



PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



June 24, 2024

Good afternoon, Lobos --

Summer has officially arrived, and here on our Albuquerque campus, it definitely looks and feels that way. It's beautiful outside, but with temperatures climbing up toward 100 degrees on many days, it's also hot. So, as you take some time to enjoy all that our campus and our community have to offer, be sure to look for ways to stay cool and to take care of yourself in the heat.

Maybe consider visiting [Johnson Center Aquatics](#), where your Lobo card provides you with access to a full-size Olympic swimming pool, a lap pool, a therapy pool, and lots of other activities. There are also plenty of opportunities and adventures available from [UNM's Recreational Services](#), including Getaway Adventures to Santa Fe or river floats, bike rentals, and access to classes and clinics where you can learn how to tune up your bike or get an open water diver certification. Recreational Services also provide a number of [adaptive programs and events](#) to ensure its experiences are available to everyone.

Enjoy your summer, Lobos, and take care in that New Mexico heat with some [summer safety tips from UNM Health Sciences](#).

Welcoming New Deans at University College, Graduate Studies

I am pleased to announce that Provost Holloway has named new deans to UNM's University College and Graduate Studies, filling two key positions at our institution with educators and leaders who will help us move our programs forward in new and exciting ways. Moving in as the [new dean of University College is David Weiss](#), a professor in UNM's Communication & Journalism Department, who has been serving as the interim dean of the University College since last summer. University College is UNM's only academic college devoted explicitly to affecting and enhancing undergraduate success in and beyond the classroom, and Dean Weiss, who also served as director of the college's Liberal Arts & Integrative Studies program, has a proven record of student success.

Meanwhile, **Maria Lane**, a professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, has been [named dean of Graduate Studies](#). Professor Lane has been serving as interim dean of Graduate Studies since last summer, where she has already made an impact in key areas such as program and academic completion, mentorship programming, and graduate curriculum development. Graduate Studies is critical to our role as New Mexico's premier Research 1 institution, and Dean Lane is just what we need to continue advancement of our outstanding graduate programs. Congratulations to Dean Weiss and Dean Lane; we're fortunate to have you at the helm of these vital units.

Picking Up STEAM at UNM's Comprehensive Cancer Center

The [University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) has [launched the Southwest Transformative Educational Advancement and Mentoring \(STEAM\) Network](#), a groundbreaking initiative connecting cancer disparity researchers and mentors across four Southwestern institutions. This program, funded by the National

Cancer Institute, will initially focus on New Mexico and Arizona, supporting graduate students, postdocs, and early-stage investigators, particularly from underrepresented communities. STEAM leverages the strengths of UNM and its regional partners to provide comprehensive mentorship and resources, relying on diversified research to enhance the quality of cancer care in our region and beyond.

Lobo Biologist Honored as McKnight Scholar

What a thrill it was to learn that Mubarak Hussain Syed, UNM assistant professor of Biology, was recently selected as one of only 10 neuroscientists in the nation to [receive the 2024 McKnight Scholar Award](#). This distinguished award, presented by the [McKnight Endowment Fund for Neuroscience](#), is given to scientists in the early stages of establishing their own independent laboratories and research careers who have demonstrated a commitment to neuroscience. Syed's project, *Molecular Mechanisms Regulating Neural Diversity: From Stem Cells to Circuits*, will investigate what determines how neurons of different types arise from neural stem cells and how developmental factors influence adult behaviors. As a McKnight Scholar Award recipient, he will receive \$75,000 per year for three years to support his research. Congratulations, Professor Syed!

UNM Uses EPA Funding to Bring Safe Water to Small Communities

The University of New Mexico's Southwest Environmental Finance Center is set to [receive \\$6.2 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) to boost small drinking water and wastewater systems across the U.S. As part of a \$30.7 million EPA initiative aimed at enhancing water quality and infrastructure in rural communities, UNM will use \$5 million to help small public water systems comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act and \$1.2 million to help improve wastewater systems. Consistent with our [Sustainable Water Resources Grand Challenge](#), this is an effort that truly changes lives, and we are proud to work to bring safe drinking water to some of the smallest and most rural communities in our state.

Fires Endanger New Mexico Communities

The news and images coming from Ruidoso and Mescalero reservation are truly horrific as the South Fork Fire and Salt Fire continue to ravage the area. The president has [approved additional aid and resources](#) for the region, [as has the governor](#), and we are grateful that recent rains have helped aid firefighters. [Our own Athletic Department is also collecting items](#) to aid the people of the region; you may drop off items through Wednesday afternoon in the Stadium West parking lot. Our thoughts are with our fellow New Mexicans affected by this terrible natural disaster.

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

Garnett S. Stokes
President