Dear Campus Community,

On Friday, December 4, 2015, the Board of Regents approved UNLV to move forward with the purchase of 42 acres along Tropicana Avenue near Koval Lane. The purchase of this land will provide many long-term growth options, including, but not limited to, graduate, clinical outreach, and professional programs. In addition, through the hard work of many individuals and leadership at the UNLV Foundation, we were able to raise private funds of approximately $75 million in new gifts and new pledges for the prior academic year from about 20,000 donors, achieving one of the best philanthropic years ever for UNLV. We’ve also begun to hold alumni events nationally for the first time ever in order to better engage the national Rebel alumni network, and that will help not only the fundraising pipeline but also recruitment and placement. These milestones are key changes that enable us with the Top Tier Initiative. At UNLV, everything we do will tie into the Top Tier plan.

At the onset of this academic year, committees were formed for each of the five pathway goals, and these teams were tasked with determining how to tackle the sub-goals and related issues present within its Top Tier goal area, based on the Top Tier vision, goals, key measures of success, and strategies. These teams worked to help us precisely define what we can and should accomplish over the next year through developing action plans, as well as determining what our strategies will be over the long term. Throughout the fall semester 2015, our teams for each of the five pathway goal areas have been working through their action plans, and I am pleased to provide an update on the progress and early accomplishments for each of the five pathway goal areas.
Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity

- Identified ways to establish a new class of “University Research and Innovation” Centers/Institutes that are multidisciplinary in nature.
- Identified ways to increase the number of grant proposals and “Young Investigator” awards.
- Developed new GA doctoral stipend plan (discipline-specific, competitive marked based) effective January 2016.
- Analyzed management, mentoring, and support of postdocs; drafting postdoctoral fellows plan.
- Implemented new Graduate Coordinator infrastructure support program.
- Developed a new graduate student mentorship program (RAMP).
- Implemented graduate teaching certificate program.
- Prepared and disseminated comprehensive College and Department RPC (Retention, Progression, Completion) reports.
- Completed Graduate College bylaws and policy changes related to graduate faculty status.
- Implemented 3 Article Dissertation format option; moved to entirely electronic submission of theses & dissertations.
- Implemented iThenticate (mandatory review for all theses and dissertations and complimentary graduate faculty accounts).
- Authored and disseminated campus research report on graduate writing.
- Developed partnerships (Switch, Tesla, Lou Ruvo Center, NASA)
- Expansion of Economic Development Office.
- Tripling of patents over the last three years.
- 17% increase in research expenditures since 2012.
- 3 startups in 2015.
- Developing a plan to increase hiring of research intensive faculty.
- Examining research space use to enable better decisions on space use efficiency, renovation of existing space, and identification of new space needs.
- Assessing research data management activities and needs.
- Researching models for Graduate Faculty onboarding.

Student Achievement

- Developed a strategic plan through Enrollment and Student Services (ESS) to enhance UNLV recruitment of high quality in-state and out-of-state students while enhancing UNLV’s diversity and improving RPC (retention, progression, completion).
- Integrated the use of the Educational Advisory Board's Student Success Collaborative (EAB-SSC) analytics program to monitor student progress and determine bottlenecks and success metrics.
- Engaged the leadership of CSN through UNLV's Offices of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs have to develop an MOU to provide high-risk UNLV freshmen applicants the ability to matriculate into CSN for academic preparation.
- Developing a strategic plan with specific college-level metrics and benchmarks, including Honors College expansion, through the RPC Task Force.
Academic Health Center

• Compiled individual academic health unit strategic plans in order to develop an overall plan that is inclusive of all areas.
• Submitted documents for LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) accreditation to establish a fully accredited School of Medicine.
• Investigating the structure for an Academic Health Center (AHC) and management system (e.g., an Academic Health Center Deans Council).
• Developing a procedure to establish an Academic Health Center Advisory Board.
• Establishing hospitality curriculum for incorporation across all academic health areas.
• Developing a 10-Year fundraising plan.
• Investigating joint research projects that extend beyond the UNLV School of Medicine.

Community Partnerships

• Collaborated with the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority in order to obtain the means for UNLV to be selected as the host site for the final presidential debate in October 2016, with this debate projected to generate a minimum of $50 million in publicity.
• Developed a vision, mission, and definition for the Office of Community Engagement.
• Merged the Carnegie Community Engagement (CCE) Classification Subcommittee with an existing group.
• Developed and administered a community engagement inventory to learn more about current projects and collaborations between UNLV faculty/staff and the community.
• Developed the initial phases for the comprehensive capital campaign, including efforts to increase alumni engagement, fundraising, and partnerships.
• Cultivating relationships with community partners, such as:
  • collaborating with Tony Heish and developing the Fremont District;
  • developing new programs to train principals for the Clark County School District, as well as other College of Education collaborative programs with CCSD; and
  • collaborating with the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health.
• Significant progress and growth for Athletics over the past year:
  • the four-year graduation rate for UNLV student-athletes is 60%, and 50% of UNLV student-athletes have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater;
  • a record 56 student-athletes were named MW Conference Scholar-Athletes, which requires a 3.5 cumulative GPA or better;
  • all 17 of our sport programs possess a multi-year APR score that exceeds the NCAA requirement of 930 and are eligible for post-season competition; and
  • six of our programs earned a perfect single year APR score of 1,000 in 13-14.

Infrastructure and Shared Governance

• Compiled “best practices” of shared governance models of our comparison schools. Data will be used to develop a recommendation for UNLV.
• Formed Customer Service subcommittee to analyze various service standards.
• Identified business practices that can be improved.
• Gathered data on where colleges need more business managers in order to facilitate an increase in grant funding and free up faculty time for research/teaching.
• Investigated structural problems with onboarding practices.
• Ordered research from EAB on best practices in terms of university organizational structures to make recommendations as to possible reorganizations at the Vice Presidential level.
• Examining internal communications and communication resources; developing plans to redesign the University website.
• Aligning the IT Master Plan with the Top Tier goals.
• Examining of PEBP practices, including inviting the Executive Director to campus to share participant experiences.
• Implementing the Strategic Diversity Project.

Everyone at UNLV will continue to have the chance to contribute, and we want to hear from you. Committee chairs will be reaching out to campus constituents to seek their input and advice on the tasks they are tackling. Please share your insights through the online web feedback form or by contacting members of the leadership team.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed their time to this important initiative.

Cordially,

Dr. Len Jessup
President