May 19, 2020

To: NMSU Faculty

From: Carol Parker, Provost

Subject: My Gratitude

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

This has been a semester unlike any other in our careers as educators. We have been through disruptive events before, but never on this scale. As you file your final grades and put the finishing touches on this academic year, I hope you’ll take a moment to reflect on your own resilience and the positive impact you have had on our students.

When it became clear in March that we would need to take unprecedented action to change our course delivery, our research and our assessment of students, you did not hesitate. We all shared some anxiety but with critical support of our amazing staff, you found innovative ways to continue instruction online, quickly shifting your curriculum into a new format. For some, this was a simple transition because online course delivery was already an integral part of your teaching. For others, it was a heavy lift – particularly when it came to courses in which hands-on learning is the only pedagogically appropriate option.

You met each of these challenges with grace and compassion – not only for your students but also for one another. You freely shared insights and ideas, helping each other troubleshoot problems and avoid pitfalls. It was through this spirit of collaboration and solidarity that you modeled for our students perhaps the most important lesson of this crisis so far: Grit. The growth mindset is one of the best predictors of future success for our students. You showed them how challenges can make us stronger when we are flexible, resourceful, and determined.

Whether you are tenure- or college-track, whether you are full-time or adjunct, you are the reason our students are here. There is much beyond academics to love about NMSU, but the primary reason our students are here is to learn from you, to conduct research with you, to be mentored by you.

Our need for extra grit is far from over. As we look forward to this summer and fall, we will need that spirit of solidarity and sharing more than ever. I am confident in our ability to create a learning environment that will deliver on our promise to these students.

You have done outstanding work, and I am deeply grateful for your commitment to your important mission. On behalf of the chancellor, the campus presidents, and the entire leadership team, thank you.