

**AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT'S  
TRAVEL, ENTERTAINMENT & OTHER EXPENSES**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO**

**Report 2026-02  
February 3, 2026**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW MEXICO.**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

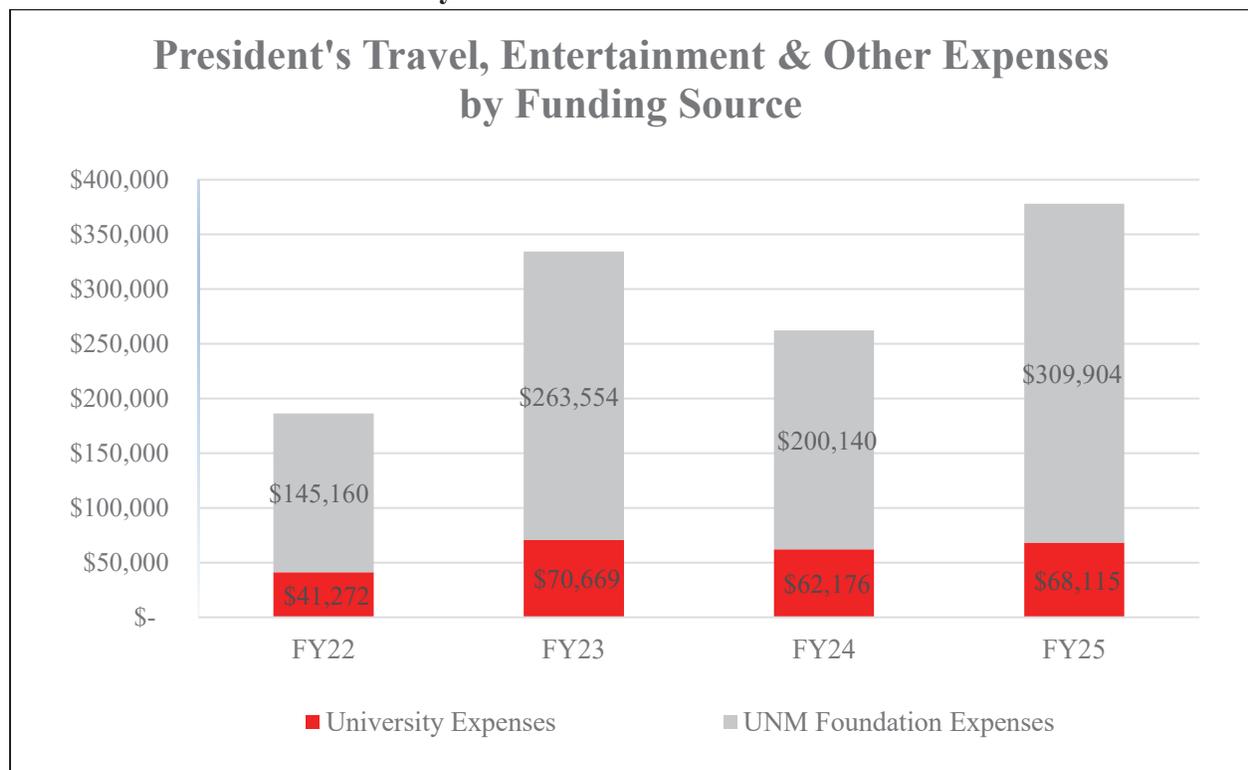
ACC .....	Audit and Compliance Committee
Foundation .....	UNM Foundation
FY25 .....	Fiscal Year 2025 (7/1/24 – 6/30/25)
IA .....	UNM Internal Audit Department
UAP .....	University Administrative Policies
UNM/University .....	University of New Mexico

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As required by *Regents' Policy 3.9: Benefits of the University President*, and per the President's employment agreement, the Internal Audit Department (IA) conducted an audit of the President's travel, entertainment, and other expenses for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025 (FY25). The purpose of the audit was to determine compliance with applicable Regents', University, and University of New Mexico Foundation (Foundation) policies, and the President's employment agreement and subsequent amendments.

IA tested in-scope expenses of \$68,115 and \$309,904, respectively, spent from the Office of the President's organization code and the Foundation's President's Club fund during FY25. IA notes that FY25 saw some semblance of normalcy for President Stokes' official duties, with a return to in-person travel, business meetings, and donor cultivation activities.

**Table 1. Four-Year Trend Analysis**



Source: MyReports (UNM Banner System) and UNM Foundation

IA also assessed the President's compensation received in FY25 to determine whether all salary and other compensation paid to or on behalf of the President were consistent with the terms of her original employment contract and subsequent amendments.

## CONCLUSION

The President's travel, entertainment, and other expenses for FY25 were generally reasonable, allowable, and consistent with applicable UNM policies and employment agreements, and the internal controls governing them were operating effectively during the audit period.

The following are Internal Audit's recommendations as a result of the audit:

- The Office of Government Relations should work with the Office of University Counsel and Policy Office to review and revise UAP 2050: Governmental Relations and Legislative Activity regarding reporting requirements for meetings with elected officials or similar events. UAP 2050 should align with state law and current practice.
- The Controller's Office should work with the Payroll and Unrestricted Accounting offices to strengthen internal controls to ensure taxable spousal benefits are properly accounted for and included in the President's gross income as required. A thorough review of travel expenditures should be completed to ensure taxable events are identified and taxed in gross income at all times.

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# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

According to *Regents' Policy 3.9: Benefits of the University President* and President Stokes' employment agreement, the University pays for or reimburses the President for reasonable and allowable expenses resulting from official travel, entertainment, and other activities by the President and her spouse if incurred in the performance of her official duties. Common examples of expenses incurred in the course of President Stokes' official duties may include any of the following: hosting University events; travel for national meetings of higher education organizations; developing partnerships throughout New Mexico; donor outreach and development; attendance of University Athletics' events; and advancing the University's legislative agenda.

In recognition that certain official events (donor cultivation, athletic events, etc.) benefit from the participation of the President's spouse, *Regents' Policy 3.9* allows the University to cover costs incurred by the President's spouse when attending events in the course of the President's official duties. These expenses are expected to comply with applicable Regents' and University policies.

The President has available discretionary funds held by the Foundation (President's Club Fund). Donations made to the President's Club Fund are used to advance the President's priorities for the University. Consistent with *Regents' Policy 3.9*, these funds are made available to the President to cover miscellaneous expenses, such as: retirement or recognition gifts, purchase of tables at receptions sponsored by community organizations, meals (including alcoholic beverages), and other similar expenses judged appropriate for the benefit of the University.

## PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the audit is to comply with the audit requirement under *Regents Policy 3.9, Benefits of the University President*, which requires Internal Audit to, "prepare and submit an annual audit report detailing the University President's Travel and Entertainment expenses." There is an additional audit requirement contained within President Stokes' employment agreement which requires that "The compensated expenses and/or reimbursements provided pursuant to this Agreement shall be audited annually by the University's Internal Auditor."

The scope of the audit included all of President Stokes' travel, entertainment, and other expenses, as well as her spouse's travel expenses, paid to her or on her behalf, within the audit period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025 (FY25). All transactions that were determined to be in-scope were tested as part of this audit.

The audit sought to accomplish the following objectives:

- Assess President Stokes' and her spouse's travel reimbursements, expenses for events sponsored by the Office of the President, or other expenses incurred incidental to her employment agreement, to ensure compliance with Regents' and University Administrative Policies (UAP) and employment agreement terms.
- Assess expenses incurred within the President's Club at the UNM Foundation to ensure compliance with Regents' and UNM Foundation policies.

- Assess whether compensation paid to President Stokes during the audit period was consistent with the terms of her employment agreement, and amendments to the employment agreement, duly authorized by the Board of Regents.

## PROCEDURES

The detailed audit procedures performed include the following activities:

- Review of:
  - Policies
    - Regents' Policy 3.9, "Benefits of the University President"
    - UAP 4000, "Allowable and Unallowable Expenditures"
    - UAP 4030, "Travel"
    - UAP 2050, "Governmental Relations and Legislative Activity"
    - Foundation Policy 4.6, "Foundation Debts, Disbursements, and Investments"
    - Foundation Policy 4.9, "Foundation Support of Other Organizations"
  - President Stokes' employment agreements, subsequent amendments, and the latest revision effective November 1, 2024
  - Control self-assessment and self-assessment questionnaires
  - Internal processes in place during the audit period, as understood through interviews with the President's staff and UNM Foundation management
- Analysis of:
  - All University expenses within the President's organization code for identification of in-scope transactions
  - Vendor history for non-salary payments paid to President Stokes
- Detailed testing to assess that all in-scope transactions were:
  - Reasonable and allowable
  - Accounted for appropriately
  - Consistent with applicable Regents', University, and/or UNM Foundation policies and procedures
  - Included in her noncash earnings, if taxable

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## OBSERVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESPONSES

### PRESIDENT'S UNIVERSITY EXPENSES

To identify in-scope transactions, IA generated an operating ledger detail report for the FY25 audit period for the President's Office's indices. After reviewing transaction information, IA identified and determined, in consultation with the Office of the President, transactions within the audit scope.

At the request of the President's Office, IA audits 100% of transactions that are determined to be in-scope, which totaled \$68,115 in FY25. IA tested in-scope transactions for conformity with applicable Regents' policies and University Administrative Policies (UAPs), as well as procedures established within the President's Office. All University Expense transactions tested were allowable, complied with applicable Regents' and University policies, and followed established internal procedures, except for two instances noted below.

IA noted a UNM event with invitations to elected officials was not reported to the UNM Office of Government and Community Relations. UAP 2050: Governmental Relations and Legislative Activity Section 6, State Reporting Requirements states, *"Any UNM funds used for meetings or receptions with elected officials or similar events must be reported to the New Mexico Secretary of State. In order for the University to track the expenditures, these events must be coordinated through the Office of Government and Community Relations."* However, according to the UNM Office of Government & Community Relations, this event did not meet the state reporting requirements, which include two exceptions to the requirements. Current New Mexico Statutes Annotated 1978 Chapter 10, Article 16B, Gift Act states, *"Payment of reasonable expenses incidental to an educational tour for legislators is not subject to the Gift Act's limitation on gifts"* and the *"Educational program exception to the New Mexico Gift Act"*. For that reason, it was not reported. However, UAP 2050 does not include exceptions and requires that any funds used for meetings with elected officials or similar events be reported. As a result of the current practice, UNM is in compliance with state law, but not UAP 2050.

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Office of Government Relations should work with the Office of University Counsel and Policy Office to review and revise UAP 2050: Governmental Relations and Legislative Activity regarding reporting requirements for meetings with elected officials or similar events. UAP 2050 should align with state law and current practice.

**Response from Chief Government Relations Officer**

<b>Action Items</b>
<b>Targeted Completion Date:</b> 12/31/2026
<b>Assigned to:</b> Chief Government Relations Officer
<b>Corrective Action Planned:</b> Government Relations will consult with University Counsel to determine the appropriate approach to ensuring congruence of relevant policies and state law. If policy changes are required, then both offices will collaborate with the Policy Office to facilitate policy change procedures. This process can involve lengthy engagement periods and foreshadows a scenario with extended time allocation for completion.

IA also identified a September 2024 airfare expenditure where President Stokes and her spouse traveled for a UNM football game in Arizona. The travel expenditure for President Stokes' spouse was determined to be taxable and documented in a UNM Chrome River expense report by Unrestricted Accounting. However, Payroll did not report the travel costs as taxable in her gross income, as required by Regents' Policy Manual 3.9.

**Recommendation 2**

The Controller's Office should work with the Payroll and Unrestricted Accounting offices to strengthen internal controls to ensure taxable spousal benefits are properly accounted for and included in the President's gross income as required. A thorough review of travel expenditures should be completed to ensure taxable events are identified and taxed in gross income at all times.

**Response from UNM Controller**

<b>Action Items</b>
<b>Targeted Completion Date:</b> 06/30/2026
<b>Assigned to:</b> Deputy Controller
<b>Corrective Action Planned:</b>  Financial Services has reviewed and agrees with the recommendation to work with the Payroll and Unrestricted accounting offices to strengthen internal controls governing taxation of the President's spousal benefits. We agree to review the current process and ensure that taxable

events are identified and taxed in a timely and appropriate manner in accordance with Regent's Policy Manual §3.9 *Benefits of the University President, Spousal Benefits*.

## PRESIDENT'S CLUB EXPENSES (UNM FOUNDATION)

Due to President Stokes' and her staff's discretion in using President's Club funds held by the UNM Foundation, IA subjected all expenses to substantive audit procedures. IA obtained a detailed report of expenditures from the Foundation made by the President's Club. The spending totaled \$309,904 in FY25.

IA tested all expenses for conformity with applicable Regents' and Foundation policies, and whether they were processed in accordance with established procedures. All disbursements from the President's Fund were allowable and no reportable conditions were identified in this test work.

IA developed Table 2 below to characterize the University and Foundation expenses audited by type of activity and source of funds.

**Table 2. Expenses Audited by Type and Source**

<b>Expenses Audited in FY25</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Development / Entertainment	-	234,000	234,000
President's Events	41,739	1,511	43,249
Table Sponsorships	-	61,000	61,000
Regents' Development / Entertainment	-	11,123	11,123
University House Expenses	15,301	-	15,301
President's Travel	5,667	2,270	7,937
Business Meetings and Meals	2,515	-	2,515
UNM 2040 Initiative	2,894	-	2,894
<b>Total Travel, Entertainment, &amp; Other Expenses</b>	<b>68,115</b>	<b>309,904</b>	<b>378,018</b>

*Source: MyReports - UNM Banner Systems (University); UNM Foundation*

## PRESIDENT'S COMPENSATION

Pursuant to the terms of President Stokes' employment agreements, IA assessed whether salary, vehicle allowance, deferred compensation, and social club membership payments made to, or on behalf of, President Stokes were consistent with the terms of her employment agreements and subsequent amendments. With the exception of the instance in Recommendation 2 noted above, IA found all compensation paid to President Stokes was consistent with the terms of her employment agreements in effect in FY25 and was appropriately reported as taxable income.

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## APPROVALS



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Victor Griego, CPA  
Director, Internal Audit Department

Approved for Publication:



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Chair, Audit and Compliance Committee