



President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

With the summer session over and new faces appearing for freshman orientation, there is an air of expectation on campus. We are about to embark on a new fall semester with lots of promise. A new football coach for the field, more than 80 new faculty members in the classrooms and labs, and a new excitement about what lies ahead. I am thankful to be in the company of such a gifted group as we enter into a new chapter for UNM.

A Unified Approach to Higher Education

Last week I attended the conference meeting of the Council of University Presidents (CUP), a gathering of our state's university level leadership including the presidents of New Mexico's seven four-year institutions. Higher Education Secretary José Garcia, Department of Finance and Administration Secretary Tom Clifford, and Legislative Finance Committee Director Dave Abbey joined us. This meeting is an opportunity for the four comprehensive institutions to develop legislative priorities that are supported by the CUP, and work on long-term goals that tie into the funding formula and student success initiatives. Much of the discussion centered on the second phase of the new funding formula. These tangible outputs will be specific to the mission of the institution. For research universities such as UNM, performance measurements will include student credit courses completed, the number of degree and post graduate certificates awarded and how the state's workforce needs are being met. This CUP will be proposing recommendations by the end of summer for the next legislation session. Our hope is that this new approach to funding higher education will better meet the financial requirements of each institution.

Education Benefits Through United Way Campaign

I also began work as part of the Leadership Group for the United Way of Central New Mexico's (UWCNM) Education Support Initiative. Kathie Winograd, president of CNM, and Jim Hinton, president and CEO of Presbyterian Hospital, are chairs of this committee of community stakeholders who are tasked with setting direction and major goals for the strategic plan. UNM will play an integral part in this campaign and will also benefit from the initiative's concepts and funding. The UWCNM is reworking its community funding to focus more on education, health and income. United Way officials will be providing details regarding how this campaign will unfold and opportunities for all of us to become involved with the official kickoff next month.

Measures Taken to Ensure Safe Lobo Living

As I mentioned last week, we start this new semester with almost double the number of students living in campus housing. In response to concerns expressed about how the University is addressing safety issues and disruptive behavior in campus affiliated housing, I want to share some specific actions we are taking. Walt Miller, associate vice president for Student Life, and additional staff have been visiting Lobo Village late at night to assess the situation. American Campus Communities is circulating a survey asking residents to rate their interest in living in an alcohol free building.

We are working together to strengthen the reporting, disciplinary and eviction processes, and to bring all housing under unified, consistent university policies and procedures. We are also furthering educational and prevention efforts for alcohol and substance abuse including social marketing, workshops and distribution of student developed booklets on fun alternatives to drinking. Let me remind everyone that drinking is not permitted in main on-campus housing and we expect those who have that privilege in their rooms at Lobo Village to do so responsibly and to be respectful of their neighbors.

UNM has Ties to Olympic Gold

As a former Lobo swimmer, it is always exciting for me to watch the swimming events during the summer Olympics. This year is particularly exhilarating, not just for the U.S., but also for UNM. Former Lobo swimmer Mary Gen Hagen (Ledecky) was gifted in the short-distance freestyle events, representing UNM in the mid-seventies. Over three decades later, her daughter, 15-year-old Katie Ledecky, is the youngest member on the United States Olympic team and won a gold medal in the 800-meter freestyle on Friday, breaking Janet Evans's 23-year-old American record with her finish in 8 minutes, 14.63 seconds, and just barely missing the world record. Mary Gen sent an email before the final on Friday noting the Aquatic Center was sold out for the event; all the more remarkable a swim for the youngest member of our team.

Recognizing Leadership Among Our Ranks

A testament to the top caliber faculty and leadership at UNM is the recent news that President Barack Obama has nominated UNM School of Law Dean Kevin Washburn to be the next assistant secretary of Interior for Indian affairs, which the highest ranking federal post for Native American issues. A member of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, Dean Washburn was commended by the President as having "demonstrated knowledge and dedication throughout (his) career." Dean Washburn's nomination is a tremendous personal honor and a tribute to his remarkable career. His colleagues at UNM undoubtedly, share the loss I feel in losing one of our finest deans.

During this brief break between summer and fall sessions, I am taking a vacation next week. Janet and I will be joining my sister's family for our traditional summer getaway. Since I'll be away, there will be no President's Perspective next week. I hope you are looking forward, as I am, to the return of students this month and plunging full speed into the busy semester ahead.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob