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Weekly Message, 12/15/2008

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Good morning.

I want to begin by extending the best wishes of the entire UNM community to those of our students who will be graduating this Friday night. You have each achieved a real milestone in your lives, one that reflects countless hours of hard work, sacrifice, dedication and persistence. Congratulations – not just to you, but to all those in each of your lives who made this moment possible: your family and loved ones (and let's not forget the many teachers, professors and counselors who inspired you to this moment). You will always have a place at the UNM table as members of our alumni family. Commencement ceremonies will take place Friday at 6 p.m. at The Pit.

Congratulations are also in order for Dr. Julia Fulghum, who was appointed by Provost Ortega last week as Vice President for Research. Having served as interim Vice President for these past six months, Dr. Fulghum demonstrated both extraordinary professional skills and a remarkable ability to work in easy collaboration with others. Under her leadership, Research has made remarkable progress, and we have every reason to expect more to come in the years ahead. Please join me in congratulating our friend and colleague.

A warm Lobo welcome to our 29th head football coach, Mike Locksley, who burst onto the Albuquerque scene last week full of high-octane energy for the challenging work ahead. Like Athletic Director Paul Krebs said, Coach Locksley impressed us right from the start with his infectious enthusiasm and strong, winning record, including his most recent stint as offensive coordinator at Illinois. Coach Locksley says he's passionate about his family – and the Lobo Nation is now his family. Welcome to the family, Coach!

By the way, I hope you'll join me and thousands of other football fans at University Stadium for the New Mexico Bowl on Saturday, December 20. Fresno State will take on Colorado State, and kickoff is at noon. UNM faculty, students and staff can buy tickets at the discounted price of \$20 with a valid ID.

Speaking of the UNM family, let me extend my thanks to those who've written and called to express their support for me following Friday afternoon's Town Hall Meeting.

Fear is normal when times are tough, and I suppose it's inevitable that at times like these, we are all capable of letting our anger and frustration get the best of us.

Nevertheless, let's not lose our perspective: we're far better situated than most public institutions of our size. In large part, this is because we engaged in this strategic planning effort – including the hiring and pay raise pause – when Governor Richardson and legislative leaders warned us on October 17 about the possibility of mid-year budget rescissions.

It's also normal, at any University, for rumors to circulate – but it is irresponsible to alarm people in a public forum without checking the facts first. Let me reiterate what Dr. Paul Roth has already made clear: there is NO plan to put ANY employees on furlough – at the Health Sciences Center or elsewhere. Never has been.

No one person has all the answers to navigate through times like these, which is why I reached out to seek your advice, explain our efforts and hopefully provide some measure of reassurance.

If we're to come through this difficult time, it'll take all of us, working cooperatively and in mutual respect, sharing our best and most creative ideas in a transparent atmosphere of shared governance. Let's try to do it in a manner of mutual respect and cordiality.

During this season of giving, please try to remember that the United Way Community Fund helps feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. As difficult as things are this year, let's also remember those less fortunate by filling out a pledge form. You can get one by clicking here <http://unitedway.unm.edu/pledgeform.pdf>.

Have a good week.

David J. Schmidly