



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*October 3, 2022*

Good afternoon, Lobos --

At The University of New Mexico, we are proud to see the diversity of our state's population reflected in kind across all of our campuses. Every day, we are fortunate to serve the educational needs of one of the most engaged and diverse student populations in the nation.

But we also understand that meeting the educational needs of our students is about more than providing a world-class academic experience. We know that food and shelter are also basic educational needs—and that when our students are food or housing insecure, it can lead to lower grades, poor health, and less engagement with campus life and campus services. It is in our best interests as educators, administrators, leaders, and human beings to understand the needs of our students, and to use that understanding to respond to those needs effectively and compassionately.

Last Friday, The University of New Mexico, in partnership with the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED), was honored to host the launch of a new statewide initiative that will research the food and housing needs of students at public colleges and universities in New Mexico and highlight funds and other resources devoted to food security at higher education institutions. This comprehensive study builds on UNM's [Basic Needs Project](#), developed in 2020 by a team led by UNM Professor Sarita Cargas, which collected two years of data about food and shelter insecurity in our community.

Moving forward with this statewide study, which will gather data from 28 New Mexico public institutions of higher education, it is our hope that leaders will use the data to devise evidence-based approaches for meeting the food and housing needs of students across the state. The lessons we learned from our own [Basic Needs Project report](#), for example, led us to re-examine and better coordinate our support services, such as improving—and even relocating—our [Lobo Food Pantry](#) for students, as well as providing short-term loans for emergency housing.

We've also identified basic needs as one of our newest potential institutional [Grand Challenges](#), which inform our research priorities across disciplines. The [Basic Needs Grand Challenge team](#) includes faculty from law, libraries, fine arts, nursing, history, the Global Education Office (GEO), and even Information Technologies (IT) – a truly interdisciplinary team, eager to contribute solutions from their various areas of expertise. Based on our experience, I am confident that a statewide study will inspire and encourage similar discussion and action.

The basic needs of our students are our basic needs as institutions of higher education, and this statewide study will help all of us to better understand and respond to the experiences and essential needs of all students.

## Lobo Food Pantry Needs Your Donations

While we're on the subject of food insecurity, our [Lobo Food Pantry](#) needs your help so that it can continue to meet the needs of Lobo students. This fall has seen our students visiting the pantry in record numbers, due in part to the relocation of the pantry in the Student Union Building (SUB), which has made it more visible and more accessible. While your cash donations are always appreciated, the Lobo Food Pantry is working hard to meet demand by getting food and personal items to their shelves as quickly as possible—which means your donation of new [food or personal items](#) is more important than ever.

## Celebrating Turing Award Winner Jack Dongarra

The University of New Mexico community celebrated last year when alumnus Jack Dongarra—a 1980 graduate of UNM's Department of Mathematics and Statistics and a current Distinguished Professor at the University of Tennessee—received [the prestigious Association for Computing Machinery \(ACM\) A.M. Turing Award](#), often referred to as the “Nobel Prize of computing.” Next Monday, October 10, [we will have the pleasure of honoring Professor Dongarra in person](#) when he returns to The University of New Mexico for a day of celebration. The day will include a [Q&A session with students](#) and an [afternoon lecture from Professor Dongarra, followed by a reception](#) at Centennial Engineering. Seats are limited for these events, so be sure to save your place by registering no later than 5 p.m., Saturday, October 8.

## OVPR Honors First Ovation Awards Winners

As New Mexico's only Research 1 institution, our Lobo faculty are used to looking at the world a little bit differently. Every day, across disciplines, our researchers are working to address some of the world's biggest challenges, improving lives in our communities, our state, and beyond. To recognize some of our most innovative full-time faculty, the UNM Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has presented its [inaugural Ovation Awards for Research and Scholarship to eight Lobo researchers](#): Professor **Subhankar Banerjee** (Art); Assistant Professor **Diana Dragomir** (Physics & Astronomy); Professor **Heather Edgar** (Anthropology); Associate Professor **Tiffany Florvil** (History); Professor **Marjori Krebs** (Elementary Education); Associate Professor **Christina Salas** (Chemical and Biological Engineering); Professor **Irene Salinas** (Biology); and Professor **Richard White** (Music). Congratulations to our award winners; you make all Lobos proud.

## Hispanic Heritage Month Continues with Art, Poetry, and the LDZ Experience

Hispanic Heritage Month continues through November 15, and the [Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies](#), the [Latin American & Iberian Institute](#), and the [Southwest Hispanic Research Institute](#) are [celebrating Hispanic art, poetry, and music](#) with a great series of cultural events. [Take a look](#) and get inspired.

UNM is also proud to announce it once again is partnering with the [National Hispanic Institute](#) to host the [2023 Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez New Mexico Lorenzo de Zavala \(LDZ\) Youth Legislative Session](#). The LDZ session brings 150 college-bound New Mexico high school students to UNM in June 2023 for a week-long leadership conference, honoring the legacy of New Mexico's late U.S. Senator Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez. Applications are open beginning October 7. I encourage you to [read the selection criteria and nominate a student today](#).

## UNM Receives State Funds for Faculty Recruitment, Retention

I am delighted to learn that [The University of New Mexico will be receiving \\$28.5 million in faculty endowment funds](#) from the State of New Mexico as part of the state's efforts to recruit and retain faculty and to increase the number of teachers, nurses and social workers graduating and entering our workforce. This funding represents UNM's portion of the \$110.5 million made available this year to state colleges and universities by the New Mexico Higher Education Department. This funding will provide for 58 endowed faculty positions statewide and support the needs of nearly 7,000 students. I am grateful for the continued support of our legislators, the governor, and New Mexico's taxpayers.

## UNM Gives Campaign Officially Underway

Commitment to community, generosity of spirit, and an endless capacity for kindness are all hallmarks of the Lobo way of life. One of the best ways the Lobo community helps transform lives locally and globally is through our [annual UNM Gives United Way campaign](#), which began on October 1 and continues through Wednesday, November 30. Because of your generosity, last year's campaign raised over \$520,000 for our community, through [donations to the United Way of Central New Mexico](#).

There will be plenty of opportunities to participate and donate in the coming weeks, including the international #GivingTuesday or by [casting your vote in the Salsa Showdown](#), where we find the best salsa on campus. As communities continue to recover from the challenges of the pandemic or work to meet the needs of those affected by poverty, crime, and tragedy, your care and compassion have never been more needed or more appreciated. Every contribution counts and every gift makes a difference. Thank you for your continued support.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President