

Transcription of interview with UNM President Robert Frank

On whom he is and what the 120 day initiative is

Well I am somebody that graduated from the University of New Mexico and the University of New Mexico gave me a great set of skills that have helped me in my career. I am someone that has a lot of passion and interest in both the state and the university. And I believe that there are great opportunities here for our students and for the university to greatly contribute to the state.

Well 120 days is really a listening campaign. It's a chance to go out and hear what people think of the opportunities for the university. So if I believe there's a great deal here, I want to hear what people think and get their ideas.

A university president has a lot of experience being a president, but might not necessarily know the different parts of the university and the state that would make things happen. So during the 120 days I want to meet as many different groups, interviews and ideas and at the end of that time I want to try and bring them together with some imaginations about what the university might be in the future. The 120 days is really the look to a long term plan, strategic vision - the opportunities that we might pursue over years or months, not days, but in the interim we are going to make all the decisions that we need to make to do the right things for the students and for the faculty.

On UNM's Potential

The University of New Mexico has all the right parts to be one of the really great research universities. A public research university can change a state. It can change the economy. It can make a huge difference to the environment we live in as well as offering our students a chance to improve their lives. So between those two things together, this community has a chance to take what's been here already as a foundation and move to levels that we haven't imagined. And I hope that together as we talk about this 120 day listening period and we look to what we can do, that at the end of that time, we have some vision that challenges us that's bold, that's audacious and it's a little scary because it's so big, but it should be achievable, and those are the things I think are really exciting about UNM. There's an awful lot of inspiration here right now, but it tends to be fragmented. People all have the thing that they are passionate for or that they are pursuing. What we want to get is enough commonality in our vision that people begin to see that if they are participating in that, what they are involved in with their own personal passion will also grow.

So hopefully the listening campaign and creating this vision of UNM in the future will bring together that process so that we are all moving in the same direction at the same time. We will try and reach out certainly beyond UNM and its boundaries. We want to reach out to the community in northern New Mexico.

I will travel the state, but I am primarily most interested in first learning about northern New Mexico if you will - northern and central New Mexico rather than reaching out to the whole area of the fifth largest state, which is a challenge just in and of itself. Over the first year I will be all over the state, but

in this first part we are going to really focus on Albuquerque, Bernalillo, you know. One hundred fifty miles around the university and then we will reach out to the other parts in the second phase.

UNM has great diversity. We talk about it all the time and the diversity we have is the kind of diversity that exists in this state. What we don't really have enough of as we go into a global world and a global economy is people from different places. So we only have 800 international students here. For a university this size, that's a very small number. We should have 3 or 4 times that number. UCLA for example, has five thousand international students.

So I think bringing international students creates a different kind of diversity. It's the kind of diversity that we have to prepare our students for. They are going to be competing with people in Shanghai and Milan and all over the world, not just people from different parts of Colorado and New Mexico. So that kind of diversity enhances the university environment. It brings us a certain richness that we can't create otherwise and for students that don't have the money to travel abroad, it gives them their own international experience right here so there's lots of advantages out of growing our international population.

On moving back

The house is beautiful. You know I remember seeing it when I was a candidate, but to be in it every day. It's a beautiful house. It's classically New Mexican and it's a real privilege to live there. I like being on campus and part of the campus life. That's been different. I've never done that before for 24 hours, since I was a student at least. So that part's been very nice. The staff and the people that manage the university have been incredibly generous with their time and effort and problem solving, so that's been wonderful. You realize what a great group of people make this place operate every day. Everything we've had so far has just been extremely enjoyable and promising for a great time here.

On shared governance

One of the points that we have been stressing is we've talked about what we wanted to do during the 120 days as we do during my whole administration is celebrating the diversity of ideas in addition to celebrating the diversity of our students and faculty. And diversity of ideas simply means that we want to hear from faculty and all groups what they think can happen at this university and how they would pursue those things. They are the architects of much of what happens here and we need their encouragement, their participation and their vision to make it work.