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Weekly Message, 2/16/2009

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Good morning.

A couple of weeks ago, we knew we were close and now it has come to pass: the University of New Mexico has raised \$1 million for United Way!

Few believed we could do it, especially once the economy took a downward spiral, but the strength, kindness and generosity of the human spirit prevailed. The UNM community has set a new standard for giving, and each generous contributor can be proud.

Special thanks go to the organizers of this year's campaign – co-chairs Paul Krebs, Martha Bedard and Valerie Romero-Leggott – along with Connie Beimer, Marla Wood, Cheryl Willman and the entire committee who worked so tirelessly and relentlessly to reach this goal. Thanks also to the countless volunteers and participants across campus who made our United Way campaign such a success.

On the subject of giving back to the community, the deadline for nominations for the Sarah Belle Brown Community Service Awards has been extended until March 2. The awards are given by the Committee for Public Service and Community Engagement and the Department of Human Resources.

The annual awards, established by former UNM Regent Doug Brown in honor of his wife, Sarah Belle Brown, recognize staff, students and faculty who serve as examples of social responsiveness and who have, over time, donated considerable personal time and effort toward advancing UNM's public service mission. For full details on the criteria and eligibility and to see the nomination forms visit: <http://hr.unm.edu/events/SBBawardinfo.php>.

Please join me in congratulating the new Dean of the Anderson School of Management, Doug Brown. He brings extraordinary talents and insights to the job, and it's great to have him back in the UNM family. I know I speak for everyone in commending Amy Wohlert for her superb work as interim dean. We have been and continue to be blessed by her service.

I traveled Friday to Cristobal, Mexico, where Vice President Cheo Torres and I met for the second time with former President Vicente Fox – a remarkable man with a vision of economic, cultural and humanitarian partnership between the United States and Mexico.

Our two meetings – orchestrated by Torres and his dedicated staff, culminate in a historic new agreement that allows UNM graduate students, faculty and researchers to participate in collaborative cultural, educational and research exchanges with scholars at Fox's newly established Centro Fox. This will also lead to creating a UNM "Vicente Fox Chair in Democracy and Development for Latin America."

President Fox has kindly agreed to serve as UNM's Spring Commencement speaker, and I'm happy to report that he will return to UNM in September for a weeklong series of lectures, roundtable discussions and meetings with faculty, students and alumni.

Have a good week. David J. Schmidly