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President's Weekly Perspective, 11/5/2012

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 **UNM President's Weekly Perspective**

Good morning.

I would like to start by recognizing two students whose achievements reflect greatly on the quality of our university. Kandis Wright and student Regent Jake Wellman are finalists for two of the world's most prestigious and competitive scholarships. Jake is a finalist for the Rhodes scholarship, awarded to only 32 students nationwide. If accepted, he will study International Relations at Oxford University. Kandis is a finalist for both the Rhodes scholarship and also the Marshall Scholarship, which is awarded to only 40 students nationwide. Her area of study is Immunology and Global Public Health. Congratulations to both our students for being finalists, and best wishes.

As we are celebrating American Indian Heritage Month, I would now like to share with you some of the unique Indigenous connections that are part of the intricate design of our UNM community.

Navajo Nation Visit

Last week I visited Window Rock to meet with Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim and NM Indian Affairs Department Secretary Arthur Allison in a ceremonial signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Navajo Nation and the UNM Board of Regents. The MOU designates UNM's School of Architecture and Planning, Indigenous Design Planning Institute (iD+Pi) to provide technical assistance to the Navajo Nation's Division of Economic Development on design, planning and development projects. Collaborative initiatives include master planning for the towns of Crownpoint, Diznothodithli, and To'hajiilee, as well as developing a resort project for the Chaco Canyon area. This partnership will allow UNM to build new linkages at all levels of education. Students from Navajo institutions can participate in a joint curriculum on design and planning to build local capacity and provide skills to those aspiring to work professionally in these fields. I am proud of UNM's leadership role in building educational partnerships with the Navajo Nation as we both work to ensure educational excellence for all New Mexico's students.

I was also particularly impressed to learn about the Navajo Nation's economic development expansion efforts, which are very congruent with our commitment to serve as an economic catalyst for the state. As we both move forward, I hope that we can identify opportunities to align our economic development efforts so that the work we are doing is synergistic and enriches the whole state and the Indigenous nations.

Promoting Education

UNM's commitment to Indigenous cultures is also reflected in our support of the Native American Community Academy (NACA). NACA is a unique charter school located in Albuquerque that focuses on cultural identity development, health and well-being, academic preparedness, leadership, and community engagement for Native American students. NACA has strong connections to UNM's Community Engagement Center, specifically the Tribal Service Corps program, which has provided educational and leadership opportunities for the students of NACA since its founding.

The Tribal Service Corps is part of the UNM Service Corps, which is a collective of university students engaged in long term civic engagement by apprenticing with strong community leaders in Albuquerque's most marginalized communities. I am happy to acknowledge Tribal Service Corps member Kyndra Danielle Armijo who was in the first NACA graduating class in May 2012. Now a college student and Tribal Service Corps member, she is returning to serve her old school as a strong role model to other young people from her community. Kyndra is fulfilling the vision of both NACA and the Community Engagement Center to develop strong Native leaders committed to serving their communities. If you are interested in knowing more about the Community Engagement Center and UNM Service Corps, visit: <http://clps.unm.edu>.

I would also like to share with you another example of UNM's engagement with our Native American communities. Dr. Vincent Werito, from the College of Education's Language, Literacy, and Socio-cultural Studies departments, is leading our participation in and support of the Navajo Nation Teacher Education Consortium (NNTEC). Through NNTEC, UNM and other partner universities will continue working with tribal leaders, and educators to reach out to young people from Indigenous communities to encourage them to become teachers. These are just a couple of examples of the tremendous work that goes on quietly across our university in support of our many diverse cultures.

A Few Last Thoughts

I was in Dallas at the end of last week, meeting with alumni and donors. Philanthropy is so important to our university. As part of our celebration of Philanthropy Month, today we formally kick off our United Way campaign. I encourage you to go to the [UNM United Way website](#) and consider contributing.

If you have not yet taken advantage of early voting, remember to make your voice heard at the ballot box on Tuesday. I also want to emphasize the importance of passing General Obligation Bond C for higher education, which will allow us to renovate our Chemistry and Biology buildings.

Finally, let me remind you that on Friday, Nov. 9, we will be celebrating Veterans Day in the SUB. Our Veterans are an important part of our community. For information and event details, visit: <http://news.unm.edu/?p=33327>.

Have a great week, and Go Lobos!

Bob