



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 23, 2023

Good afternoon, Lobos --

At The University of New Mexico, our endless curiosity about our world compels us not only to pursue new ideas and experiences, but to explore and enhance existing knowledge. As New Mexico's only [Carnegie-designated Research 1 institution](#) — and among only 20 or so in the nation that is also a [Hispanic Serving Institution \(HSI\)](#) — infusing and cultivating that curiosity throughout everything we do is an inextricable part of our institutional DNA.

Just last week, for example, we were thrilled to learn that a project from The University of New Mexico has been selected for [funding under a U.S. Department of Energy \(DOE\) Bioenergy Technologies Office interagency agreement](#) with the Minority Serving Institution STEM Research & Development Consortium. This exciting project, led by researchers in our Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, is exploring new alternatives to the production of biofuel, with an eye on the sustainability of aviation, diesel, and marine fuels. We are honored to be a part of this project, which is part of DOE's effort to reduce barriers to entry for minority-serving institutions and increase research partnerships.

While advances in science or engineering may be the first that come to mind when you think of research, that's only part of our story—Lobo researchers are truly everywhere, conducting innovative research across disciplines and changing the way we look at the status quo. For a great example of this, look no further than research being coordinated by our Political Science Department and [UNM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research \(BBER\)](#) to [examine the costs and impact of modernizations to New Mexico's state legislature](#), including assessments of staffing, legislator compensation, and the scope and length of our legislative sessions. The report from our researchers in the Political Science Department is [available to review now](#); the report from BBER will be available shortly.

At UNM, [research is education](#)—and I am constantly inspired and amazed by the endless possibilities explored by our innovative researchers.

## **Africana Studies Kicks Off Black History Month**

Black History Month begins February 1, and our newly established [Department of Africana Studies](#) will formally mark the start of our campus-wide celebration on Saturday, January 28, at its [38th Black History Month Kickoff Brunch](#), featuring a keynote speech by scholar, writer, and editor Adolph Reed Jr., Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. The brunch will begin at 10:30 a.m. in the UNM SUB Ballroom, and [tickets for this highly-anticipated event are still available](#). This week will also feature a celebration of the life and work of the late Barbara Brown Simmons, UNM alumna and one of the founders of the Black studies program, and the first Black woman to graduate from the Law school and become a member of the New Mexico State Bar. The celebration will begin on Friday, January 27 at 5:15 p.m. at the

UNM Alumni Chapel. I'll have more to say about Black History Month next week, but I always look forward to this special month of dedicated reflection and appreciate the opportunity to raise our voices as one as we celebrate and commemorate the Black experience.

### **A Model for Success: UNM Navajo Student Leads by Example**

I am constantly encouraged by our Lobo students—part of the most engaged and diverse student bodies in the nation—who never fail to impress with their stories of perseverance, compassion, and sense of community. I was recently inspired by the story of Zachary Larry, a first-generation Navajo student in the UNM College of Population Health, who says he hopes his success in pursuing his degree will encourage other Native American students to follow in his footsteps. “I think other Native Americans seeing me or someone that looks like them gives them that sense of motivation to complete a higher degree,” Zachary says. “It’s really important for me to improve the quality of life for communities across the state, the country and even the entire world. Continuing my education puts me in that direction addressing these inequities people are facing.” I hope you’ll [take just a minute to read his story](#); you’re certain to be moved by all this remarkable Lobo has accomplished.

### **Continuing to Create a Sense of Place**

Right on schedule, improvements have been completed at the northwest corner of Central and Girard, removing barriers and replacing deteriorating infrastructure with desert landscaping, improved lighting, and a large UNM logo. These changes have [transformed the corner into a safer and more welcoming gateway to our Albuquerque campus](#), and highlight our special place on historic Route 66. I very much appreciate the leadership of the Associated Students at the University of New Mexico (ASUNM), which secured the funding back in 2020 for this much needed improvement to our campus.

### **UNM Hosts Hispanic Institute Youth Training**

The University of New Mexico is delighted to once again partner with the National Hispanic Institute (NHI) to [host the 2023 Lorenzo de Zavala \(LDZ\) Youth Legislative Session for New Mexico high school students](#). This year’s event will host 150 top students in a weeklong leadership experience on the UNM campus June 11-18, 2023, and spotlights the legacy of late U.S. Senator Dionisio “Dennis” Chavez. New Mexico high school sophomores and juniors are encouraged to promptly [submit their online application](#) for an incredible opportunity for personal growth and community engagement.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President