



President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

America is driven by innovation, much of which is in turn driven by research universities such as ours, and the new knowledge we produce. It is important to recognize the significance of the contributions of national research universities to the nation's future economic successes. UNM, its research faculty, and the next generation of research leaders we graduate all play a critical role the economic competitiveness in high-tech global markets. The education and scientific research that takes place here contributes to the foundation for innovation and sustainable long-term economic growth, and produces discoveries that improve health, fuel new technologies, address our energy needs and environmental challenges, and position us to better comprehend the global community in which we live.

Closing the Innovation Deficit

Congress is due to consider legislation this fall that could significantly affect budgets for higher education and research. Along with more than 160 University and College presidents of Association of American Universities (AAU) and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I signed an open letter to President Obama and Congress, urging them to close the [Innovation Deficit](#), the growing gap between where federal investments in research and higher education are and where they should be. We have collectively expressed concern about cuts to federal investments in research and higher education at a time when other nations are pouring resources into these areas.

NM EPSCoR Grants Benefit Sustainability and Intellectual Leadership

Federally funded research is critical not only to areas of national importance but also at the state level. UNM is a part of our state's [Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research](#) (NM EPSCoR), which is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), and strives to make the state and its research universities competitive with the national research agenda through improving the New Mexico's scientific capacity and a competitive research infrastructure. UNM has been awarded two EPSCoR grants that will continue to build the state of New Mexico's research capacity in water resource modeling, and renewable energy and energy efficiency. This month, UNM was awarded a [\\$6 million grant](#) for water resource research. In partnership with the Nevada System of Higher Education and the University of Idaho, we will create a western consortium dedicated to advancing watershed science, workforce development and education. Given the severe drought and wildfires that have affected New Mexico, this grant will be critical to aiding researchers to better understand and address the environmental challenges we face. UNM also received a [\\$20 Million EPSCoR](#) grant earlier this year that will help to build New Mexico's research capacity in renewable energy and energy efficiency. We are partnering with colleges and universities statewide, as well as our national labs and other key stakeholders to focus on ways to improve efficiency of sustainable energy resource utilization and to minimize environmental impacts of uranium mining and oil and gas production. Congratulations to University Libraries Professor William Michener, who is the UNM principal investigator on both grants, along with Mary Jo Daniel, associate director of the New Mexico EPSCoR program, who is the co-PI on the energy grant. Together, we are working to improve the research, infrastructure, and the human talent necessary for New Mexico to be competitive and successful.

Health Sciences Center Recognized as an Innovation Institution

Innovation is key to the growth of New Mexico's economy. The Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce has developed a series of events to recognize organizations that drive innovation in New Mexico. The UNM Health Sciences Center was the first honored for making key contributions to New Mexico's economic and technology development through research and innovation. I would like to congratulate the faculty and staff of the Health Sciences Center along with Dr. Paul Roth. It was highlighted that last year the Clinical and Translational Science Center received more than 900 grants totaling about \$150 million in external funding. The Center is key to driving innovation and economic development by guiding and accelerating discoveries in the laboratory to clinical practice in our communities. The UNM Cancer Research and Treatment Center was also lauded as one of only 67 centers nationwide recognized by the National Cancer Institute for their excellence, contributions to cancer research, and delivery of medical advances. The Cancer Center receives over \$60 million in federal and private funding and maintains strong collaborations with SNL, LANL, NMSU, and the Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute. This honor is a testament to the excellence of our health sciences faculty and staff and their cutting-edge work in research, education, and patient care. Dr. Roth was also recognized for his role as the chair of the Chamber during the last year – a great example of our leaders, faculty and staff, serving our community.

Increasingly, the link between the knowledge jobs created by our faculty and graduates is recognized as critical to driving the engine of America's engine of innovation. As yesterday's Albuquerque Journal noted, we are seeing job growth, but many of the jobs are low paying. Research universities, especially those with health science centers providing cutting edge clinical care and innovative research, provide the key to the economic growth need United States. In Albuquerque, we have a great public research university with a world-class health sciences center only a few miles from the very best federal research labs in the country. Few other universities or cities have this combination of resources and we need to make this combination effective.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob