



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 30, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos--

I always look forward to commemorating [Black History Month](#) as a time of dedicated reflection as we celebrate the Black experience. This year is even more special, as this is the first Black History Month we're celebrating since the establishment of our new [Department of Africana Studies](#), marking the beginning of an exciting new era for the Black experience at The University of New Mexico.

When it comes to recognizing the accomplishments of Black Americans and celebrating Black history, UNM has been fortunate to find itself guided and inspired by generations of proactive leaders. Six years before the formal creation of Black History Month in 1976, UNM had already taken steps to recognize the accomplishments of Black Americans. In 1970, under the leadership and collective effort of students from the Black Student Union, what was then called the "Afro Studies program" was born, one of the first such programs in the nation. Over the next decade, Afro Studies would grow and evolve, becoming African American Studies in 1982 and, by 1993, becoming a degree-granting program. Today, we are proud that Africana Studies has full departmental status, adding to our university's intellectual leadership and inspiring the next generation of innovative scholars.

Throughout February, UNM's [African American Student Services](#) will be [hosting a number of special events to commemorate Black History Month](#), starting with the traditional flag-raising ceremony in front of Scholes Hall at noon on Wednesday, February 1, and lectures and performances from the [Langston Hughes Project](#) on February 2-4. UNM Health Sciences is also presenting several [lectures and programs throughout the month](#).

As we strive as a nation for equality and justice, Black History Month provides a much-needed opportunity to recognize and acknowledge that our history as a nation is multi-cultural, that the Black experience is the American experience, and that there is unity to be found in our plurality. And yet, as recent events have made clear, we still have much to do, much to learn, and much to accomplish together. Even as we celebrate Black history, it is appropriate to use this opportunity to contemplate our common humanity and compassion, and strive to live up to the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Darkness cannot drive out the darkness; only light can do that," he wrote. "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." May we all open our hearts to light and love.

At The University of New Mexico, we are grateful for the countless Black students, faculty, and staff and other members of our Lobo family who make our lives richer, and who bring their stories, experiences, and expertise to our campuses.

RFPs Sought for Grand Challenges Level 2 Teams

The launch of our [Grand Challenges](#) initiative was a transformative moment for The University of New Mexico—and for our state. Our Grand Challenges teams strive to address issues of immediate importance for the state of New Mexico. Our research findings have brought us closer to better understanding the world around us and our students have benefitted from their engagement with various projects conducted within the teams.

Four years after launching our first three multi-disciplinary Grand Challenges—and five months after announcing [ten new Level 1 Concept Teams](#)--I am delighted [we are now accepting applications for Level 2 teams](#). Successful applicants will receive funding needed to implement their plans, with a focus on answering critical research questions, building capacity for interdisciplinary research, and communicating opportunities and outcomes to the broader public. Interdisciplinary research teams that are interested in becoming a Level 2 Grand Challenges team are encouraged to respond to the Request for Proposals by Monday, May 1, 2023. The expanded UNM Grand Challenges program will continue to foster a culture of research collaboration with broad engagement of researchers at all career stages.

Green Zone Training Available

I'm proud that The University of New Mexico has again been [rated as a Gold Level "Military Friendly" university—and ranks eighth among nearly 150 Research 1 institutions](#)--recognizing that our commitment to veterans and their families is second to none among most of our fellow institutions. One of the best tools we have for ensuring our campus remains open and accommodating to veterans is our regular Green Zone training, which prepares UNM faculty, staff and students to better understand the experience of veterans, service members and their families. In coordination with our Veteran and Military Resource Center, my office will be holding a [Green Zone training on Friday, February 3](#), from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the SUB Trailblazer/Spirit Room. If you'd like to participate, please [register here](#).

UNM's First Big Give is February 28

Mark your calendars now for our inaugural Big Give campaign, our comprehensive fundraising collaboration combining The University of New Mexico Foundation's (UNMF) Giving Tuesday, Athletics' Lobos Give Day, and UNMF Faculty and Staff campaigns into a single fundraising effort. The Big Give will officially launch on Lobo Day 2023—that's February 28—and will be open for 1,889 minutes. Over that span of 31 hours, Lobo alumni and friends from across the globe will be able to support various academic, healthcare, athletic, cultural, and student programs that make up The University of New Mexico's diverse community. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Online Nursing, Engineering Programs Earn National Rankings

As we endeavor at The University of New Mexico to make our programs more widely accessible, I am pleased to see some of our most popular online programs nationally ranked in the latest U.S. News & World Report 2023 Best Online Programs survey. In its January 24 survey, U.S. News & World Report ranked [UNM's College of Nursing's Master of Science program at number 21](#) in the nation, while the [UNM School of Engineering's master's program retained its position at number 61](#). The latest survey also saw our [Internet of](#)

[Things master's program](#) in computer engineering make its debut at number 31 of the Best Online Master's in Computer Information Technology Programs. I am pleased to see our programs making the list and climbing in the rankings.

UNM Newsroom to Begin Series on Campus Safety

As an urban campus sprawled across hundreds of acres in the heart of a metropolitan area, The University of New Mexico faces unique challenges when it comes to safety. Just as universities and communities across the nation work to address comparable questions about crime, safety, and policing, UNM continues to work with the greater Lobo community to explore both common sense and innovative practices for violence prevention and safety, from campus environmental design to digital safety. Beginning this week, the UNM Newsroom will be running a series of articles about the university's ongoing efforts to address campus safety, including providing the latest information on initiatives like our Campus Safety Plan, LoboAlerts, and infrastructure improvements like Blue Light Phones, security cameras, and education and preparation programs.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President