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President's Weekly Perspective, 2008_09_15

David Schmidly

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Monday Morning Message - September 15, 2008

Good morning.

There was a grand dedication yesterday of UNM's new Centennial Engineering Center, which is a magnificent facility on the west side of campus. Centennial is the new home of the Civil Engineering Department, the Center for Biomedical Engineering, Engineering Student Services, the Dean's Office, and labs for the Chemical and Nuclear Engineering Department. It was designed and built with the focus on student success.

Centennial is a product of vision, tenacity and hard work. In part, it also came about thanks to New Mexico voters who approved a portion of its funding in General Obligation bond elections. In the upcoming November 4 general election, G.O. bonds are back on the ballot. UNM has more than \$50 million in projects that depend on voter approval for Bonds B, C and D. In the coming weeks leading up to the election, I'll be talking to you about those projects, so you can make an educated choice when you vote.

I look forward to meeting with the faculty tomorrow - introducing the new members of the executive team and responding to the resolutions faculty presented to us last April. We've initiated positive dialogue with the faculty and we look forward to that dialogue continuing tomorrow.

There is much that our faculty, staff and students have worked hard to achieve and can celebrate: our record freshman class, the 275% jump in National Merit Scholars and the 140% increase in National Hispanic Scholars. We should celebrate an exciting future in Rio Rancho and the partnerships with our educational colleagues that will transform the educational model for New Mexico.

Last Friday, I had the opportunity to tape some comments for faculty engaged in Title V workshops. I strongly believe UNM's commitment to diversity makes for a dynamic learning and living environment, and it presents for us an opportunity to be a national model for understanding, appreciating and respecting differences. Doing so will make us stronger as teachers, mentors, life-long learners, and as an institution.

It has always been my priority to value the parents and families of our students and welcome them to campus as often as possible. So I'm pleased to see plans for UNM's first annual Family Weekend coming together. It will be held November 1 - 2, which may seem far in the future, but the work is happening now. Organizers need your help to make this event for families a success. If you're a manager, please announce this call for volunteers at your next staff meeting. If you want to volunteer, contact Lisa Delgado in the Dean of Students office at 277-7870 or ldelgado@unm.edu. And thanks for helping out.

Have a good week.

David J. Schmidly