



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



March 13, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Welcome to Spring Break 2023! Walk across any of our campuses, and you'll see the sure signs of Spring returning as grass begins to fleck with green and the early blooming flowers, trees, and desert plants are surging to show their colors. And with the onset of Daylight Savings Time—you did remember to set your clocks forward one hour on Sunday, right?—you've got sunshine extending even later into the evening, letting you enjoy the outdoors just a little bit longer.

With many of our students away, our campuses are certain to be quieter this week, so I hope you'll find time to catch up on matters of importance to you, whether it's cleaning out your inbox at work or doing some Spring cleaning at home or something else. I also always like to point out that this is a great time to explore any of [New Mexico's National Parks, monuments, trails, or historic sites](#), or some of our 35 beautiful State Parks.

Wherever you may be this week, I hope you're enjoying your Spring Break—and if you're on campus, here's to a productive week.

Happy Spring, Lobos!

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement to be Lifted for Most Lobos, Effective Today

The Lobo community has demonstrated incredible strength and resilience as we have adapted to the challenges we have faced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and well-being of our community has always been our highest priority, and I am grateful for the thoughtful conversations with UNM administrative leaders, as well as the questions and feedback received from the greater Lobo community that informed the [COVID-19 vaccination information session](#).

After evaluating current public health guidance, and in consultation with our own medical and public health experts, The University of New Mexico will no longer **require** the COVID-19 primary vaccine series for students and employees, effective today. UNM Health and Health Sciences programs and clinical areas will continue to maintain their COVID-19 vaccine requirements. We continue to strongly recommend that the entire Lobo community should keep up to date with vaccinations, stay at home if sick, and follow [CDC guidelines](#) for all COVID-19 matters.

What this means in practice is:

- individuals with a hire date of March 13, 2023, or later are no longer required to provide proof of vaccination or apply for an exemption;

- students enrolling in classes after March 13, 2023, are no longer required to provide proof of vaccination or apply for an exemption; and
- UNM will no longer require students, faculty, and staff to report COVID-19-positive tests through the online portal or upload COVID-19 vaccination records.

We have also retired the Bring Back the Pack website and instead are linking to [COVID-19 Updates and Answers](#) from the home page banner. Here you will find Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and be able to submit your own questions.

UNM Selected as New Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety

Some exciting news out of our School of Engineering, as it was announced last week that [The University of New Mexico has been selected as the home for a new center to study and address bicycle safety](#). The Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety is a Tier One University Transportation Center, [funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation](#), providing UNM with \$2 million annually for five years. The new center will be led by assistant professor Nicholas Ferenchak in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering. It will use existing virtual reality (VR) technology and research that Professor Ferenchak and his team have conducted over the last several years to make our roadways safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Congratulations to our entire team. I look forward to hearing what the center discovers over the next five years.

Search Underway for Chief Human Resources Officer

A search committee has been appointed to select [The University of New Mexico's next Chief Human Resources Officer](#), a key position at our institution as it provides strategic leadership and direction to all facets of human resources management. The search committee will begin reviewing applications immediately and [applications and nominations will continue to be accepted](#) until the position is filled. In order to assure the fullest consideration, candidates are encouraged to have complete applications submitted by Friday, April 21st.

Project ECHO Names New Director for NM Programs

For nearly two decades, [Project ECHO](#), UNM Health and Health Science's internationally renowned tele-mentoring program, has been committed to bringing its expertise to communities around the planet, starting with the needs of the citizens of New Mexico. I am delighted that [Andrea Botero-Tompkins, a longtime New Mexico health care leader and team member at Project ECHO, has been named Project ECHO's director of New Mexico Programs](#). She will oversee 33 ECHO health care programs focused on New Mexicans, while also working to promote equity and inclusivity across all Project ECHO projects. Her leadership and passion, along with her long-term knowledge of our state, will make an immediate difference in delivering UNM's brand of compassionate care to the communities across New Mexico where it is needed the most. Congratulations on your new position, Andrea.

COEHS Provides New Route to Teacher Certification

Continuing in its ongoing efforts to address New Mexico's teacher shortage, and consistent with our UNM

2040 goal to Advance New Mexico, [UNM's College of Education & Human Sciences \(COEHS\) has established a new route to the classroom for aspiring teachers](#), permitting those with bachelor's and/or master's degrees to earn teacher licensure with a new graduate certificate from [UNM's Teacher Education, Educational Leadership and Policy Department](#). This new 21-hour certificate will allow New Mexico's schools to tap into our state's committed experts as a source for new teachers, whether it's clearing a path to certification for a Los Alamos National Laboratories scientist to teach physics to high school students or permitting an MBA to move more quickly from the boardroom to the classroom to teach math. I am so encouraged by this new road to certification, which will help bring highly skilled content experts into classrooms across our state.

On a related note, I am pleased that UNM's [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) was [just awarded designation as a Level 3 certified tutor training program](#) by the [College Reading and Learning Association](#). This is a master-level certification, the highest possible achievement, and I appreciate the hard work and care that has gone into attaining it.

Welcoming New Regents, Officers

On behalf of the entire Lobo community, I am pleased to welcome the newest members of the [University of New Mexico Board of Regents](#), **Paul Blanchard** and **Paula Tackett**. At this morning's meeting, the Board of Regents selected their officers for the coming year, naming Kim Sanchez Rael as Chair, Jack L. Fortner as Vice Chair, and Robert L. Schwartz as Secretary-Treasurer. New committee assignments have also been made, and I, along with the administration, am eager to work with our Board to continue making UNM a successful, thriving and impactful institution. I would also like to thank our outgoing regents, Doug Brown and Sandra Begay, for their hard work and commitment to The University of New Mexico. It has been a privilege serving the Lobo community with you.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President