



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*September 19, 2022*

Good afternoon, Lobos--

One of our foundational responsibilities as a public research institution is a commitment to an environment where one can grow, express, and be exposed to contrasting, even disagreeable, perspectives and points of view. Even when opinions collide, critical thinking demands that we strive to grow, educate, and improve ourselves from those experiences. That is what I ask and expect us to aspire to as a University and as a community.

Last week, The University of New Mexico was the site of a protest in the SUB, a response to an event featuring a controversial speaker who had been invited to appear at a campus venue by a student organization. Both events were mostly peaceful—and I applaud those who expressed their points of view respectfully. However, when tensions began to run high, the event was disrupted by banging on the walls, an unlawfully pulled fire alarm, and vandalism of UNM property. We also received complaints that some ticketholders to the event were denied access based on their appearance—a practice that will not be tolerated. The safety of our campus community and visitors is always our first priority, and these types of behaviors create a potentially unsafe environment. UNM is investigating each of these incidents and will hold those who have violated the law or University policies accountable.

For generations, The University of New Mexico has upheld its commitment to the principles of free speech and has valued its role as a public square for debate and a place to test and challenge competing viewpoints and opinions. We encourage the free and open consideration and questioning of opposing ideas. But providing an open forum in no way signals endorsement of the content of every speech, idea, or opinion.

Nearly a century ago, Justice Louis Brandeis reasoned that “if there be time to expose through discussion, the falsehoods and fallacies, to avert the evil by the processes of education, the remedy to be applied is more speech, not enforced silence.” Let us focus our attention and energies on the underlying causes of what offends or concerns us most with more and better speech. I appreciate your continued commitment to making our university a place where competing points of view can be respectfully, and safely, discussed and debated. It is fitting that we continue these discussions, as this week marks the beginning of [UNM Safety Week](#), when we come together as a community to observe [National Campus Safety Awareness Month](#).

Our Safety Week initiatives are a collaborative effort between UNM Police, [Office of Compliance, Ethics and Equal Opportunity](#), and various campus partners to keep the Lobo community informed about our safety procedures, including digital safety and our emergency response procedure—and we’ll be taking this opportunity to look at ways to ensure our spaces remain safe, including at those times when voices are raised in peaceful protest. I’ve also asked that we emphasize the importance of the week by launching two new projects to make the campus safer, including a revitalized peer escort program and a Safe Campus Living Task Force that focuses on where Lobos live both off and on campus. We’ll provide more information soon.

Finally, I also encourage you to join me on Tuesday evening for our annual Safety Walk, when we walk the campus together to learn more about campus layout and identify possible places where we can improve safety by replacing burnt out lights, for example, or trimming tree branches that may reduce visibility. I live on campus with my husband at University House, so UNM isn't just my workplace; it's also my neighborhood. Come walk with me on Tuesday evening; doors for the event open at 6:00 p.m., and we'll begin the walk by dusk, around 7:30 p.m.

### **HSC Hosts First Statewide Health Equity Summit**

As New Mexico's only academic health center, it is vital we connect with our health care leaders and workers, employers, elected officials and citizen advocates so we ensure we all work together to meet the health needs of communities across our state. This week, the [UNM Health Sciences Center is hosting its first statewide Health Equity Summit](#) to help make those vital connections as well as to discuss health inequities and find solutions to assist underserved communities. This at-capacity two-day event may be the first of its kind, but it's not the last; there are already plans underway for next year's summit. If you aren't able to attend this year's summit in person, you can [check in on the live link](#). Congratulations to Dr. Doug Ziedonis, Dr. Lisa Cacari-Stone, and their team at HSC for bringing something of such value to our community.

### **Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with the Works of Rudolfo Anaya**

As Hispanic Heritage Month continues, I was pleased to learn that the prestigious Library of America will be publishing this Fall [a volume devoted to the work of the late author and Lobo Professor Emeritus Rudolfo Anaya](#). For more than 40 years, the non-profit Library of America has published collected volumes of the most significant American writers and developed national and international initiatives to help readers discover timeless works, and we are thrilled to see this giant of Latino literature so honored—one of the first Hispanic authors in the Library of America's catalog. The volume of Anaya's works will feature *Tortuga*, *Albuquerque*, and his seminal novel *Bless Me, Ultima*.

### **Distinguished Professor Elected AGU Fellow**

Every week seems to bring more news of the amazing accomplishments of our Lobo faculty who make The University of New Mexico such an extraordinary institution. This week, I was delighted to learn that [Distinguished Professor Yemane Asmerom has been elected as an American Geophysical Union's \(AGU\) Fellow](#), one of only 54 individuals in the world similarly honored in this year's class. In bestowing the honor, AGU noted Professor Asmerom's outstanding achievements in science, particularly his groundbreaking contributions to the study of climate change. Congratulations to Professor Asmerom on this remarkable achievement.

### **Nominate a Lobo for the Sarah Belle Brown Award**

There's still plenty of time to submit nominations for the [Sarah Belle Brown Award](#), which I have the pleasure of presenting annually to one faculty member, one staff member, and one student for outstanding service to the community. Nominations are due Friday, September 30, so [nominate an extraordinary Lobo today](#).

### **My Next Traveling Office Hours**

My traveling office hours provide me with some of the best, and most interesting, opportunities for learning

more about our campus communities and engaging in an ongoing dialogue with those who understand Lobo life the best: *you*. My [next traveling office hours](#) will take place this Wednesday, September 21, at 10:30 a.m. at the SHAC Commons. The following Wednesday, September 28, I'll be at the Latin American and Iberian Institute, also starting at 10:30 a.m. As always, Lobo students, faculty, and staff are invited to attend—and I look forward to seeing you there.

### **Enter the Salsa Showdown**

Finally, there are still a few spots left for the [UNM Salsa Showdown](#), so [submit your recipe by Thursday, September 22](#). Put your recipe to the test and go head-to-head with some of UNM's best salsas for a chance to have the cost of your parking waived for the rest of the parking year. It's a great way to kick off our annual UNM Gives Campaign to raise funds for the [United Way of Central New Mexico](#). And not to worry: while Chartwells Catering will prepare your salsa according to your recipe, your recipe will remain secret.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President