

DATE: July 16, 2008

TO: Campus Community

FROM: Waded Cruzado, Executive Vice President and Provost

SUBJECT: Interim President of New Mexico State University

On July 15 the Board of Regents announced my appointment as Interim President and I would like to share some thoughts on this position with the campus community.

First, I would like to thank the Board of Regents for their confidence in asking me to serve in this capacity. I was looking forward to working with Jim McDonough and have communicated to him that his health is of primary importance to all of us.

Today, July 16, marks my fifth anniversary with this institution. I could not have imagined when I arrived as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences that I would later be asked to serve as executive vice president and provost. And now, I am truly honored by the opportunity to serve as interim president. My sincere goal is to pay back the trust that many people have deposited in me. I am proud of this institution and its power to positively transform the lives of the people we serve.

Let me offer my congratulations to President Michael Martin as he moves on to a new chapter in his long career in higher education administration. Under his leadership, New Mexico State University strengthened its understanding about the rich possibilities of being One University; increased enrollment at all NMSU campuses; exceeded fund raising goals and raised the level for the comprehensive campaign; created the Domenici Public Policy Conference and the International Relations Institute; contributed to the economic growth in Southern New Mexico; received legislative funding for major capital outlay projects; and adopted a Master Plan to guide the university's physical development. President Martin has represented our university on important missions to Korea and Iraq and brought luster to our land-grant institution when he received the New Mexico Leadership Award and the nationally prestigious Justin Smith Morrill Award.

In particular, the last year has been one of tremendous accomplishment for New Mexico State University, with the full ten-year reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. It has also been, at times, a period of complex challenges. We all have been dismayed by the startling headlines, allegations and counter-allegations of months past, which are not what define New Mexico State University. The situation is not fair to the tens of thousands of faculty members, students, staff, alumni and supporters who together have made New Mexico State University a community for teaching, research and service. Our mission is to meet the educational aspirations of the diverse populations of New Mexico which, in a global society, includes the confines of the world. This is who we truly are and this is where we will focus as we go forward together. Some people say that we have seen better days; I say that the best days of our institution are still ahead of us.

Among my priorities will be to put together a management and faculty team to start implementing the excellent recommendations made by the Regents Professors' task force. While continuing to build on our academic accomplishments, we will work hard to further improve our administrative processes and procedures, as well as our effectiveness in communications and outreach efforts both inside and outside the university. This includes doing more to ensure that our friends in the news media have the access, information and context they need when reporting on what happens at New Mexico State.

I will be working closely with our vice presidents, our community college presidents and the deans of each college within the university system to reinforce the standards and expectations of the communities we serve. In particular, I look forward to working closely with College of Education Dean Bob Moulton, whom I had invited to consider the possibility of serving as interim executive vice president and provost, in the event that the Board of Regents approved my appointment. I also look forward to facilitating the new beginnings of recent appointees: Pamela Jansma as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Russell Hardy as president of our Carlsbad campus. Needless to say, all of us have pledged to assist Dean Virginia Higbie and the College of Health and Social Services in making progress to address specific needs and prepare for the next academic year.

No doubt there will be great expectations about who will be named the next president. The process will be led by the Board of Regents with significant input from constituents. I will support fully their effort and offer my assistance in the nationwide search. In the meantime, I will do my absolute best to continue the good projects already in place and to provide leadership on behalf of New Mexico State University to the very best of my ability. There is no challenge that together we can not resolve, no goal that as a community we can not accomplish.

I look forward to exciting times ahead. Go Aggies!