



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



October 2, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos --

It's autumn in New Mexico, which means shorter days, longer sleeves, the smell of roasting green chile in the air, and hot air balloons dotting our skies. Starting this fall, one of the balloons you'll see overhead will be [UNM's official hot air balloon, Cherry on Top, which made its first public appearance this morning](#) on Johnson Field in front of more than 250 Lobos. While the wind made it impossible for our students to take the tethered balloon rides we'd hoped for, it was still exciting to see our balloon fill with the heat from its propane burners and slowly rise up against a beautiful New Mexico sunrise.

We are delighted to partner with [Rainbow Ryders](#), founded and headed by UNM alumnus Scott Appleman, who will own, operate, and maintain Cherry on Top as part of his regular fleet of more than 40 balloons. Cherry on Top will be one of the more than 500 balloons taking part in this year's [Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta](#) from October 7-15, and will be featured at the [Diner en Rouge: Sip and Savor](#) event on October 19, as part of this year's [UNM Homecoming Week](#). You can also see the latest on Cherry on Top on [its Instagram page](#).

I was pleased to see so many of our Lobo students turn up in the early morning light to celebrate the debut of our balloon. I also want to give a special shout out to our Communications & Marketing Team, our catering crew, and the members of our spirit squads and marching band for their hard work and help in making the event truly special.

Balloon season is here, so keep watching the skies!

UNM Gives United Way Campaign Officially Kicks Off

The University of New Mexico is [proud to kick off its annual UNM Gives United Way Campaign](#), one of the best ways you can give back to the greater Lobo community. The campaign, which officially began yesterday, on Sunday, October 1, and runs through Thursday, November 30, provides the perfect opportunity for our Lobo employees to make a donation to the [United Way of North Central New Mexico](#), which has been serving individuals and communities in need since 1934. This year's campaign features some familiar events, like our [Salsa Showdown](#), as well as our new [Change for Change](#) fundraiser. Between October 2 and October 16, participating UNM departments vie to see who can collect the most change in their change jars—and the two departments with the most donations will win a pizza party, with the food delivered personally by me and members of my leadership team.

We're also offering [bi-weekly prizes](#) where your donation automatically enters you in a chance to win a \$100 [UNM Bookstore](#) gift card, two tickets to the [men's Lobo-Aggie basketball game](#), a [Spring 2024 World of Wellness pass](#), or two [Art Studio Passes](#). Now through the end of November, you can [make a pledge to the United Way of North Central New Mexico](#). Every donation matters.

UNM has been a proud supporter of the United Way of North Central New Mexico for nearly three decades—and last year, our efforts raised more than \$400,000 for our community. These funds support programs that create a solid foundation for individuals and families and provide young people with the assistance they need to succeed in school now and in the workforce tomorrow.

For more on the campaign, visit [UNM Gives](#). And thank you for whatever you choose to give.

Cultivating a Culture of Safety

As an institution, [The University of New Mexico remains committed to the safety and security of the entire Lobo community](#). As part of our ongoing effort to reduce the number of work-related injuries on our campuses, UNM's [Environmental Health & Safety Department](#) (EHS) is assessing the progress of UNM's safety culture. This evaluation will begin with [a survey](#), followed by focus groups, interviews, and site visits. Results of the assessment will help us evaluate the progress we've made in fostering a safety culture at The University of New Mexico and identify areas where we have more work to do. Your participation in the survey is anonymous and is one of the best tools we have for learning more about what you think about safety on our campus. The survey is available for all faculty, staff, and paid student employees through Friday, October 13 in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#). For more information, please visit the EHS [Culture of Safety webpage](#).

Congratulations to the 2023 Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research Award Winners

As New Mexico's only Research 1 institution, there's always something fascinating going on in our laboratories and classrooms, especially when great faculty and students work together on innovative research that can change lives and change the world. Each year, the [UNM Office of the Vice President for Research](#) and the [Undergraduate Research, Arts and Design Network](#) present the [Faculty-Mentored Undergraduate Research Award](#) to an outstanding undergraduate researcher and their faculty research mentor, based upon the demonstration of a strong research partnership. [This year's winning team](#) is Yolanda Lin, an associate professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, and Anistasia Baca, a Spring 2023 graduate with a degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Statistics, who were honored for their nearly two-year research collaboration to help increase flood resiliency in Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo. Congratulations to this year's inspiring and award-winning team!

CETI Celebrates Twenty Years of Innovation

Twenty years ago, UNM's [Center for Evolutionary and Theoretical Immunology](#) (CETI) brought together an interdisciplinary group of scientists, including immunologists, parasitologists, theoreticians, and computer scientists, from UNM and Los Alamos National Laboratory to advance research into immune systems. Later this week, [CETI is celebrating its innovations and the impact it has made since 2003](#), as well as the people who have been integral to these successes. I'm looking forward to joining CETI at its celebration on October 6 as we look back at two decades of success, and look forward to CETI continuing with the leadership and creativity that has kept the center responsive to the needs of countless communities in our state, and beyond. Here's to another 20 years!

Lobo Alumni “Smell the Love”

And finally, another sure sign of Fall is seeing our alumni across the nation celebrate green chile roasting season and prepare for [UNM's 2023 homecoming week](#) with terrific gatherings, fundraisers, and other events. Over the weekend, our [Alumni Association](#) hosted its very first UNM Alumni “Smell the Love” Green Chile Roast in front of Hodgin Hall, giving the entire Lobo community an opportunity to enjoy great food and music while stocking up on their roasted green chile for the long winter—and all benefitting Lobo student scholarships and other initiatives. Similar events take place at [UNM Alumni Associations across the country](#) throughout the year, as our Lobo family of alumni, more than 200,000 strong, continue to give back to the university and to their communities.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President