



Office of the President

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Dear Colleagues:

We have passed the halfway mark in the legislative session, and I am writing to update you on our advocacy efforts on behalf of the New Mexico State University System and other matters of importance to our university community. The New Mexico state budget remains the key focus of our efforts and of our legislature. Despite efforts by the House Appropriations Finance Committee to forward a budget proposal, the full house has not yet passed it and sent it on to the senate. The sticking points appear to be the proposed reduction in the film tax credit to help offset funding for other programs.

We anticipate that the senate version will differ from the house recommendation. This will then require a conference to work out a final package capable of being supported by both bodies for submission to the Governor.

The Governor is holding the line on her initial budget recommendations. There are discussions under way on some aspects of the budget, but we cannot anticipate now whether differences will be resolved before the session closes.

Your NMSU team is fully engaged in discussions that matter. I have made several trips to Santa Fe and use my time there in one-on-one meetings with key decision makers, making the strongest arguments possible for the NMSU System.

Over the past few days, I have met with the Governor's Chief of Staff, Directors of the Legislative Finance Committee and the Senate Finance Committee. I have had dinner with HAFC committee members as part of the Council of University Presidents, spoken at the New Mexico Economic Forum in Albuquerque, attended the Hispano Round Table Legislative Dinner, met with our government relations team to map out strategy, and walked the halls of the capitol speaking with legislators as they go about their daily business.

The previous week, I met with the Council of University Presidents and had a special meeting with Rep. "Kiki" Saavedra and Rep. Rhonda King, along with representatives of the other research universities to argue for better funding for the research institutions. Several of our suggestions were adopted as a result of that meeting. In the past few weeks, I have also met individually with several legislators on the LFC and HAFC and have held numerous conversations with other senators and representatives. On Wednesday, I will travel to Santa Fe for another round of meetings with key leaders on the Senate Finance Committee. We plan to meet with members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My position is consistent. Protect the investment our citizens have made in higher education and do not use our students as a means to solve the current budget shortfalls. We are responding to individual changes in budget recommendations as they arise, keeping this message consistent. Our current challenge is to preserve waivers for some of our part-time students, a budget item that currently amounts to a \$3.9M budget reduction and a true hardship for many students—mostly graduate students—whose tuition must be raised to cover the shortfall.

Our general message to preserve NMSU's budget is well received, and I am constantly reminded of the high regard our university is held in by the vast majority of our elected leaders. That being said, we know that our legislators face a tough challenge in balancing the state's budget. In short, NMSU's reputation as a well-managed university that does world-class research, produces graduates who succeed in the workplace, and is characterized by efficient operations and services has served us well.

I invite you to track the ongoing legislative efforts at our website at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~legislat/>. You can also navigate to it off the NMSU homepage under the Community Outreach column and linking on Legislative Priorities.

On another front, we were pleased last week to learn of Governor Martinez's appointment of Mr. Michael Cheney and Mr. Christopher Dulany to our Board of Regents.

Mike Cheney graduated from NMSU in 1985 with a B.B.A. in Finance. He is currently the Southern New Mexico Regional President for Wells Fargo Bank operating out of Las Cruces. Mr. Cheney has served on the NMSU Business College Advisory Council and the Board of Directors of the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce. His wife, Denni, also a proud graduate of NMSU, currently serves as President of the Presidents Associates.

Chris Dulany, the Governor's nominee for our student regent, is a graduate student pursuing a M.B.A. He graduated from NMSU with his B.B.A. in Finance in 2005, earning Crimson Scholar honors. He served as an ASNMSU Senator during his undergraduate years; he is also involved in the Las Cruces Rotary Club and the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce.

Both nominees still await senate confirmation before they are able to assume their seats on the Board of Regents.

Their pending arrival offers us this opportunity to thank Regent Blake Curtis and Regent Chris Anaya for their service to our university. We wish them the best and hope to see them back on campus in the years to come.

As always, thank you for the good work that you do for New Mexico State University and for your strong support of our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Couture".

Barbara Couture
President