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President's Weekly Perspective, 12/17/2012

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 **UNM President's Weekly Perspective**

Good morning.

I know we are all breathing a sigh of relief as our holiday break comes into sight. I hope that you all have a joyful time with your families. Regardless of your personal beliefs, this is a time to reflect on how we can create a better world as we look ahead. This year has been full of many changes for all of us. As we greet 2013, our hopes for the New Year are great, and our expectations for UNM are bright. As you return in 2013, be ready to excel.

Retiree Healthcare Plan

At the Board of Regents meeting last week we heard discussion about the solvency challenges facing the Retiree Health plan. Costs are far outstripping revenues and we are facing a significant shortfall. The current model is unsustainable and we must find a way to address this issue. I am aware that this is a sensitive issue with many ramifications. I have asked the Staff Council and Faculty Senate to take a lead role in identifying a solution.

I have created a webpage that provides a timeline and history of this benefit, as well as relevant documents such as the resolution passed by the Regents last week. We will update this site with information and materials about the on-going dialogue. You can link to the webpage from Office of the President site, or by clicking <http://president.unm.edu/retiree-health-care-information/index.html>.

Looking Ahead

We have a big agenda for UNM as we look to implement the UNM2020 vision. As I have reviewed and pondered all the comments, I have noticed a consistent contrast between comments that envision the future and those that bemoan the pains of the past. I appreciate both kinds of comments because in order to embrace a vital future, it is important to acknowledge, and even forgive, the past. An institution, even one as large and diverse as UNM, is like anyone of us – some things we do well, and some things fail. We all hope that we can build on our success as well as learn from, and then let go of, the failures.

Recently, I have been reading the book, “How,” by Dov Seidman. He writes of the three primary goals that people seek from their work: equity, achievement and camaraderie. When those break down, a culture of cynicism arises. My intention in 2013 is that we will address these goals throughout UNM so that we can reduce any lingering criticism and strengthen our inherent culture of excellence and optimism. As we do this, we will indeed be stronger together.

In order to achieve these goals, I have realigned some roles in the Office of the President. Breda Bova, whose institutional knowledge and relationship management skills are essential to UNM, is now serving as Special Counsel to the President, focusing specifically on those vital areas. In addition, I would like to welcome Dorothy (Duffy) Rodriguez who has joined UNM in the role of Executive Assistant and Chief Administrator to the President. Duffy will be responsible for the operations management and strategic implementation functions of the Office of the President. Please make her welcome.

Thanks

Finally, thank you to all of you who participated in the UNM United Way campaign. The final tally is still in process, but we are well on our way to meeting our goal of \$1 million to support our community. Although our campaign is ending, remember that you can always make a contribution any time during the year.

This is our last Monday message for 2012. Happy Holidays all of you. And, as always, GO LOBOS!

Bob