



President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

As the state's flagship university, UNM faculty, staff and students work with other universities — both in our state and beyond — to extend knowledge that improves lives, drive economic development and address our state's most pressing educational concerns. By evaluating our collective needs and resources, as well as how we can incorporate those of our state and national partners, we can gain greater efficiencies by working together.

Progress for Higher Education through the Power of Collaboration

In the weeks leading up to the beginning of the new semester, I have had a chance to visit my colleagues in different part of the state to discuss the challenges and opportunities – and sometimes they are one in the same – facing higher education. Gov. Martinez demonstrated her commitment to improving the state of all levels of education in New Mexico by bringing the leadership across the pre-kindergarten through college continuum together in Las Cruces this past week, to holistically address the most pressing challenges we face.

One particular message expressed in a presentation by Kati Haycock, president of the [Education Trust](#), stood out to me as incredibly relevant: we cannot afford to make, nor accept excuses for why we cannot succeed. At the college level we hear about how poor and unprepared our students are in New Mexico, and that is why we rank low in some areas and cannot succeed. But honestly, many do succeed, overcoming these types of challenges; we should be looking at why these students and their institutions are successful and look to make this the rule rather than the exception. Everyone must take responsibility – students, their families, educators and political leaders – for creating environments of success, rather than succumbing to a self-fulfilling prophecy of mediocrity and lowered expectations.

One of the visions I expressed for UNM when I came here as president was the establishment of a College of Public Health to benefit all New Mexicans. While in Las Cruces, I was able to have an engaging and productive dialogue with NMSU President Garrey Carruthers regarding ways in which we could collaborate in the delivery of our curricula. I am very optimistic that this initiative will have a critical impact on public health education that will reverberate throughout and beyond New Mexico.

Great Coaching a Foundation for Success

When I was a student-athlete at UNM, and afterwards as I pursued my post-graduate degrees, I always saw the parallels of having a great coach to that of having a great teacher. Recently, I had the chance to see UNM Football Coach Bob Davie in Ruidoso coaching our players. I observed Coach Davie's approach of understanding how his players learn and shaping their learning. Like a great teacher, he gets his players excited about football not just as a sport but also as a discipline. By recognizing that each player is different, he helps them to make adjustments and improvements. He always emphasized the positive, while encouraging players to learn new skills. Our student-athletes are getting the best type of coaching mentorship that will prepare them for success both on and off of the field. Yet, another example of the value of [Lobo Athletics](#)!

Collaboration for Veterans' Success

It is always my honor to emphasize the ways in which The University of New Mexico has been a leader in supporting our Veterans in their efforts to successfully achieve their higher education goals. Most recently, UNM has joined in a collaborative initiative with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to assist student Veterans in making a smooth transition to college. The [VetSuccess on Campus](#) program provides an experienced Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor directly on campus working with the [UNM Veterans Resource Center](#) to assist and support student veterans and their eligible family members.

Please join me in welcoming UNM VetSuccess Counselor Gwen Nutter, who will serve as a “one-stop liaison” for all veterans, military service members and their families attending UNM. Gwen will also be working with our UNM branches and UNM West, so please contact Gwen at [VetSuccess](#) for support.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob