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Inside UNLV

Cate Weeks
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Diane Russell
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, diane.russell@unlv.edu

David Ashley
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Grace Russell
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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Mission: Diversity

New Office Making Strides Toward More Inclusive Campus

By Diane Russell | Marketing & PR

Action is on Christine Clark’s mind. During her first year as vice president for diversity and inclusion, Clark plans to take strong and obvious steps toward making the university both more diverse and inclusive. For too long, she said, members of the on- and off-campus communities interested in seeing significant improvement in these areas have been repeatedly disappointed. “It’s vitally important that this office makes a difference on campus within the next year,” she said. “We need to show the campus community that it’s not just talk — things are really changing now and will continue to change for the better.”

One action has already been taken, the awarding of $300,000 in Institutional Development Grants. (See “Walking the Diversity Talk.”)

Additionally, Clark is partnering with Suzanne Espinoza, associate vice president for enrollment and student services, as well as with admissions and diversity personnel from the Clark County School District, CSN, NSC, and UNR, to address admissions in the context of diversity. Clark and Espinoza emphasized that they are not seeking to change UNLV’s current cognitive criteria (GPA and standardized test scores), but rather to refine UNLV’s admissions process to simultaneously improve graduation rates and demographic diversity. Hybrid admissions approaches, which pair the traditional criteria with other student success predictors, have been shown to improve graduation rates, especially in racially and socioeconomically diverse student bodies, she said. Clark is quick to point out that, “excellence requires diversity, that is, excellence and diversity are complements, not competitors.”

Non-cognitive variables include such things as: • whether a student has overcome significant hardship; • what kind of support system a student has, such as family members who will support her in times of stress; • how a student deals with racism or sexism, whether he is the target or agent of racism, or a witness to it.

Once UNLV refines its admission process to take full advantage of key cognitive and non-cognitive elements such as diversity and admitting students who are not only bright but also diverse, Clark said, “it’s not just talk — things will be patient and remember that the debate website at www.unlv.edu/debate is back! To make a donation to this fund that provides scholarships to students each year, go to foundation.unlv.edu/give. For more information, call Deborah Young at ext. 5-2818.

Demos to Wage War of Words at UNLV

The Democrats are coming! The Democrats are coming! Most — and possibly all — of the major Democratic candidates for president will be on campus Nov. 15 for a presidential primary debate. Currently set for 5 p.m. at the Cox Pavilion, the debate is being sponsored by CNN and the Nevada Democratic Party. CNN will air the debate live with Wolf Blitzer, anchor of The Situation Room and Late Edition with Wolf Blitzer, moderating. UNLV will be allotted a limited number of seats to be distributed to the campus community. In addition, a number of related events may be held the week of the event, including a CSUN-sponsored student mock debate, a campus concert, and a political forum sponsored by the Brookings Institute. Some disruption to campus, including increased traffic, is anticipated as the candidates and their staffs as well as the media and debate guests arrive at UNLV, said Schyler Richards, associate vice president for community relations. “The temporary inconveniences that will result from having the debate on campus are outweighed by the positive publicity UNLV should receive for being the site of such a major event,” she said. “We ask members of the campus community to be patient and remember that any inconveniences will be short-lived.”

“UNLV is proud to be the site of a major political debate that will be watched by people around the country. The exposure will be invaluable to UNLV and Southern Nevada,” said Luis Valera, director of government relations. “If the Republicans want to hold a debate here, we would be happy to have them, too.”

More info: Be sure to check the debate website at www.unlv.edu/debate for frequent updates as additional information becomes available.
Shared Governance Key to UNLV’s Future

In his convocation speech, President David Ashley emphasized his belief that shared governance is critical to a university’s success. Here he expands on the topic.

Many employees came to the university from other environments and may not understand the concept of shared governance. Can you explain your views?

Top-down management approaches generally do not work on college campuses. It sounds cliché, but shared governance recognizes that smart people work here. It would be incredibly misguided and a waste of resources not to turn to them for support and expertise in advancing the university.

When working effectively, shared governance creates a partnership among faculty, staff, students, and the administration. It recognizes that each group has distinct roles and responsibilities, as well as a common purpose in achieving the university’s mission:
- The faculty is the key to achieving excellence in academic quality. Its members hold the primary role in setting high standards for academics, for promotion and tenure, and for research productivity.
- Professional and classified staff members understand the complexities of campus operations and offer tremendous expertise in their fields. They are unquestionably the best resource for knowing where we can gain efficiencies and improve effectiveness.
- Students are the primary consumers of what we produce. They can and should tell us how the learning environment can be adjusted and improved. Students must be included in any assessment of our performance as a university.
- The administration’s primary role is to be a good shepherd of our resources amid many competing interests and needs. Our administrative leadership should also guide and shape the discussions and keep us moving toward our primary goals.

Can you give an example of how those roles play out?

The faculty must inform the administration of the impact on learning so the administration can make appropriate and sometimes tough decisions based on available resources and institutional priorities. For example, let’s say the faculty, in its pursuit for excellence, proposes the need for a highly equipped new lab. The board would certainly advance our mission, but as a steward of limited resources, we have to ask, “Can students experience the same learning outcome in a more streamlined facility?” The faculty sets the academic expectations and needs, and the administration seeks economical means and establishes priorities for achieving those results.

In other words, shared governance is not decision-making by consensus, which so often leads to protecting the status quo. It’s a way to make tough, but informed and transparent, decisions. Ultimately, I am accountable for moving the university into the future; but I cannot achieve that without building trust in the administration and engaging the campus community in aggressively achieving our goals.

Are there any administrative changes being developed now to enhance it?

In my convocation speech, I mentioned that we are forming an executive policy committee with broad representation from across campus. This committee will now be charged with evaluating proposed policies and then making recommendations to the cabinet. I believe this will encourage even greater, but shared, involvement in decision-making. This committee will also promote much greater coordination of policy. Its responsibilities will include creating a database to catalog all policies and ensuring that new policies do not conflict with existing policies.

The professional staff is represented by a committee of the Faculty Senate rather than by its own campus unit like the Classified Staff Council. At the recent professional staff development day, I encouraged attendees to explore ways to strengthen their involvement through shared governance, perhaps even re-establishing a separate Professional Staff Council.

As we move forward, I hope that all members of the campus community find avenues open to them to participate. Balancing our roles in shared governance is a fluid process with sometimes varied results, but you can be certain that we will be a stronger university the more we are all actively engaged.

More info: To learn more about the organizations involved in UNLV’s system of shared governance, visit:
- Faculty Senate, facultysenate.unlv.edu
- Classified Staff Council, unlv.edu/commissions/coc
- Professional Staff Committee, prostaff.unlv.edu

Employee Benefits

Got Leave? Here’s How to Use It

A Guide to Sorting Out Your Leave Benefits

By Grace Russell | Marketing & PR

Confused about which leave to use when? Here’s our guide to the leave benefits UNLV offers to help you balance work life and personal life.

Annual Leave

For vacations or just a day off to relax, use your annual leave. All employees receive paid annual leave except for part-time employees. Before you book your plane ticket or reserve that tee time, benefits manager Pat La Putt said that you should do two things. First, check your leave balance to ensure you have enough time on the books. Second, get your supervisor’s approval to take the leave. “As long as you have accrued annual leave and your supervisor approves it, enjoy the time off,” La Putt said.

Holiday Leave

Employees receive 11 paid holidays including this month’s Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Family Day. Under the federal holiday, your supervisor arranges for you to work a holiday; these are paid days off.

Sick Leave

When you’re ill or need to care for a sick family member, use your sick leave. This paid leave also can be used for medical appointments. Up to 15 days of sick leave can be used to provide direct care for a sick relative or when there is a death in your immediate family. The number of days available for bereavement leave depends on your job classification.

“With sick leave, employees can feel secure they will not lose pay while taking care of their health or their family’s health conditions,” said Lily Magana, benefits coordinator. “If additional time is needed, talk with your supervisor.”

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Under the federal act, you can take up to 12 weeks off for the birth or adoption of a child, for personal health reasons, or to care for a family member who is seriously ill. To qualify for FMLA, you must have worked at UNLV for a year. Use of annual or sick leave during those weeks allows the employee to remain in paid status and to receive their benefits.

“FMLA serves to protect your job while you’re gone. Due to the already time-consuming leave provisions under the FMLA, the federal act did not provide additional leave, but it did provide the job protection,” said La Putt.

This leave also provides that any employee who qualifies can take FMLA leave for bonding and newborn care purposes. “Before FMLA, employers would rarely see fathers take such leave,” La Putt said. “After the FMLA, such leave is protected and taken much more often.”

Under FMLA, you can request up to 12 weeks off in any rolling 12-month period. To qualify, you must complete the forms found on the HR website or call the benefits office.

Extended Sick Leave

For faculty or professional staff who have exhausted their sick leave and are unable to return to work, UNLV offers extended sick leave. This is paid leave granted by UNLV’s president. Depending on length of service and available funding, an employee could receive one or more months of extended sick leave.

California Leave

- Jury Duty — UNLV employees receive paid leave for serving on a jury or as a court witness.
- Military Leave — Employees who perform active military service in time of war or emergency are entitled to leave and, in most cases, differential pay that will make up for any lost pay if their military salaries are less than their UNLV salaries.

More info: For full details visit hr.unlv.edu or call ext. 5-1374.

Breaking Through the New Year

This year, the UNLV campus will reduce operations for winter break on Dec. 22 through Jan. 1. Services and offices that will remain open include human resources, payroll, university police, the office of information technology, and selected library facilities.

Christmas Day and New Year’s Day are official state holidays and the university will be closed. If you want to take advantage of the remainder of the break, use your available annual leave, comp time (if applicable), or request leave without pay. You may also choose to work during the break. You are not required to take leave.

More info: Call Larry Hamilton at ext. 5-1999 for a complete list of office closures or more detailed information.
Employees Weigh In on Planning Process

By Grace Russell | Marketing & PR

During the identity and values session of the Focus: 50 to 100 planning process, faculty and staff were asked how they perceived UNLV now and what it should be in the future. Here are some of their thoughts.

“A university has different values than profit businesses. When faculty, students, and the community come here, they should feel that UNLV is a place that values them for more than what they can contribute to the bottom line. We should be a place where an ethos of community and of respect and reciprocity for ideas as a show of care for our fellow human beings is cultivated, encouraged, and rewarded.” — Gregory Brown, history professor

“I would like to see UNLV leverage what makes us unique to our region. Housing, hotel, and casino construction is booming here and we should be creating opportunities for students and faculty. Maybe we should focus more on our construction management program to provide resources to elevate the program to a higher stature.” — Darrell Lutey, assistant director, campus computing services

At the third session, participants were put into groups and asked to create 15-second radio spots about UNLV. Here’s what they came up with.

Spot 1: Come for the Weekend, Stay to Get a Degree
An intellectual center in Las Vegas? At UNLV, just a mile from the famed Strip, faculty and students collaborate to solve global problems in a unique cultural laboratory.

UNLV — Come for the weekend, stay to get a degree.

Spot 2: A Global Village for Innovation
The world comes to Vegas. UNLV delivers to the world. UNLV — A global village for innovation, an intellectual center in Las Vegas.

Spot 3: A Laboratory to the World
Dynamic. Accomplished. Accessible. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas is a youthful, energetic institution. Situated in the Mojave Desert and in an international tourist hub, UNLV serves as a laboratory to the world.

From astronomy to hotel programs, the university is recognized nationally and internationally. Come and join the fastest growing university.

Spot 4: Global Problem Solving
UNLV values and promotes the pursuit of knowledge in an ethical and collegial environment committed to diversity and focusing on research, scholarship, and regional, national, and global problem solving with emphasis on community engagement.

Spot 5: Break Away from the Pack
U - Unique
N - Novel
L - Leading
V - Vanguard
Be a Rebel — Break away from the pack!

More info: Read more about what your colleagues are saying and share your thoughts online. The Focus: 50 to 100 website also has a full calendar of planning events. Visit planning.unlv.edu.
Recognizing Retirees
Patricia Laranjo, University Libraries dean, greets honorees Billie Mae Polson, left, and Carolyn Rogers, right, at the Libraries’ inaugural retirees luncheon on Oct. 17 in Lied Library. Thirty-four retirees were recognized for their contributions to UNLV and the library community.

Education
Learning to Lead
The department of educational leadership is home to several successful programs.

The 12-year-old principal participated in a badge-earning event held by the scouts, who were recruited primarily because of their ability to immediately take on the demands of the job. This is due in great part to the program’s commitment to integrate field experiences with course work. Graduates have approximately 300 hours of field experiences directly related to school leadership responsibilities.

Engineering
Scouting for the Next Generation of Engineers
A total of 125 Boy and Girl Scouts participated in a badge-earning event hosted by college faculty this fall. The scouts earned a merit badge or a future activity badge for their participation in the event billed as “The Boy Scout EngineeringMerit Badge/Girl Scout Build a Better Future Activity Patch Program.”

The office will provide current and prospective graduate students with the information they need to solve problems and make informed decisions about following procedures, meeting deadlines, preparing paperwork, and handling various other matters. “This office’s goal is to ensure that all members of the university’s graduate community have access to the information they require in order to have a successful experience at UNLV,” said Kate Hausbeck, senior associate dean of the Graduate College. “The office will accomplish this by answering questions and/or connecting graduate students with others on campus who can assist them.”

The office will be staffed by two facilitators — Frederick Krauss, director of graduate outreach, and Dee-dee Severin, associate director of admissions. They will strive to provide friendly, knowledgeable and confidential assistance to help resolve issues and challenge graduates. The office will coordinate with the recently established UNLV ombuds office on a case-by-case basis.

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Business
College Named Among the Best Business Schools
The Princeton Review recently named the college as being among the best 290 business schools for 2008. Over a three-year cycle, nearly 40,000 students were surveyed at the best AACSB-accredited business schools in the world. UNLV’s college stood out for its:

- full-time day and full- and part-time evening MBA
- cohort-based weekend executive MBA program for more experienced professionals.

Graduate Nonacademic Guidance Available for Grad Students
To offer nonacademic guidance and assistance to graduate students, the college has established the office of student advising services. The office will provide current and prospective graduate students with the information they need to solve problems and make informed decisions about following procedures, meeting deadlines, preparing paperwork, and handling various other matters.

“...will speak Dec. 6 as part of the Peace in the Desert public lecture series. Ross served on President Ronald Reagan’s National Security Council staff, as President George H.W. Bush’s director of the Strategic Department policy planning staff, and as President Bill Clinton’s coordinator of Middle East peace efforts.
His talk will address the role of negotiation and mediation in efforts to achieve stability and peace among nations. He recently published the book Statescraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World.

More info: To learn about future programs through the Saltman Center, visit law.unlv.edu/saltman.html or call professor Peter Reilly at ext. 5-2675.

Liberal Arts
UNLV Sains Ivy League Grads

Assistant professors Erin Hannon and Joel Snyder are new faces in the psychology department. Both earned Ph.D.s from Cornell University. Hannon joined UNLV in 2003 and Hannon in 2005. While both do research in auditory cognition and perception, their specializations differ, as do the populations they study.

Hannon joins the faculty after two years as an assistant professor at Barnard College. Her work focuses on music and enculturation, using comparisons across age and culture to examine how knowledge of musical structure changes from early infancy through adulthood, and how auditory cognition becomes specialized for music and speech.

Snyder comes to UNLV from postdoctoral fellowships at the Rotman Research Institute in Toronto and the department of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. He works on behavioral and electrophysiological measures of auditory processing in healthy aging individuals. He also plans on using behavioral and electrophysiology measurements to explore the reasons why people with schizophrenia have difficulty perceiving auditory and visual patterns.

Libraries
UNLV Libraries Links You to 7 Million Books

What should you do if the University Libraries doesn’t own the book you need? Hard to believe that, with more than 1 million volume holdings, the Libraries might not have the one you want; but it happens. For many years, Document Delivery Services, a service for interlibrary loans that delivers the requested material in two to four weeks, has been available. These days, that’s just not fast enough. Now we have Link+, a consortium of more than 40 libraries in California and Nevada.

UNLV students, staff, and faculty can expect faster delivery of books that University Libraries does not own by using Link+. It often delivers in just two to four days. The easy-to-use service is free. Just click the Link+ icon displayed in the library catalog.

The Libraries essentially added 7 million volumes to its collections by joining Link+. Link+ handles only books; journal articles are delivered electronically within two to four days using Document Delivery Services.

More info: Visit the Link+ website at couliii.ill.u.

Public Health
Breathing Easier: Professor Brings Asthma Expertise

In an area of strengh for the School of Public Health in 2006. Children’s health is an important focus of research at the school. Despite the development of national guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of asthma, morbidity and mortality have increased dramatically in the past few decades,” said Moone.

“Young children of African-American and Puerto Rican descent and those living in urban, inner-city communities carry a disproportionately burden of asthma,” she said.

Moone was instrumental in working with the state Health Division to develop surveillance measures that will allow public health officials to examine the burden of asthma among Nevada’s children. Recently, she has partnered with UNIR, the state Health Division, and the Clark County School District to study asthma prevalence in relation to school absenteeism and academic outcomes. It is the first study of its kind in Nevada.

She has also spearheaded the development of the Asthma Action Coalition—a new community based organization that meets regularly to develop strategies to improve the quality of life and management of asthma among Nevada residents.

Moone came to the School of Public Health from the Southern Nevada Health District, where she served as a chronic disease epidemiologist. She earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of California, San Diego; her master’s degree from California Polytechnic University, Pomona; and her Ph.D. from Saint Louis University.

Science
Desert Survivors: Season Two

Desert Survivors, a science education television show funded by a prestigious National Science Foundation award to assistant professor Frank van Breukelen of the School of Life Sciences, is entering its second season. Van Breukelen received a prestigious Postdoctoral career development award of $74,000.

Desert Survivors airs on Cox digital cable, Channel 110, at 7 p.m. Tuesdays and at 7:30 p.m. Thursdays. The program promotes scientific literacy in elementary school students. It spotlights “survivors” native to the Mojave Desert and features experts who answer questions from local school children.

Graduate students Candice Rausch and Jennifer Utz design and host the program. Other key collaborators include UNLV-TV and the Clark County School District. Episodes this year include:

“Owls in the Desert and Other Microhabitats” with Ph.D. candidate Markus Mika

“My God You’re Not a Scorpion!” with adjunct faculty member John Lighton and Rob Fulton, director of the Desert Studies Center in Yucca Valley, Calif.

“Plants: Our Greatest Survivors?” with professor Stan Smith

“Bees: They’re Not Just for Honey!” with associate professor Stephen Roberts and assistant professor Michelle Elekonich

More info: Visit sciences.unlv.edu/desertsurvivors.

University College
College Helps Establish First-Year & Transition Student Center

The college is working with a campuswide task force to establish a new center to help freshman and transfer students. It is expected to play a major role in helping students matriculate successfully through their degree programs.

The task force, created by Neal Smatresk, executive vice president and provost, is co-chaired by Michael Bowes, vice provost for academic affairs; Rebecca Mills, vice president for student life; and Ann McDouche, interim dean of University College. The members include representatives from academic colleges, the Division of Student Life, UNLV Libraries, and campus advising centers.

The goal is to have the center serving students by mid-2008.

New Online Course Tool

University College has partnered with the office of educational outreach and faculty from kinesiology, nursing, and counselor education to launch an online course development initiative. Courses developed will help to serve curricular requirements for University College’s bachelor of university studies degree.

Bird’s-Eye View

This peregrine falcon has made the roof of a UNLV building its winter home. Nesting on top of urban buildings is not unusual winter behavior for the falcon, according to John Klicka, curator of ornithology at the Barrick Museum. Once nearing extinction, the birds have made a successful comeback thanks to massive reintroduction efforts, he said. Urban areas often provide ample food such as pigeons. UNLV’s falcon appears to be a large female, according to Klicka. Members of the campus roofing crew report that a bird just like this one has wintered at UNLV the past three years.

Urban Affairs
Criminal Justice Coordinates Panel on Prostitution

More than 300 people attended the highly publicized “Prostitution and Human Trafficking” panel discussion in September. Alexis Kennedy of the criminal justice department organized the event. Five women who had worked in legal and illegal prostitution in Nevada spoke about the victimization of women in the commercial sex industry.

Author Melissa Farley, whose research for the U.S. State Department’s office to monitor and combat trafficking of people was released recently, introduced the panel. Coupled with a recent New York Times piece by columnist Bob Herbert about the status of women in Las Vegas, the panel resulted in local media coverage.

Among the attendees were Nevada Assemblyman Bob Beers and area law enforcement officers.

Marriage and Family Therapy Program Awaits Accreditation

The newly formed department of marriage and family therapy officially launched this fall and expects to reach and faculty from kinesiol-

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Across Campus
Jorge Villavicencio Grossmann (Music) has been selected for the 2007 Aaron Copland Award and a residency at Copland House. Copland House is the only composer’s home in the United States devoted to nurturing American composers and their work through a broad range of musical, educational, scholarly, and public programs and activities. He is their work through a broad range of methods.

Kyle Ethelbah, Carolyn Taylor, Damian Gomez, and Joy Zincone (CAEO) attended the annual National Educational Opportunity Center Association (NEOCA) Conference in Chicago in September. Ethelbah was re-elected to the NEOCA board for 2007-08. He will represent the organization’s board in communications with the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Opportunity in Education. Gomez and Zincone gave a presentation, “Computer Literacy for College Success.” The session provided information on how to conduct basic computer training so that adult students can complete online applications, access online classes, and set up e-mail accounts. Information was shared on how to put students at ease and make computer literacy personnel and fun.

Eva Simmons, Jill Tripplett-Owens, and Alma Garcia-Vitale (CAEO) conducted a concurrent session on “Collaboration and Effective Programming in a Large Urban School District” at the National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships in San Francisco in July. It was authored and convened by Simmons. It included components for designing programs to improve student achievement, increase parent engagement, and encourage teachers to implement best practices for systemic change. Participants learned how UNLV’s GEAR UP staff works in concert with the Clark County School District to ensure effective communication and to maintain a climate of confidence and trust, building relationships that ensure GEAR UP services can continue to be provided to low-income, college-bound students.

Goethe Sendhil (CAEO) attended the National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships in San Francisco in July. She shared how the center uses technology to enhance service delivery to GEAR UP school sites and their students. She shared what items to consider and questions to ask about assessment and integration of technology with existing workflows. She also discussed suggestions regarding which technologies are of greatest benefit when students are dispersed at multiple locations.

Kirk Williams, Anita Austin, Luana Graham, Tommy French, and Betty Raschko (CAEO) participated in the 20th annual conference of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Chicago in September. Grimmett was one of the presenters for “Building Campus Coalitions and Alliances to Advance Undergraduate Goals.” She shared how various campus units and academic departments can work together to benefit TRiO participants. She also moderated the session, “Gaining Faculty Buy-In for McNair Programs,” presented by Barlow, Bernstein, and Davis. The presentation advanced the idea that faculty involvement can be tremendously important in building strong, graduate school aspirations among McNair participants.

William Sullivan (CAEO) served as a panel member for the session, “Program Alumni: Powerful Role Models and Allies” at the 26th annual conference of the Council for Opportunity in Education in Chicago in September. The session offered simple recommendations for developing an alumni base, even with an imperfect tracking system. Step-by-step information on how to plan alumni events and how to adapt approaches for either college or pre-college programs was shared.

Summer Mudd (Accounts Payable) was named a classified employee of the month in the administrative category for October. As a member of the office’s vendor team, she processes vendor invoices, works on independent service provider agreements, deals with customer complaints, and updates the website. Until recently, she worked on the office’s travel team. A UNLV employee since August 2005, she is working on a bachelor’s degree in business administration at UNLV.

Karl Kingsley (Dental Medicine) is the author of the article, “The Integration Seminar: A First-Year Dental Course Integrating Concepts from the Biomedical, Professional and Clinical Sciences,” which appears in the October issue of the Journal of Dental Education. This is the second article he has published in the journal this year, and his third published peer-reviewed article in 2007.

Submit Your News

E-mail entries to inside.unlv.edu. Items should be no more than 100 words.

Method in Differential Equations. It was published recently by Birkhauser.

Tom Sommer (Libraries) was recently elected to the governing council of the Conference of Inter-Mountain Archivists, the regional organization for archivists in Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Idaho.

Jason Simmons (Custodial Services) was named classified employee of the month in the administrative category for September. An administrative assistant II, he greets students, helps them with their forms, and enters new student records. He has worked at the center for more than a year.

Joyce Moore (Libraries) serves as the president of the Southwest Oral History Association, one of the most prestigious regional groups of its kind in the country. It has a membership of more than 150 active historians collecting the histories of New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Nevada.

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Sandy Ziegler (Porking and Transportation Services) was named a classified employee of the month in the technical/service category for October. A computer technician IV, she handles the database for parking citations and permits. It is her job to make sure all the systems are working. She coordinates the registration process for obtaining parking permits in the fall. She began working for parking and transportation services as a student worker in 1993 and joined the office on a permanent basis three years later. She earned a bachelor’s degree in communications and business administration at UNLV.

David Perrico (Music) won a national composition competition this summer for an original fanfare to commemorate the 100th year of Ohio’s Youngstown State University. “Fanfare Of Light” will be performed throughout the year by the orchestra of the university’s Dana School Of Music in 2003.

Wesley Townley (CIT) was named classified employee of the month in the technical/service category for September. An IT professional III, he works on system administration. His work involves Lotus Notes e-mail, UNLV hosts, and Windows systems. A UNLV employee since 2000, he is working on a bachelor’s degree in management information systems at UNLV.

Su Kim Chung (Libraries) was recently appointed to the editorial board of the American Archivist, the primary journal of the Society of American Archivists, the national professional organization for archivists in the United States.

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Legal Eagle Returns to Nest

Valera Heads Government Relations

By Cate Weeks | Marketing & PR

Luis Valera, director of government relations for UNLV, stepped into his position just one week before the state politicians convened in Carson City for the 2007 legislative session. He worked with the NSHE lobbying team to “dig the system out of a hole that just kept getting larger as the session went on.”

Before joining UNLV, Valera served as the director of legislative and public affairs for the Nevada Resort Association. He is also a two-time UNLV alumnus. As an undergraduate, Valera was CSUN’s Nevada student affairs director and was later elected CSUN vice president. After earning his bachelor’s degree in political science, he moved to Washington, D.C. to work as a legislative staffer for then-U.S. Rep. John Ensign. Two years later, he returned to earn his law degree at the William S. Boyd School of Law. Here he shares his views on government relations with Inside UNLV.

What’s your assessment of the last state legislative session?
We went into the session knowing we were facing serious challenges. The first was securing “hold harmless” funding, which protects the university from funding cuts when its enrollment is less than projected. This funding was critical for us to just maintain our current service levels. We had to explain how public policy, not fiscal mismanagement, contributed to the funding situation. At the same time, the K-12 lobby was very successful in its efforts, which meant there was less for everyone else, and the slow housing market was leading to substantial drops in revenue projections for the state. It was a tough session for higher education, and for UNLV in particular. In the end, however, the governor did increase our funding formula 1 percent, which is a substantial amount; key legislators helped us obtain most of the money we need for hold harmless; and a number of individual projects received funding.

So what’s next for government relations?
As tough as the last session was, I think the next one is even more critical. We will have a lot of work to do in the interim to avoid the hold harmless situation, to adjust the funding formula to better support our operations, and to secure funding for planning and construction. We’ll also be working with the state’s Interim Finance Committee as it meets. At the county level, I’ll be working with the commissioners, UNLV officials, and developers for the Midtown UNLV redevelopment projects. At the federal level, I think Nevada and UNLV have a great opportunity to work with the federal funding. Our delegates now sit on some key finance committees. That doesn’t mean it’s going to be easy to get the funding, but it certainly going to be less difficult.

How do you hope to enter the next legislative session?
Ideally, I hope that we will have identified specific leaders in the Legislature who are committed to advocating the specific needs of UNLV and the system. To get there, we need to fully educate them about the issues and challenges we face, as well as the resources and opportunities we provide the state.

How can employees help the government relations program?
I encourage faculty and staff to contact the office when they have or they are going to interact with public officials. I certainly don’t want to imply that I want to control the interactions — all I want to know is that you did contact someone, or you’re about to, and how things went. When there’s a perception of a lack of coordination, it can hinder the efforts of the system’s lobbying team. Touching base just helps me get my job done better.

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data on all UNLV applicants, Clark said, “I think we will be able to show, over time, that students who score better in the non-cognitive variable arena do better academically and, ultimately, are more likely to persist to graduation.”

Key New Hires
Clark emphasized that her office is not a one-person shop. Since she arrived in July she has brought on two key employees: • Candy Warkentin, a program officer, has worked in three other offices during her seven years on campus. In addition to providing the usual administrative support for the office, she is also managing the office budgets and soon will supervise additional support personnel. • Elaina Bhattacharyya, the diversity programming manager for the office, previously worked with the UNLV-based Nevada Small Business Development Center. One of her responsibilities is to review UNLV’s identity month programming to determine what enhancements can be made. In the past, these programs have focused only on race, but other forms of diversity, such as those related to spiritual and secular affiliation, sexual orientation, and disability, also need to be recognized, Clark noted. Bhattacharyya also serves as the tri-campus (CSN, NSC, and UNLV) coordinator for the identity month programming and as a liaison to the joint chambers of commerce, and is building connections to community groups dedicated to diversity and to student access in higher education.

Ombuds Office
Within the next few months, Clark will fill a new position that already has the campus talking — an ombuds. While ombuds offices exist at many universities, the models for them differ. Clark is working from Faculty Senate recommendations to develop the ombuds role here. She plans to draw from best practices at ombuds offices across the country while taking into account unique aspects of the UNLV community. The ultimate goal for the ombuds is to create and sustain a more unilaterally affirming educational and workplace climate and culture.

Clark said she leans toward a model in which the ombuds helps individuals access the resources needed to respond to or resolve their concerns themselves, rather than a model in which the ombuds acts on behalf of the person in distress. This will enable the UNLV ombuds to empower students, faculty, and staff at all levels in the institution to strategically and skillfully help themselves.

One exception to this philosophy must exist, she said. When an individual’s concern has criminal implications or bumps up against sexual harassment or nondiscrimination policy or law, the ombuds would work with the person in distress to ensure the appropriate disclosures to campus oversight authorities have been made. If the person was unable to do this herself, the ombuds would need to take on the responsibility.

More typical issues would include roommate disputes, student-faculty personality conflicts, and employees’ concerns about performance evaluations.

The ombuds is not an advocate for students, faculty, and staff, nor a “management agent” of the university, Clark emphasized. Although the person will be paid by the university and supervised by a vice president, a mandate on ensuring impartiality will allow that person to operate with confidentiality, she said.

To enhance confidentiality, the ombuds will be located in a convenient spot, but one in which foot traffic will not call attention to people visiting the office.

While nominations and applications from the Southern Nevada community may be considered, the job is most likely to be filled by an internal candidate, Clark said.

“We need our ombuds to be someone who knows UNLV well and who will be viewed by vastly divergent constituents ... as someone who is extremely fair and trustworthy,” — Christine Clark, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

Luis Valera, director of government relations, is already preparing for Nevada’s 2009 legislative session.
Get Fit, Get Physical

By Grace Russell | Marketing & PR

Need motivation to get fit? The new Student Recreation and Wellness Center makes working out convenient. The ultramodern fitness center is making quite an impression on the campus community, said Yvette Kell, the center’s director of facilities and operations.

“It’s fun to watch people’s eyes pop when they see the building for the first time because it’s such a large and impressive facility,” said Kell. “We’ve never had anything like this on campus.”

The center boasts an indoor running track, numerous circuit-training machines and weights, an indoor pool, a relaxation room with massage chairs, and a café. The center also offers a variety of group fitness classes including yoga, pilates, hip-hop, spinning, and kickboxing.

Kell said the busiest time for the gym is after 5 p.m., but most faculty and staff work out before work or during the lunch hour. Faculty and staff are attracted to the gym’s convenience, modern amenities, and atmosphere, she said.

“You could go to a gym off campus, but everything that you need is right here on campus,” said Kell. “Additionally, faculty, staff, and students are all here. So, it’s a great opportunity to socialize and be part of the campus community. If you go to an outside gym, you’ll miss out on that.”

More info: Visit srwc.unlv.edu or call ext. 4-7100.

Membership Rates
Annual: $350
Academic Year (fall and spring): $295
Semester (fall, spring, or summer): $175 per semester

Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday: 6 a.m.-midnight
Saturday: 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sunday: noon-midnight

The Student Recreation and Wellness Center has high-tech weight and fitness machines, swimming pools, and basketball, volleyball, and racquetball courts.