

Chancellor Weekly Brief – 9.17.2020**Dr. James Malm****SEPTEMBER 11TH.**

Tomorrow, we commemorate the 19th anniversary of 9/11—a time in our country’s history when we not only endured a crisis but came together as citizens to overcome the despair and uncertainty that followed this attack on our shores. Those of us who lived through this incredibly dark day in our history can still vividly recall the images of the World Trade Center buildings collapsing, and the unbelievable horror New Yorkers—and the rest of our country—lived through and witnessed that day. Tomorrow’s day of remembrance for the victims of 9/11 is also a day for us to honor all first responders and the incredible work they do to keep our community safe.

As we endure another crisis this year, we can find solace in knowing that we will defeat this virus, we will return to normal, and we will someday look back at this time as another example of Americans coming together to overcome tragedy and crisis. We saw reports this week that the Navajo Nation had zero new COVID-19 cases—a first since the beginning of this pandemic for what was one the country’s hot spots. That is perhaps one of the best examples we now have of communities coming together to accomplish what needs to be done to control this virus so that we can soon return to normal.

Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund

There are good efforts underway across the state to continue the delivery of high-quality online education to New Mexico students—including those attending UNM-Gallup—during this pandemic. As part of the New Mexico Association of Community Colleges, we join with the other 30 higher education institutions (HEIs) to participate and collaborate on opportunities recently provided through the [Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund \(GEER\)](#).

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham recently dedicated GEER Funds to HEIs to transition to online learning with the belief that institutions such as ours can be leaders within the state to ensure that other early childhood, K through 12, and small businesses can more fully participate in online learning. [As stated on the GEER webpage](#), these funds are available for public and tribal HEIs that “can demonstrate significant needs as a result of COVID-19.” These funds are also meant to encourage collaborations among these institutions—collaborations that could include cross-technology groups, associations, cross-institutional collaborations of teacher preparation programs, and early childhood education preparation or nursing programs.

Beyond collaborations and other opportunities, these funds would be well-allocated at [UNM-Gallup to support](#) student success and build online capacity as we continue to navigate this pandemic. The proposal we submitted to the New Mexico Higher Education Department truly represents a collaborative effort by all institutions to address unique challenges brought to us by this pandemic and showcases how we can leverage our strengths for the benefit of all.

Legislative Finance Committee

There is no doubt that the budget headwinds we are now facing due to the COVID-19 crisis has all state institutions and leaders reviewing the stewardship and effectiveness of state funds. Just last month, the [New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee](#) requested that higher education institutions provide a report on

how we might improve spending through collaboration with peers and diversify revenue outside of state appropriations. We have joined with the entire UNM system to respond to this request, which will be provided to the finance committee during its October meetings.

UNM Deans' Council

In the coming days, I anticipate the roll out of several new relief policies or programs for our personnel and faculty. This crisis has placed undue pressure on many of our faculty and staff who are also caregivers at home. Through a proposed temporary and voluntary reduction in FTE and workload policy, faculty and staff may be provided additional flexibility to dedicate time to family care and other personal responsibilities for reasons related to COVID-19.

This is a topic of discussion during today's UNM Deans' Council meeting—and is an important offering for those within our community who may benefit from respectful, humane, and empathetic programs. I will keep our UNM-Gallup community informed on these programs as they are determined and implemented soon.

Also, there is a newly determined eligible retirement list distributed this week. While this list is confidential, I do want to extend my sentiments to those who received this information from UNM that it is their own free choice to make and without any pressure from anyone on their decision. We value and appreciate the service of our personnel and faculty to UNM-Gallup and understand that retirement may be a difficult decision to discern.

UNM-Gallup Census Date

As our census date has come to an end, we anticipate numbers that show a 91% headcount and 84% student credit hours compared to the same time last year, though official numbers will be coming soon. Students continue to enroll, and our numbers continue to fluctuate with all the campus and community activity caused by COVID. We will continue to monitor this data and ensure that our commitment to our mission aligns with ongoing public health and safety efforts to keep our campus safe.

Thank you to all for everything that you accomplish each day for our students and campus. Keep up the good work and study—and we will continue to navigate our way through this pandemic safely and together. Our return to normal will come.

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