

## PRESIDENT'S WEEKLY PERSPECTIVE

Good afternoon.

Roy T. Bennett, author of *The Light in the Heart*, once wrote: "Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand."

One of my biggest goals coming to UNM is to be a leader who is willing to listen and understand. So far I've had the pleasure of meeting fellow Lobos at campus events, community conversations and every day occurrences like shopping at the neighborhood grocery store. Throughout my [statewide listening tour](#), many of you have taken the time to welcome me to your part of the state and speak to me about your hopes, concerns and ideas.

With every new opportunity to listen comes a new chance to learn. Social media has been a valuable and surprisingly engaging tool to connect with many of you, especially students. Last week, I invited my Twitter followers to send me some questions to frame this week's message. I received several that I am sharing below, along with my responses.

### President's Q&A

#### **What will be happening to the Provost position now that Chaouki Abdallah has announced that he has taken another position?**

Provost Abdallah will be leaving large shoes to fill and, again, I wish him the best of luck as the Executive Vice President of Research at Georgia Tech. Having been a Provost myself, I know that this role is profoundly important to ensuring academic excellence across the University. I will announce an interim Provost and will develop the charge for a search committee chair by mid-August. We will be conducting a national search for Provost Abdallah's permanent replacement.

#### **Who would be a performer that you would like to see come to campus - music artist, speaker, book author or otherwise?**

There are many! I love different kinds of music, but recently my stepson went to see Coldplay live, and I wish I could have gone! My stepdaughter and son-in-law went to see Pink, and from the video they shared, it looked like an amazing performance. And, secretly, I have been a fan of Alan Jackson for some years. I also really enjoy reading for pleasure when I have a chance, especially real life adventure books, so there are several authors I'd be interested in meeting. I am also looking forward to attending Popejoy performances.

#### **Can you tell me if UNM has to build on the current strategic plan in a way that is both intentional and forward thinking?**

That is a great question. One focus this Fall, when everyone is back on campus, will be to engage the campus on readying ourselves to shape a shared vision for our next strategic plan. The current UNM2020

plan has resulted in many positive outcomes, built on the outstanding work of this community. We must continue to find inspiration among ourselves and apply our talents to turning vision into opportunity. I look forward to providing more information on how this process will unfold in the coming months.

**What is something that you wish you had done (involvement-wise) as an undergraduate student?**

I had taken Spanish in seventh and eighth grade while living in Arizona, then switched to French when I went to high school. In college, I wish I had gone back to taking Spanish and immersed myself in the language and culture by doing a study abroad program in a predominantly Spanish speaking country. Instead of Spanish, I took courses in New Testament Greek. It was interesting, but now I understand more fully just what it takes as an adult to master another language, and two years won't do it! I also now understand the value of international experiences for undergraduates in broadening perspectives about the world we live in.

**What is your favorite place to eat breakfast in New Mexico?**

I have had some amazing breakfasts as I've travelled the state, many of which include green chile. I have to say that I am very partial to the Frontier. My husband Jeff and I go there just about every other weekend.

**What are your thoughts on a 4-day work week for staff or working from home 1-day a week?**

Work-life balance is very important, and I do want staff to feel like they are both able to put in their all here at UNM, while still living their best life outside of the workplace. I also believe that as the state's flagship university, UNM is held to a high standard for the services we provide to our students and citizens. While I haven't been engaged in any current conversations about flexible schedules, I am aware that our Human Resources Department has guidelines for providing managers the ability to work with employees who seek an [alternate work arrangement](#). It's important to strike a work-life balance for employees, while ensuring the high integrity of the institution we are working so hard to make successful.

**What has been the most surprising thing about adjusting to the culture here in New Mexico?**

I've vacationed here several times over the years and was somewhat familiar with the culture before relocating. Probably the biggest adjustment has been learning the varied and proud history behind New Mexico's people. It is critical to understand this perspective in order to be able to apply that understanding to how we best serve our state's educational, economic and health care needs.

**Do you think pineapple belongs on pizza?**

Having spent lots of time in Georgia where pineapple sandwiches with mayo are served at family reunions, I guess I have to say that pineapple goes with anything!

Thanks to those of you who submitted questions. If this communication is useful, I will look for additional opportunities to incorporate it into future weekly messages.

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