

Chancellor Weekly Brief – 8.13.2020

Dr. James Malm

RIGHT AND WELL.

This first week of the fall semester began in earnest with our campus-wide convocation on Monday morning and wraps up with today's weekly brief. We gathered with our faculty and personnel to meet virtually throughout the week to better understand the many details required in this important semester to successfully continue UNM-Gallup's mission for the benefit of our students' success. Since this pandemic emerged in March, we have collectively worked to ensure that the path we take to our eventual campus reopening is right and done well to keep us all safe and effective in the coming months.

As I communicated to you on Monday, this is a most unique and unprecedented semester start in our 52-year history. We ended the spring semester at a distance from campus as we climbed the first curve of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic—far from where we started our continuous operation in January.

We last saw everyone in March as we left for Spring Break for what we thought would simply and quickly be an extended mid-term break. It turned out to be a heroic—and sheroic—disruptive run to the end of the semester with a hurried shift to learning at a distance for all but one of our course sections. The campus buildings were locked and the utilities turned down, travel and professional development shifted, our graduation ceremony postponed, and state budget appropriations sanded.

Since then, we've concluded a great summer semester—entirely online—and have registered more than 5,200 enrollments in 495 course sections for fall. The numbers will continue to change every day until we reach our census date next month. While the enrollments are lower than they were at the same time last year, we are tracking with the national trends of our peers. We remain hopeful that all of our students will return, and aspiring students will join us as their university of choice. Compliments to our dedicated and passionate marketing, recruitment, admissions, advising, registration, and retention personnel for our collective successes. And, thank you to Jayme McMahon, our director of student affairs!

Of our 495 course sections, 85% are remote arranged or remote scheduled—with 14% moded as what we creatively call face-to-face-plus. These modalities will give our faculty the greatest flexibility in our individual teaching and learning schedules over the next 16-weeks. There is no central mandate to be on campus at any particular day or time for any of our classes. Face to face and hands-on instruction is at the sole discretion of each faculty with close coordination with university management and safety officers—according to the learning objectives of their syllabi.

With this flexibility, we will not return to our physical campus for the start of classes next week at any time—with the exception of a short list of official Tier-1 employees. All of our work, teaching and learning will start at a distance. Students and faculty will not be reporting on day-one to our campus classrooms, studios, shops, and laboratories; nor will staff to our buildings and vehicles.

Campus access will be by appointment only—as we take time to carefully coordinate all areas of the university—and to ensure safe access with special cleaning, social distancing, and protective equipment protocols. If you need access to any of our facilities, please make arrangements with your department chair, director, or dean prior to your arrival.

With all of the new and creative changes to our teaching and learning operations over the past five months of finishing spring at a distance, completing summer purely online, and starting fall with hybrids across the board, our mission has not changed. We continue to prepare people to achieve their educational and professional goals in a context of respect for the traditions and values of the many groups we serve.

And, our values remain unchanged. We continue to value excellence. We continue to value integrity, diversity, freedom, sustainability, and access with support to succeed. And, we continue to value respectful relationships.

The theories and concepts of our respective fields we are teaching and learning in remain unchanged as well. The fundamental theorem of Algebra, Grey and Vandyke's Anatomy, Costa and Kallick's Habits of Mind, or the metallurgical properties of MIG and TIG welds. These are all unchanged for our continued dissemination and student mastery.

With all that remains the same during the abrupt and drastic changes brought by the global pandemic, I invite each and every one of you—all of us—to come together from a distance this fall to find and create opportunities to innovate connected teaching and learning in our collegial, compassionate, and competent network of the UNM-Gallup community. Together, we will succeed in our mission in the face of so many daunting and dangerous unknowns of the pandemic.

We welcome back our students on Monday, August 17—all at a distance and remotely for now. Faculty, it is critical that you communicate with students about class logistics. As stated by the provost, we can be sure that a number of students will be unclear on Monday as to when and where they are supposed to begin engaging with their classes. We have also put together a [complete resource guide for students](#) that you can also share. The [library](#) and [bookstore](#) are providing curbside services—and the library will begin taking appointments on Monday for access to study carrels with computers and other resources.

Thank you for all that you accomplish each day for our students, our campus, and our Gallup community.

Please 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