



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



*January 9, 2023*

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Happy New Year and welcome back to our faculty and staff! I hope each of you enjoyed the winter break and were able to spend time recharging and connecting with family and friends. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone back as our students return for the start of the Spring 2023 semester. While classes don't begin for another week, there's already plenty going on; our outstanding faculty are putting final touches on curricula and engaging in groundbreaking scholarship, our wonderful staff continue with the daily work that keeps The University of New Mexico running seamlessly and efficiently, and our healthcare professionals continue to work tirelessly to provide world-class and compassionate healthcare. It is a privilege to work with all of you.

Here's to a successful semester together, as well as a safe and productive 2023.

## **UNM Adds Juneteenth as Observed Holiday**

June 19th, 2023, will mark the 158th anniversary of Juneteenth, commemorating the day in 1865 on which Union soldiers arrived in Texas to deliver the news that the Civil War had ended and that the Emancipation Proclamation had freed nearly four million from chattel slavery. Starting in 2023, The University of New Mexico is proud to [add Juneteenth as one of our observed holidays](#), giving all Lobos an opportunity not only to celebrate the liberation of our fellow Americans, but also to reflect on the progress that has been, and remains to be, made to ensure that Black Americans have genuine access to freedom, opportunity, and self-determination. I want to thank our Provost, Staff Council, Faculty Senate, the Division for Equity and Inclusion, and the Office of Human Resources, for their advocacy and support for adding this important holiday to our official university calendar.

## **Remembering the Life and Legacy of Martin Luther King**

While we're discussing the 2023 calendar, this is a reminder that The University of New Mexico will be closed next Monday, January 16, in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. federal holiday. I am forever inspired by Dr. King's assurance that "the arc of the moral universe is long but bends toward justice" -- and we must constantly strive to keep that arc bending. The journey toward representation, equal justice, peace, and understanding is difficult, never-ending, and as we have seen far too often, sometimes dangerous. Progress, as Dr. King also noted, is hard work:

Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable . . . Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

It is our responsibility—and our obligation—as a university, as Americans, and as human beings to remain tireless and passionate in the name of human progress. Stay active, stay engaged, but most of all, Lobos, please stay kind—for love, as Dr. King also reminds us, is the greatest force in the universe.

## New Mexico Legislative Session Begins January 17

Tuesday, January 17 is the opening day of the First Session of the 56th New Mexico Legislature. This year, as with all odd-numbered calendar years, the 60-day session will be focusing on the state budget and related finances, agency spending, as well as any other legislation that may be introduced.

We are proud to host our annual UNM Day at the Capitol and legislative alumni reception on Monday, January 30—the first time we've been able to do so in person since 2020. We are excited about bringing our key [legislative priorities](#) to the attention of our lawmakers, and we will continue to work closely with UNM students, faculty, and staff to advocate on behalf of these priorities and to provide opportunities for further engagement during the session.

The [UNM Office of Government and Community Relations](#) (OGCR), led by Chief Government Relations Officer Mike Puelle and his team, work diligently with the Governor, Senators, Representatives, and associated state staff to represent and defend the best interests of the UNM community and to keep all of us informed on bills and other activities that affect our students, staff, faculty, retirees, and patients. OGCR provides several ways to keep informed about legislation affecting UNM during the session, including UNM bill tracking and a [listserv to receive updates](#).

Throughout the legislative session, UNM is actively engaged in dozens of other important legislative issues at any one time. To help us ensure that our university speaks with one strategic voice, I ask that you please coordinate all legislative requests and associated communications with the Office of Government and Community Relations; doing so can go a long way toward cultivating greater support for UNM.

## Sign Up for Traveling Office Hours

I enjoy having the regular opportunity to talk about The University for New Mexico with those who understand it best: you. Each week, I hold traveling office hours, which provide me with the privilege of coming directly to you to learn more about your concerns and aspirations for our university—and I'm always inspired by the enthusiasm for a meaningful conversation about life as Lobos. Traveling office hours are on Wednesdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., and if you'd like to invite me to come visit your department, [please just sign up and ask](#). Slots tend to go fast, so I encourage you to get your request in as soon as possible. I can't wait for our next conversation!

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

Garnett S. Stokes

President