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Weekly Message, 1/12/2009

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Good morning.

It's good to hear about the success of the university's current intersession classes. I mentioned last week that they were growing in popularity. Vice Provost Wynn Goering reports a growth of 21.5% over last year and a three-fold increase in students since these classes launched in 2005. This session, there are 31 classes with a total enrollment of 1,285 students. So Wynn is exactly right when he says we are clearly meeting a significant need with these classes. Thanks again to everyone putting in the time and energy to make them successful.

In support of the anticipated influx of armed forces veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, UNM is working toward easing the transition of these brave men and women back into our New Mexico communities and our universities. With the passage of the new GI bill last year, coupled with the economic recession, it is important for the university to act as a resource for all of our prospective students, particularly for those who have bravely served our country. In this effort, I am pleased to announce that we have hired a program manager for the UNM Veterans Education and Outreach Center. Later this month, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Elise Wheeler will take the helm of the center, reaching out to veterans on and off campus to help with their transition from the battlefield to the classroom. I invite you to welcome Elise to our campus and to support this mission-critical center.

The 2009 session of the New Mexico Legislature begins at noon on January 20, and UNM's Government Relations team has been preparing for what promises to be a challenging session. The new Government Relations website outlines the priorities for UNM, supplies a legislative calendar and provides a way to receive frequent updates on your computer. The website can be accessed at http://govrel.unm.edu/legislative_sessions/2009/. If you would like to receive daily updates about the progress of UNM-related bills during the 60-day legislative session, you can opt in to a list serve at <http://govrel.unm.edu/updates/>. Don't forget to respond when you get your confirmation email.

This week, five of our students arrive in Washington, D.C. to launch the University of New Mexico-Talk Radio News Service Internship. Coffee Brown, Christina Lovato, Michael Ruhl, Suzia Van Swol and Candyce Torres will have a front row seat on history during some of our nation's most exciting days as they cover the inauguration of President-Elect Barack Obama, his State of the Union address and the first five months of the new Administration and Congress. They will be credentialed journalists with access to the News Galleries of the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, and once they've obtained security clearances, access to TRNS' studio booth in the White House. Reports from the University of New Mexico Talk Radio News Service Washington Bureau will be available at UNM Online! (<http://unmlive.unm.edu/>) and at TRNS' existing websites, and they'll be fed to over 200 radio stations nationwide. Good luck to each of our TRNS student interns as they join our highly successful complement of Washington

interns taking part in the Senator Fred Harris Internship Program!

Have a good week.