FROM THE PRESIDENT

When teaching meets research … and when research meets teaching

For our faculty, research and teaching are mutually inclusive terms. Without one, the other cannot truly exist. They are both absolutely essential to the success of our faculty, and by extension, our University.

Take one of the featured faculty researchers in this issue of Nevada Silver & Blue as an example. M. “Saiid” Saiidi is a Foundation Professor in the College of Engineering’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a large-scale structures expert known throughout the world.

Over a career that has spanned three decades, Saiid and many of his colleagues have helped elevate the College of Engineering through the acquisition of multi-million-dollar, highly competitive research grants that have placed the college at the forefront of earthquake engineering. Saiid continues to do groundbreaking research for the seismic safety of bridges, using innovative materials such as nickel titanium and rubber, reinforced polymers to design a new generation of bridges that tests have shown can withstand severe shaking and still be usable. In recognition of his pioneering research, Saiid was named the recipient of the University’s 2016 Established Innovator Award.

And, just as importantly, at every turn in his teaching, Saiid encourages his students to seek more of themselves through their participation in undergraduate and graduate-level research projects. All told, Dr. Saiid has mentored nearly 150 undergraduate research assistants, master’s, doctoral, and postdoctoral fellows and research assistants over the years.

Saiid has said that education is one of the most rewarding careers an individual can ever choose, and that research “is a prominent component of higher education.”

Professors at our University like Saiid Saiidi are not just impacting their respective research fields through cutting-edge discovery and innovation. They are changing how students experience learning on our campus.

This experiential immersion – in world-class facilities from our Earthquake Engineering Laboratory, to our performance and recital halls, to intensive field work done in natural resource and environmental science settings, to learning “maker” spaces on our campus where creativity flows and solutions abound – prepares all of our students to become leaders.

Through their exposure to research and highly rigorous scholarly activity, and being mentored by accomplished and nationally recognized faculty, our students learn important fundamental values that will serve them well in their future workplaces. These values include teamwork, collaboration, and the ability to re-think customary approaches in order to find uncommon solutions that can favorably alter the trajectory of Nevada industry.

All of this is nurtured in a teaching and research environment made possible by faculty dedicated to innovative approaches in discovery and learning.

Research and teaching.

Teaching and research.

It doesn’t matter the order. When coupled, they are helping our faculty change the world for the better.

Marc A. Johnson
President