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Weekly Message, 12/22/2008

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Good morning!

I always love taking part in Commencement exercises, and Friday night was no exception. With every diploma, there goes a personal story of persistence, dedication and hard work, and I never cease to be inspired. Graduations are the culmination of everything we do, and let me again extend the congratulations of our entire UNM family to each and every one of the graduates – and to their loved ones who sacrificed, too, to make Friday night’s ceremonies possible. A special thanks to all those who worked so hard to ensure a successful event.

I also want to thank everyone who took time out Thursday to attend the Special Meeting of the Regents. It was a good discussion, with many excellent questions by the Regents and some equally constructive comments from the audience, most notably Faculty Senate President Howard Snell, Staff Council President Loyola Chastain, GPSA President Christopher Ramirez and ASUNM President Ashley Fate.

To keep the conversation going, I have set up a new blog that contains all of my Monday Morning Messages, webcasts and other notes and thoughts. I invite you to make comments. Please visit: <http://blogs.unm.edu/president/> to tune in – and feel free to weigh in with your thoughts.

It’s time we realized that we all love UNM, and that nobody has a monopoly on good ideas, especially when they’re communicated in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. As I said in my Inaugural address, a University should always be a place that is alive with the discussion of ideas, and my website is no exception.

In the meantime, we’ll likely have no definitive word from Santa Fe about funding until the start of the Legislative Session in January and so, as I said at the meeting and at my other forums, we’ll proceed with the program we’ve initiated: a pause in hires, promotions and pay hikes, a suspension of all but essential travel and curtailing capital projects. To my mind, it’s the only prudent course.

I want to extend the congratulations of the entire UNM community to Regent Jamie Koch, who was reappointed to the Board of Regents by Gov. Richardson on Friday. Let’s also extend our warm thanks to student Regent Dahlia Dorman, whose term has been marked by enormous hard work, intelligence and poise. Let’s also congratulate and welcome our newest student Regent, Emily “Cate” Wisdom, a junior majoring in Biology and Chemical Engineering.

I’d like to extend an invitation to the entire UNM community to join me for a holiday celebration at the SUB TOMORROW, Tuesday, December 23rd from 9:30 a.m. -11 a.m. To help share in the spirit of community and camaraderie, I want to kick off the winter break with hot cider, coffee, biscochitos, good friends and good cheer.

This is a time for good friends and family – for being grateful for all that we have, to remember times past and those we miss. It’s also a time to remember those less fortunate, and I hope each of us will consider a special Holiday gift to the United Way, by filling out a pledge form, which you can get by visiting:

<http://unitedway.unm.edu/pledgeform.pdf>.

Happy Holidays to each of you and your loved ones, and here's to a happy, healthy and productive New Year.

David J. Schmidly