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President's Weekly Perspective, 2008_06_23

David Schmidly

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Monday Morning Message - June 23, 2008

Good morning.

Summer is just a couple of days old, and we've been flirting with temperatures near the century mark for several days. So it's a perfect time to renew our commitment to saving energy, both here on campus and at home, if we're going to keep our utility bills from soaring also.

A team of "Energy Conservation Educators" has been working with UNM departments to implement a summer savings effort that will involve students, faculty and staff alike. Summer presents great opportunities for achieving significant savings, so we've asked the Energy Educators to leave no stone unturned. They're reducing operation of daily cooling systems, making sure vacancies at Residential Life are set for maximum energy savings, and doing everything they can to squeeze every bit of energy waste out of the system.

You may notice some minor temperature changes in classrooms, offices and dorms, but it's hoped nothing too unusual. Our goal is to achieve our energy conservation goal without creating discomfort or compromising the learning environment. In particular, great care is being taken to accommodate those whose buildings are served by older, less responsive heating and cooling systems.

It will take all of us working together. Even things as small as remembering to turn off unused lights, computers and appliances can make a big difference, especially when thousands of us are all doing our part. As with our four-day-workweek option, we're receiving a lot of support for these initiatives, in part because we're setting the stage for a more sustainable future and largely because we're conserving precious financial resources as well – and protecting the financial health of this University in the process.

We were all terribly saddened this past week to learn of the tragic death of one of our recent graduates, John Smeltzer, while traveling in Spain. His death comes as a great shock to all who knew him as an extraordinary, involved student and an engaging young man. Our heartfelt condolences go to his mother, Mera Wolf, his family and his friends. We understand many of you want to remember John. We're told his family is still making arrangements for a memorial fund and will let everyone know when that is in place.

On a happier note, a pat on the back goes to our Lobo athletes who, with students from Highland High, are packing upwards of 1,000 backpacks with school supplies for APS elementary and mid school students. They hope this partnership - the "Student to Student Backpacks for Student Success Program" - will become an annual event. If you want to help, the 2008 APS School Supply Drive continues through July 25. School supplies can be dropped off at all metro-area Wal-Mart stores and at New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union locations.

Have a good week.

David J. Schmidly