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President's Weekly Perspective, 7/16/2012

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Frank, Robert G.. "President's Weekly Perspective, 7/16/2012." (2012). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/frank_papers/21

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UNM President's Weekly Perspective

Good morning.

In Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice asks the Cheshire Cat, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where—," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

I have always found this exchange to be a poignant reminder that before a journey is begun, it is important to take a step back to gain perspective on exactly in what direction one wants to travel. A vision is just that, a vision, until one starts to take steps toward it. I have repeatedly touched on our common understanding that the world changes rapidly; therefore our goals will have to be flexible enough to keep pace. In today's higher education landscape it does matter – very much – which way we go, and we need to set goals that will allow us to reach our destination.

UNM2020

This week began the formal process of engagement in the development of the UNM2020 plan.

UNM2020 is a comprehensive and collaborative approach to planning for the future of this institution, with which the entire UNM community will come to be involved over the next several months. To fulfill our role as the state's flagship university and enhance our national and international positions, we must anticipate the path ahead and then decide to navigate it. UNM2020 asks each participant to transport him or herself to the year 2020 and imagine UNM. Once we establish our collective vision, we will then work backward to create the pathway that we will take to make the vision come to fruition.

Everyone will have a stake in the creation of this future picture – faculty, staff, students, regents, administrators, alumni, parents, donors, community leaders and others who want to contribute to what success will look like during the journey and upon arrival. Last week, two groups began engaging in the UNM2020 process – a group composed of vice-presidents, deans and directors of large centers, and later in the week, our Board of Regents. Interestingly, it was found that their perceptions of UNM's challenges and opportunities are closely aligned. I also began a conversation with the Board of Regents regarding the goals that will be set for me as President for the next year, some of which will be informed by the results of UNM2020.

I will be sharing more about the process and opportunities for involvement over the next few weeks. Remember, we are the drivers on this journey, and our goals become the road map. This collective goal setting is a positive and powerful practice, which I hope will ignite enthusiasm and provides clear direction for UNM2020.

A Foundation for Long-Term Fundraising Success

A critical issue for the University is establishing new and sustainable ways to generate revenue. A significant building block in the success of this goal is to create a different business model by which the UNM Foundation is able to expand and grow the University's fundraising efforts. The UNM Foundation has been found by three separate reports to be an effective and efficient organization consistent with best practices, yet it relies too heavily on non-recurring revenues. A new interdependent model will be developed, which necessitates changes in governance and funding. Creating a sustainable UNM Foundation aligned to the University's goals of generating additional funding is crucial for the advancement of our faculty, staff and students in upcoming years.

Inspired by an Engaged UNM

I am excited about the opportunities we have and the responses we are getting from the many varied constituents and individuals, on and off campus. It is overwhelming obvious that this community has a vested interest in continuing to pursue excellence for the University and those it serves. During the month of June I asked you to participate in an open-ended questionnaire in order to help me to identify and pinpoint the challenges and opportunities you see at UNM as we define future goals. More than 1,200 people responded with ways to improve the University, and offer their advice and well wishes. I look forward to reviewing the responses in their entirety. The comments provide specific instances that can be addressed or expanded upon as we try to be more proactive on campus. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who took the time to fill out the questionnaire and share their perspectives.

Last week Janet and I were invited to two events that gave us the opportunity to meet some of our UNM family. The Staff Council held a reception for us on Thursday, where we met a wide group of staff from across the University. Many present took time to chat with us and tell us about their ideas for UNM. El Centro de la Raza also held a reception for us late Friday afternoon in the courtyard of Mesa Vista Hall. There was a great turnout, and we had a chance to meet students, faculty, staff and community members interested in our Latino students. Many thanks to the leadership of the Staff Council and El Centro de la Raza for organizing these two great events.

Advancing the UNM Research Mission

I have emphasized the importance and value of our research mission, and the ways in which it stimulates our connections throughout New Mexico and the world. The Provost and the faculty are currently engaged in a search for a Vice President for Research and Economic Development. Until this position is filled, it is imperative that we do not lose momentum in advancing our research efforts. I would like to welcome UNM Professor [John McGraw, Department of Physics and Astronomy, as the Interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development](#). His portfolio of duties will include serving as the senior administrative official responsible for UNM's Main Campus research. John brings a collaborative and focused vision for UNM's Office of Research, as well as demonstrated passion for expanding the enterprise.

UNM has many examples of innovation through research. One of our Electrical and Computer Engineering faculty members and his graduate student will be presenting papers next month at the Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques. Pradeep Sen, an assistant professor of ECE, will present research on the process of rendering cleaner, faster, more sophisticated computer graphics that could be used in feature film production at SIGGRAPH 2012. UNM was recently ranked by The Princeton Review as one of the top 10 schools in the U.S. to study video game design, and UNM's Advanced Graphics Lab, run by Professor Sen, is No. 9 in the rankings for undergraduate programs. Their work is an illustration of how this University can assist industry in staying cutting edge.

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bob