



President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

Over the past two weeks I've really come to appreciate that one of my most important duties as President is being the public face and voice of the University, and with that comes the responsibility to represent the UNM with integrity, vision and passion.

This week alone I was invited to speak to more than 150 Rotarians here in Albuquerque, held a joint press conference with Albuquerque Mayor R.J. Berry on our collaborative open data initiative and was asked to be interviewed for New Mexico In Focus on KNME-TV. I love talking about UNM and am eager to keep the public engaged, but it is also so energizing to listen to the many perspectives on and wonderful stories about the University and New Mexico that people have shared.

Internally, I attended my first full Board of Regents meeting on June 12, giving an administrative report that outlined the Listening Campaign and plans for the first 120 days in office I am looking forward to working closely with Board to advance and strengthen the University.

Keep the Ideas Coming

Responses to President's Questionnaire now approach 800, and significant themes are beginning to emerge, such as the value that this community places on its human capital and our ability to creatively respond to a variety of challenges. The insights, advice and quality of the comments suggest that those of you have responded have devoted considerable thought and time to answering both fundamental and complex questions relevant to the success of UNM. The questionnaire will be available through the end of June, so please make time to share your ideas and perspectives if you have not yet done so.

Praise for Public Television at UNM

It was a pleasant surprise and privilege to be invited to speak with Gene Grant on [New Mexico In Focus](#) which aired last Friday about some of the opportunities and challenges I see as President of UNM. While at the KNME-TV studio, I also got a chance to speak with Polly Anderson, the station's general manager. I was impressed by the role our station has played for over 50 years in connecting the people of New Mexico through innovative services that address current issues important to our state and that New Mexico PBS is one of the most watched public television stations in the country reaching over 710,000 households each week with 25,000 members in central and northern New Mexico.

New Director of Communication

I'm pleased to announce the hiring of Dianne Anderson as UNM's Director of Communication. Dianne was selected after an extensive search for an individual with knowledge of New Mexico media outlets, experience in this market, superb writing and communication skills, and the ability to go on camera to be the "face of the university" on institutional issues. Dianne brings over 25 years of experience to the position, most recently having been an anchor on KRQE-TV.

The Global Campus

One need that you may have heard me identify as an imperative for UNM to succeed as a 21st century flagship university is to expand the number of international students. In ["Why a Diverse Student Body is so Important"](#), *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, former Harvard President Neil Rudenstine pointed out that it is "important that we continue to stress the most fundamental rationale for student diversity in higher education: its educational value. Students benefit in countless ways from the opportunity to live and learn among peers whose perspectives and experiences differ from their own." Simply put, students learn from other students. Not only do students challenge each other intellectually but there is tremendous opportunity for social and personal growth in interacting with people from varied backgrounds, and thereby a demonstrated value in the student experience. Recruiting more international students is about ensuring that all of our students benefit from the diverse educational environment that produces global citizens. We will grow stronger as a university and a community for it.

The Fulfilling Life

If one and a half million views on YouTube are any indication, you may have seen the [commencement speech](#) given by David McCullough Jr., an English teacher at Wellesley High School in Massachusetts, to the graduating class. He told them they were "not special," reflecting on an American era where accolades outstrip genuine achievement. He concludes by telling them, "the fulfilling life, the distinctive life, the relevant life, is an achievement, not something that will fall into your lap..."

While his "not special" message has received extensive attention, it is his recognition of the importance of leading a fulfilled and distinctive life that resonates in my mind. In the next months we will consider how we can improve the graduation and retention rates for our students. Part of that process is dependent upon the ability of our students to engage in critical thinking. Students entering our next class will hold as many as 18 jobs by their 38th birthday. They must have critical thinking skills that allow them to understand how to face the very complex, global environments they will encounter. The personal maturity that derives from a clear life path, and personal fulfillment, seems, to my mind, to share the same cognitive skills inherent to critical thinking. I don't know if you will see these same relationships in the advice offered in this address, but I suspect you will find it a great 12 minute graduation speech.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob