



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



January 8, 2024

Good afternoon, Lobos--

Happy 2024, and a warm *welcome back* to our Lobo faculty and staff! I hope you had a happy and healthy winter break and were able to find some time to relax and recharge for the return of our students for the beginning of the Spring 2024 semester. With classes starting in a week for most students—Tuesday, January 16, to be precise--I know there's plenty going on across our campuses, whether it's our faculty putting together final curricula and overseeing top-tier research, our staff keeping the university running seamlessly and effectively, or our medical professionals continuing to provide the Lobo brand of quality, compassionate healthcare. Thank you for all you do; it is a privilege to work with every one of you.

Here's to a successful Spring semester together and a safe and productive 2024.

## **New Mexico Legislative Session Begins January 16**

Tuesday, January 16 is not only the first day of the Spring 2024 semester, but it also marks the opening day of the [Second Session of the 56th New Mexico Legislature](#). This year, as with all even-numbered years, the 30-day legislative session will focus on the state budget and related issues, agency spending, and items placed on the legislative agenda at the request of the governor. We will be hosting our annual UNM Day at the Capitol on Monday, January 29, and we are looking forward to discussing [UNM's legislative priorities](#) with our lawmakers. We will continue to work closely with students, faculty, and staff to advocate for these priorities and provide engagement opportunities with legislators throughout the short session, which ends at noon on February 15.

UNM's [Office of Government and Community Relations](#) (OGCR), led by Chief Government Relations Officer Mike Puelle and his team, work diligently with the governor, legislators, and associated state staff to represent and defend the best interests of the UNM community and to keep the UNM community informed on bills and other activities that affect our students, staff, faculty, retirees, and patients. OGCR provides several ways to stay up to date on all legislation affecting UNM during the session, including an online UNM-related bill tracking service and a [listserv](#).

As always, The University of New Mexico is actively engaged in many important legislative issues at any given time. To ensure that UNM speaks with one strategic voice, I ask that you please coordinate any legislative requests and associated communications with our Office of Government and Community Relations.

## **Tickets Available Now for Black History Month Kickoff Brunch**

Black History Month officially begins on February 1, which means there's plenty of time to buy your tickets to our [Department of Africana Studies' 39th Black History Month Kickoff Brunch](#), set for Saturday, January 27 and featuring a keynote by Lobo alum and Executive Assistant United States Attorney for the District of New

Mexico **Aja Nicole Brooks**. The brunch begins at 10:30 a.m. in the SUB Ballroom, and tickets are [available for purchase now](#). Grab a seat—or a table—for one of UNM's most highly-anticipated events of the late winter season.

## Saluting the 2023 Gerald May Award Winners

One of my great privileges as President of The University of New Mexico is helping to select the recipients of the [Gerald W. May Awards](#), presented annually in conjunction with [UNM Staff Council](#), to staff members who have made significant contributions to the University. Each year, we ask for nominations for this prestigious award, which may be submitted by any UNM staff, faculty member, or student. I'm proud to announce that [the recipients of the 2023 Gerald W. May Award](#) are: **Anthony Gravagne**, senior machinist, Department of Physics & Astronomy; **Brian Kimura**, IT officer, College of Fine Arts; **Nick Royle**, manager, Special Activities, Facilities Management; **Theresa Sherman**, consultant, Employee and Organizational Development, Human Resources; and **Deborah Trevino**, marketing manager, Project ECHO. Congratulations to all our 2023 winners; you truly make our university community a better place.

## Celebrate the Memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This is a reminder that The University of New Mexico will be closed next Monday, January 15, to honor the life and legacy of one of our nation's most courageous, compassionate, and principled icons, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

As an undergraduate student in 1948, King wrote a column in the Morehouse College newspaper, the *Maroon Tiger*, positing that education has both practical and moral purposes. "The function of education," he wrote, "is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically . . . Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education."

At The University of New Mexico, an engaged education is one of our core values, built into our UNM 2040 goal of providing every Lobo student with a [transformative student experience](#). I hope you will take some time to reflect on how each of us might follow Dr. King's example to create and benefit from an environment of diverse experiences and dynamic learning, in which we are all inspired to explore new ideas, express opinions, draw conclusions, and find value in who we are as individuals and as Lobos.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President