



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 6, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos —

With the recommendations and reasoning of our Health Protocols Committee at front of mind, and after further discussion with UNM administrative and constituent leaders, I am taking under serious consideration a proposal to lift UNM's mandate requiring the COVID-19 primary vaccine series for students and employees.

The Administrative Mandate requiring the COVID-19 vaccine, initially issued on August 5, 2021, was essential during the peak of the pandemic to protect the health not only of our University but communities across New Mexico. The result of the mandate was a very high rate of vaccination across all campuses. Moreover, a study released last October from the National Bureau of Economic Research indicates that [colleges' vaccine mandates appeared to have a substantial effect on county-level COVID-19 infection and death rates](#), likely reducing total U.S. deaths from the virus by about five percent in fall of 2021.

As we approach the midpoint of the Spring semester, the Lobo experience is once again a thriving and dynamic learning/living environment across our campuses – this just three years after a global pandemic forced us into limited operations, curtailed in-person instruction and taxed our healthcare system and providers. While we know that COVID-19 is not over and that we must remain vigilant in protecting ourselves against the virus, it is transitioning into a more manageable endemic phase in our state and across the country. As our understanding of the virus and the ways in which we manage it evolve, we are continuing to adhere to the science-based decision-making process we have followed from the very beginning of the pandemic.

To provide our community with the opportunity to hear the latest scientific data and reasoning, ask questions and provide feedback, we will host a [virtual forum on Thursday, February 16](#) at noon, with our medical experts and administrators. I would ask that you please submit any [questions](#) or [comments](#) in advance for the virtual event, no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 10; there will be an opportunity for Q & A during the session.

The timing of such a decision and its effective date are vital to the registration and enrollment procedures that current and new students must navigate, and equally as important to the employment process for current and future job postings. These, and other topics, will be part of the discussion at the virtual forum. Shortly after the session, we will post Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as well as links for submitting any additional questions and commentary.

I should make clear that even if UNM lifts its vaccination mandate, UNM Health and Health Sciences clinical areas will continue to maintain their COVID-19 vaccine requirements. We will also continue to strongly

recommend that all Lobos consult with their health care providers to best determine what vaccination strategy they should follow, specific to their risk profile.

My sincerest gratitude to all of you for your continued diligence. Through your efforts, UNM has led in setting a high bar for safety and well-being during the pandemic. I am confident that, together, we will continue to serve our students and the citizens of New Mexico by providing world-class education, research, and health care, imbued with intellectual curiosity and compassion.

UNM to Host Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Native American Veterans

With an institutional culture proudly rooted in the Indigenous experience, as well as our status as a Research 1 institution that ranks among the [top ten military friendly universities in the nation](#), I am honored that The University of New Mexico is hosting the first of its kind [Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Native American Veterans](#)(EBV-NAV) in New Mexico and the Southwest Region of the United States. This [weeklong event](#), which we'll host at the Lobo Rainforest Building from April 17-21, encourages participants to leverage higher education skills, resources, and infrastructure via cutting-edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management. The bootcamp is open to any Native American Veteran from New Mexico and the Southwest region—but for best consideration, applicants are encouraged to apply by Friday, February 24. My thanks to Regent Sandra Begay for her leadership and advocacy in bringing this unique event to The University of New Mexico.

Celebrating UNM Day in Santa Fe

Last Monday, we had the privilege of [celebrating UNM Day at the State Capitol building in Santa Fe](#)—always a great opportunity to showcase our schools, campuses, and programs and highlight UNM's contributions to communities across our state. After three years away, it was wonderful to be allowed to have displays of our programs in the capitol rotunda and to share our stories with legislators and visitors who dropped by. I was especially honored to be on the floor of the House as our legislators approved House Memorial 14, officially [designating January 30, 2023, as "UNM Day."](#) My thanks to all our Lobo students, staff, faculty, and alumni who were in the capital representing UNM, advocating for our [legislative priorities](#), and demonstrating the far-reaching impacts of our university.

Wayfinder Offers Support for Lobos Experiencing or Witnessing Harm

A new campus website called [Wayfinder is making it easier for faculty and staff who experience instances of harm or harassment to learn about the support services and reporting options](#) available to them at UNM. The Division for Equity and Inclusion created the [Staff and Faculty Wayfinder](#) to help employees learn more about the support and reporting options available to those who have experienced or witnessed bullying, discrimination, harassment, violence or threat of violence, retaliation and threats to academic freedom. This project results from UNM's participation in the National Academies' [Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education](#), of which UNM has been an active member since 2019.

I am pleased we are making this confidential "resource navigator" available to our employees, which should help make our campus climate safer and more inclusive. I appreciate the leadership of our Division for Equity and Inclusion and IT Applications in developing this resource, as well as the many campus units, DEI committees, and staff and faculty volunteers who participated in its creation.

Career Expo Opens with Peak Attendance

Our annual Career Expo, hosted by UNM Career Services, looks to be [one of our largest ever, with a record number of employers ready to speak with Lobos](#) about jobs and internships. The expo, which takes place this [Thursday, February 9, in the SUB from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.](#), is our first in-person expo since 2020. The expo is open to both undergraduate and graduate students alike—and attendees are encouraged to come dressed to impress, with resume in hand, since many employers will be ready to hire on the spot. To help make sure everyone can be prepared to shine at the event, Career Services will also offer [two days of workshops](#) on February 7 and 8, including sessions on resume writing and tips for successfully navigating the career expo.

Global Education Hosts Study Abroad Fair

The University of New Mexico has a long tradition of encouraging and supporting students who wish to study abroad, and our [Global Education Office \(GEO\)](#) is always busy developing, promoting, and implementing international education initiatives across our campus and around the world. Lobos interested in studying abroad are invited to attend [GEO's semiannual Study Abroad Fair](#), where you can find information and guidance on global education opportunities and cultural exchange. The fair will be held in the SUB Atrium on Tuesday, February 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., plenty of time to come learn more about the critical role international education plays in fostering mutual understanding and how you can be ready to study abroad in [ten easy steps](#).

Give Back During BeKind UNM Week

Our annual [BeKind UNM Week begins next Monday, February 13](#), a time for spreading kindness and giving back to those in need in our community. Among the week's notable events are a [Teddy Bear Toss](#) at the Lobo men's and women's home basketball games on the 14th and the 16th, where fans are encouraged to bring a new stuffed animal to toss onto the floor of The Pit at the half, benefiting the Albuquerque Police Department and Albuquerque Fire and Rescue. On Wednesday, February 15, all Lobos are invited to the SUB Atrium from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Kindness Carnival, where you can donate food and toiletries for the Lobo Food Pantry. For more information, visit the [BeKind UNM website](#).

Alemán Named Interim Dean of Graduate Studies

I am pleased to welcome Professor Jesse Alemán to his [new role as the interim dean of Graduate Studies](#), where he will lead this important academic administrative unit through July 2023. A professor of English and a Presidential Teaching Fellow, Dr. Alemán has previously served as acting dean of Graduate Studies, and I am grateful to him for his continued leadership at this pivotal time.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President