

## **PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE**

Good afternoon.

Times couldn't be busier or more exciting at The University of New Mexico these days. The semester is drawing to a conclusion as we get ready for the holidays and prepare for quite a few "new" beginnings.

As you certainly all know by now, in March 2018, UNM will welcome a new president to the Albuquerque campus. While incoming President Stokes concludes her current responsibilities, we at UNM are working around the clock to make her transition as seamless and positive as possible. She brings with her a resume and reputation for extraordinary leadership and a history of excellence. We know the standards President Stokes intends to demand upon her arrival, and are committed to removing any obstacles or impediments from her being able to begin her first days focused on her own forward agenda.

With that in mind, I and the dedicated professionals that have helped assist me as interim president, have begun reviewing past and current management and business operations, processes, and procedures at UNM. The incoming president will most assuredly have her own goals in that regard, but we also feel an obligation to turn over the reins to her with as few challenges as possible.

In addition to some ongoing internal evaluations into overall campus practices, we have been working with the New Mexico Office of the State Auditor (OSA) to identify areas where we might be more effective and accountable in our athletic department. A little less than two months ago, UNM hired Eddie Nuñez to assume responsibilities as athletic director. When Eddie was hired, he said he intended to review processes and procedures within the athletic department with an eye toward not just meeting institutional NCAA measures, but also elevating programs to best practices standards. He openly welcomed the OSA evaluation and the resulting recommendations as valuable resources. I know he has other areas where he intends even further inventories and reforms.

I have been most impressed, in fact, with the willingness, seriousness and zeal with which most UNM leadership and staff has embraced the opportunity we now have for self-evaluation and change. Over the coming months, we will be outlining more university challenges we plan to turn into opportunities.

Consistent with what we expect of UNM, let me report some things we are all very proud of:

- Sandra Biedron, of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, received the IEEE national particle accelerator science award for her exceptional work.
- On Saturday, the Lobo women's cross country team nabbed the NCAA championship for the second time in three years, with a record-setting performance by Ednah Kurgat.
- The School of Architecture and Planning recently hosted the 2017 ASCA Administrator Conference, here in Albuquerque. Dean Geraldine Forbes Isais and her co-chair, Rafael Longoria of University of Houston, deserve a shout-out for their leadership.
- The annual LoboTHON surpassed its fundraising goal for their miracle week.
- Lobo basketball tipped off earlier this month with impressive and high-scoring victories that are exciting UNM fans about Coach Paul Weir's squad.

I admit, I hate to start listing UNM individual or departmental accomplishments, because I know some will

undoubtedly be left out. The point is, there are a great deal of phenomenal achievements that occur on this campus each day.

So, while we at UNM are diligently working to improve, what remains consistent is our commitment to excellence, and providing the very best education, learning environment, and supportive culture for our students and faculty. We must never lose sight of our role as stewards of one of New Mexico's most valuable resources and treasures.

I am thankful for every faculty, staff and student who makes this campus a place of excellence. I hope everyone enjoys some time off for the holiday, to celebrate with family and friends. I wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving!

## **Federal Tax Bills**

The tax proposals being debated in DC will have serious implications on universities. Specifically, they will affect our graduate students by taxing their tuition, the athletic department and the foundation by eliminating or changing tax breaks for donations, and the university by removing tax breaks for our bonds. We are working with national organizations and associations, as well as our congressional delegation, to assess the impact of these bills. Specifically, APLU (Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities) and ACE (American Council on Education), as well as others, are communicating the concerns of universities to our senators and representatives, as are we. For a sample of such efforts, please read the two letters at: [Public Research Universities Detail Deep Concerns Over Tax Bill](#) and [APLU Expresses Strong Concerns with Senate Tax Provisions](#).

## **2017 Mandatory Training Reminder - December 1 Deadline Rapidly Approaching!**

The Dec. 1 deadline for the 2017 Mandatory Training is rapidly approaching. With a short week for the holiday this week, that leaves very little time for all regular faculty and staff, temporary faculty and staff, on-call staff, and student employees (including graduate students), to complete the three designated university-wide mandatory training courses. For more information, please visit, [University-wide Mandatory Training](#). To see who has and has not completed the 2017 Mandatory Trainings in your area, go to Learning Central for direct reports and HR Reports for your department and organization.

## **Volunteers Needed for Commencement**

Do you want to volunteer and have some fun? Join us in celebrating the class of 2017 and assisting at the University Commencement ceremony! The University will have a single Fall 2017 UNM Commencement ceremony in Dreamstyle Arena, on Friday, Dec. 15, at 6 p.m. This ceremony will recognize graduates from all degree programs at all levels. Volunteer assignment hours for the Commencement ceremony will be from 4 to 8:30 p.m. Please visit [sign up to volunteer](#). For more information on University Commencement, please visit: [Fall 2017 Graduation Ceremonies](#).

Until next time.

Chaouki Abdallah  
Interim President

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*There is so much more that happens on the UNM campus than can be conveyed in a weekly message. To find out about the latest stories and events, please visit the [UNM Newsroom](#), the central source of news and information for the UNM community.*