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President's Weekly Perspective, 2008_03_10

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Monday Morning Message
March 10, 2008

Good morning.

The search for UNM's Provost is entering its final phase as we begin to meet the finalists for the position, starting today. Dr. Tito Guerrero III, who currently serves as the Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity at Texas A&M, will be on campus today and tomorrow for a series of meetings that include public forums with faculty, staff and students. Find out more at <http://www.unm.edu/news/08MarNewsRelease/08-03-06Guerrero.htm>. Dr. Suzanne Trager Ortega, Vice Provost and Graduate Dean (and Professor of Sociology) at the University of Washington, will be interviewing on campus this Thursday and Friday. The schedule for her public forums will be released this afternoon. Schedules for other Provost finalist visits will be released as they become available.

I've mentioned before how important the position of Provost is on a campus. In my opinion, this is the most important individual to be hired at UNM. More than anyone, the Provost provides critical leadership in all aspects of the university's education, research and service missions. This person plays a key role in leading students, faculty and staff toward meeting UNM's goals and their own ambitions. So I encourage you to meet with all of these finalists.

As you know, interim provost Vi Florez has announced she has withdrawn from the search. For many years, Vi has been my personal friend and professional colleague, and I hold her in the highest possible regard, both personally and professionally. We've spent many hours together discussing how to best utilize her formidable talents. I will continue working with her to find a leadership opportunity that will enable her to continue putting her mark on this University.

This Wednesday, UNM Regents will set tuition, fees and compensation for the coming year beginning July 1, 2008. We will then tackle the job of balancing needs and resources as we build the coming year's budget. This is when the spirit of cooperation and understanding will be needed most. I am confident that this spirit will guide our work in the coming weeks.

Thanks again to all of you who voted in the Rio Rancho municipal election last week. Our Higher Education Initiative was approved by nearly 63% of the vote, which is a great mandate as we take the next big steps in establishing a four-year campus there.

Here's a reminder that UNM will be hosting the Sungshin Women's University Korean Cultural Exhibition Friday, March 21, at 7 p.m. in Rodey Theatre. Tickets are free, but seating will be limited. So don't wait too long to pick up your tickets at the UNM Bookstore ticket office.

The Mountain West basketball tournament begins this Wednesday. We'll be joining a great group of the Lobo die-hard faithful in Las Vegas to root on our men and women. Both teams are looking strong entering this tournament, which we hope is just the next step to the Big Dance.

Have a great week.
David J. Schmidly