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President's Weekly Perspective, 2008_05_12

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Monday Morning Message

May 12, 2008

Good morning!

This week marks the end of the Spring semester and on behalf of the entire UNM community I want to wish everybody good luck on their finals. As well, I think I speak for everyone when I congratulate those that will be graduating on Saturday. Commencement is a time for graduates to reflect on the years spent working towards a goal: your college degree. It's a time to celebrate with friends, family, professors and your peers. And it marks the moment in time when you are declared prepared to enter the workforce, equipped to address the most critical needs of the 21st Century. We all look forward to your future endeavors and wish you nothing but the best. Just like the "Golden Grads" of the class of 1958 will be joining us this Saturday at commencement, we look forward to seeing all of you in 2058 to celebrate a lifetime of achievement. Good luck, class of 2008!

Last week I had the opportunity to visit my alma mater, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and deliver the convocation address to the school of Integrative Biology. It was great to be back in my old stomping grounds and see some of the wonderful changes that have taken place since I last went to school there. As with anything, some changes are good and some are bad, but one thing remains constant: change happens. The idea of change and adapting to change was the cornerstone of my comments to the graduates there. It is something that is unavoidable. I have found that an individual's ability to succeed oftentimes hinges on one's ability to adapt to change.

I also spoke to the graduates of U of I about the changes that are occurring on our planet. I am proud of the initiative that the University of New Mexico has taken to help to address some of these issues. This week is "Strive Not to Drive" week in Albuquerque and I've been encouraged by the number of people that I've talked to who plan on participating. The city is sponsoring a number of great events to encourage people to use alternative methods of transportation. In an effort to reduce the number of single occupant vehicles on the road, they will be highlighting various alternative methods each day of the week. Visit <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/strivenottodrive.html> for more information.

As part of our ongoing efforts to provide information regarding cultural diversity, equal opportunity, and the issue of sexual harassment, the University will soon begin offering two on-line courses, titled 'Preventing Sexual Harassment' and 'Preventing Employment Discrimination'. This training will provide faculty, staff and students with valuable information, help them learn their rights and responsibilities, and help to preclude future incidents. The 'Preventing Sexual Harassment' course will be available beginning May 19th and will be mandatory training for all faculty and staff. I am asking you to give serious attention to this initiative and take away from this training a personal commitment to comply with our policy of zero tolerance. Further details regarding this training will be forthcoming from the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO).

Have a great finals week!

David Schmidly