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President's Weekly Perspective, 2008_09_29

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Good morning.

Welcome to Homecoming Week at the University of New Mexico – a time for all of us to revel in an extra dose of school spirit. The pirate-inspired theme this year is “It’s A Lobo’s Life For Me!” So I imagine you’ll be seeing a lot of treasure chests, eye patches and Johnny Depp wannabes this week. In my office you’ll get to walk the plank, courtesy of an imaginative staff. So come by. Thanks to UNM Alumni, the Homecoming Committee and all of the units that have decorated for what promises to be a grand week. For a list of the week’s activities visit: <http://www.unmalumni.com/homecoming/>.

The general election is just over a month away, though absentee voting begins next week. When it comes to the issues, I believe this campus is aware and involved. So over the next few weeks, I’ll be informing you about the bond issues and hospital mil levy – each of great importance to UNM.

General Obligation Bond D is the big one for higher education, with nearly \$140 million at stake for building projects around the state. For UNM, GO Bond D has \$5 million for biology expansion, \$6 million for the College of Education building, \$4 million for the film and digital media building at Mesa del Sol and \$2 million for the Student Success Center. The bond also has money for projects at UNM Taos and UNM Gallup. I encourage everyone in the UNM community to study up on these issues and to vote.

Over the weekend, a number of us joined the UNM Regents in Las Cruces for the annual joint regents' meeting with NMSU. There was much discussion about how the state's economy is faring and what the financial forecast will be heading into the legislative session. We heard that for the most part, New Mexico's finances are holding steady, but there will not be any significant new money. Some legislators have been calling for a round of belt-tightening. So we have to be conscious of that as we head into the legislative and budget seasons.

The Regents also heard about current and future collaborations being implemented by New Mexico's two largest research universities, especially in areas of research and opportunities for students. It is apparent that more will be accomplished by both institutions if we work together.

We held a very enlightening workshop last week to talk about UNM’s role in supporting economic development. Along with more than 30 UNM leaders from our schools and colleges, branches and administration, I had the opportunity to learn about some of the great work that’s going on across our campuses. We talked about everything from our role in ensuring a strong workforce, to research and creative endeavors that improve the quality of life. The workshop was only the first step toward determining the best way to organize ourselves to carry forth this important aspect of our service mission, so please stay tuned.

Have a great Homecoming Week!

David J. Schmidly