



February 3, 2025

Good afternoon Lobos –

The University of New Mexico is proud to celebrate February as Black History Month, a time of dedicated reflection and celebration of the Black experience at UNM, in our community, and in our nation. We are grateful for the countless Black students, faculty, staff, and other members of our Lobo family who make our lives richer by bringing their stories, experiences, and expertise to our campuses.



While President Gerald Ford formally recognized Black History Month in the United States in 1976, UNM was well ahead of the national movement—and, in fact, had helped lead the national groundswell that eventually led to the federal designation. In 1970, under the leadership and collective effort of students from the Black Student Union, what was then called the “Afro Studies program” was born, one of the very first programs like it in the nation. Afro Studies would grow and evolve, becoming African American Studies in

1982. Eleven years later, it became a degree-granting program, and today it has full department status as our Department of Africana Studies.

I’m also proud of the dynamic partnership between the Department of Africana Studies, under the leadership of Dr. Kirsten Buick, and our African American Student Services (AASS), led by Brandi Stone. Their close collaboration ensures our students have a meaningful and productive student experience. We continue to grow and learn as a university, and we will continue to look to their leadership—and to our extraordinary Black Lobo community—to help guide and inspire us.

I want to mention one inspiring leader we just recently lost: Dr. Harold Bailey, Albuquerque NAACP President and a long-time Lobo professor, mentor, advocate, and inspiration to several generations of thinkers, activists, and community leaders. Since stepping onto our campus as a track star in the mid-60s, Dr. Bailey spent his life committed to uplifting the Black student experience and ensuring that UNM respected the contributions of the Black community. As we celebrate Black History Month, we celebrate Dr. Bailey’s life and memory.

As you reflect and celebrate, AASS has planned a [month of events](#), including a [conversation with poet, activist, and author Kevin Powell called *Hip Hop is Resistance: The Future of America*](#) on February 27 in the SUB Ballroom. Health Sciences is also [hosting programming this month](#), including a lecture by social psychologist Dr. Robert W. Livingston titled *The Conversation: How Seeking and Speaking the Truth About Racism Can Radically Transform Individuals and Organizations* on February 12 in the Domenici Center Auditorium.

Black history has long been a part of the University of New Mexico’s history. Today, as we look at the events in the world around us, we’re reminded that our history as a nation is multi-cultural, that the Black experience is the American experience, and that there is unity to be found in our plurality.



UNM Day at the Roundhouse

The University of New Mexico [took center stage at the State Capitol on January 29](#), making a powerful impression on legislators, stakeholders, and the public during the New Mexico State Legislature's annual UNM Day. With a strong presence from faculty, staff, students, and leadership, the Lobo community showcased why UNM is truly The University for New Mexico. From key academic initiatives to vital infrastructure projects, UNM engaged policymakers and the public on [our top legislative priorities](#), emphasizing UNM's role as an R1 institution and a cornerstone of education, healthcare,

and economic development in New Mexico. My thanks to everyone who participated and helped make UNM Day at the State Capitol a success.

Lobo Wins Prestigious Churchill Scholarship

Congratulations to Lobo senior [Ariana Pritha, who has been awarded the 2025-2026 Churchill Scholarship](#)—one of only 16 recipients in STEM fields nationwide. This highly competitive honor will allow Pritha to pursue an MPhil in Medical Sciences (Psychiatry) at the University of Cambridge, where she plans to advance research on Lewy Body Dementia using molecular biology and neuroimaging techniques. Pritha, [who is also one of our 2024 Goldwater Scholars](#), exemplifies UNM's commitment to academic excellence and groundbreaking research, and this award presents her with an exciting opportunity to pursue a career in translational neuroscience. Congratulations again, Ariana!



Survey Your Space for the Indirect Cost Study

The University of New Mexico is undergoing its FY25 Finance and Administration indirect cost submission to the federal government. Occurring every four years, this study determines the amount of indirect revenue we generate to support UNM's research mission. This will involve most, if not all, of our colleges and departments in surveying their spaces to determine room function, floor plan accuracy, and space allocations. Our teams at UNM Financial Services and Health Sciences Finance and Administration will be reaching out to schedule virtual appointments with many of you; thank you for helping to make sure our information is as up-to-date as possible, as this survey is vital to our success as a Research 1 institution.

Help Find the Next AVP for Facility Services at ISS

All Lobo faculty, staff, and students are invited to participate in [public forums featuring the finalists for the Assistant Vice President for Facility Services \(AVP\) role](#) within [Institutional Support Services \(ISS\)](#). The AVP oversees campus maintenance, operations, and utilities while leading key sustainability and capital improvement initiatives. Our first candidate was interviewed this afternoon. These forums provide an opportunity to meet the candidates, learn about their qualifications, and engage in a Q&A session. Your participation is crucial to helping us select the right leader.

Lobos are Cooking as Volunteers at Ronald McDonald House

Service to the community is a foundational part of who we are as Lobos, and giving back is even more



fulfilling when working together as a team. Recently, a group of volunteers from the Office of the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration (EVPFA) spent time at the [Ronald McDonald House Charities \(RMHC\) of New Mexico at the Yale location](#) on UNM's North Campus to offer some assistance—and a delicious meal—to families with loved ones seeking treatment at The University of New Mexico Hospital. For one evening, [our team served as “Guest Chefs,” doing not only all the cooking for more than 70 people at the Ronald McDonald House but also all the planning, shopping, and prep.](#) As Teresa Costantinidis, EVP for Finance and Administration, noted, “These experiences foster a sense of purpose and connection that we can carry back into our daily work, ultimately enhancing our effectiveness as a division and our service to the university community.”

Lobo ASM Students Shine at National Sports Sales Championship

The UNM Anderson School of Management (ASM) continues to make headlines as MBA student Kiana Alvarez recently [took first place in the National Collegiate Sports Sales Championship, Corporate Partnerships division](#), besting competitors from 32 schools nationwide in the final round at Atlanta's State Farm Arena, hosted by the Atlanta Hawks. And her outstanding performance wasn't the only highlight; teammates **Shelby Rasmussen** and **Than Ngo** also advanced to the Sweet 16 in the Ticket Sales division. Alvarez's victory marks ASM's second national title in four years, reinforcing our commitment to excellence in sales education. Congratulations to Kiana and the entire UNM team on this well-earned success!

Celebrating the 2024 Gerald May Outstanding Staff Award Winners

One of my great privileges as President of The University of New Mexico is helping to select the recipients of the Gerald W. May Outstanding Staff Awards, presented annually in conjunction with the UNM Staff Council to staff members who have made significant contributions to the University. Each year, we ask for nominations for this prestigious award, which may be submitted by any UNM staff, faculty member, or student.



I'm proud to announce that [the recipients of the 2024 Gerald W. May Outstanding Staff Awards](#) are: **Tuan Bui**, associate director, Enterprise Applications Development, IT Department; **Sharina Desai**, technical director, Autophagy, Inflammation, and Metabolism Core Facility; **Deena Duran**, senior business analyst, UNM

Health Sciences; and **Jason Quinn**, field and studio engineering manager, New Mexico PBS. Recipients were honored at a celebration in late December 2024. Congratulations to our winners; you make our university community a better place.

Updates and Provisional Guidance Related to 2025 Federal Executive Actions

Last week, I shared that we were developing rapid response groups to analyze changes to federal orders, policies, and/or regulations that may impact the university and our community. While much of the previous week focused on federal funding, we continue this important work across several areas. To keep the university community informed, we have developed and will maintain a [dedicated information page](#) with the latest updates, as well as a [mechanism to submit questions](#) that will inform our FAQs section. I strongly encourage you to check this resource frequently to stay current on any relative changes, and if you are communicating more broadly, please use this space as a point of reference.

This Week's Podcast is Actually Rock Science

Although the Grand Canyon may seem timeless, it turns out it's actually younger than scientists have previously believed. In [the latest installment of UNM's award-winning podcast, *It's \(Probably\) Not Rocket Science*](#), we dig into groundbreaking discoveries from The University of New Mexico geologists Karl Karlstrom and Laura Crossey, whose findings challenge everything we thought we knew about this iconic natural landmark. From cutting-edge geochronology to ancient trilobites, we're unraveling Earth's deep past—one rock layer at a time. Tune in for a fascinating journey through time, science, and the canyon's ever-evolving story, [wherever you get your podcasts](#).

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

Garnett S. Stokes

President

