



President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

Today, we officially kick off the Fall 2012 semester. The increase in energy was palpable last week and will be notable today as the University springs to life academically, socially, athletically and creatively. It is my pleasure to welcome new and returning students, faculty and staff to UNM. I am honored to serve as the University's 21st President and am committed to your success as we move forward into a new academic year.

New Faculty Add to Diverse Intellectual Environment

The faculty is a fundamental element of campus life; last Monday, I had the opportunity to meet many of them at a welcome reception at University House. This year we welcome almost 215 new faculty, including 130 from the Health Sciences Center. As I spoke with our new UNM faculty, I was struck by their caliber and diversity, which I believe will contribute significantly to our UNM vision of a vital academic climate. We are all part of a learning community, and much of our learning comes from each other. The addition of these new instructors and researchers will set the stage for an even stronger UNM.

Recognition for Excellence in Service

Equally important to the campus is our staff, many of whom have committed their entire careers to UNM. On Tuesday our Board of Regents honored long time UNM HSC employee Pug Burge with the Regents' Meritorious Service Award. Pug began her 38 year long career at UNM in 1974 in the Department of Pediatrics as an Administrative Assistant where she very quickly rose to the position of Department Administrator. Pug's passion and commitment for HSC and its mission, coupled with her leadership skills, positioned her to serve in various vital HSC roles, most recently as Chief Administrative Officer. In nominating Pug for this award, Dr. Paul Roth, Chancellor of Health Sciences, lauded Pug as a "respected central resource at HSC for all constituents for guidance, direction, production and growth."

Building an Intentional Culture of Collaboration and Innovation

As a great research university and the state's flagship institution of higher learning, we recognize that we cannot have walls around our enterprise, but rather we must be fully engaged with our community. As resources of every type – natural, capital and human – become increasingly scarce, thoughtful and collaborative planning for long-term solutions will be our most valuable means of sustainable success.

To that end, the significance of engaging in open dialogue between the University of New Mexico and its surrounding community was demonstrated last Tuesday by our Board of Regents, which unanimously approved a license agreement between UNM and Bernalillo County to protect the UNM North Golf Course from development for the next 15 years. As a result, you will soon see golf course renovations and upgrades funded by the County, which will include path maintenance, new trees and a new irrigation system. The commitment to protect the golf course is significant for three reasons. First, open space enhances the quality of life not only on campus, but for all residents of Albuquerque.

Second, we reached this agreement by working closely with the neighborhoods that surround us. And third, the upgrades will enable us to implement improved water management practices. As someone who fondly remembers enjoying the North Golf Course as a student, I am especially pleased that we were able to approve this agreement.

White Sands Education and Research Agreement

White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) has been contributing to the advancement of science and technology for more than half a century. On Wednesday, I travelled to White Sands to meet with Senator Jeff Bingaman, Brigadier General John Ferrari, and my counterparts at NMSU, New Mexico Tech and the University of Texas at El Paso to sign a memorandum of agreement committing us to working together on education and research partnerships. We received a comprehensive briefing on the many organizations currently doing test and training work at WSMR. Our initial discussions centered on student and faculty opportunities, including both internships and careers. The Department of Contract Archeology, within UNM's Maxwell Museum, is already working with White Sands on projects to excavate culturally sensitive areas. It is my anticipation that by formalizing this agreement we are paving the way for more UNM departments to implement innovative educational research initiatives with WSMR.

Welcoming Our Newest Lobos

Sunday afternoon I joined more than 1,000 freshmen at Popejoy Hall for Freshman Convocation. It is an event that is particularly enjoyable for me because it is the time for welcoming new students and their families to our UNM community. Freshmen bring new energy, new hopes and new interests to our campus. As we seek to challenge them to expand to new ventures, their eagerness and energy infuse us with enthusiasm – for our disciplines, for education and for this place that is our UNM. Participating in this annual tradition, symbolizes the beginning of their educational experience – their Lobo experience.

Please be sure to join in UNM's traditional Welcome Back Days activities that run throughout the week. You will see a lot of cherry and silver as you walk through camp us to get you in the Lobo spirit. As we begin a new academic year, your personal journey starts or continues here at this great University.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob