



Provost's Quarterly Newsletter – Fall 2009, Edition 2.0

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<http://www.unm.edu/~acadaffr/CurrentEventsAndInfo.html>

Goal: To issue updates to our various University constituencies in a manner that provides opportunity for input. Comments, questions or concerns about any of the following can be provided to provost@unm.edu.

Objective: To provide a mechanism for timely communication of information and feedback on matters of concern to our academic, research and student affairs community

Provost's Fall 2009 Letter to the Faculty:

Read about my proposed process for crafting the Vision of Academic Excellence for UNM which can be found at:

<http://provost.unm.edu/SupportingFiles/LetterToFaculty/Fall2009LTF.pdf>

Academic Affairs Leadership:

I am once again focused this year on filling a number of important academic leadership positions. We are immediately moving forward with the searches for the Deans of Engineering, University College and Architecture and Planning. At stake are three key leadership positions that will help us set the direction for excellence at UNM. Recruiting top-notch candidates for these positions is of paramount importance to me and I look forward to faculty participation and input into these searches.

Budget/Resources

The state of the local and national economies will certainly bring challenges in the coming year. However, we will not let those challenges prevent us from moving toward our long-term goals. The Regents have allocated new funding to address advising as well as faculty recruitment and diversity that we will put to use to achieve the maximum impact. In the next several months, we will be working with the Deans and other key staff to develop a plan for best use of these funds. You will hear more about these efforts in the coming months.

Given what we all know about the State's economy, it is also important to mention that we should be bracing ourselves for what may be another round of budgetary cuts. It is too early to know how those cuts will affect us but I can assure you that we will be communicating with you, primarily through the Deans, on the potential impacts to the institution.

Shared Governance/Communication:

A number of steps have been taken to address concerns about shared governance and communication between faculty and administration at UNM. For an update on accomplishments thus far, see my May 2009 letter to the faculty at:

<http://provost.unm.edu/SupportingFiles/LetterToFaculty/LetterToFacultyMay2009.pdf>

Over the summer, the President, Deans, and I continued to work towards establishing consistent mechanisms for inclusive input into our decision making processes. I held two meetings during the spring 2009 semester with deans, department chairs, and members of executive cabinet to explore the perceived communication problem between the various levels of administration at UNM. A number of recommendations were made from those meetings that have the potential to improve our current shared governance model. The notes from the meeting can be found at:

<http://provost.unm.edu/SupportingFiles/CommunicationMeetingsDocument2009.pdf>.

Some of the other things we are doing include:

- Scheduling all-faculty meetings with every college with an agenda set by faculty in the college. These meetings will be attended by the Provost, President and Vice Presidents. The first meetings with Anderson School of Management and Architecture and Planning were held last week.
- Development of a quarterly newsletter from the Provost's Office which will be posted to our website to ensure that information of general interest is widely disseminated.
- Creation of a richer agenda for the Board of Regents' Academic/Student Affairs and Research Committee.
- Creation of a group headed by Dean of Fine Arts, Jim Linnell which encompasses a broad cross section of University constituencies, and is charged with recommending a new budget approach for Research and Public Service Projects (RPSP's), which are line item appropriations under increasing pressure due to state budget shortfalls.
- Experimenting with the structure of Provosts' Cabinet to allow for focused and inclusive discussions on the areas of high priority for the coming year.
 - Four working groups: Advising, Budget Planning and Institutional Research, International Issues, Faculty Awards and Research. These groups will meet once month and every fifth week the Provosts' Cabinet will convene in its entirety for discussion.
 - One Dean will be invited to be a member of each working group, not to represent all Deans but to make sure there is a conduit that grounds the discussion in order to stay consistent with the day to day operations of colleges and departments.
 - Additionally, the faculty senate president has been invited to all meetings.

Accreditation:

UNM recently received the report and recommendations from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) team that visited UNM back in April. A direct link to the report is available on the Academic Affairs website (<http://www.unm.edu/~acadaffr>). The report recommends that UNM remain fully accredited in good standing for another 10-year cycle with two interim reporting requirements: one on academic advising and the other on governance and communications issues.

The HLC report is presented in two parts: (1) an Assurance Section, which addresses evidence that UNM has met the five accreditation criteria and explains the overall recommendations and reporting requirements for the institution, and (2) an Advancement Section, which provides advice for institutional improvement. The recommendations from the team are currently under review by the Higher Learning Commission Board. The official notification of UNM's accreditation status is anticipated soon. However, we are already beginning to work on the some of the issues and recommendations identified in the report as detailed below:

- *Progress Report on Academic Advising*
The HLC report directs UNM to strengthen advisor training and professional development, communication among advisors, and the advisor-student ratio for students enrolled in University College. Over the summer a task force of faculty, advisors and administrators worked on the organizational aspects of this charge. That, in turn, will help inform decisions about the allocation of the \$500,000 of new money budgeted by the regents to strengthen advising across the university. This is a priority and I intend all the positions funded by these monies to be in place and working by the end of the fall semester.
- *Monitoring Report on Governance and Communications Issues*
One major area of concern outlined in the report centered around governance and communications issues. If adequate progress cannot be demonstrated by the institution in this area over the next year, the HLC may recommend a follow-up visit. The HLC report recommends that the university use a survey or other type of instrument to empirically demonstrate our progress on this issue. To meet this requirement, we have engaged the firm of Research & Polling Inc. to conduct a study to examine perceptions regarding shared governance and communication issues as well as academic influence on budget processes. The study will consist of two surveys: a baseline survey administered in fall 2009 and a follow-up survey to measure progress in those areas administered in fall 2010. Prior to survey distribution, a set of pre-design focus groups will meet in September to aid in determining key elements and questions of the survey. A draft of the survey will also be reviewed by a select group of people prior to distribution to all faculty and staff. Watch for it to come out later this fall and I strongly encourage you to take time to participate in the survey process!
- *Other Issues Identified in the Report*
 - Improving support for graduate students – We were able to protect and maintain the additional 500k for graduate student lines in this year's budget. There is also an additional 400k for stipends and research dollars to enhance graduate student research and dissertation work.
 - Rewarding Faculty and Staff – Members of the Board of Regents have challenged us to come up with a plan to recognize the people on our campus who are making outstanding contributions to our mission.
 - Faculty Development -- We are in the process of creating an integrated approach for faculty development around instructional technology and

Distance Education. Currently, we are taking steps to see who needs to be around the table to begin the conversation and how we can better align existing resources.

FACULTY INITIATIVES

Faculty Recruitment Toolkit: The Office of Equity and Inclusion is finalizing a faculty recruiting toolkit that will provide assistance to hiring officials with the complex process of recruiting the most diverse applicant population possible and ultimately, hiring the best candidate to serve our diverse teaching and research mission. Clearly, on an effort of this importance, we must engage continuous improvement tactics to ensure we are responding appropriately to the challenges associated with our diversity goals. You can expect to see it rolled out within the next month.

Faculty Rewards & Recognition Program: One of our highest priorities for the current academic year is formulation of a meaningful rewards & recognition program for our distinguished teaching and research faculty. I have initiated this effort by developing a base-line account of faculty who hold a variety of distinctions and/or awards. If you hold a distinguished honor and have not already responded to our call for this information through the Deans and the All-faculty List serve, I ask for your assistance in continuing to build this database. Please contact Donna Hoff at dhoff@unm.edu with this information.

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

Lobo Reading Experience

As one of our primary Student Success goals, we are identifying and implementing programs that have the potential to impact the first year experience of our students and get them engaged in the University in new and interesting ways. This semester, we launched the “Lobo Reading Experience” for first-time freshmen, featuring the book “Antonio’s Gun and Delfino’s Dream” and a visit by its author, Sam Quinones of the Los Angeles Times. More information about the Lobo Reading Experience can be found at: <http://www.unm.edu/~lre/>. All of these efforts point to the same goal: keeping our students engaged and focused on attaining their degrees.

Research:

There is plenty of great news to report regarding Main Campus research. First and foremost, our faculty deserve congratulations for an excellent year. Main campus research expenditures totaled \$154.5M, an increase of 8.9% over FY08. In addition, research awards totaled \$133.3M, an increase of 18.5% over FY08.

Our faculty have also been taking advantage of funding opportunities resulting from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, with over \$71M in proposals submitted and \$11.1M of awards received so far. These data reflect the hard work and dedication of our faculty, and they deserve sincere congratulations.

The Research Office has laid out an ambitious agenda for FY10, including convening a task force charged with developing new policies related to Research Centers & Institutes, streamlining the proposal submission process, and refining the limited competitions process.

Finally, we would like to welcome Jane Slaughter, who over the summer was named the Director of Arts and Humanities Research Initiatives and will be spearheading increased research collaborations and funding opportunities for faculty in the Arts and Humanities.

FACILITY UPDATES

Campus Advising and Outreach Center

Our goal to create the Campus Advising and Outreach Center in the main campus Student Services Center building is coming together. By the end of the Fall semester, the facility will house the University College, College of Arts & Sciences and BA/MD advising centers. Various outreach services such as College Prep, College Mentoring, Natural High, Educational Opportunities Center, Upward Bound and High School Equivalency Program College Learning & Public Service are already moved into the second floor. We believe housing all of these programs in one facility next to the One-Stop Student Service center in the neighboring Mesa Vista Hall will be beneficial to providing efficient and easy-to-locate services to our students.

Classrooms

Many of you have been impacted by the Mitchell Hall construction project and were asked to make sacrifices. The multi-faceted approach to solving this problem was dependent on the cooperation of all the schools and colleges and I must congratulate and express my appreciation to everyone who came together to solve the classroom shortage problem and help us maintain adequate classroom space for our students. I am pleased to report that the Mitchell Hall project is on schedule for completion by the end of the year with the first classes being taught in the Spring 2010.

Prior to the completion of the Mitchell Hall project, you will see a number of other improvements to our classrooms across campus. In addition to improving the general condition of most of our classrooms, we are in the process of outfitting many of our classrooms with new, state-of-the-art audio visual capabilities. Over seventy five classrooms will be getting new AV equipment, with sixty of those outfitted with high-tech instructor stations and computers. Much of this work was completed over the Summer with the remainder being finished during the Fall semester. I look forward to your feedback on our efforts to modernize classrooms on our campus and hope that our investments benefit both the faculty and students.