

Chancellor Weekly Brief – 6.19.2020

Dr. James Malm

JUNETEENTH.

Today we observe Juneteenth, which is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States, when—on June 19, 1865—Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with the news that the Civil War was ended and the enslaved are free. Sadly, this event was two and a half years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. As this Freedom Day has been an official New Mexico state holiday since 2006, we join in the [governor’s call to action](#) for us all to work toward a more just society “and to contribute to the essential and ongoing urgent work of making that society a reality.”

Universities are essential institutions that contribute to this work of building a more just society for all. Through our discovery and exploration in classroom discussion and debate—and through our coursework, teaching, and research—we find new and beneficial ways to create communities where race, creed, gender, or sexual orientation will no longer determine a person’s level of freedom or injustice experienced in this country. I would like to think that the campus we provide our students—and their experiences within a robust and respectful environment—helps to build a foundation of inclusion for them to pursue their academic and professional goals with an unwavering commitment to fairness and equality for all.

Without a doubt, we are experiencing a time within this nation’s history where monumental events are shifting our lived experiences. Paralleling the enormous swell of social activism and protests surrounding the ongoing incidents of racial violence, we also had the Supreme Court ruling that protects workplace rights for our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. And yesterday, the hundreds of thousands of Dreamers building their lives in our country were provided some relief in another historic Supreme Court decision on DACA.

With these social movements and historic decisions, we are truly moving toward a more just society for all. UNM-Gallup continues its commitment to provide an inclusive, welcoming, and intellectually robust environment for our students, faculty, and staff. We will all work in tandem toward that ideal of building our communities where a person’s culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, and language are truly valued and honored. I am proud to say that we have a longstanding tradition of embracing diversity as a learning opportunity that strengthens us all.

I encourage you to celebrate this special day by exploring these issues on a deeper level. Read a book on race. Join one of the many online forums and discussions offered through UNM. Or, simply have a respectful conversation with a friend, colleague, or family member that adds to the discussion of the unfortunate experiences of racism and discrimination in our country. Juneteenth calls us to action.

Stay safe. Stay well. And, have a wonderful weekend.

Best Regards,

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

Dr. James R. Malm, Chancellor
Professor of Business