



THE UNIVERSITY *of*
NEW MEXICO

Office of the Provost &
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
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SUBJECT: An Update from Academic Affairs

Dear Faculty,

After my first 160 days on the job, I thought it was time to share with you some of the work we've been doing to strengthen Academic Affairs at UNM.

Developing a fundamentally sound organization has been my first priority as interim Provost. To that end, we've been working hard to assemble a results-oriented team that can manage every aspect of our operations. As you know, we have new Divisions of Enrollment Management and Diversity, headed by Terry Babbitt and Rita Martinez-Purson that are already putting ambitious agendas in place. National searches for both those leadership positions are now underway.

In addition, we've undertaken two significant internal reorganizations. Residence Housing and Food Services are now part of the Division of Student Affairs. And, I am especially pleased to report that as of November 1, Associate Vice President of Budget, Planning and Analysis Curt Porter has joined the academic affairs staff. With Mr. Porter's help, I look forward to implementing a number of best practices in budgeting and resource planning that will enhance our ability to respond to the university's strategic priorities.

Finally, we've devoted a great deal of time and energy to address the state of our research enterprise and the recommendations that came out of the Research Study Group. To date, we've formed an Executive Research Advisory Group; hired a new Manager of Sponsored Research Services and an Interim AVP for Research Administration; and, authorized an internal audit of the office. By the end of the semester, we will have a new budget model in place that will prevent a recurrence of this year's fiscal challenges. The number of research proposals (2007-2008) submitted has increased this academic year; as well as the increase in grants and contracts awarded to the University. We will continue the work to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of this critical part of the university.

The revised organizational chart for Academic Affairs can be viewed on-line at www.unm.edu/~acadaffr/.

Organizational structures, of course, are only the preamble to the real mission of UNM – the education of our students. So during the past five months, we have been working equally hard to make “Student Success” a reality, by means of a number of new initiatives.

- Significant investments in high-need, high-demand courses have been committed to increase enrollments in the Fall 07 “intersession” term up to 1,000 students.
- New policy proposals have been presented to committees of the Faculty Senate to improve the effectiveness of our enrollment policies and promote diversity in the curriculum.

- A new “Provost’s Committee on Assessment” has been charged with developing a university-wide plan to assess learning outcomes, in support of our accreditation self-study and improvements in our pedagogy.
- In the 2008 Fall semester, we changed the practice of disenrolling students automatically if they failed to meet university payment deadlines, which included UNM Branch campuses. We implemented a plan to work with each student to make sure they had received the financial aid or any other type of support before any change was made to their current course registration. We believe this made a major impact on the retention of the students attending in the fall semester.
- A number of senior academic affairs staff have been working with their colleagues at Central New Mexico and other community colleges to implement our recent pledges of increased cooperation. Evaluation metrics are also being planned to ensure that the result of these activities is increased transfer rates and better persistence for all participants.
- The acknowledgement of the importance of addressing the skills of our ESL (English as a second language) GA/TA workforce. At the request of our undergraduates, we have studied and are beginning to address the relevant issues with the goal of improving the preparation of the GA/TA’s to serve as educational resources in the classroom and seek creative ways to support our teaching assistants.
- The new UNM Student Success Center, to be located in the current Lockheed Martin building at the corner of University and Avenida Cesar Chavez, will provide a well-designed, integrated, contemporary student service and academic support facility that will support student access and support to our general and student-athlete populations. This facility will be operational by the summer of 2008.
- The 2007 UNM Bond Issue is expected to go a long way towards aligning our facilities with our academic goals. I am pleased to report that our cooperative efforts with the Deans and the EVP for Administration have resulted in a proposed bond issue that will fund a number of important academic projects including \$12.5M for classroom renovation and modernization. Other projects that will receive supplemental funding include:
 - Renovation of the Lockheed Martin building for the UNM Student Success Center
 - Renovation of the former Architecture & Planning Building for the Interdisciplinary Film and Digital Media and Theater and Dance programs
 - Renovation of space for the Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Center
 - Renovation and expansion of the University Art Museum to include the Jonson Gallery
 - Renovation of the former Architecture Annex for the Tamarind Institute
 - College of Education Phase II
 - Biology expansion project
- Our capital campaign efforts are also aimed at identifying funding for academic initiatives. Each of the Deans has put forward ambitious proposals that aspire to funding that will support new programs and facilities within their schools/colleges that will benefit the institution as a whole. With all of your help and that of the Vice President for Institutional Advancement and his staff, we hope to realize these ambitious goals. Additional information about our capital campaign goals will emerge in the coming months.

Another important priority for Academic Affairs is our institutional accreditation self-study. A number of you have been engaged in this self-study process and thanks to the diligent efforts of many individuals across the institution, I am confident that we will be prepared to answer this challenge.

The last thing that I'd like to mention is the importance of a consolidated effort for the upcoming legislative session. Four strategic areas have been designated including: Student Success, Excellence, Healthy Communities and Economic and Technology Development. Our full legislative agenda can be located on the UNM Webpage.

I welcome your input on any of the above-mentioned issues and look forward to working with all of you to develop new ways to meet our collective goals.

Respectfully yours,

Viola E. Florez
Interim Provost & EVP for Academic Affairs