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UNM’s Fall Return Plan Announcement

The last 15 months have been an unprecedented time for the University. But with the improved pandemic conditions, we can now look forward to returning our UNM campuses to regular operations this fall.

As we plan our return to campus on Aug. 2, we first recognize that there are many among us who never left. HR would like to take a moment to thank our front-line workers- from our Tier 1 workers who kept our campus safe and clean to our first responders and healthcare heroes fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. We are forever grateful.

We also would like to take the time to acknowledge those family, friends and colleagues who lost their lives due to the COVID-19 virus. We hope that through the sorrow and grief we can each find purpose to honor their story.

Return to Campus

Here is what you need to know and how we can all do our part to make this a successful transition.

Transition begins in July

Prior to our full return in August, departments should use the month of July as a transition period. Employees should begin returning to the office any supplies and equipment they have taken home and begin acclimating to a commute and working in an office setting. Schedules for this transition period should be discussed and determined between employees and their supervisors.

Some employees may be ready to return full time while others may prefer to limit their time to a few days per week in the office as they acclimate themselves, their loved ones, and their pets to their return to campus. Employee needs will differ and supervisors are encouraged to be flexible in helping plan the July transition work schedules.

Phases of Return

While departments are beginning to collaborate on their return throughout July, we have created a guide- UNM’s Phases of Return to the Worksite for supervisors and employees to use in preparation for full operations on August 2. Please review the timelines and recommended tasks and ideas to ensure your department opens safely, efficiently, and timely.

This is not an all-inclusive list so please consider any other items that may be applicable to your department’s functions for your own employees, your customers, or events you may be responsible for hosting.

Remote Work and Telecommuting

The past several months and hurdles we endured as a country and along with the rest of the world have taught us many things. One of those things is that not all jobs have to be performed at a UNM worksite.

Many employees have been successful while working remotely and have enjoyed it, while it has also worked well for their supervisor; therefore, it may be of interest to the department and employee to continue that work arrangement.
UNM’s Fall Return Plan Announcement (Cont’d)

For such cases, we are officially launching a remote work and telecommuting program where employees may be eligible to work fully remote or partially from a UNM worksite and partially from a remote site (telecommuting).

Interested employees can review the program guidelines and request process on our Remote Work & Telecommuting Program website.

What else do I need to know about returning to campus in August?

• **Masks:** Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask but those who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask while on UNM property. Vaccinated individuals may still choose to wear a mask; please be respectful of others’ choices.

• **Physical Distancing:** Fully vaccinated individuals no longer need to physically distance themselves, except where specifically required as identified by signage.

• **Daily Symptom Screening:** UNM plans to discontinue this attestation process when the requirement is officially lifted by the governor, which is expected to occur around mid-July. Employees should continue to complete the screening as long as they are receiving the daily emails.

• **COVID-19 Symptoms/Positive Case Reporting:** Employees who experience symptoms of COVID-19 or who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must continue to follow the Self-Reporting Guidelines until further notice.

• **Vaccines:** The COVID-19 vaccination is not currently required for UNM employees. The feedback collected on the Proposed Vaccination Policy is under review and a decision is pending. Being vaccinated is the best defense against the virus, both for individuals and for our community; therefore, UNM highly encourages vaccination against COVID-19.

Please remember to review UNM’s Phases of Return to the Worksite to begin your planning.

For more information on the above highlights and details on other related guidance, review the On-Campus Worksite Protocols and COVID-Safe Practices. We have also updated the FAQs on the HR website regarding the full operations phase.

**Expiring HR Policies**

Over the last year and a half, HR implemented several programs designed to aid the university in getting through the pandemic. Now, as we look forward to a more “normal” fall, the following policies will no longer be in effect. Visit each link for more details.

**May 3 | 16:** Business Meal and Travel Restrictions for Main and Branch Campuses Lifted

**May 31:** Staff Temporary Voluntary Reduction in Appointment Percent Option Ends

**June 30:** Emergency Paid Leave Option Ends

**June 30:** Suspension of Main/Branch Campus Staff Hiring and Personnel Actions Ends

**July 31:** Functional Operating Tier Structure Ends

**July 31:** COVID-19 Remote Work Reimbursement Ends

**Dec. 31:** Increase to Maximum Annual Leave Accruals Ends

Thank you, UNM, for all you have done to help us get through the COVID-19 pandemic. We value our employees and hope that the programs we enacted were helpful.
**Compensation Corner**

### Clinical Staff Salary Structures

In order to enhance salary administration and to align with best practices, the University will proceed with eliminating the Clinical Staff Salary Structures and moving all classifications into one Staff Salary Structure.

This change pertains to classifications currently assigned to alphanumeric grades beginning with AE, AN, BE, BN, CE or CN. Information capturing specific changes to individual employee records will be sent to HR Agents in mid-July.

### Staff Compensation Increase

In February, the New Mexico State Legislature passed the state budget which included a 1.5% pay raise for state college and university employees. The 1.5% Mass Salary Update (MSU) was approved by the UNM Board of Regents and will take affect July 1.

Regular staff employees should plan for the 1.5% increase if meeting the following criteria:

- Employees must have been hired prior to Jan. 1, 2021 and have completed their probationary period prior to July 1, 2021.
- Employees must have obtained “Successful” overall ratings for both job responsibilities and goals on their annual 2020 Performance Evaluation.
- Salary increases for bargaining unit employees are subject to the applicable collective bargaining unit agreement.

Questions regarding faculty increases should be directed to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Services or the HSC Faculty Contracts Office.

For more information, visit HR’s Mass Salary Update Guidelines webpage.

This update will affect grade levels and, in one case, title; however, no changes will occur to salaries, FLSA exemption status, appointment percent, or any other aspect of an employee’s job record.

Changes will take effect July 31 for non-exempt staff and Aug. 1 for exempt staff. For more information regarding this effort, refer to the HR project webpage.

### Minimum Wage Increase

Additionally, The University is preparing to respond to the next incremental increase in the New Mexico State Minimum Wage rate, increasing from $10.50 per hour to $11.50 per hour on Jan. 1, 2022.

To ensure compliance, the University will adjust the minimum rate in the Staff Salary Structure to $11.50 per hour. Additional changes will occur to align with industry-leading practices.

Preliminary information was provided to HR Agents in June, with more detailed information to be shared as the University gets closer to implementing the revised structure at the end of the calendar year.

Questions regarding Staff Salary Structure updates may be directed to comp@unm.edu.

### Have a Safe & Relaxing 4th of July Holiday

The University of New Mexico will recognize Independence Day on Monday, July 5 and all University offices will be closed.

Visit the HR Calendars & Holidays page for more information.

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**HR NEWS**

**Compensation Corner**

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**UNM at Work**

**July 2021**
HR NEWS

Attend NACUBO 2021, July 27-30

The 2021 NACUBO Annual Meeting is happening virtually this month! Register by the July 20 deadline to attend this exciting four-day session.

A group membership package is available for UNM staff to attend the conference at no cost, July 27-30!

Visit the NACUBO 2021 Annual Meeting website.

If you are a regular staff employee and would like to register:
1. Seek approval. Talk to your supervisor about attending the four-day session.
2. Visit NACUBO and log in with your NACUBO account OR create a new account.

3. Upon signing in, you will be directed to a profile page with your information.
4. Complete the remainder of your registration profile and agreement to terms, conditions and policies, and submit your registration.

There is no cost to attend. Questions regarding the online registration process? Contact NACUBO at 877.797.7698.

Stay Informed with UNM Listservs

As the University for New Mexico, UNM has a lot of information to share. Here are some key listservs you may want to subscribe to!

**UNM POLICY OFFICE | UNM_POLICY_OFFICE-L@LIST.UNM.EDU**: Communicates important policy announcements (such as policy approvals, revisions, or campus review-and-comment periods).

**UNM OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS UPDATES | GOVREL-L@LIST.UNM.EDU**: Informs the campus about government initiatives that affect the University of New Mexico, particularly during legislative sessions.

**UNM NEWS MINUTE | NEWSMINUTE-L@LIST.UNM.EDU**: Keeps the UNM Community up to date on the latest campus news and information.

**INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYEE LIST | INTERNATIONAL_EMPLOYEES-L@LIST.UNM.EDU**: Information from UNM Leadership and periodic news from UNM’s external legal firms, specializing in immigration matters.

**How to Sign Up**

Not sure how to sign up for listservs? You may subscribe to a list via the Web or by emailing a “subscribe” command to the Listserv server. Visit the [UNM Fastinfo instructions](https://www.unm.edu/fastinfo).
YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EOD Remote Work Resources Page

As we prepare to return to full operations this fall, keep in mind that EOD is here to help with resources and trainings to help manage change and support work that is both in person and remote.

Our resources are helpful for both the supervisor and employee, on topics from staying focused and productive to conference call etiquette.

Visit our Remote Work Resources page for helpful tips as we manage our next transition as a campus community.

July EOD Offerings

Did you know EOD offers over 30 online and in-person professional development courses? Here are two of the many great online classes offered this month.

**Six Critical Practices for Leading a Team**

**EOD 229**

The role of the first-level leader has always seemed tough and today’s realities make the role even tougher. People skills typically account for 80 percent of success in this role.

Yet many people are promoted because of their technical capabilities. The Six Critical Practices for Leading a Team is a special collection of carefully curated content from Franklin Covey offerings.

This course is great for current and aspiring leaders.

**WHEN:** July 9 | 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**COST:** Free!

**LOCATION:** Virtual, on Zoom

**REGISTER:** Register via Learning Central

**Are You WELL Aware?**

**EOD 161**

EOD and Employee Wellness have teamed up to offer three great topics in one course to help you improve your well-being: “Squash the ANTS (Automatic Negative Thoughts),” “Building Self Confidence at Work and Daily Life,” and “Eating Outside the Box.”

**WHEN:** July 29 | 1:30 to 4:20 p.m.

**COST:** Free!

**LOCATION:** Virtual, on Zoom

**REGISTER:** Register via Learning Central

Thank you for supporting Staff Success Days!

With 15 sessions and speakers across campus, we want to thank everyone who helped make our first Staff Success Days event a super-heroic event!

Special thanks to our speakers and moderators, and to all who attended.

Missed a session? No worries! Recordings of all the sessions will be available soon!

**Brought to you by:**

Employee Organizational Development & Staff Council
Financial Wellness: Build and Replenish Your Emergency Savings

Cherie Knight, MA, ChFC
HR Projects Specialist
Financial Wellness

Emergencies are bound to happen to most of us. A car repair, illness, job change, or loss of a loved one can impact our ability to pay for regular bills and expenses. An emergency savings account, maintained separately from your other checking and savings accounts and used only for emergencies, is a helpful way to reduce stress, avoid taking on more debt, and be better prepared for the unexpected.

Experts recommend having three to six months of take home pay available for emergencies, or nine-to-twelve months if you are the only income earner, are self-employed, or your income varies a lot.

Most of us need to build these funds slowly by setting aside a small amount each month until we’ve reached the target.

Open an interest-earning savings account that can be accessed without early withdrawal penalties or the risk of losing money. A CD, IRA, stock, bond, or mutual fund is not a good choice for emergency funds.

When you need to use this money, it’s important to start rebuilding to your goal amount immediately to be prepared when the next emergency happens. See best high yield savings accounts for top interest rates.

Start by calculating the total amount you want to save, then decide how much each month to put away toward this goal. You may be able to send money directly from your paycheck or your checking account to your emergency account automatically. Next, create or review your budget to see where spending can be reduced to carve out more savings. Bankrate’s Home Budget Calculator, or a budgeting app can help.

Savings-focused apps like Acorns or Qapital can round up your purchases to the nearest dollar and send the change to your emergency account, and save extra change in a jar to be deposited when it gets full.

Putting your tax refund into your emergency account or reducing your refund and saving the difference is another great strategy. A second job, side hustle, or small business are additional ways to generate more cash for this purpose. Evaluate where you want to direct additional savings when you reach your emergency goal.

Saving for other expenses and short-term goals like car maintenance, clothing, and vacations is a good next step after your emergency fund is built. Start another savings account, or some banks allow sub-accounts to help you set aside money for different purposes.

You and your loved ones can take advantage of complimentary financial planning and advice from UNM’s financial services partners for help with setting goals, taking action, and making decisions that will improve your overall financial security.
Food for Thought: Starting the Mediterranean Diet in 4 Steps

Reed Vawter, MS, RDN, CSOWM, LD
Health Education Consultant
Employee Wellness

The Mediterranean Diet is consistently ranked as one of the healthiest eating patterns. Research has shown that it can improve heart health, reduce the risk of stroke, help control diabetes, reduce the risk of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, and more! And with all these health benefits, it might be something you want to try.

But where should you start? Some people will try switching their eating all at once – but this can be overwhelming and just set you up for failure.

Instead, a better strategy might be to start with small, concrete changes you can fit in your existing diet that moves you in the right direction. Try these four steps to help you start following the Mediterranean Diet.

Change Your Oil

Olive oil is a central part of the Mediterranean Diet. It provides mono-unsaturated fats that help improve cholesterol. It also adds tons of flavor and fullness that might otherwise be lacking in low-fat meals.

The first step is to replace your other vegetable oils with olive oil. Use it to sauté Swiss chard (or any other greens), drizzle it on fish when making grilled tilapia with smoked paprika, or create a simple vinaigrette dressing to use on your favorite salad.

And it doesn’t just have to be the oil – whole olives count, too. Try making tapenade to spread on your favorite whole wheat bread.

Boost Veggies: Make a Greek Salad Every Week

The Mediterranean Diet is a plant-based eating pattern that emphasizes fruits and vegetables over animal products. There are many familiar salad recipes that you’ll find on Mediterranean eating sites. But I find the easiest place to start is with a simple Greek salad made of tomato, cucumber, and red onion.

It’s a salad you can put together in minutes – it tastes excellent, and lasts for several days. Make this every week, and you’ll always have some vegetables to add to your meal.

Switch Low-fat Dairy, Include Cheese in Moderation

You don’t have to give up dairy to follow the Mediterranean Diet. In fact, low-fat yogurt and cheese are an important part of the plan. Choosing low-fat milk, Greek yogurt, or kefir are perfect swaps.

And continue eating cheese if you enjoy it – think of it as a garnish or flavor-enhancer instead of being a primary part of the meal. For example, try a pizza with feta, spinach, and olives instead of a typical cheese-heavy pizza.

Include Legumes Several Times per Week

A core part of the Mediterranean Diet is to choose leaner proteins. The first step is often to choose poultry and seafood more frequently than red meat. But it’s also important to include plant-based proteins such as beans and lentils.

These foods are great sources of fiber, so they are excellent at creating fullness. Plus, they reduce cancer risk and improve blood sugar control. Enjoy a pasta, kale, and white bean soup or this Greek Mediterranean lentil salad.

Try one or more of these steps to move your eating closer to the Mediterranean Diet. But also realize that healthy eating is not all-or-nothing. You can get a lot of the benefits of the Mediterranean Diet without going to it 100%.

Every positive change will make a difference in your health, so just go one step at a time.
UNM Suicide Awareness Week, Sept. 12-18

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month is a time to share resources and stories in an effort to shed light on this highly stigmatized topic. The UNM community is coordinating events and workshops the week of Sept. 12 to our understanding of the complexity of mental illness.

Through the week’s events, we can expel myths, educate our community and show support for the many people affected by behavioral health conditions.

The week’s schedule will be published in upcoming communications. Questions? Contact Benefits & Employee Wellness.

Well-Being Expo, Sept. 21-23

SAVE THE DATE! UNM’s Virtual Well-being Expo is coming up on September 21, 22 & 23. Educational workshops in Zoom from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. will support your personal and financial growth. Sessions include eating healthy on a budget, giving back, stress management, movement at work, supportive listening, student debt strategies, pet therapy, and how to maintain your health while in college. Financial topics like budgeting, paying down debt, financial planning (including risk protection, retirement, and wills and trusts), Social Security, and Medicare will also be covered.

The Expo will also feature videos from a number of UNM Wellness departments and an added bonus for your participation- you can opt into drawings for giveaway items!

The Well-being Expo, sponsored by UNM Benefits & Employee Wellness and HSC Wellness, is free and open to all UNM faculty, staff, retirees, alumni, and students. More information coming soon!

Road to Wellness Workshop

Benefits & Employee Wellness is back with our 7-week Road to Wellness Workshop for Fall 2021. Make your health and wellness a priority this fall semester by signing up today! Space is limited.

This online workshop will help you set achievable wellness goals and maintain healthier habits as you continue on your road to wellness. The workshop will also share and discuss several self-care techniques that you can start practicing in your daily life immediately!

WHEN: Every Thursday, Sept. 2 – Oct. 14, Noon-1:30 p.m.

Fourth meeting will be 1-on-1 consults only. No group class will be held on Sept. 23

WHERE: On Zoom and daily emails to keep you on track!

You will receive a calendar invite with the Zoom link for each class

FOR WHOM: This workshop is free to all benefits-eligible faculty and staff

Who is This Workshop For?

• Individuals living with a chronic condition or disease
• Caretakers of individuals living with a chronic condition or disease

• Anyone needing more guidance and accountability on their road to wellness

While we cover chronic disease self-management information in this workshop, we also offer self-care and general wellness tips that anyone can apply in their daily lives, including:

• Wellness Goal Setting and Action Planning
• Brainstorming and Problem Solving
• Healthy Eating
• Physical Activity
• Getting a Good Night's Sleep
• Stress Management and Mental Health
• Meditation and Deep Breathing
• Additional Resources and Support

Questions? Contact workshop leader and UNM Benefits & Employee Wellness Health Education Consultant Lauren Lewis at lclewis@unm.edu.
Positivity 101: “Paws”itively Supporting Our Pets

Tracey L. Briggs, MA, Supervisor Employee Wellness

Ever since many of us began working remotely, our furry family members have become our 24/7 sidekicks. Social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic has brought us, literally, closer to our pets. They enhanced the positive in our lives and became our office helpers, couch companions, and stress relievers.

Now as some of us begin the process of gradually returning to work and spending less time at home over the weeks and months to come, our pets are likely to experience separation anxiety. Here are some practical suggestions to ease the shift for our tail-wagging pals.

Start preparing them
As we start the process to “Bring Back the Pack,” ease your pet into a reduction of constant attention, which can help them when you leave the house to go back to work or school. Gently remind them what it’s like to be alone for parts of the day.

Regularly leaving pets alone for 30 minutes at a time can help “desensitize” them to absences. As they adjust, gradually increase the amount of time you are away.

Doing the prep work lessens the impact of extreme transition when you are back at the office full time.

Schedule a schedule
Another recommendation would be setting up a daily routine because dogs and cats (like most adults and children) do best on a schedule. Build in consistency for when they wake, when they eat, when you exercise with them, when you share time with them, and set aside time so they have independent intervals throughout the day. Experiencing a set schedule now can help pets adjust quicker when you go back to work.

Keeping them happy and engaged when alone
Give your dog a puzzle toy or leaving your cat with a new toy she can toss and chase provides a challenge and distracts them when you first leave, as can using a pheromone collar or diffuser or playing relaxing music for them. Studies show that dogs really like reggae, but any music will soothe the inner beast of your pet.

Making sure dogs get exercise before leaving for work, whether it be a walk or just play in the backyard, can wear them out and make them ready for a nap by the time you leave. These actions can help to make your absence easier on your pets.

Truly, no matter what path you choose, by starting the process of easing your pet into your transition from home to office work, you will find that the positive impact it has will make it much easier for both of you.

Approaching Change with Well-being in Mind

COVID-19 brought multiple changes to our work lives and a transformation to the way we provide our services. We incorporated virtual meetings, remote work routines, and online collaboration with colleagues, all while getting used to work-from-home demands. Now, we are facing new changes as we return to campus and enter another phase in the pandemic story.

Change can lead to disruption, challenges, and even learning opportunities that transform organizations and individuals. The strategies by which we perceive and approach unexpected and planned changes have an impact on the success of our workplace and, undoubtedly, our personal well-being.

Want More Tips? Join the LoboWell Listserv LOBOWELL-L@LIST.UNM.EDU Learn how to subscribe.

Or follow us on Facebook! @UNMEmployeeWellness

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