our search for the newest leader of our nationally acclaimed School of Engineering enters its next phase this week, as we welcome the first two of our [four finalists to meet with faculty, staff, students and members of the greater Lobo community](#). The finalists, in order of their campus visits, are **Rakesh Nagi** from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; **Donna Riley** of Purdue University; **Anne Skaja Robinson** from Carnegie Mellon University; and **Iris Rivero** of the Rochester Institute of Technology. Public meetings and presentations continue through early October, and I encourage you to come out and meet these outstanding candidates.

## Celebrating the D.H. Lawrence Centennial in Taos

The University of New Mexico is proud to be a part of the legacy of writer D.H. Lawrence, who visited the Taos area in 1922, fell in love with the region, and eventually purchased a ranch there. Today, The University of New Mexico owns and maintains the [D.H. Lawrence Ranch in Taos](#), and will be [celebrating the centenary of Lawrence's arrival in The Land of Enchantment](#) with a series of gatherings and events, including a poets' brunch, a literary lecture, and a showing of the 1969 documentary *D.H. Lawrence in Taos*. "New Mexico was the greatest experience from the outside world that I have ever had," Lawrence wrote. "It certainly changed me forever." We are honored to be stewards of this very special place.

## Get Ready for the Annual Salsa Showdown

Each year, as [we kick off the annual UNM Gives Campaign](#) to raise funds for the [United Way of Central New Mexico](#), we invite all students, faculty, and staff to impress us with the best salsa recipe on campus. If you've got an old family favorite—or maybe it's that "famous salsa" you're always asked to bring to parties—[submit your recipe by Thursday, September 22](#). The first 10 entries will be prepared by UNM's Chartwells Catering, and on Tuesday, October 4, Lobos can grab a bag of chips and a sample of the competing salsas in the SUB, then vote online for their favorite. The winner will get more than just bragging rights; UNM Parking and Transportation (PATS) will also waive the cost of your parking for the rest of the parking year. It's a great way to take care of that salsa craving while bringing awareness to a terrific cause.

## Staff Success Days Offers Virtual Professional Development

Due to popular demand, UNM's [Staff Council](#) and [Employee & Organizational Development](#) are jointly offering a week of virtual professional development opportunities as part of this year's [Staff Success Days](#). During the week of September 19 to 23, you'll find new ways to gain leadership opportunities, increase

your workplace engagement, manage anxiety, and learn more about UNM's goals, objectives, and employee benefits. You can register for as many sessions as you'd like, and all are available virtually.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President