From the President

The special power of our University’s research

The breadth and depth of any quality university’s research enterprise goes far beyond numbers. At the University of Nevada, Reno, we often define the impact of our research in broadly sketched, highly human terms: How our research enterprise helps transform our student experience by adding a sense of collaborative adventure and discovery into our students’ academic careers; how world-improving research discoveries and strategic commercialization can lead to a more diversified economic portfolio for our community and our state; and how the important inroads we make with our research dollars can build our prestige as a quality, public institution with a national reputation.

This last point doesn’t just concern the image of our University. By shaping our identity in this manner, we are also shaping the identity of the communities and the state we serve. So how do we accomplish these important points via our research agenda (which, by the way, totaled $89.7 million in 2013, up $4 million from the previous year)?

For our students, a robust research agenda means that we offer nationally and internationally known professors and programs in fields ranging from engineering to education, from sciences to the humanities, from natural resources to high-density physics.

Civil engineering professors in the College of Engineering have spent the past three decades creating the country’s largest and most versatile earthquake engineering laboratory. The James E. Rogers and Louis Wiener Jr. Large-Scale Structure Laboratory regularly conducts tests to ensure the country’s large-scale structures remain safe. The story of the University’s research enterprise also includes the commercialization of innovative and life-saving technologies. School of Medicine researchers Tom Kozel and David AuCoin’s DxDiscovery company was incubated on our campus and is successfully commercializing medical diagnostics tests for infectious diseases using highly optimized antibodies. The company promises to diversify Nevada’s economy in the much-needed biomedical sector. This groundbreaking work remains highly attractive to bright, promising students wishing to remain in Nevada to pursue discovery in an innovative research environment.

Finally, there is the prestige that is gained through a well-earned reputation for quality research. A few years ago, the former University of Michigan President James J. Duderstadt, in his book, The Third Century, referred to this reflective phase of an institution’s history as its “saga.” He wrote that if a public university is to control and focus the agenda for transformation for itself and for its communities, it must be both a “pathfinder” and a “trailblazer.” If we are to be seen in this leadership role, we must continue to seek new directions for discovery, new pathways for exploration through research. This is why over the coming months our campus will begin in earnest a five- to seven-year process to achieve the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classification of “Research University/Very High.” This is a necessary and attainable goal for us. It will enhance our economy with a powerful impact on our region and state, as well as our nationwide reputation as a quality university as we join a highly select group of a little more than 100 public and private institutions. It will also illustrate that research isn’t simply a number at our University—it is discovery made remarkable.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Johnson
President

www.unr.edu/president