



The Installation Address of

Robert G. Frank
21st President

of the University of New Mexico

I N S P I R E



T H E E I G H T E E N T H o f N O V E M B E R , T W O T H O U S A N D T W E L V E

The background image is a composite. The top half shows a man in a blue and red academic robe speaking at a podium with the University of New Mexico seal. The bottom half shows a large group of graduates in various academic regalia seated on a stage. The text is overlaid in a white, italicized serif font.

The rich history and culture of the University of New Mexico serve as great inspiration to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to pursuing one's dreams. Enthusiasm springs from inspiration. Enthusiasm is one's attitude of confidence, curiosity and expectation, with fragments of daring and risk.

We are all inspired differently. The success of this university, your university, will be built on the way we inspire each other to learn, lead, and serve in a diverse and changing world.



The following is a text of remarks prepared for delivery by Dr. Robert G. Frank on the occasion of his installation as 21st President of the University of New Mexico.

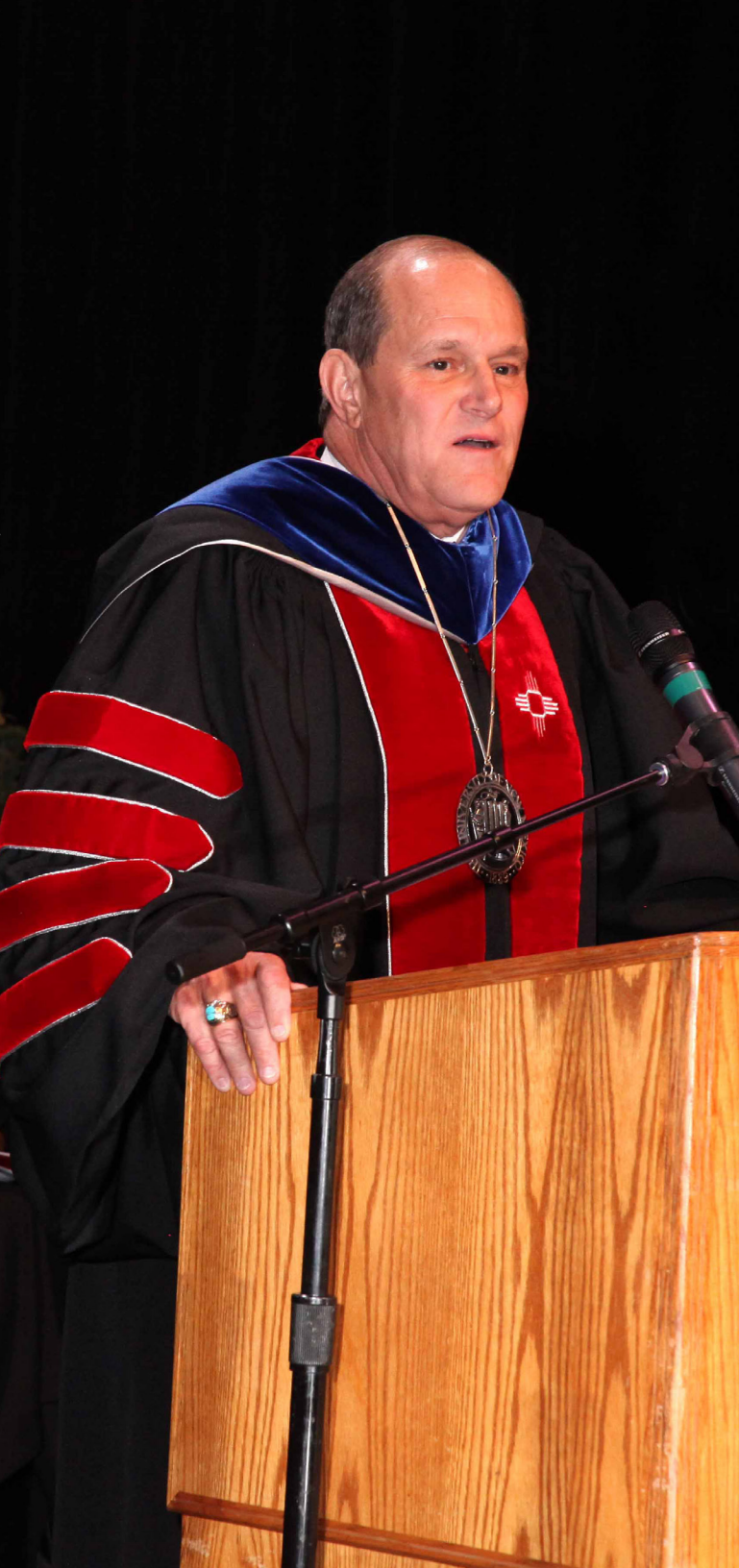
I N S P I R E

I am honored, more than I can express, to serve as the 21st President of the University of New Mexico. I am a native son of New Mexico, and a proud alumnus of UNM. I am deeply indebted to the Board of Regents for their vote of trust in asking me to assume the presidency of this great University. In my short time in office, I have learned being a president is not a solo journey; it is truly a family affair. My wife, Janet, my sons Daniel and Brian have all followed me to my beloved state. I thank the boys for joining me here, as their lives allow.

It is an extraordinary opportunity to come home to the Land of Enchantment, to my alma mater, the university that provided me with the skills to compete successfully throughout my academic career. And while I have worked at other great public research universities, nothing compares to the enormous joy of returning to the University of New Mexico.

Now, each day, I am captivated and inspired by the mesas; by the setting sun turning the Sandia Mountains pink. I walk across this familiar and beloved campus, appreciating the sight of pueblo architecture against the big blue sky.

I walk past the fierce lobo statute sculpted by our faculty member John Tatschl in 1947 that stands guard at the entrance to the university. I was a swimmer in college. I remember how my college teammate and roommate, Paul Harris and I would ride our bikes past the wolf on our way to our 5:45 AM workout. I admit, on many cold mornings we greeted that



lobo with words that I cannot repeat to this fine audience.

I was a young man from Las Cruces who was recruited to the University of New Mexico by Coach John Mechem, the son of a former Governor. Coach Mechem, who is here with us today, told me two things: UNM was a great university, and that I would swim fast as a Lobo. I trusted Coach Mechem, and he delivered on both promises. I received a wonderful education and swam many more yards than I thought possible, or ever wanted.

Like every young college student, I knew in my heart that there was something that I was supposed to do. I threw myself into college life, the tasks of studying, the fun of making friends, the discipline of swimming, the challenge of learning who I was, and who I would become. Thinking back to that young man, I recognize how unformed and elastic my nascent dreams were. Like many of our students today, I was searching for the right inspiration, the right vision, the right dream to set my life afire.

I came to UNM through athletics, but like most athletes, academics was the key to my career success. I had the great luck of finding a wonderful academic mentor in Professor John Gluck, who is here today. John became my Honors mentor, and later my graduate advisor. Today, like Coach Mechem, he is one of those rare life long friends, the kind you can count on the fingers of one hand. John challenged and inspired me to reach higher than I believed I was capable.

I had the great luck of a demanding athletic program that inspired me to redefine my limits through rigorous discipline.

And I had the great luck of going to a graduate program that set me in the right direction for a career that prepared me to compete with some of the best and brightest people across the nation.

Although I tend to think of it as 'great luck,' the truth is that it was more than random luck.



It is said: “Luck happens when opportunity and preparedness meet.”

Based on my experience as a young man, I have to agree, because this is the UNM experience: Our faculty finds in us that key element that we never imagined could make us great.

Last week, we learned two of our students, Jake Wellman, our student Regent, seated behind me on the stage, and Kandis Wright were finalists in what is probably the most prestigious fellowship in American academics, the Rhodes Scholarship. Imagine, imagine how many others our faculty could inspire, from places like Espanola, Mora, Wagon Mound, Fort Sumner, Farmington, Albuquerque and beyond, if they were only given a chance!

Well, I was not a Rhodes Scholar, but this university gave me the opportunity to be around very smart, thoughtful professors, coaches, and fellow students. Their daily example challenged me to do my very best, both as a student and later, as a graduate. Their influence and inspiration empowered me to achieve.

Of course, I was fortunate to come from a family that prepared me for this experience. I had a wonderful head start. On this day of celebration, I freely acknowledge my only sadness is that my Dad could not be here today. His faith in me was so strong that he started sending me presidential vacancy notices while I was still an assistant professor! My sisters, Pam and Barbie, and many others here today remember him, and know he was a true Renaissance man.

My Dad was also a proud New Mexican, who instilled in me his love for this great state and all that it has to offer. I bring this deep affection to my Presidency, but it will mean little if we cannot translate this love for New Mexico and UNM into something bigger than all of us.

New Mexico today is the one of the most complex states in America. New Mexico



reflects the United States of the future, the country we will become at the halfway point of this century, when the rest of our nation first faces the challenges of a minority, majority population. New Mexico is a melting pot of rocket scientists, movie stars, business owners and undocumented migrants, poets and artists, wealthy people and working poor seeking a better life. Somehow we make it work. We've done it by finding a common vision among all peoples. New Mexico serves as beacon for our country. At UNM, our differences connect us. We are what America will be, and our challenges will be solved by our unique outlook. We will inspire America with our example.

Higher education in New Mexico is one way we can do this. From a national perspective, we can see that higher education in America is in a period of rapid change. In the beginning of the 20th century, manufacturing was the key to success. Today, in the 21st century, education is the key. However, like manufacturing in the last century, universities have been slow to recognize their role in creating prosperity. We have watched while the for-profit colleges have entered the education sphere with low quality, high convenience products. Students have flocked to these classes despite remarkably high tuition and little evidence of quality. Because a college degree has moved from optional to mandatory for the job market, the for-profit colleges have capitalized by leveraging the power of convenience and the power of marketing. We must acknowledge that we are in an era of personalization. The future of higher education requires developing individualized learning for our students. Citizens of the 21st century expect solutions that cater to their personal needs. As UNM looks ahead, we must realize that the models of teaching we used in the past will have to be modified to meet this century's demands. We must change, and the pace of change is faster than we might appreciate.

This is not the first time UNM has been an agent of change. Our university was established in 1889 to help the territory of New Mexico become a state. As we peer ahead into the 21st century, we can see that there are many more ways UNM can serve the state. Some of you have participated in our UNM 2020 process that is helping us to effectively define our vision. For today, let me touch on four overarching themes that will be part of our future.



They are: economic development, public health, the Honors College, and globalization.

Great universities play a pivotal role in driving economic development, often in partnership with the business community. The economist Enrico Moretti makes the argument that innovation, or brain, hubs are driven by increased numbers of college graduates. For that reason, we must make it possible for our graduates to stay in New Mexico by creating job opportunities right here in the Land of Enchantment.

To do this, we will need a new order of economic development in New Mexico. Our existing models are outdated, and we are losing ground. In this new vision of economic development, business leaders must work with government and with the university to find new solutions. The new world is one of public/private partnerships, and in that world, the most successful outcomes will include UNM.

One unique resource we have here in New Mexico is our access to National Laboratories, Los Alamos, Sandia and the Air Force Research Lab. Down I-25, we have the White Sands Test Facility and White Sands Missile Range. These facilities offer us significant opportunities for scientific partnerships. Their proximity also distinguishes us from other research universities.

One of the great challenges we face, however, has been the under-funding of our university. UNM produces nearly 50% of all bachelor and graduate degrees in our state. We manage to do that even though State and tuition funding for a UNM student is about \$10,000 less than it is for our regional competitors in Arizona, Colorado, and Texas. This under-investment in UNM has grave consequences for economic development in our state. It also has grave consequences for our students. We will address this problem so that we can help lead our state to economic viability in the next decades.

We can also serve our state in the area of public health. Public health in New Mexico is in a crisis. More than 21 percent of our state lacks access to health insurance. In some parts



of the state, our citizens live without running water. Diabetes, Hepatitis C and obesity are rampant. These are all public health issues. A comprehensive college of public health would provide doctoral education in public health, and serve as a statewide resource. With our extraordinary Health Sciences Center, and our Robert Wood Johnson Center for Health Policy, UNM is the best place to house a college of public health. I believe we must do so, for our students, and for our state.

In every discipline, whether public health, or engineering, or linguistics or jazz studies, great universities foster discovery, and create the opportunity for students to ask questions, and make their own discoveries. The quality of those opportunities hinges on identifying, attracting, and retaining excellent students. For most of our 123-year history, UNM has tried to serve all the people of New Mexico. This has resulted in an unintended consequence for UNM: We find ourselves lacking sufficient resources to pursue the level of distinction we are capable of achieving. As we look forward to our next epoch, we should recognize there are many good colleges in New Mexico; each offers a different kind of experience and opportunity. We believe our role at UNM, as our state's flagship university, is to serve New Mexico's best and brightest students.

We know that sometimes the best students take a while to bloom. For that reason, I am proud that, in partnership with CNM, APS, and other institutions, we have defined programs that assist those who aspire to attend UNM but who are not yet ready. We have also launched initiatives such as the Foundations of Excellence that will help first year students better position themselves for success. As we put such pipeline programs in place, we will raise our graduation rates. Moreover, our students will graduate prepared with all the resources they need to compete and achieve in the world. Our students are our core mission, and it is our primary obligation to challenge them to discover their own bright future.

One way we will do this by developing our Honors College. The Honors program will make us more attractive to New Mexico's best high school students, and give them a choice



of finding the path that best helps them to engage and succeed at UNM.

And finally, we must engage more with globalization. While we have many international faculties, we have lagged behind on international students. International students inspire in our students a curiosity and awareness of global cultures and economies. Our students will not compete with people from Berlin, New Hampshire, or Globe, Arizona, or Paris, Texas, but with people from Shanghai, Viet Nam, and Mumbai. To excel today, our students must understand the global market. They must be able to imagine opportunities for themselves that span the planet. Most of all, they must discover that the diversity we are so lucky to have in New Mexico is just a hint of the diversity beyond our borders.

These are some of the big endeavors that we must take on starting today. They are our pathway to greatness. UNM has a rich palette of resources, including a world-class faculty, whose commitment to excellence in education inspires our students to push the boundaries of knowledge. To our faculty, I ask you, join me in this vision, this quest to elevate our University of New Mexico to its rightful place as a leader among research institutions.

To our students I say, embrace this time. You can dare to risk here. You came here to be challenged and to do new and different things. Challenge yourself to explore new ventures. We will be there to inspire you, to guide and encourage you, and to help you set your life afire.

And, when you leave us, I hope that you will keep a little piece of UNM in your heart. In my homecoming, I have been privileged to meet many of UNM's friends and supporters. What I have learned is that, no matter how far away from New Mexico we stray, we all carry a lobo paw print on our heart.

I am inspired by the support from our Alumni, not just of money, but also of time, of leadership, and of encouragement. The support that our friends and our Alumni give this university is awe-inspiring in its passion and generosity.



As Janet and I have been reconnecting with the beauty and grace of New Mexico, we have been inspired by the colorful history and culture of our community. New Mexico's strength is rooted in its diverse cultures and its frontier spirit. Yes, it is a history rife with conflict and strife, with blood and thunder, with the legacy of fallen warriors and heroes. We cannot deny the great sacrifices made by so many people in the birthing of our state. But, we can do them honor by building on the wisdom, courage and traditions they left us. Their legacy can help us forge a stronger community, united by our common love for this place, the lessons of its history, and the heritage of our traditions.

For I believe that the great task before us in the 21st century is to build on the inherent greatness of UNM. Our challenge is to deliberately, and decisively raise our sights to embrace a powerful new vision. We know that UNM has boundless resources – in the depth and breadth of our faculty, in the diversity and creativity of our students, and in the strong pillars of our staff and alumni. We have the wealth of our many cultures. We are like no other place in the world.

For that reason, I believe that we have a unique destiny at UNM. We have an unprecedented opportunity to step into a role of leadership, not only within our university, but also for our community, our state, and our nation.

To do this, we must ensure that UNM is recognized as a university that both conveys and creates knowledge. We will do so by pushing the limits of intellectual inquiry. We will do so by challenging ourselves to own our greatness as New Mexico's flagship university and premier research institution.

I know we can do this.

I know, because as graduate of UNM, I feel in my heart how extraordinary our university is. I knew it as a student, and I know now today. We are a strong university, and we will grow



stronger together.

Imagine, if a boy from Las Cruces who once stood forlornly outside Coronado dorm, watching his parents leave him at a strange university, can go on to become its president, then surely a girl from Espanola can become a rocket scientist, and later walk on Mars. Just imagine how our faculty could inspire a young man from Mora to become a global entrepreneur, or maybe a Broadway actor. And, imagine how a College of Public Health might inspire a young woman from Carlsbad to become an epidemiologist, and go on to help cure malaria in Africa. The possibilities are endless.

I stand before you today because of the quality of my University of New Mexico education. I am a Lobo through and through; proud of what this university has given me.

I am filled with enthusiasm for our future. As a great university, we will ignite our students' visions of their own greatness. And as we do, they will leave their lobo paw prints across the world, and the infinite universe beyond.

In closing, to the Regents, and to all of you here today, thank you for your faith in me. I promise to do my very best for this University.



***“Do not tell me the sky is the limit
when there are footprints on the moon.”
- Dorothy Parker***