



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



May 8, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos---

For our nearly 3,000 Lobos who are completing their degrees this week as our [Spring Class of 2023](#), my most sincere congratulations--and welcome to the [Lobo Alumni family](#). This is an exciting time for our graduates and their friends and families who have supported them along the way. You are truly an [inspiration to us all](#).

We are grateful that The University of New Mexico has been your school of choice; your time here as scholars, researchers, artists, athletes, and leaders has helped make UNM a place where each of us truly defines all of us. I encourage each of you to continue to strive for excellence, to live boldly, and to apply your innovative spirit to the opportunities and challenges that await you.

Many of us will be attending college, school, and department recognition events in the upcoming days, culminating with the [Spring Class of 2023 commencement](#) on Saturday, May 13, beginning at 9 a.m. in University Arena. I am excited about sharing these momentous occasions together, and I am looking forward to hearing from our keynote speaker, New Mexico's Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales. For those who cannot attend in person, we will live-stream the ceremony on [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), and on UNM's [graduation website](#).

It has been our privilege to help you on your journey from student to graduate to Lobo alumni. On Saturday, you join the ranks of more than 214,000 active Lobo alumni around the world. Our UNM Alumni Association is here to help our graduates stay in touch with the friends they have made and connect them with other Lobos in their communities. Whether you continue to forge a path here in New Mexico or explore opportunities around the world, you will always be a part of the Lobo family.

For the rest of our students, this is a big week for you as well, as we head into the home stretch of the Spring 2023 semester. I expect that most of our students are busy with exams, finishing projects and papers, and getting ready for the summer. Good luck with your finals, Lobos; you've worked hard to get here.

Finally, I want to extend a very special thank you to our world-class faculty and amazing staff, who have challenged our students to be curious, courageous, and compassionate. For those students who will be returning, and to those who will join me here throughout the summer, thank you for your tireless efforts during the semester. I look forward to seeing you over the next few months or upon your return in the fall.

Congratulations to the Class of 2023 and Go Lobos!

## College Basic Needs in New Mexico Highlighted

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. Expanding upon the original UNM Basic Needs study in 2020, the College Basic Needs Survey is a collaboration led by the UNM Basic Needs Project, the Governor's Food Initiative, and the New Mexico Higher Education Department, with 27 colleges and universities across the state participating. In fact, New Mexico is a national leader in launching a statewide study of food and housing insecurities across higher education institutions and is innovative in its inclusion of faculty and staff.

On Friday, our Basic Needs Project research team [presented its findings](#) to a full room of colleagues and students from across the state, with the results reflecting that 67% of the individuals who completed the survey experienced some form of basic needs insecurity. We were honored to be joined by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Secretary of Higher Education Stephanie Rodriguez, Senator Ben Ray Lujan and UNM Regents, who all strongly reaffirmed their commitment to effect meaningful change when it comes to food and housing insecurity at our public institutions. We appreciate the state's investment in college student hunger—which also includes the funding that made this Basic Needs Survey possible. I especially want to thank those students who have shared their stories and been a part of this important research.

It is our hope that leaders will use the data from this report to devise evidence-based approaches for meeting the food and housing needs not just of students, but also of faculty and staff at colleges and universities across the state. Their basic needs reflect our basic needs as institutions of higher education, and this statewide study will help all of us better understand and respond to their experiences.

### **Celebrating the Winners of Teaching Excellence Awards**

As New Mexico's flagship university, The University of New Mexico is many things to many people at once—but at its heart, it's a place for expanding minds, encouraging exploration, and inspiring imaginations. That puts our faculty at the very center of our mission as a university—and they deliver every day. Last week, I had the privilege of helping [present this year's Teaching Excellence Awards](#), selected by the Faculty Senate Teaching Enhancement Committee and the Center for Teaching and Learning from nominations across our campuses, and bestowed on some of our most dedicated and creative educators. I am always particularly proud to personally present the Presidential Teaching Fellowship each year, which helps build a core group of faculty who ensure teaching excellence by sharing their expertise with the university community. Congratulations to this year's winners, and thank you for your commitment to your students, your colleagues, and The University of New Mexico.

### **Land Acknowledgement Unveiled in SUB**

Since its first use in 2018 and formal approval in 2020, our Indigenous Peoples' Land and Territory Acknowledgment—honoring the stewards of the land on which The University of New Mexico sits and extending our gratitude to the original peoples of New Mexico, past, present, and future—has become a foundational part of our identity as Lobos, read at the beginning of nearly every gathering or event. I am proud that it has also become—quite literally—a permanent part of our very infrastructure. Last week, I attended the [unveiling of our Land Acknowledgement on the wall of our Student Union Building at the very heart of our campus](#), where it will serve as a vibrant reminder of our roots and our ongoing responsibilities.

## Globally Engaged Research Awards Winners

As one of only 146 Carnegie classified Research 1 institutions, curiosity is an inextricable part of our Lobo DNA. But we've also been federally designated as a [Fulbright Hispanic Serving Institution Leader](#), which means that we regularly engage with students from around the globe. That makes it particularly exciting when our [Office of the Vice President for Research](#) partners each year with the [UNM Global Education Office](#) to present the [Globally Engaged Research Awards](#), highlighting the international research conducted by UNM students and faculty. These awards, presented to faculty and to graduate and undergraduate students, emphasize our university's commitment to dynamic international partnerships to solve a wide range of global issues and prepare a new generation of scholars to work and live in an interconnected and rapidly evolving world. Congratulations to Faculty Award winner and Professor of Economics **Alok Bohara**; Graduate Award winners **Beau Murphy** and **Esther Elia**; and **Tara Falce**, winner of the Deborah Rifenburg Memorial Undergraduate Award. The four winners will be formally recognized during Research & Discovery Week in November 2023.

## UNM Clinical Trial Studies Alternate Treatments for Opioid Exposed Newborns

Every 18 minutes, an infant is born in the United States suffering from opioid withdrawal, a condition that traditionally relies on treatment with medication. As part of a National Institutes of Health-funded study, [Lobo researchers in UNM Health and Health Sciences explored the effectiveness of alternate treatments for opioid exposed newborns](#), most notably an *Eat, Sleep, Console (ESC)* approach, which was shown to decrease the need for medication and to get babies home from the hospital earlier. With our focus on substance use disorders as one of our institutional research priorities, I am proud to see our researchers combine their expertise with the compassionate care that defines UNM Health. Our research team is now hoping to bring ESC practices to other hospitals around our state, directly and immediately impacting lives in our communities for the better.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President