



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 13, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Among our greatest assets are our alumni—more than 200,000 Lobos around the world, representing our university with enthusiasm and pride, and bringing to their respective communities the Lobo standards of excellence and compassion. Our alumni can be found [serving as Cabinet secretaries](#), [running museums for the Smithsonian](#), [winning Grammy Awards](#) and [Pulitzer Prizes](#) -- and, as of January 10, 2023, serving as Vice President for the Navajo Nation.

The entire Lobo community sends its congratulations to UNM alumna Richelle Montoya, a member of the Ta'neeszahnii clan in Torreon, New Mexico, who was recently sworn in as Vice President of the Navajo Nation, making her the first woman elected to the position. Vice President Montoya studied human services, criminology, psychology, sociology and Native American studies here at UNM, and made a special point of taking advantage of our Indigenous Studies program to expand her understanding of all tribes. “It was a really good experience,” she said of her time as a Lobo. “I have loved UNM since I was a little girl. You know, it’s always been the Lobo.”

I encourage you to take a moment to [read the exclusive interview](#) with Vice President Montoya that was just published in the UNM Newsroom, where you can find out more about her life in New Mexico, her time at UNM, her passion as an advocate, how she overcame challenges in her life, and how she used those lessons to inform her future. Finally, I hope you’ll also be inspired by her advice to all Lobos to “open your arms and make sure you take everything in.”

Students Invited to Complete Higher Learning Commission Survey

As an accredited state institution, The University of New Mexico is regularly evaluated by the [Higher Learning Commission](#) (HLC) to ensure we remain in compliance with all [foundational requirements](#). While we’re scored on factors such as how well we comply with federal standards, to us, one of the most important criteria for determining our success as an institution is how well we meet the academic demands of our Lobo students. Ensuring a [supportive student experience](#) is so important, in fact, that we made it one of our five institutional goals under [UNM 2040](#). I invite all UNM students to [complete a short survey for the Higher Learning Commission](#), which provides you with the opportunity to comment on your experiences as a student at The University of New Mexico. The survey is open through February 15 and will take only five minutes of your time. Your answers are submitted anonymously and unless you provide identifying information in your comments, neither HLC nor UNM will have access to your identity. I appreciate your taking the time to complete this voluntary survey.

Poet Alumnus Presents Reading and Master Class

UNM is proud to welcome back one of our distinguished alumni, the [National Poetry Series Award](#) winning poet Jake Skeets, who will be hosted on campus this week by the Creative Writing Program for [two events open to the entire Lobo community](#). On Thursday, Skeets will read from his poetry at 7 p.m. at the School of Architecture and Planning; on Friday afternoon at 2 p.m., he will lead a poetry master class in Dane Smith Hall. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage with a true master of the art and craft of poetry, and we are delighted to have Jake Skeets back at The University of New Mexico, if only for two days.

ASUNM Co-founds “Rivals for Relief” to Provide Humanitarian Aid

As part of a coordinated effort to raise awareness and provide humanitarian relief to migrants and refugees at the southern border, the Associated Students at the University of New Mexico (ASUNM) has joined with student government leaders at downstate rivals New Mexico State University (NMSU) and the University of Texas-El Paso (UTEP) to [create the Rivals for Relief initiative](#). With a fundraising goal of \$30,000, the three student organizations are [collecting donations through a portal supported by the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico](#) and will use the funding to provide grants to nonprofits assisting migrants and those seeking asylum in the United States. My thanks to ASUNM for their ongoing efforts to reach out to their counterparts at regional institutions for this important show of unity.

UNM Encourages Young Women in Orthopedics and Engineering

The University of New Mexico is proud to support the [Perry Initiative](#) and its mission to inspire young women to be leaders in the fields of orthopedic surgery and engineering—two fields in which women are sorely under-represented. On April 1, we'll be [hosting a one-day, hands-on outreach event](#) for high school students, offering young women an opportunity to perform mock orthopedic surgeries working side by side with female engineers and surgeons, attend talks from female mentors in both careers, and engage in experimental testing of repaired bones. This is UNM's tenth year hosting the Perry Initiative, which can serve as a pipeline for young women to enter our own academic programs. Interested applicants may apply using the [form on the Perry Initiative website](#)—and we'll see you here on April 1.

Zoom Forum on Vaccination Mandate Set for Thursday

I appreciate all the questions and comments that have been submitted by the Lobo community in advance of UNM's [virtual forum at noon on Thursday, February 16](#) to discuss the Administrative Mandate requiring the COVID-19 primary vaccine series and initial booster for all faculty, staff, and students. I'm looking forward to us all coming together for what I know will be an informative and constructive conversation.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President