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President's Weekly Perspective, 4/22/2013

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UNM **President's Weekly Perspective**

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."
— Winston Churchill*

Good morning.

For countless members of the UNM community, the spirit of giving is evident through single acts of compassion and bravery to community service projects and fulfilling career choices that advance both personal well-being and that of our society. This week, I am proud to recognize how UNM's commitment to producing active, engaged, and effective citizens is reflected across the university. Each of us can make a difference - at home, through our work, and in our communities - to help build a better future for our students, our communities, and our nation. Thank you for all that each of you does to make our world a better place.

The Lobo Spirit Shines Bright in Boston

Over the past several days, we have all been processing the senseless tragedy of the [Boston Marathon](#) bombings. The aftermath showed a number of good Samaritans among the first responders. Danielle Deines, a first-year resident physician at the UNM School of Medicine, was one of those heroes. She immediately began to assist in triaging those injured at the Boston Marathon, offering her aid even though she herself had been treated in the medical tent prior to the explosions. Danielle is an example of the countless individuals who responded courageously and selflessly to do whatever they could to preserve lives, and she is a true reflection of the Lobo spirit we value here at UNM.

UNM Leads Peace Corps Volunteer-Producing Hispanic Serving Institutions

This year the University of New Mexico leads the list of [Peace Corps volunteer-producing Hispanic Serving Institutions](#) (HSIs), with 24 undergraduate alumni currently serving as Peace Corps volunteers and 439 alumni having served since 1961. These graduates are well prepared for the challenge of international service. They become leaders in their host communities and carry the spirit of service and leadership back with them when they return home, upholding the Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship and a better understanding between Americans and people of other countries.

UNM Mentorship Opportunity

Big Brothers Big Sisters is launching a new mentoring program that I feel will be a great fit for faculty and exempt staff at UNM. The program is called *mentor2.0* and works to place mentors with ninth grade students at South Valley Academy located on Coors and Black SW. The program goal is to graduate these young people from high school and have them prepared for college. Our goal is to match every incoming freshman at this school with a UNM mentor. I realize we all work very hard to create balance in our time for work, family and service. While you may have heard about Big Brothers Big Sisters traditional programs, mentor2.0 is a bit different – you mentor via email. This program is a fun and easy way to get involved in the community and make a difference, and could be your opportunity to make a positive impact on a young person's life. Please join me in making mentor2.0 a success. If you are interested in participating in the program and are faculty or an exempt staff member, please request and complete the UNM Interest Form and return it to LaTrenia McDaniel, the UNM liaison for mentor2.0, at 505-277-2695 or lmcdaniel@unm.edu. Let's see if we can make South Valley Academy a UNM mentored school!

Celebrating Success in Sustainability

UNM is committed to being a sustainability leader, and has adopted sustainability as core value of the university. Several events and recognitions have recently coincided that reflect this commitment in a very real way. For the third year in a row UNM has been included in the Princeton Review's Guide to Green Colleges and is the only higher education institution in New Mexico to be named a "Green College." The Green College Guide is published in partnership with the U. S. Green Building Council and focuses solely on colleges that have demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment and sustainability. Also, last Monday, the photovoltaic (PV) installation on the Science and Math Learning Center was dedicated increasing the amount of renewable energy electricity produced on campus to 273 kW; other PV installations on campus include Mechanical Engineering, College of Education, Yale Parking Structure, and Electrical and Computer Engineering.

In celebration of Earth Day, the [5th Annual Sustainability Expo & Lobo Growers Market](#) will be held on Tuesday April 23, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Cornell Mall. As the UNM campus is recognized as a nationally recognized arboretum, and in honor of Arbor Day, several students groups have organized a series of tree plantings and informational workshops around campus.

To further emphasize our commitment to sustainability, I am very pleased to announce that Mary Clark has been named the first Sustainability Manager at UNM. Mary has been a UNM employee since 1995 and is currently a graduate student in the Masters of Public Administration program. I am confident that she will continue to work to position as a national model and leader in institutional sustainability through implementation, education, outreach, research, and partnership. Please join me in congratulating Mary on her accomplishment.

UNM Students Leaders in Our Nation and State

The Udall Foundation announced that Byron "Craig" Williams, a current law student at the University of New Mexico, is one of 12 students from 12 tribes and 11 universities that have been selected as [2013 Native American Congressional Interns](#). Interns were selected the basis of academic achievement and a demonstrated commitment to careers in tribal public policy. Craig is a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and is currently pursuing a J.D. with a certificate in federal Indian law from the UNM School of Law. This highly regarded internship program is intended to provide American Indians and Alaska Natives with an insider's view of the federal government processes firsthand. Craig will be interning with the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Tribal Justice.

The New Mexico Space Grant Consortium (NMSGC) recently awarded 26 Fellowships and Scholarships to students across New Mexico totaling \$210,000, based on application information, faculty recommendation, GPA, research project, and its alignment to NASA. Eleven of the recipients are [UNM students](#). Congratulations to Ph.D. students Heather Buelow, Aleksandra Faust, Bridget McEwen, and Allison Santos, and graduate students Sebastian Gomez and Suzanne Gordon, who were awarded \$10,000 each for their research; and to Ph.D. students Robert Mesler, seniors Daniel Herrera, Nicole Saavedra and Joshua Williams, and junior Jon Vigil, who were awarded \$5,000 each for their research.

Employee Benefits Update

UNM is presently faced with a large unfunded post-retirement benefit liability that, if not corrected, will grow each year. This increasing liability will jeopardize UNM's financial stability and could lead to the complete elimination of post-retirement benefits if not immediately addressed. The faculty, staff, and retiree members of the Retiree Health Care Task Force were charged with the task of preparing recommendations to reduce UNM's unfunded liability for post-retirement benefits. Please be aware that there are changes to our retiree healthcare, which will require a decision on your part even if you do not know when you will retire from UNM. Before you make this decision, I strongly urge you to attend one of the [Human Resources information sessions](#) for staff, faculty and retirees. UNM Human Resources has provided detailed information regarding post-retirement benefit changes for [current faculty and staff employees](#) and [retirees](#).

Have a great week and Go Lobos!

Bobx