



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 10, 2024

Good afternoon, Lobos--

As New Mexico's premier Research 1 institution, The University of New Mexico is proud to be one of the leading drivers of our state's innovation economy. According to our most recent analysis, UNM annually contributes more than 47,000 jobs, nearly \$2 billion in annual labor income, and more than \$5 billion in economic output to our state. Whether it's collaborating on research with national partners like our federal laboratories or providing the intellectual or financial capital for local startups, we value our roles as economic leaders and motivators.

Just last week, we learned that [The University of New Mexico has been ranked as one of the Top 100 Universities Granted Utility Patents by the National Academy of Inventors](#). This distinguished ranking recognizes our leadership as [one of the nation's top universities in advancing innovation and invention](#) and reflects our commitment under Goal One of UNM 2040 to ["Advance New Mexico."](#) It is also a testament to the hard work being done regularly by our technology-transfer and economic development organization, [UNM Rainforest Innovations](#), which commercializes technologies developed at The University of New Mexico by filing patents and copyrights and transferring them to the marketplace. This, in turn, creates jobs and benefits our communities through new businesses, new products, and new services.

As another brilliant inventor and innovator, Thomas Edison, once said: "The value of an idea lies in the using of it." Our Lobo inventors are in the business of bringing business to New Mexico, putting their ideas to use and growing New Mexico's innovation economy. Congratulations to Rainforest Innovations and to all our Lobo inventors for helping UNM attain this prestigious ranking.

## **UNM Alcohol Research Center Received Grant to Study Post-Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

The New Mexico Alcohol Research Center (NMARC) at UNM Health Sciences has been [awarded a five-year, \\$7.3 million extension from the National Institutes of Health to further their groundbreaking research on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders](#) (FASD), a condition far too common in New Mexico and across the nation. Led by center director Dr. C. Fernando Valenzuela, NMARC is focusing on understanding the neurological, behavioral, and psychiatric impacts of prenatal alcohol exposure. This grant marks the third round of full funding, underscoring UNM's key leadership in this research since the launch of NMARC in 2008. With collaborations across various departments and partnerships with the Mind Research Network and our Center for Development & Disability, NMARC is driving innovative research and therapeutic interventions that are good not only for the Lobo community, but for anyone affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

## **Anthropology Spotlights Pride Month**

As we continue to celebrate Pride Month in New Mexico and across the nation, UNM's Department of Anthropology has once again compiled [a comprehensive website of Pride-related history, events, research, and news](#). If you missed last week's Pride brunch hosted by our LGBTQ Resource Center—or any of the countless

events around town—Anthropology's website can help you find plenty of other ways to celebrate in and around the Lobo community, including [Paletas for Pride at UNM Hospital](#) and special events brought to you by Meow Wolf and the Albuquerque Isotopes. You can also [contact UNM's LGBTQ Resource Center for more information](#).

## Finalists Named for American Indian Student Services Director

I am pleased to announce that our search committee has named [three finalists for consideration for the director of UNM's American Indian Student Services](#). This key position provides strategic support and direction for addressing the educational needs of American Indian/Indigenous students and helps ensure The University of New Mexico maintains a welcoming and dynamic atmosphere that results in greater advancement and empowerment of Native students. The three finalists are **Natalie Arellanez**, who currently works as the operations manager and certification officer in the UNM College of Education and Human Sciences Center for Student Success; **Dawn Blue Sky-Hill**, program manager for UNM's Student Support Services-TRIO; and **Andrew Yazzie**, manager of student success for UNM's American Indian Student Services. All three will participate in open forums this week, meeting with students, faculty, and staff in person in SUB Fiesta A and B, and online.

## UNM-Valencia Wins NEH Grant to Boost Humanities

Some great news at our UNM-Valencia campus, which recently [received a two-year grant for \\$60,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities through its Spotlight on the Humanities in Higher Education program](#). UNM-Valencia was one of only 16 applicants to receive this prestigious grant, which will be put to good use centering its humanities curriculum around cultural relevance related to being a small, Hispanic-Serving Institution. Campus leadership is excited about using this new funding to boost the humanities and social sciences to demonstrate the career opportunities offered by these fields of study.

## Lobo Researchers Link Air Pollution to Low Birth Weight

Responding to an alarming trend in low birthweights across New Mexico—where 1 in 10 newborns are underweight, compared with a national average of 1 in 12--[a multi-disciplinary team of Lobo researchers have found that air pollution has a detrimental effect on birthweight](#). In a [study published in the \*Journal of Environmental Management\*](#), a research team that included members from the UNM department of Geography, the UNM School of Medicine, and the New Mexico Department of Health identified five air pollutants that show significant positive associations to low birthweight. In New Mexico, these pollutants are concentrated in the northwest region, southeast region and Albuquerque area, though researchers also recommended further study of the southeastern portion of our state, which is affected by industrial facilities in Texas. These findings will inform debate and policy on the public health impact of specific industries in and around our state.

## Habtom Samuel Clinches NCAA 10,000m Title, 1st Team All-American Honors

Last week was one of the record books for Lobo runner Habtom Samuel, as our freshman phenom [clinched the NCAA 10,000m Title in a thrilling race in Eugene, Oregon](#). Samuel's race for the title was made even more dramatic when he got caught up in a collision that sent him tumbling to the ground and knocked him back to fifth place, [before making up the lost ground in exciting and dramatic fashion](#) over the final three

minutes. Capping off the week, [Samuel also earned 1st Team All-America in the NCAA 5k Final](#)—his fifth First Team honors of the season—where he finished sixth. It was a terrific week and a fitting conclusion to what has been called the Year of Habtom. Congratulations to Habtom, Coach Gauson and his coaching team, and all our Lobo runners for a remarkable season.

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

Garnett S. Stokes

President