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## President's Weekly Perspective, 10/22/2012

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 **UNM President's Weekly Perspective**

Good morning.

I would like to start this week by thanking all of you who have contributed thus far to the UNM 2020 planning process, either by going on-line and adding your thoughts, or by visiting the SUB recently. Thank you also to the Staff Council for inviting me to join them on Tuesday for a good conversation regarding RCM budgeting. I also appreciated the dialogue with the faculty on Friday. I am looking forward to having more conversations with both groups as well as our students going forward.

### **New Mexico's Legislature**

One of the external groups I have been speaking with regularly over the past few weeks has been our New Mexico Legislature. In particular, I've been asked to present to several interim committees in preparation for the upcoming 60-day session in January. On Friday, I spoke before the Science and Technology Committee to let them know of the work we are doing to follow up on September's Rainforest in the Desert summit and to engage more directly in economic development. I laid before them a number of our initiatives and asked for their support. The previous week I presented to the Health and Human Services committee about UNM's vision for a School of Public Health. In response to House Memorial 43, which requests a feasibility study for a School of Public Health, UNM has provided formal input to the Secretary of Education. Our assessment is that UNM is well positioned to establish a CEPH-accredited School of Public Health.

I have been very pleased with the discussions that have taken place with all of the Legislative committees I've addressed. As the representative arm of our state government, the Legislators are speaking for the individuals, families and groups in their districts who are our stakeholders. I am heartened to see how well regarded UNM is by most of our Legislators, who know that UNM is focused on excellence in education.

### **Kellogg Foundation**

Our quality and commitment to excellence also serves as a magnet that attracts other institutions to want to partner with us. Last week I spent some time with the Kellogg Foundation as part of panel that included Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, Education Secretary-designate Hanna Skandera and CNM President Kathy Winograd. We heard from the foundation about their commitment to investing in New Mexico, which is focused on funding long-term programs that improve outcomes and opportunities for children. UNM already has some on-going grants and contracts through the College of Education, and we are open to opportunities for more collaboration.

### **General Obligation Bonds**

Early voting has started in New Mexico, so I will end this week with one more plea for your help in promoting the General Obligation Bonds on the November 6 ballot. General Obligation Bond C for higher education will fund \$119.4 in infrastructural improvements for universities and colleges across the state. UNM will receive \$24.5 million that go to the renovation of chemistry and biology facilities. The GO Bonds will not raise taxes. I strongly encourage you to talk with your family and friends about the GO Bonds and why they are important for our students and for New Mexico.

## **Lovelace Insurance Concerns**

For those employees and retirees that are members of Lovelace Health Plan through UNM, you may have read and/or heard conflicting information regarding deadlines for choosing either a new insurance company or a new medical provider for patients of ABQ Health Partners doctors. Customer representatives from both entities have reportedly told patients that the deadline is Thursday, Nov. 8, while the State Insurance Superintendent publically stated that it would be the end of the year; they are all supposed to meet this Wednesday to work out a written agreement. We have asked Lovelace for information regarding the deadline, and have not yet had a response. I would like to assure our employees and retirees who are in this position that we will continue to advocate for solutions that go beyond the proposed short-term extension and will work with your UNM governance groups to facilitate further communication as it becomes available.

Have a great week, and Go Lobos!

Bob