

8-6-2007

President's Weekly Perspective, 8/6/2007

David Schmidly

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Recommended Citation

Schmidly, David. "President's Weekly Perspective, 8/6/2007." (2007). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/schmidly_papers/48

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Monday Morning Message
August 6, 2007

Good morning.

A few weeks ago, I told you about my visit in Rio Rancho with business and community leaders. There is a real hunger for higher education in that city and their leaders have made it clear they want UNM to play a major role in providing it.

Over the summer, I've had several meetings with CNM President Cathy Winograd and her leadership team about Rio Rancho. More are scheduled this week. What we are working on is an ambitious higher education plan for this fast growing area, one that combines the best services from both institutions on one campus. Working together, we can also share resources and save taxpayers' money. I believe this will be an innovative collaboration that will serve as a model throughout the state.

I will also begin to have regular meetings with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chávez. UNM has been called "the city within the city," so it makes a lot of sense to work closely with Albuquerque's leadership to develop city/university partnerships. Our service learning projects are already working within a number of Albuquerque neighborhoods. In my conversations with Mayor Chávez, I will be discussing his exciting new initiatives that focus on China, and we will determine the roles UNM can play in furthering those initiatives.

Meanwhile, another project that will directly benefit our students is going into effect this month. Thanks to NM State Rep. Gail Chasey, UNM received a legislative appropriation that allows UNM students to ride city buses free of charge. It will be a great way for them to save money on gas and avoid parking lot congestion. The details will be worked out in time for the fall semester, and we're planning a big media event to get the word out.

Finally, we'll be hosting U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman on campus tomorrow (Tuesday). He wants to discuss the Higher Education Act reauthorization with graduate students who will have a special stake in the legislation. He'd also like to talk to Pell Grant recipients about proposed changes in funding levels. If you'd like to share your views with Senator Bingaman, join us tomorrow at 2 p.m. in the Willard Reading Room of Zimmerman Library.

I hope you enjoy the last of the summer break. Have a good week.

David J. Schmidly