

## Chancellor Weekly Brief – 10.8.2020

Dr. James Malm

### COMMUNITY.

While a walk through campus today feels and looks much different than it would during a normal semester at UNM-Gallup, there is activity as we persist together as a community through this hybrid fall semester.

Students in very limited numbers are socially distancing and wearing protective gear on campus while learning in our laboratories and other facilities. We have personnel working on improvements and keeping our learning spaces sterile and clean. There are a number of families and avid runners utilizing our fitness trail in the evening to stay in shape and enjoy the outdoors. Local organizations are providing drive-thru flu shots and COVID testing. And, students and faculty are studying and teaching in campus parking lots while utilizing our boosted Wi-Fi.

Of course we yearn for the return of normal campus life, but we are resolute in our commitment to keeping each other safe and well throughout this pandemic. It is that commitment to wearing face masks and socially distancing while on campus—and remaining dedicated to coursework through this hybrid fall semester—that will ensure a return to normal campus life in the near future. I commend each of you for staying the course during these challenging times and following all available safety and health measures when you are on campus.

#### 2040 UNM Branch Strategies

In the coming weeks, I will join with leaders from throughout UNM to present to our state legislators a robust overview of proposed strategies that will help to better align the state's higher educational system with evolving workforce and innovation needs in New Mexico. We will use as our guide a plan titled *UNM 2040: Opportunity Defined* that outlines improved synergy among the four branch campuses and UNM's main campus.

As stated in this report, the branch campuses within the UNM system support students who, for various reasons, pursue higher education close to home and at low direct cost. Our branches also support students who may not be ready to pursue their education at the Albuquerque campus. We also know that branch campuses support students who pursue their education in various other ways, including taking classes at the main campus *and* at a branch campus such as UNM-Gallup.

Other possible synergies and opportunities are being explored through this draft report that better serve New Mexico students, including a potential increase in the number of scholarships for students at a branch campus to provide a low-cost path towards their bachelor's degree and the development of transfer experience courses to give students at the branch level better opportunities to explore the main campus. Also discussed in this report—and will be presented to our state's leaders—are potential pathways to offering more four-year degree opportunities to students at our branch campuses.



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This is just a small sampling of the many ideas and innovations we look forward to presenting to the Legislative Finance Committee as a unified UNM community at their hybrid meeting coming up on October 28<sup>th</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup> at the state capitol. Once finalized and presented, I will publish the final report for your review.

Without a doubt, there are many wonderful activities and achievements occurring every day throughout our campus. Just last night, I joined with Ralph Richards, chair of our Local Advisory Board, to present progress at UNM-Gallup during a broadcast of the locally produced Barbara Stanley Show. We shared with our wider Gallup community some of your ongoing progress and success—ranging from the many adaptations and innovations our faculty achieved to ensure quality remote instruction to the recent installation of our new EMS simulation rig that provides real-world experiences for our students. And, of course, the many upgrades and improvements made throughout this past summer across campus by our facilities management team.

Great things continue to happen at UNM-Gallup even in the midst of this pandemic. It is because of your perseverance and commitment to excellence that we continue fulfilling our mission. I so enjoy sharing our success with state leaders and community members here in Gallup and beyond.

Thank you for all that you do for our students—and we will continue to work collaboratively and joyfully together as we eventually see our way out of these challenging times for our community and nation.

Stay safe and be well.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'J. Malm'.

Dr. James R. Malm, Chancellor  
Professor of Business