From the President

The transformational power of faculty and discovery in action

Whenever I speak with members of our faculty and ask them about their jobs and what excites them most about it, there is usually strong consensus. Nothing, they tell me, is more exciting than standing on the edge of discovery and knowing they’ve helped advance understanding of a particular field of knowledge. They pursue this knowledge with uncommon focus because they wish to share their wonderful sense of discovery with their students.

The potential for innovation or transformational change is great, they say, when they wear both the hats of “researcher” and “teacher.”

One of the definitions of a great national university is that teaching and discovery are not mutually exclusive realms; indeed, at the best national universities, teaching and discovery are often one and the same, and are often done by the same people. Our University is very blessed in this respect. We have countless faculty members who further our University research and teaching missions. These faculty members ignite passion in their students for their various subjects because they are on the forefront of solving real problems and providing tech and intellectual transfer through world-improving research and creativity.

Our University’s newest Foundation Professors are clear examples of this important interconnection between teaching and research. All three—Iain Buxton, chair of the Department of Pharmacology; Dhanesh Chandra, metallurgical and materials professor; and Eric Rasmussen, English professor and world-renowned Shakespeare and modern drama scholar—are recognized leaders in their respective areas of research and scholarly endeavor.

They’ve contributed in profound ways to the world’s understanding of pre-term labor, X-ray diffraction and hydrogen storage, and the compilation, scholarly editing and interpretation of the world’s most influential writer.

Perhaps even more importantly, these distinguished faculty members have inspired and prepared many of their students to follow a similar path. In their own way, all three of these professors, by virtue of their own cutting-edge research and investigation, have introduced their students to new worlds of knowledge and understanding.

I’ll leave this to the Shakespearean scholar in residence on our campus to help me fortify my message. As Eric Rasmussen has so aptly put it, “You have to achieve that balance, of being very intellectually vested in the material, but at the same time making it accessible and available to your students.”

This is why so many professors, like Eric, perform research at our University, achieving a duality of purpose and achievement that can mean everything for an institution. And this is why we are building a remarkable national Tier I research university—through the work of talented faculty who excel in the classroom, who are at the forefront of impactful work done in the research laboratory, and who give all those around them the rare opportunity to see the transformational power of discovery in action.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Johnson
President
www.unr.edu/president