



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 12, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos --

In the coming days, we face the possibility that the U.S. Supreme Court may decide to restrict or prohibit colleges and universities from considering ethnicity and race in their admissions processes, also known as race-conscious admissions or affirmative action.

Inclusivity and diversity are reflected in our distinct UNM identity – and are values and practices that I deeply care about and have fought for throughout my career. That’s why when we say *each of us defines all of us*, we really mean it. The varied lived experiences, voices, ideas, and dreams that make up each Lobo’s “I” consistently make our “we” stronger, prouder, and unstoppable.

The University *for* New Mexico fully and openly embraces the cultural diversity that has made our university, and our state, such a unique place to live and learn and grow for generations. With one of the most diverse campuses in the country, we strive to give our students a vital sense of belonging to a community that understands, values, and respects them.

I will share a more in-depth perspective after the Supreme Court makes its ruling and we have evaluated any direct impact it would have on our programs. Regardless of the Court’s ruling on affirmative action, I can assure you that UNM will remain true to our values and our commitment to inclusive diversity, including ethnicity and race, as fundamental tenets of the Lobo experience. Every member of the UNM community—past, present, and future—belongs and deserves to be here. We will actively continue to recruit, admit, and support a highly diverse and vibrant student population.

## Shine On, CASA Moon

With the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) planning to send astronauts back to the moon for the first time in more than 50 years, an interdisciplinary group of Lobo researchers has been selected as [one of only five teams to support the scientific research and preparation required for this historic mission](#).

UNM’s Center for Advanced Sample Analysis of Astromaterials from the Moon and Beyond (CASA Moon) will receive \$7.5 million over the next five years to study the lunar crust through lunar sample analysis. This incredible team, selected from a pool of 14 competitive applicants from across the country, consists of researchers in the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences, the Institute of Meteoritics, the Center for Stable Isotopes, the Department of Biology, and the Department of Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering. CASA Moon evolved from the [Sustainable Space Research Team](#), one of UNM’s 10 Level One Grand Challenge teams—a group committed to looking out into the universe to help us better understand life here on Earth.

## **Lobo Researchers Lead in Innovation, Collaboration**

While we're on the subject, Lobo researchers are also [one of only three teams in the nation to be awarded funding by the Department of Defense \(DoD\)](#) under its Defense Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (DEPSCoR) Capacity Building competition. The funding from the two-year \$1 million grant will advance the research ecosystem at UNM by boosting resources dedicated to photonics-based system-level experimental Quantum Information Science and Engineering (QISE). Funding will also support the creation and implementation of a new interdisciplinary graduate degree program in QISE at UNM.

Additionally, I want to spotlight the accomplishments of assistant professor Nathan Jackson in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Professor Jackson recently received not one prestigious research award, but two, [earning \\$500,000 over five years from the National Science Foundation \(NSF\) CAREER Award](#) for his work on microsystem energy harvesting and [\\$800,000 over four years from the Army Research Office](#) to develop new functional thin films that could be used in microsystem sensors. Congratulations, Professor Jackson; your hard work is truly inspiring.

And finally, congratulations to Joey Sorenson, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Physics & Astronomy at The University of New Mexico, who has been [awarded the U.S. Department of Energy and the Istituto Nazionale de Fisica Nucleare \(DOE-INFN\) Summer Students Exchange Scholarship](#), one of only 11 recipients in 2023. This award promotes research and collaboration between student scientists from the United States and Italy, and Sorenson will travel to Genoa, Italy, in September and October 2023 to work with INFN's [Large Hadron Collider](#) (LHC) and [ATLAS group](#). What a remarkable accomplishment—and enjoy your work in Italy.

## **Agoyo Appointed Executive Director for Student Support**

Following a nationwide competitive search, longtime Lobo leader [Pam Agoyo has been appointed as the new executive director for Student Support](#) in the UNM Division of Student Affairs, starting July 1. As the director of this newly created office, Pam will oversee our commitment to equitable, student-centered practices that lead to a high-quality, research-informed, and aligned student experience. She will also oversee our various student resource centers, the Community Engagement Center, and College Enrichment and Outreach Programs. I have the pleasure of working regularly with Pam, who serves as my special assistant for American Indian Affairs, and I am looking forward to her leadership and infectious enthusiasm as the inaugural executive director for Student Support.

## **UNM Health Looks to Expand Care for Transgender Patients**

As home to our state's only academic health center, ensuring all New Mexicans have access to quality health care services is a foundational principle of UNM Health. As Pride Month continues, we are proud to affirm our conviction that a quality health care system includes [providing compassionate care for transgender New Mexicans](#). Dr. Molly McClain, who presently leads the Deseo clinic at the UNM Southeast Heights Family Health Clinic, has been providing ongoing support and services to transgender families, and, given new protections enacted by [New Mexico state law](#), is working to bring much-needed services to remote, rural, or underserved areas.

## Lobo Athletes Earn 15 All-America Honors at NCAA Championships

What a great run—literally—by our Lobo Track & Field team this season, as they wrapped up their year with an appearance at the NCAA Championships over the weekend. [Twelve of our athletes earned 15 All-America honors](#), including First Team All-Americans **Amelia Mazza-Downie**, who placed fourth in 10,000 Meters, and **Elise Thorner**, who placed fifth in the 3,000 Meter Steeplechase. Congratulations to Coach Joe Franklin and the entire team for a terrific end to an exciting season.

## Celebrate Juneteenth

Next Monday, June 19, marks 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 was over](#) and that the Emancipation Proclamation had freed nearly four million from chattel slavery. The University of New Mexico is proud to celebrate 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.

Please enjoy the long weekend away from the office and campus; to those employees who work in critical areas, I appreciate your continued hard work and dedication to our institution and your role in continuing our mission of excellence. I will resume my weekly message on the following Monday, June 26.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President