From the President

Diversity, student success a hallmark on Nevada campus

Richard Tapia is a towering figure in higher education. As an internationally known researcher and leader in education and outreach, Dr. Tapia has impacted more lives than most of us could ever imagine. Born in Los Angeles to parents who separately emigrated from Mexico as teenagers, Dr. Tapia was the first person in his family to ever attend college.

Since then, as a mathematician and professor at Rice University, Dr. Tapia has had a profound influence on not only how mathematics and engineering in this country are taught, but perhaps more importantly, who teaches these key disciplines. As the first Hispanic elected to the National Academy of Engineering, he has been a role model of the highest order. He has directed or co-directed more under-represented minority and women doctoral recipients than anyone in the United States. Dr. Tapia has said of his own heritage, which he has credited for much of his success, that, “It’s our culture that teaches us to reach, and to help, and to include.”

On Saturday, Dec. 4, Dr. Tapia shared his story of inclusion, opportunity and personal integrity as the keynote speaker during the University of Nevada, Reno’s Winter Commencement.

Dr. Tapia’s visit served as a reminder that diversity makes us all stronger. At the University, we have sought to emulate the example of pre-eminent individuals such as Dr. Tapia. We have actively sought the best and brightest high school students in the Silver State. We have recruited students whose compelling personal experiences have made them stronger people. We have encouraged students to come to Nevada to learn, to experience and to connect with others in ways that will stay with them forever.

The results of this effort have been exceedingly, extraordinarily positive. In just the past few months, our campus has achieved the following:

The fall 2010 semester saw us reach a record number of National Merit Scholars on our campus. The fall 2010 semester saw us reach a record number of National Merit Scholars on our campus. We now have 38 National Merit Scholars in our midst after adding 10 in the fall semester; Over the past 10 years, the University has increased the number of bachelor degrees awarded from 1,350 to more than 2,300 awarded in spring 2010—a 66 percent increase. Dr. Tapia once told a reporter that if there has been any theme to his life and career, it would be that, “while I was here, I made a difference.”

It is our commitment to our students that once they graduate from our institution, they will be fully prepared to be “difference-makers” in the lives of those around them, and in the fabric of the communities they serve.

Sincerely,

Milton D. Glick
President
www.unr.edu/president