



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



February 5, 2024

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 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 \(HSI\)](#)—innovation is part of our Lobo DNA, informing how we look at the world, and look at life.

Over the last few weeks alone, we've seen our Lobo researchers contemplating and exploring life on our planet and conditions in outer space. In the dynamic realm of volcanic research, Professor Tobias Fischer in UNM's Earth & Planetary Sciences Department has been working with colleagues at the University of Iceland to [measure carbon isotopes for a better understanding of magma dynamics during volcano eruptions](#), which Iceland has lately been experiencing with frightening regularity. These data can then be used to determine whether multiple eruptions in a region are related and drawing from the same underground source. Professor Fischer and his team have been using drones to measure carbon output from live eruptions--just another day at work on the perimeter of an active volcano!

Meanwhile, 250 miles above our heads, Lobo biology [professor David Hanson and his team are sending tomatoes into space](#), as part of project Trichoderma Associated Space Tomato Inoculation Experiment--or TASTIE--to learn more about growing sustainable food crops on the International Space Station (ISS). What happens in zero gravity when a plant can't tell up from down? And can a beneficial fungus on earth help tomatoes grow better without gravity? These are some of the questions Professor Hanson and his team hope to answer as part of our [Sustainable Space Research Grand Challenge](#).

At UNM, we know that [research is education](#). That's one of the many reasons why we encourage students to apply for participation in the [Undergraduate Research Training Initiative for Student Enhancement \(U-RISE\)](#), which supports students in pursuit of graduate education in biomedical research. You can also read more about the [research being conducted at our College of Arts and Sciences](#) by [looking through its latest impact report](#).

Whether we're working to return astronauts to the moon or preserving Native languages in New Mexico, I am constantly inspired by the endless possibilities explored by our innovative researchers.

## **Lobo Professors Develop First Tribal Government Textbook for Young Adults**

In a groundbreaking venture, a dedicated team of UNM Native American professors, led by American Studies Professor Jennifer Denetdale, is penning the [first tribal government textbook for young adults](#). Citing a lack of accurate and culturally resonant resources for Native students learning about government, Denetdale and her team decided it was time for a textbook aimed at providing a definitive narrative rooted in Navajo perspectives.

Supported by a \$170,000 grant from the Navajo Nation, their two-volume textbook, which will be published both in English and Diné, will span from the inception of the Diné people to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project, envisioned as a three-year endeavor, represents a transformative step towards empowering the next generation with an authentic understanding of their history and governance. Congratulations to our team for making history . . . literally.

### **Faculty Input Needed on AI Study**

Even as institutions around the world grapple with the impact and ethics of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on teaching, learning, and research, The University of New Mexico continues to lead in taking on these issues thoughtfully and deliberately. As part of a collaboration between UNM's University Libraries, Health Sciences & Informatics Center, and the Center for Teaching and Learning, [Lobo investigators are inviting faculty members across our campuses to share their insights through one-hour interviews](#), which will be used to help us develop institution-specific strategies for the broader implementation of generative AI. Interested faculty can [sign up here](#) to schedule an interview with our team.

### **Anthropology Department Highlights Black History Month**

As we continue to celebrate Black History Month in New Mexico and across the nation, [UNM's Department of Anthropology](#) has once again compiled a [comprehensive website of resources](#), including information on UNM's Black organizations, programs, faculty, and scholars. You'll also find plenty of information on events across our community, including [activities hosted by our African American Student Services](#) and webinars [hosted by the International African American Museum](#).

### **Emergency Notification System Will Be Tested on Tuesday**

This is a reminder that [UNM will be testing its emergency notification systems tomorrow at 11:02 a.m.](#) across all UNM campuses. This will include tests not only of our e-mail and text messaging systems, but also our sirens—so when you hear the sirens just after 11:00, it's all part of our regular testing of our notification system. We do this three times a year, including at the start of each semester as part of our ongoing efforts to keep our community informed and safe. Just to make sure there are no surprises, we'll send you a LoboAlert again at 10:45 a.m. tomorrow to remind you of the test coming up in 17 minutes.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President