

Monday Morning Message
February 11, 2008

Good morning.

The New Mexico Legislature winds up its 2008 session this Thursday. For UNM, it has been an intense session which has reaped bittersweet rewards. In a year with scarce new money, legislators have funded most of our programs aimed at student success, excellence in research and healthy communities. They've also provided funding for many of our capital project requests. For all of that we are grateful. Unfortunately, as lawmakers had to weigh all of the needs of the state, they were only able to provide compensation increases of 2%. The tuition credit is also 2%. That combination will mean challenging decisions ahead for the Regents and for this administration. The Governor is currently reviewing the budget bill.

We are revving up our efforts in Rio Rancho in anticipation of the March 4 municipal election. The Higher Education Initiative on the ballot calls for a quarter-cent gross receipts tax increase in Rio Rancho that, if approved, could provide infrastructure funding for the UNM campus there. That's a big payback for what amounts to 25-cents for every \$100 purchase. We have scheduled town halls at the Rio Rancho Mid-High on Tuesday, February 19, and Saturday, February 23. Our volunteers will also be out canvassing neighborhoods. We want to educate voters about our plans for the Rio Rancho campus and about the partnerships with CNM, NMSU and others that will bring a full array of higher education choices to that fast-growing city.

On Wednesday night, Lobo women's basketball will participate in the Women's Basketball Coaches Association "Think Pink" promotion. More than 800 colleges and universities are taking part as we work to increase breast cancer awareness. You'll be seeing a lot of pink in the Pit when our Lobo women take on San Diego State that night, from the benches to the head table to the Lobo Store. We also invite you to show your support by substituting your Lobo Red for pink.

I'll be there to do my part. They've set up a little free throw challenge for me that will benefit the UNM Cancer Center. The more free throws I shoot, the more money is raised for the Cancer Center. I've been practicing and feel pretty good about my chances. However, I will admit the thought of shooting on the floor of the Pit in front of all those people is giving me some heartburn. Wish me luck.

Have a good week.
David J. Schmidly