



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



March 25, 2024

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Commencement for the Spring Class of 2024 is seven weeks away. That's closer than it seems, which is why we're already working hard to make sure everything about the big day is a success. For one thing, we've just confirmed [a fantastic commencement speaker: Lobo alum and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland](#), who made history as one of the first Native American women to serve in Congress, and again when she became the first Native American U.S. cabinet secretary.

We're also looking for volunteers to help celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates by making sure everything runs smoothly at University Arena on May 11. There are many volunteer positions available, and service time frames vary by position, ranging from 7 a.m. until the end of the ceremony. Anyone interested in volunteering can view the positions and times available and sign up here--and thank you, as always, for giving your time.

Have a successful Spring semester, and we'll see you at commencement on May 11!

## **Sauder Appointed Interim General Counsel**

With the departure of General Counsel Loretta Martinez at the end of this month, I am pleased to announce the appointment of Scot Sauder as Interim General Counsel, effective April 1st. Scot brings a wealth of experience to this role, including almost ten years serving as Deputy University Counsel and previous experience leading the Office of University Counsel in an interim capacity. He has broad expertise across all aspects of the university and strong relationships with university leadership across campus and with our Board of Regents. I am thankful to Scot for his willingness to lead OUC through this period of transition. I also want to thank Loretta for her service to UNM and wish her the best of luck in her new role. She has made a significant impact at UNM during her years here; she will be missed! I will be launching a national search in the coming weeks and will keep the campus community updated as the search progresses.

## **FY25 State Budget Includes Increase for Higher Education**

On March 6, the Governor completed her final actions on the budget and other related bills passed by state policymakers for FY25. In the course of the 2024 "short" 30-day legislative session, legislators approved a budget of \$1.4 billion for the Higher Education Department and all institutions statewide, an increase in recurring spending of 6.4% from FY24. Also enacted were important new investments supporting the sustainability of the state's major higher education scholarship programs, as well as the creation of the New Mexico Health Care Authority, to become fully operational July 1.

UNM successfully influenced many significant policy bills and appropriations over the course of the session in alignment with [UNM 2040](#) and UNM's [FY25 legislative priorities](#). In the end, UNM Central Campus and branch campuses combined will benefit from a 3% increase, totaling \$8.8 million, in recurring appropriations, while

Health Sciences received an increase of 8% (totaling \$11.4 million). For more information on appropriations and other significant policy changes affecting UNM, please see the [2024 State Legislative Session Final Report](#), prepared by our Office of Government and Community Relations.

## It's a Match for Medical and Pharmacy Students

On the third Friday of every March, graduating medical students across the nation learn where they will be training for residency for the next several years. Because residency is where doctors train in a specialty, "The Match" has a major impact on the student's future. Last Friday was Match Day for our students, and one hundred percent of our School of Medicine graduates were placed in residencies around the world, with nearly half matched with The University of New Mexico. While College of Pharmacy graduates aren't required to enter residency to become practicing pharmacists, approximately 30 percent of the College's graduating class choose to pursue post-graduate training, with a match rate of 82 percent—exceeding the national match rate of 74 percent. Congratulations to all our graduates for your successful matches! For those of you who matched here, we're delighted to keep you. And for those matching elsewhere, they're lucky to have you.

## Celebrating 20 Years of the Native American Studies Degree

The University of New Mexico commemorates a significant milestone as the [Bachelor of Arts in Native American Studies celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2024](#). On March 26, the [Department of Native American Studies](#) hosts the 20th Viola F. Cordova Memorial Symposium themed "Looking Back, Moving Forward: 20 Years of the Native American Studies Bachelor of Arts Degree." NAS alumni will share insights on using their degrees in various professions and showcase the degree's versatility and societal impact. UNM is proud of its commitment to Native American Studies, with over five decades of diverse faculty and courses. The symposium will be held both in-person and online, and you'll need to [register in advance](#).

## New Endowment Funds Subsidize Internships at Economics, Public Administration

Beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year, students in the Department of Economics and the School of Public Administration will have increased access to career development opportunities, [thanks to a \\$500,000 endowment from Goldman Sachs Gives](#). This endowment aims to subsidize unpaid or low-paid internships through the Goldman Sachs Gives Public Service in Health Care Award and addresses financial barriers that often hinder students from pursuing crucial career experiences. By alleviating financial pressure, the award empowers students to invest in their futures, fostering equity and enhancing the talent pool for jobs in New Mexico's fast-growing public service sector.

## National Farmworkers Awareness Week

The [University of New Mexico's College Assistance Migrant Program](#) (UNM CAMP), [High School Equivalency Program](#) (UNM HEP), and [El Centro de la Raza](#) are standing proudly in solidarity with various campus partners for [National Farmworkers Awareness Week 2024](#). UNM HEP and CAMP programs are dedicated to empowering seasonal and migrant farmworking communities to achieve academic excellence. Both deeply understand and empathize with the distinct experiences of students from farmworking families, whose educational journeys are often uncertain despite their vital roles in harvesting our fields and enriching our communities.

Farmworkers Awareness Week, March 25 to March 29, serves as a call for students, faculty, staff, community members, and corporations to acknowledge and address the challenges farmworkers face. It's a week devoted to education and honoring the hands that cultivate our food and sustain our society. Please [check with El Centra de la Raza for regular updates](#) on the week's events.

### **Grab a Seat for the Annual Research Lecture**

They're going fast, but seats are still available for this Wednesday's presentation of the Annual Research Lecture—one of the highest honors bestowed on faculty for creative research— [delivered this year by Distinguished Professor Felisa Smith](#). She'll present her lecture, *Mammalian Paleoecology: Using the Past to Study the Present*, at a hybrid event starting on March 27 at 5:30 p.m. in PAIS 1100 and on Zoom, followed by a reception. [Reserve your seat here](#).

### **Lobo Basketball Season Ends in Memphis**

A fantastic Lobo men's basketball season came to an end last week in Memphis, as our eleventh seeded [Lobos lost to sixth-seeded Clemson](#) in the opening round of the NCAA Tournament. I'm so proud of the way this team has played all season long—we've come a long way over the last three years, and it's been fun to watch and hear the excitement at the Pit over these past few months. It was a terrific season, Lobos; we're already looking forward to next year!

### **Coming Up on This Week's Podcast . . .**

A high school student's bedroom was scanned while taking a class exam and after teachers saw a can of spray paint, he was accused of graffitiing a wall at the school. Was that decision just or were the student's rights violated? High schoolers in the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project have spent the past year working with students at the UNM School of Law to answer this hypothetical question. In just one week, they'll travel to Washington D.C. to compete and argue in a national moot court competition. You can hear more about it on [this week's episode of our \*It's \(Probably\) Not Rocket Science\* podcast](#), available wherever you get your podcasts.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President