



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



October 10, 2022

Good afternoon, Lobos --

UNM is commemorating October as Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to encourage all Lobos to look out for their mental health and well-being and to overcome the stigma often associated with asking for help. If you're presently feeling overwhelmed, know that you're not alone; a [recent CNN/Kaiser Family Foundation poll](#) found that 90% of Americans say the United States is experiencing a mental health crisis.

Further, [data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) show that drug overdose deaths reached record levels in 2021 and suicide rates were back near a record high after two years of decline. In 2020, mental health-related visits to emergency rooms jumped 31% among adolescents aged 12 to 17.

As I reported earlier in the semester, The University of New Mexico continues to offer a [wide range of mental health services](#) for students, faculty, and staff, providing a comprehensive selection of services for those who need assistance. At the same time, we're also working to strengthen our delivery of mental health services and resources to promote student well-being. As part of this new mental health initiative, we will be investing in more staff and providing additional resources needed to increase the capacity of our support system, ramp up provider access, and better coordinate services across our academic and health systems.

A big part of this effort is making sure we have in place an adequate number of mental health providers and other resources to ensure that our system is quicker and more responsive to the needs of our students. I am pleased to report that our stepped-care model has already resulted in shorter wait times and that we are continuing to make the crucial hires to increase capacity at SHAC. We have also, since the start of the semester, trained 435 faculty and staff to support students in crisis, and we continue to offer regular workshops for training. We are also proud to make mental health services available through the convenience of [therapy assistance online \(TAO\)](#), which provides all students, staff, and faculty with online access to self-help assessments and modules, available at your fingertips through your desktop, tablet, or smartphone.

I am grateful for the leadership of Dr. Assata Zerai, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and Dr. Stephanie McIver, Interim Director of Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), who assessed our mental health needs and are moving quickly to ensure our system remains supportive, compassionate, and responsive.

Standing With Our DREAMERS

We at The University of New Mexico are disappointed and saddened by last week's ruling by the Fifth Circuit Court that [deemed the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) program to be unlawful](#). Although this ruling continues to provide—at least for the moment—some protection for current DACA students, the sense of uncertainty over their status continues. As it has for decades, The University of New Mexico stands

with and supports our undocumented students and their families, and we will continue our efforts to work with Congress, other institutions, and national organizations to ensure our students remain protected as they successfully pursue their dreams of higher education. As a university and as a member of the New Mexico community, UNM is committed to doing all it can to support and empower our Dreamers to reach their full potential at the university.

Supporting Human Rights in Iran

Like many Americans, I have been watching with increasing alarm the events unfolding in Iran in the days and weeks following the death of Mahsa Amini, who died in police custody for an improper hijab. As peaceful protests have spread across Iran, we have taken particular notice of the suppression of the rights of protestors at universities, including faculty, students, and staff. The University of New Mexico stands in solidarity with the peaceful protests occurring in Iran against the violation of women and human rights, and we will continue to advocate for civic leadership, human rights, and equity for the people of Iran and for communities around the world. We also feel great compassion for members of the Lobo community who have family, friends, and colleagues in the region who may be directly affected by events. Please know that our pack is here for you.

Celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day

Today is Indigenous Peoples' Day, and I encourage all Lobos to reflect on, and find strength in, our unique culture here at The University of New Mexico. UNM is very fortunate to benefit from the students, faculty, and staff who come from New Mexico's 23 tribal nations--including 19 Pueblos, 3 Apache Tribes and the Navajo Nation--and the many more who come to us from tribes beyond the borders of our state. We take pride in our Native students--in fact, American Indian enrollment is up by more than 25 percent for the Fall 2022 semester--and in providing campus resources like [American Indian Student Services](#) to help ensure our students have access to the support necessary to arrive here as enthusiastic students and leave as proud Lobo graduates and alumni. We are honored to have you at The University of New Mexico.

National Coming Out Day

Tuesday, October 11 is National Coming Out Day, which commemorates the Second National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 11, 1987. This is a day for raising awareness and celebrating the courage of the LGBTQ+ community and to reaffirm UNM's commitment to equality and inclusivity. Whether you're lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or non-binary, we are proud to amplify all LGBTQ+ identities on this Coming Out Day. Our [LGBTQ Resource Center](#) can provide plenty of support and information, and encourages students, faculty, or staff to sign the [Out List](#) or [Ally List](#). Regardless of how you identify, we are connected by our shared experiences as Lobos, and are all deserving of respect and dignity.

Everyone is invited to join the LGBTQ Resource Center for the [first ever Pride Howl](#), from noon to 1:00 p.m. on October 11, in front of the SUB, featuring a drag show and a dance party. Later in the evening, join the LGBTQ Resource Center and Queer Cumbia at the oldest LGBTQ establishment in the Southwest, the [Albuquerque Social Club](#), for a fundraiser for the Pride Scholarship Fund.

Lobo Wins LPGA Mediheal Championship

We had exciting news from Somis, California, over the weekend as [former Lobo golfer Jodi Ewart Shadoff won her first LPGA title](#) with a thrilling victory at the LPGA Mediheal Championship. Jodi, who graduated from UNM in 2010 with a degree in psychology, was a [three-time All-American as a Lobo](#) and the first student-athlete in Mountain West history to be named Player of the Year four times. Congratulations to Jodi on this fantastic win; Lobo Nation is proud of you.

UNM GNSPI Lecture Features Janet Napolitano

As part of our ongoing mission to build a healthier, better educated, and more globally aware New Mexico, UNM is delighted to partner with Sandia National Laboratories to bring distinguished leaders to share with the Lobo community their thoughts about global security issues. This week, the [UNM Global & National Security Policy Institute \(GNSPI\)](#) continues its Global Security Distinguished Lecture Series with [a talk by the Honorable Janet Napolitano](#) titled Rising National Security Threats and Challenges in the Decade Ahead. The lecture will be this Thursday, October 13 at the UNM Continuing Education Center Auditorium, with an hors d'oeuvre reception at 6 p.m., followed by the lecture at 7 p.m. This is a community event, open to the public, but please RSVP by [sending an e-mail to GNSPI](#).

Red Rally, Fall Break for Students

This is a short week for UNM students as Fall Break happens this Thursday and Friday. But before you enjoy your well-earned break, be sure to come out to Johnson Field on Tuesday night for our annual Red Rally to kick off the UNM-NMSU rivalry, as we prepare for our 112th meeting with the Aggies on Saturday, October 15.

We'll see you back on October 17 for the beginning of Homecoming Week, where my husband and I invite you to our annual S'mores Roast, starting at 2:30 p.m. on Monday, under the tents that you'll find at the Castetter Cactus Garden, on the west side of Zimmerman, near the Duck Pond.

And the Winner Is . . .

Finally, I'm pleased to announce that the winner of this year's Salsa Showdown is Salsa #10, submitted by Lobo student Cassie Chance. Congratulations, Cassie! Apart from having the costs of your parking covered by PATS, you've also officially got bragging rights as having this year's favorite salsa recipe.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President