

President Len Jessup

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

When I took the helm at UNLV my goal was to make a positive difference. I envisioned staying at this great university for a decade or more, and even possibly ending my career at UNLV. Words cannot express how proud I am of the UNLV faculty, staff, and students. I am also incredibly appreciative of their on-going and continuing love and support; as well as the love and support of the alumni, donors, and business community as a whole.

Working together, we have realized countless wonderful accomplishments in just three short years. We have received letters and messages of support too numerous to recognize in this letter. However a few of the communications from stakeholders in the UNLV Campus Community, for which we are incredibly grateful, include the UNLV Faculty Senate, the UNLV Administrative Faculty Committee, the UNLV Deans, the UNLV Women's Research Institute of Nevada, the UNLV Women's Council, and the UNLV Alumni Association.

We charted a path for UNLV to assume its place among the nation's top public research universities by 2025 with the implementation of the Top Tier Strategic Plan. It was and is a collaborative process that captures the energy and defines the heights to which this university can excel in the future. I am confident UNLV will continue its ascension to- and ultimately reach - Top Tier status. On the way to achieving Top Tier status, UNLV supporters raised a record \$243 million in fundraising over the past three fiscal years - including \$93 million this past fiscal year alone in spite of many of the key UNLV donors expressing serious concerns about the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), the Regents and the challenges they have created for UNLV currently and over the past several years.

Other notable accomplishments include the launch of the UNLV School of Medicine with preliminary national accreditation and an initial class of 60 students on full scholarship and successfully hosting the 2016 final presidential debate that generated nearly \$114 million in publicity for UNLV. Grant awards have soared by nearly 30 percent in the past year alone. UNLV has achieved an enviable standing as the most diverse and inclusive university in the country with increased rankings for multiple academic programs including the steady rise of the Boyd School of Law. Working together we achieved the funding and construction of Hospitality Hall and successfully finalized a pact with the Las Vegas Raiders to share the new football stadium giving the UNLV football program enviable access to NFL level facilities. These accomplishments complement tremendous growth in enrollment, faculty, budget, acreage, and other academic and athletic facilities all while dealing with the issues of growth despite the continuing intervention, interference, and the personal demands of some of the Regents.

As evidenced by the constant change in leadership in the office of the UNLV President over the past decade, the current UNLV/NSHE governance structure makes long-term sustainability a challenge

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for any UNLV president. Events over the last several months have clearly signaled that the Regents and the Chancellor have decided upon a vision and implemented a management structure for UNLV that is inconsistent with what I believe is in the best interests of UNLV. I have expressed my disagreement consistently and have, unfortunately, been met by personal and professional attacks by the Chancellor and some Regents, unfounded and unjustified opinions, and media “leaks” that appear to be calculated to damage not only me but UNLV and the UNLV Foundation; and, by implication, all of those organizations and individuals who give so generously of their time, talent, and resources to benefit UNLV and our UNLV Community. This is intolerable and unacceptable and has created a working environment that is not productive for me or my staff who, among other issues, have had to deal with on-going direct interference by individual Regents and others on their behalf as I and my staff continue to attempt to carry out our responsibilities.

Instead of undertaking the contractually required periodic reviews of my performance and the offering of constructive suggestions in the contractually mandated forum and manner, the denunciations of the Chancellor and certain Regents have improperly been released as unbalanced fodder for the press. Faced with this inappropriate public airing of their concerns, I have elected to refrain from publicly responding in the press since, while such may have been personally satisfying, it would not have served the best interest of UNLV—an interest I hold paramount.

On Friday, March 16, after approximately nine months of increased antagonistic, invasive, and consistent interference and animosity consistently expressed on behalf of the Regents by various Regents and the Chancellor, the Board of Regents thru Chairman Kevin Page and Chancellor Thom Reilly unequivocally stated its desire to bring my tenure to a conclusion, either through termination or by my resignation. Faced with this clear expression of the Regents’ wishes, it was agreed that I would instruct my attorneys to contact their attorney regarding a Separation Agreement, which attorneys for NSHE were to prepare evidencing my departure as UNLV President in May of this year. On March 16th I complied with the request of the Regents and retained the services of O’Reilly Law Group who initiated contact with the NSHE’s designated attorney on that same day.

As plainly stated in my contract (drafted by NSHE), as President of UNLV, I serve at the pleasure of the Regents. NSHE Chairman Page and Chancellor Reilly have made the Regents decision clear. UNLV/NSHE’s attorneys were by Monday March 19 to have prepared the Separation Agreement terminating my employment. When they failed to do so, I and my attorneys ultimately took the initiative to prepare and submit a proposed Separation Agreement consistent with the terms of my UNLV contract and the Regents demands including that I remain as UNLV President thru this current semester and participate in our May commencement ceremony. At the request of the Regents, I have agreed to remain as President thru the May commencement ceremonies. However, we have yet to receive a substantive response to the Separation Agreement forwarded to the attorneys for the Regents/NHSE. Nonetheless, I remain optimistic that NSHE will honor the Employment Agreement they drafted and which I signed. In this regard, I am also hopeful they will

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honor their covenant of good faith and fair dealing and that an amicable resolution can soon be realized.

After thoughtful deliberation, I have accepted the position of President of Claremont Graduate University (CGU) in Claremont, California, one of seven of the universities in the prestigious Claremont consortium near Los Angeles. This is a bittersweet decision for both Kristi and me given the true love we have for UNLV and the enormous amount of love expressed over the past several weeks from thousands of colleagues and friends – both on and off campus. My official tenure as President of CGU will begin as of July 1.

In the interim, I look forward to serving UNLV through the conclusion of the May commencement ceremonies and welcome the privilege of spending time with those of you who are truly what UNLV is all about. As I undertake my new responsibilities at Claremont, I will remain available and eager to cooperate with and assist UNLV to the extent realistic and I can be of assistance. Our love of and appreciation for UNLV will continue.

It was truly an honor and a privilege to serve as President of UNLV. As I have often said, there is something very special about this university. UNLV will continue its ascent, of that I am confident. There are too many talented individuals associated with this great university, both on campus and off, for UNLV to do anything other than to take its rightful place as one of the most different, daring, diverse, dynamic, and important universities in the country.

Thank you again and again for all for your past, ongoing, and future contributions of time, talent, and resources to and for UNLV. I can assure you that those of us who are and committed to UNLV each and every day are most grateful and appreciative.

I wish each and every one of you the very best now and in the future.

GO REBELS!



Dr. Len Jessup

President
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

