



May 31, 2018

Dear Fellow Lobos:

Since joining The University of New Mexico within the past several months, we have been committed to evaluating and rectifying significant issues within our Department of Intercollegiate Athletics while striving to be transparent about our challenges—and potential solutions. We owe it to our student-athletes, coaches and staff and the legion of passionate Lobo supporters everywhere.

The University and the State of New Mexico have conducted numerous financial audits and reviews of the Department. Because it is important for us to develop a sustainable budget that supports our student-athletes and their coaches, a UNM Athletics Budget Task Force was formed to address the current and future financial challenges. For context, the UNM Athletics Department currently projects a recurring deficit of \$2.3 million for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) in addition to facing a running \$4.7 million deficit accumulated over the past decade. All objective analysis led to the conclusion that aggressive action to create significant savings will be required to avoid jeopardizing the future integrity of the entire athletic program.

In early May, we determined that we needed all available research and assessments to move forward with a plan to meet these challenges. We retained Mike Alden, a veteran athletics consultant, to examine our athletics department and our current offerings and to assess the information we had gathered and our viable options. His work has included a campus visit, interviews with athletic department staff, university administrators, university faculty and staff, student leaders, community leaders and Lobo supporters. He has also conducted a comprehensive analysis of our finances. Mr. Alden will continue to provide guidance, and though he will not be making formal recommendations to us, his work and research will be invaluable to our decision-making process.

To address the financial challenges and right-sizing of the department, there are several options for us to consider. Reducing the number of sport offerings is just one option under consideration to remedy our financial situation and reboot our department. In evaluating if we should no longer sponsor a sport at the varsity level, we are looking carefully at the impact on student-athletes, financial savings, program history, fan support, impact on the community, facilities, scheduling, travel and a host of other factors.

There is, however, an additional challenge that weighs heavily upon us and that is fundamental to our mission in providing opportunities for our students.

Federal law under Title IX requires that institutions receiving federal dollars must provide equal opportunities to both men and women on campus and in intercollegiate athletics. We are committed to equity and have been concerned for many months that our athletics program is not in

compliance with federal law. This past spring, we retained Helen Grant Consulting, a leading national expert on Title IX compliance, to conduct a thorough and transparent review of our athletics programs. You can read the document here: [www.golobos.com/titleix](http://www.golobos.com/titleix).

Understanding compliance with Title IX can be complicated, but it is clear from the independent review that the University is falling short in adhering to federal guidelines. Basic tests of compliance include providing athletic opportunities that are substantially proportionate to the undergraduate enrollment; a history of growth and continued expansion of opportunities for underrepresented groups; and fully accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex. For example, women make up 55.4% of our undergraduate student population but just 43.8% of our student-athletes. This 11.6% difference represents approximately 145 participation opportunities. There are other shortfalls that we currently face in scholarships, facilities and an overall commitment to Title IX. We could spend time assigning blame for the situation, but instead we are committed to spending our energies on finding solutions.

As we consider options to reverse our financial position, it is clear that we must also consider the impact our decisions will have on our Title IX compliance. We must do better in offering equal opportunities for men and women and achieve this while also reducing our financial deficit.

The hard work of assessing and evaluating is underway, and we commit to having a plan ready to share with you later this summer. We understand that our decisions will impact students, staff and the entire UNM community. Any decision to reduce the number of sport offerings will be incredibly difficult but will come with a pledge to delay implementation until the summer of 2019; honor all current student-athlete scholarships through graduation; and continue to support our coaches and staff.

We certainly understand the importance of Lobos athletics to the history, tradition, and spirit of The University of New Mexico and to the citizens of the State of New Mexico. We know our decisions weigh as heavily on some of you as they do on us. We ask for your patience as we find ways to honorably and accountably manage our way through our current challenges. We appreciate your continued assistance and support as we work to restore the fiscal and athletic integrity of UNM sports.

Sincerely,



Garnett S. Stokes  
President



Eddie Nuñez  
Director of Athletics