From the President

A transformational statement about the health of a campus

In mid-September we gathered in the Great Room of the Joe Crowley Student Union for an important announcement.

On hand were representatives of the E. L. Wiegand Foundation, friends from the community, faculty, staff, students and Gov. Brian Sandoval ’86 (foreign affairs).

We were there to announce one of the more transformative statements ever made on our campus: the E. L. Wiegand Foundation’s $8 million lead gift for the construction of the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center.

Gov. Sandoval summed up the moment perfectly: “This University has tremendous tradition,” he said, noting that our legacy as an institution has been predicated on helping our students realize their potential “in mind, body and soul.”

“All you have to do is to be at this event today to feel the soul of this University,” Gov. Sandoval said, with a wide and heartfelt smile. “To me, this is just an embodiment of everything that is great about the University.”

Indeed, institutions embrace greatness whenever they go far beyond what is expected of them. This has been one of the mantras we’ve lived by for the past five years. We’ve been working to link the “mind, body and soul” of our students through a strategic, sequential focus that has emphasized innovative new buildings centered on the student experience in learning (including the Davidson Mathematics and Science Center and the Mathewson-IGT Knowledge Center), in residential and social experience (the Nevada Living Learning Community residence hall and the Joe Crowley Student Union) and now, with the announcement of the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center, an emphasis on student health and well-being.

This four-story facility, which will be constructed in the parking lot north of the Brian Whalen Parking Complex and border North Virginia Street, will offer our campus much-needed space for fitness and recreation and will help elevate the campus experience by contributing to the health, wellness and success of our students. This will be a transformative facility, one that will ensure that our campus more fully integrates the wellness of our students into their daily lives. It will nearly triple the space dedicated to fitness and recreation at our University, and, perhaps just as importantly, it will keep our campus at the forefront of a national trend that indicates that as many as three-quarters of all students believe recreation and fitness facilities strongly contribute to their decision to remain at an institution and eventually graduate.

Seen through this prism, the E. L. Wiegand Fitness Center becomes more than a fitness center. It will also play a vital role in our continuing effort to grow our student body, to retain more of these students and, ultimately, to see them all graduate in four years from our University. Thank you to the E. L. Wiegand Foundation for its vision, generosity and long-standing partnership, and we thank E. L. Wiegand Foundation board member Mario J. Gabelli for his gift.

Our announcement on that mid-September morning was indeed an embodiment of everything that is great about our University, where a commitment to the well-being of all students is one of our top priorities.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Johnson
President

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