



# PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE



October 7, 2024

Good afternoon, Lobos—

With World Mental Health Day coming up this week on October 10, I want to emphasize that mental health is not just a personal matter, but a cornerstone of our campus community's success and well-being. A healthy mind promotes academic achievement, personal growth, and overall life satisfaction.

The pressures and other demands faced in trying to navigate and balance one's school, work, family and social lives, along with the seemingly constant blare of often polarizing national and international news, can make it easy to feel overwhelmed, depressed, or just plain stressed out. Especially as the daylight hours begin to get shorter and we make the turn toward winter, I'd like to encourage you to [remember to take time to take care of yourselves](#).

At The University of New Mexico, we offer a wide range of mental health services and resources for students, faculty, and staff alike, designed to support our Lobos. Our Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) services are available by appointment—and many times, you can even walk in and receive the help you need. UNM's [Division for Equity & Inclusion has also provided an online hub where you can find plenty of information](#) on coping skills, links to other UNM resources, and a calendar of upcoming events, including SHAC's new printable brochure, [The Weight of Conflict: Addressing Stress in a Polarized Society](#).

UNM is also proud to have partnered with TimelyCare to offer students free and equitable access to mental health support, medical care, and basic needs assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This partnership is an extension of our existing campus health and counseling center resources, with the goal of improving student well-being, engagement, and retention.

Eligible faculty and staff may also find similar help available from [UNM's Counseling, Assistance & Referral Services \(CARS\)](#). We are constantly working to ensure our mental health support system at UNM remains supportive, compassionate, and responsive, so please ask for help when you need it.

Please take care of yourselves, and each other.

## **UNM Hospital Launches Zuni Interpretation Program**

In a groundbreaking initiative—and in direct response to the diverse linguistic needs of our state—[The University of New Mexico Hospital is training Zuni language interpreters](#) to enhance patient care in local communities. This program, initiated in collaboration with the Zuni Tribe and Zuni Comprehensive Health Center, aims to eliminate barriers to healthcare access by enabling Zuni patients to receive care in their native language, and in their home communities, thereby avoiding long travel to Albuquerque. The first cohort of seven interpreters completed their training in late April, equipping them to facilitate clear communication between healthcare providers and patients. This first-of-its-kind initiative paves the way for potential interpreter programs in other Tribal languages, further enriching Native American patient care and ensuring we are delivering more in communities that need our help.

## Lobo Welcome Center Officially Opens Its Doors

Last week, we proudly [cut the ribbon on our newly renovated Lobo Welcome Center](#), which is already making a terrific first impression on visitors to our beautiful campus. Blending historic adobe architecture with state-of-the-art technology, the new center features an exhibition hall, provides dedicated spaces for meetings and presentations, and—most importantly—does a fantastic job showcasing UNM's rich history and spotlighting our vibrant campus culture. I appreciate the legislative support that helped us transform the old Naval ROTC building—one of the oldest adobe buildings on our campus—into this beautiful center. If you've not yet had a chance to visit, I hope you'll [take a look](#).

## Black History Month Kickoff Brunch Tickets Now on Sale

Although Black History Month is still four months away, tickets are already on sale for one of our most popular events, the [40th Annual Black History Month Kickoff Brunch, hosted by UNM's African American Student Services and the Department of Africana Studies](#). The Black History Month Kickoff Brunch serves as a platform for the UNM community and the broader public to unite, gain insights, and celebrate the Black community's profound heritage and cultural contributions. This event sells out very quickly, so [get your tickets while you can](#).

## AGU Fellow and HACU Fellows

Each week seems to bring more news about the accomplishments of our Lobo faculty and staff, who make The University of New Mexico such an extraordinary institution. This week, I'm proud to congratulate three Lobos who have been recognized for excellence, starting with [Carl Agee, professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, who was elected as an American Geophysical Union's \(AGU\) Fellow](#), joining a distinguished group of 54 individuals in the 2024 class. [AGU](#) Fellows are recognized for their scientific eminence and innovations that advance the Earth and space sciences—and Professor Agee, as director of our [Institute of Meteoritics](#), has definitely done that, as he and his work continue to contribute to our greater understanding of meteoritics and planetary interiors.

I am also pleased to recognize [Barbara Rodriguez](#), senior vice provost for academic affairs at UNM-Albuquerque, and [Alejandra "Ale" Villalobos Meléndez](#), director of strategic initiatives and research at UNM-Taos, who were recently [selected as fellows for the 2024-25 cohort of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo](#). The [Hispanic Association of Colleges \(HACU\) Leadership Academy](#) is designed to increase diverse representation in executive and senior-level positions in higher education; Rodriguez and Meléndez were two of only 45 fellows selected from around the nation. Congratulations to all three of these remarkable leaders for these notable achievements; they make the entire Lobo community proud.

## Teacher Residency Program Graduates Head for the Classroom

Here's some more good news: the latest graduates of UNM's District Partner Teacher Residency Program (DPTR) are bringing their expertise to communities across our state, as [the 66 graduates from the 2023-2024 cohort move into classrooms in 14 New Mexico school districts](#). As they celebrated their spring graduation, these enthusiastic educators spoke highly of the DPTR program's exceptional mentorship and support, enabling their journeys toward becoming licensed teachers. As the DPTR prepares to launch a

principal residency program this fall, it continues to gain national recognition for addressing New Mexico's teacher shortage and advancing innovative solutions in education. Congratulations to our latest group of DPTR graduates! We're glad to have you out there.

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

Garnett S. Stokes  
President