Intercom: Letter from the President

Sue Koller

Hi everyone. I hope you are all catching your breath from IPEDS, the myriad of national publications, and salary analyses. Is there such a thing as downtime in IR?

For anyone who is going to AIR in Kansas City, I want to invite you to our RMAIR session on Tuesday from 11:30 am-12:10 pm in the Westin/Pershing East Room on the Ballroom Level. It is a great time to hook up with fellow RMAIRians! Please grab some food before the session so we can snack and visit. After that, I encourage you to attend RMAIR's best paper “Expanding a Small IR Office by Engaging Undergraduate Student Researchers” by Kathy Pulotu and Ronald Miller of Brigham Young University, Hawaii. Their session will take place at 12:30 pm in Westin/Pershing South. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Take care!

Letter from the Editor

Wendy Kappy

Greetings RMAIRians. I want to give thanks to everyone who participated in putting this issue of Panorama together. Your contributions are vital and much appreciated.

Many of you will be heading off to Kansas City soon for the AIR Forum. As noted by Sue, the RMAIR SIG will take place Tuesday morning. I especially want to invite our newer members to the SIG. It is a good opportunity to connect with your fellow RMAIRians and to find out more about our upcoming October meeting in Reno. I would also like to encourage all of you to spread the news about the RMAIR SIG to institutional researchers in our region who are attending the Kansas City meeting. It is a good opportunity for potential members to meet us and find out more about the organization.

I have been serving as Panorama editor since 2001, and I announced last October in Park City that I will be stepping down as editor in fall 2007. If you have some interest in becoming the new editor, I would be
more than happy to answer any questions you might have. I’ve really enjoyed my six years as editor, so I can wholeheartedly endorse this activity to anyone who is interested in serving RMAIR in this capacity and working with a great group of people. You can reach me at wkappy@unm.edu. Thanks for considering this position.

**Call for RMAIR VP and Secretary Nominations**

Wendy Kappy

It is time to starting thinking about nominations for RMAIR vice president/president elect. Please give some time and thought to considering yourself or nominating another RMAIR member to serve in this position.

As a member of the Executive Committee, the person elected will serve three years—first as vice president, then as president, and finally as past president. The responsibility of the past president is to present a slate of VP candidates for the vote of the membership, and to conduct the election. An appropriate candidate would be someone who has had some history with RMAIR by serving in some capacity as secretary/treasurer, Panorama editor, Panorama state reporter, local arrangements chair, program chair, program committee member, workshop instructor, frequent presenter, etc.

At our annual meeting last October in Park City, the RMAIR membership voted to approve revisions to our by-laws. The revised by-laws establish two newly elected RMAIR positions: treasurer and secretary. Up to now, these positions have been a single appointed position. The rationale for splitting these positions and limiting the time of service is to increase participation and provide more service and leadership opportunities within RMAIR. The two three-year positions are staggered, so this year we will hold an election for the secretary position, and Ellen McGregor will serve one more year as treasurer. Next year we will hold the election for treasurer.

The responsibilities of the secretary, as defined by the by-laws, are as follows: “The responsibilities of the Secretary include keeping minutes of the annual business meeting and the RMAIR SIG at the AIR Forum. If the Secretary is unable to attend either of these meetings, the Secretary shall be responsible for arranging for another individual to record meeting proceedings. The Secretary is also in charge of membership, which includes maintaining a mailing list of members and communicating with potential members about membership in the Association. The Secretary shall send out reminders about upcoming meetings.”

Please note that the vice president, president, and past president still constitute the RMAIR Executive Committee.

Please send nominations for the vice president and secretary positions to me, Wendy Kappy (wkappy@unm.edu), by August 1 so that a slate of candidates can be prepared. The RMAIR Executive Committee will review all nominations and put forward two candidates for each position for electronic election in September. The results of the election will be announced at the RMAIR conference in Reno, Nevada. Thank you for your participation in this important activity.

**RMAIR 2007**

Kari Coburn and Serge Herzog

Serge Herzog (UNR) and Kari Coburn (UNLV) have been working on the local arrangements and programming for the upcoming RMAIR 2007 conference in Reno, Nevada. The national conference theme “Choice/Chance: Driving Change in Higher Education” extends to the regional conference theme...
this fall, “College Readiness and the Future of Higher Education,” and provides an excellent backdrop to our keynote speaker, Jay Greene. Jay’s research focuses on the national challenge of ensuring college success for the mounting number of marginally prepared high school graduates, an area in which he is widely known and one that sets the tone for how we as IR professionals can better assess the impacts of college preparation on higher education values.

The 2007 RMAIR conference will be held October 17-19, with workshops held on Wednesday the 17th. The conference hotel is the Circus Circus Hotel (www.circusreno.com) located in downtown Reno on the main strip, just five minutes walking distance from the UNR campus. Room rates will be $74/night, including tax and wireless access throughout the hotel. All workshop and conference facilities are located on-site. Serge will be make final arrangements for the Thursday evening off-site event after getting feedback during our business meeting at the AIR Forum in Kansas City.

Please consider presenting a paper, panel, or demonstration to share your expertise and institutional experiences. Proposals on access and success, remediation, and STEM enrollment are encouraged, including institutional or state initiatives that promote these values. This is also an excellent opportunity to offer a workshop. Mark your calendars now for this chance to re-connect with your colleagues and experience beautiful northern Nevada in the fall. The conference website is currently under development; however, the call for proposals is available at http://unlvdata.nevada.edu/rmair/rmairCallForProposals.doc.

For more information on the keynote speaker, go to http://www.uark.edu/ua/der/People/greene.html. If you want more information on Reno’s downtown, see http://www.reno-hotels-casinos.com/downtownrenohotelscasinos.html.

News from the States

ARIZONA
State Reporter: Ellen McGregor (Pima Community College)

The 18th Annual AZAIR Conference was held in Tucson on March 30th with a set of pre-conference meetings on March 29. The topics for March 29th were Perkins accountability reporting, sector meetings, and ASSIST (the state database). Nancy Osborne of the Maricopa District coordinated the Community College Section meeting. She arranged a discussion on state reporting.

The keynote speaker for the conference was Dr. Richard Howard, a former President of AIR and an author of several books on institutional research. His power point, entitled “Actionable Knowledge,” is available at the AZAIR Home page, http://www.azair.org/. Tom Hughes’ presentation on “2007-2008 FTSE Projections” combined science and art in the development of reasonable and accurate FTSE and enrollment projections. Rick Kroc, in collaboration with our keynote speaker, discussed the mixed message approach to a research issue (the power point is also available at the web site). Other conference news included the acknowledgement of Rick Kroc’s work in support of AZAIR and the introduction of Steve Chambers, newly elected vice-president/president-elect. Our next conference will be in Prescott, Arizona, and will be hosted by Yavapai Community College.
IDaho
State Reporter: Archie George (University of Idaho)

The Idaho legislature had a very short, and by most estimates minimalist session this spring. Confronted with a large budget surplus, but with uncertainty about whether this might be sustained, they changed very little in the way of tax policy and funding priorities. Budgets for most agencies, including higher education, saw inflationary increases. Starting July 1, average salary increases are expected to be 5% for most public employees.

Higher education institutions have been dealing with flat or declining enrollments the past couple years, making it difficult to argue strongly for large increases in funding. Building maintenance funds were increased modestly, but still not enough to make any real progress on the huge backlog of projects. Due to safety concerns, two on-campus student housing facilities at the U of Idaho have been scheduled for closure at the end of the spring semester. One will be remodeled, while the other will simply be closed with an uncertain future. Students in those dorms are being moved to other student housing, where sufficient vacancies exist to accommodate them.

The U of Idaho has historically been the only institution or state agency to provide retiree health insurance benefits. With the advent of strict accounting rules and requirements to set aside funds for the future, the benefits and eligibility requirements are changing rapidly. Many long-term employees who were confident of qualifying are now being excluded, and the benefit packages significantly reduced. This is hard on morale, of course, especially with current health insurance co-pay and deductible amounts going up faster than the 5% pay increase this year.

Around the State

At Boise State University, record enrollments are expected this summer. Boise State’s men’s and women’s tennis teams are each going to the NCAA Championship the second week in May. The men’s team went 29-5 and won the Western Athletic Conference championship, while the women’s team went 18-4 and earned an at-large berth.

Idaho State University has a new exhibit featuring Bigfoot in the Idaho Museum of Natural History. “Come and examine Bigfoot through the lenses of science, belief, mythology, folklore, and traditions. Visit this exhibit and then decide for yourself if this creature’s existence is possible or not.” The exhibit is open and will run through the summer of 2007.

The NAIA national baseball championship is held at Lewis-Clark State College each year. Last year LC won the tournament on a bases-loaded, two-out walk in the 11th inning. The tournament will be held May 25th through June 1 this year.

In case you missed it, the University of Idaho has a new media campaign and slogan, “Open Spaces, Open Minds,” replacing “From Here You Can Go Anywhere.” Given the perception that most talented young Idaho people leave the state, and given the legislature and Board of Regent’s emphasis on
economic development and job training, it was apparently deemed wise not to appear to encourage our graduates to leave. One aspect of the new slogan, “No Fences,” was very unpopular among faculty and staff and has received minimal exposure after initial rollout.

It’s not too late to buy your tickets for the 14th Annual Really Big Raffle sponsored by North Idaho College. The drawing, to be held July 11th this year, has a $300,000 home as grand prize, with a car, a boat, a vacation, and a shopping spree as consolation prizes. With only 5,000 tickets to be sold, at $100 each, this is much better odds than most other lotteries.

CSI Twin Falls is not a TV show, but the College of Southern Idaho. CSI is doing Twin Peaks five better, with a “Seven Peaks in Seven Weeks,” a “Women in Nature” event this summer. Participants will hike Bald Mountain and Titus, Baker, Johnstone, Hyndmann, Salzburger Zpitzl, and Horstmann Peaks. Starting June 16th, the hikes will be conducted on seven consecutive Saturdays. Just typing that list took it out of me!

It’s a quiet time at Eastern Idaho Technical College, as their News and Events web site contains not a single announcement as I write this! Digging a bit deeper, I find that spring commencement is scheduled for May 9, and summer session begins May 21st.

Last but not least, this spring the Idaho State Board of Education approved a petition to create a new community college district in southwest Idaho. As reported in a state board press release, SBOE President Laird Stone declared, “I’m thrilled that we are moving forward…We hope the good people of Ada and Canyon counties embrace this opportunity to help their children and grandchildren for years to come.” The vote clears the way for an election to create a new taxing district, specifically designated to form and fund a new community college. The petition stated that these two counties jointly comprise the largest metropolitan area in the country outside of Washington, DC that does not have an existing community college.

**MONTANA**

State Reporter: Jim Rimpau (Montana State University-Bozeman)

The Montana Legislature will reconvene for a three-day special session on May 10th after failing to approve Governor Schweitzer’s proposed budget during the regular 90-day legislative session. In spite of beginning the session with a projected one billion dollar surplus, it is the first time in Montana history that the legislature was unable to pass a budget bill. The governor’s College Affordability Plan (included in the proposed budget) provides funding for higher education that allows tuition for resident students to be frozen at this current year’s levels. House Republicans are deadlocked with Governor Schweitzer and Democrats over dueling tax-relief plans, which have blocked progress on the budget. Schweitzer demanded the four budget bills on his desk before he signed anything else, and House Republicans refused to release the budget bills for floor debate until a tax relief plan emerged.

A plan to give raises to state employees has passed in the Senate and the House. Pay for state employees would go up an average of 3.6 percent over the next two years under the proposal. The deal was negotiated between the state's largest public employee unions and the governor's office. The $100 million proposal also increases payments for health insurance, paves the way for more flexibility in pay for state employees and helps agencies bring employees to within 80 percent of market value.

Montana State University is considering the purchase of the historic Byron Story mansion in Bozeman to house a humanities institute. Bob Rydell, director of MSU’s Humanities Institute, said he and the city have discussed a $1.2 million sales price. The university would need another $1 million to start its plan to turn the 97-year-old mansion into its new humanities institute.
Work crews and equipment will be at the University of Montana for a two-year span beginning next month, as the campus heating system undergoes a $9 million upgrade that requires tearing up sidewalks and removing trees.

The Strand Union Building on the campus of Montana State University will undergo a $12.6 million renovation over the next 18 months to meet contemporary building codes and to make it look and function better. The project includes a $2.1 million addition to the south entrance that will house admissions and new student services offices.

The state Board of Regents authorized a May 8 election on a possible community college in the Bitterroot Valley after supporters gathered more than 5,000 signatures in favor of a state-funded community college near Hamilton. If area voters say yes, then regents will make a recommendation to the legislature, which has the final say on the matter. It would be the fourth community college in Montana.

A current proposal would increase tuition and fees paid by full-time students at Flathead Valley Community College by 21 percent effective at the start of the 2007-08 academic year. The action is necessary to help cover the rising price of utilities, insurance, and other expenses, and because state revenue fell below projections. The governor’s proposed College Affordability Plan did not cover Montana community colleges.

The Montana Museum of Art and Culture at the University of Montana has acquired 161 works of Western art. The Bill and Polly Nordeen family donated the works to the museum. The collection includes works by some of the best-known pioneers of Western art, including Karl Boomer, Edward Borein, George Catlin, Ace Powell, Edgar Paxson, Frederic Remington, and C.M. Russell.

Montana State University-Northern provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs, Cheri Jimeno, will take the top leadership position at New Mexico State University at Alamogordo. Jimeno has been second in command at the Havre college since taking the position in October 2003. She will finish the academic year at MSU-Northern, leaving after graduation.

NEVADA
State Reporter: Linda Heiss (Nevada System of Higher Education)

The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) received the first transfer of data from the Nevada Department of Education for 2006 high school graduates. The exchange of data has enabled matching of high school transcript level data to NSHE students allowing us to begin several projects, including a study on remedial placement and high school course taking patterns, which we are working on in conjunction with WestEd and WREL; and a system wide mathematics success project being performed in coordination with NASH, The Education Trust, and seven other higher education systems. In the future we plan to work with the districts to develop high school feedback reports.

The NSHE’s Board of Regents passed a policy establishing the use of system-wide common data elements. Pursuant to this policy, the NSHE has formed a data administration committee, consisting of representatives from each of the institutions charged with the mission of developing common data elements, a data dictionary, and values within each data element. NSHE is also conducting a search for a data administrator to oversee the establishment of the system-wide data warehouse.

NSHE offered its third annual College Goal Sunday on January 28, 2007. Financial aid staff and volunteers assisted students and parents at 12 sites statewide, providing information about going to college as well as assistance in completing the FAFSA.
The graduates from the first cohort of the Nevada GEAR UP grant will arrive on campus fall 2007. NSHE has been working with the Nevada Department of Education to establish the funding process. Qualified students will receive a GEAR UP grant, matched by a state Access grant.

The Nevada Legislature, which meets every other year, is nearing a close, and NSHE is still waiting for decisions on a number of issues that will affect higher education in the state. Funding for our iNtegrate project, which includes statewide implementation of a new student system, is being considered by the legislature. In the meantime, negotiations are taking place that will determine selection of either Sungard/SCT Banner or Oracle/PeopleSoft.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Diane Muntal

An increase in the admission requirements for entering students at UNR and UNLV resulted in a decrease in enrollments at both institutions. The legislature is discussing the extent to which the enrollment decreases should affect university funding, and what role the graduate and research missions of the universities should play in determining financial impact.

The University of Nevada-Las Vegas officially inaugurated David B. Ashley as its eighth president on April 27th. The inauguration ceremony was the first event of UNLV’s 50th anniversary celebration. As is often the case, new presidents bring new leadership teams. Recent hires at UNLV include:

- Executive Vice President and Provost, Neal Smatresk, Ph.D., who served as the vice chancellor for academic affairs at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He will assume his duties at UNLV on June 1st.
- UNLV’s first vice president for diversity and inclusion
- The deans of the William S. Boyd School of Law, College of Education, and interim deans of the University College, Honors College and College of Liberal Arts.

Stay tuned. The new vice presidents of research/graduate studies and advancement are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

NEW MEXICO
State Reporter: Carol Bernhard (University of New Mexico)

University of New Mexico

David J. Schmidly Named UNM President

David J. Schmidly was named as the 20th President of the University of New Mexico, by unanimous vote of the University of New Mexico Board of Regents, on February 17, 2007. Schmidly is CEO and president of the Oklahoma State University System and former president of Texas Tech University.

In nominating Dr. Schmidly, Regent Jack Fortner remarked that regents were looking for the candidate with experience in higher education, health sciences, research, athletics, and capital campaigns. “This is our opportunity to select a sitting president from a major university,” said Fortner. “There will be no need for on the job training. Dr. Schmidly will step right in.”

Regent Don Chalmers said, “We had five wonderful candidates. But one stands head and shoulders above the rest. Dr. Schmidly came to us with a vision about how to take this university to the next level.”
Schmidly was one of five finalists selected by the regents in late January after a seven-month long search process. Each of the finalists took part in two days of campus interviews that included public forums with staff, faculty, students and the community.

After tabulating participant responses and comments from all of the forums, the Regents President Jamie Koch said 91 percent of the UNM constituents who participated in the forums supported Schmidly. “We look forward to a dynamic presidency,” said Koch.

**UNM Regents Approve Tuition/Fee Increase and 2007-08 Employee Compensation Increase**

The University of New Mexico Board of Regents recently approved a 5.4 percent increase in tuition and fees for resident undergraduate and graduate students for FY 2007-2008. This brings the annual undergraduate tuition and fee total to $4,571, up from $4,336. Tuition accounts for 3.8 percent of the increase, while 1.6 percent goes to a scheduled fee increase approved by the regents in 2005. Regents also approved differential tuition increases for the School of Law and School of Architecture and Planning, as well as special summer rates for the College of Nursing.

In addition, the regents approved an average five percent compensation increase for faculty and staff to be awarded on the basis of factors such as merit, market competitive salary levels, and correction of inequities.

With no tuition credit coming out of this year’s legislative session, the regents are able to earmark the new monies raised from the tuition increase for initiatives proposed by incoming President David Schmidly.

“The budget will be built on helping students,” said Schmidly, who attended the meeting and who will take over as UNM president June 1. The funds will go to areas he says need to be strengthened:

- $450,000 to establish a division of enrollment management and expand student recruitment efforts;
- $750,000 for retention and graduation initiatives;
- $550,000 to develop and staff a division of institution diversity responsible for initiatives related to increasing and maintaining diversity and fostering equal opportunity for all faculty, staff and students;
- $200,000 for minority faculty recruitment; and
- $300,000 for institutional marketing and branding initiatives.

The university budget, which the regents will vote on at their regular May meeting, will also feature a proposal to use $500,000 of interest earnings from the Regents’ Endowment to create a new National Merit Scholarship program and provide additional need-based student aid.

**UNMH Anticipates Growth**

The University of New Mexico Hospital’s 2008 budget envisions new medical programs, more patients, more employees, and more revenue, largely thanks to its 479,000-square-foot expansion.

The budget, approved on Friday, May 4, 2007 by the UNMH clinical operations board, forecasts an 18 percent increase in insurance, Medicare and Medicaid revenue, and a 16 percent increase in the number of patients admitted to the hospital. UNMH anticipates it will run a slight surplus in 2008.

UNMH also expects to hire more than 170 new full-time employees in the fiscal year beginning July 1, raising its staffing to 3,639 employees.
The new operating rooms in the Barbara and Bill Richardson Pavilion should allow UNM to handle 2,000 more surgical cases in the new fiscal year, according to the budget. More emergency room capacity will allow an average of 17 more adult patients per day to be admitted to a new adult medicine unit. The pavilion is expected to open in early June.

UNMH expects to open a new midwife clinic, expand clinics for senior health, and increase staffing and hours at some primary care clinics.

Among the budget highlights:
- Revenue is expected to be $486.6 million, of which $67.3 million will come from Bernalillo County property taxes.
- Appropriations from the state will be $621,600 for children's clinic operations.
- Expenses will be $486.5 million.
- UNMH expects an average of 349 people per day to be hospitalized in 2008 and will have 530,428 visits to its clinics. It expects to perform almost 16,800 surgeries.
- The hospital system will spend $12.7 million on mortgage payments for its expansion, of which $9.1 million is interest.

UNM Cancer Center Breaks Ground

THE UNM CANCER CENTER, the State of New Mexico's Official Cancer Center, broke ground May 15 on the state's first world-class cancer diagnosis and treatment center. The groundbreaking is the first phase of construction of a new 190,000 square foot, $90 million world-class, ambulatory cancer treatment and clinical research facility.

http://hscapp.unm.edu/calendar/output/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.release&EntryID=6023

UNM Nurse Midwifery Program Ranks Third in the Nation

The University of New Mexico College of Nursing’s nurse midwifery program has been ranked third in the nation for the fifth consecutive year by U.S. News and World Report. UNM’s nurse midwifery program ties for third place with programs at Yale University and the University of California on the magazine’s “America’s Best Graduate Schools” list for 2007. The rankings are based on surveys conducted in the fall of 2006 of graduate nurse-midwifery programs accredited by the American College of Nurse-Midwives Division of Accreditation. The UNM nurse-midwifery program has a 96 percent first-time pass rate for the American Midwifery Certification Board’s certification exam, better than the national average of 86 percent. Nearly one third of all births in New Mexico are attended by nurse midwives, mostly in hospitals.

New Mexico State University

NMSU Board of Regents Approves New Contract for President Martin

In a meeting Friday, May 11 covering a wide range of topics, the New Mexico State University Board of Regents approved an extension to President Michael Martin’s contract, the capital outlay requests for the coming year, and the operating budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year.

“We are pleased to be extending President Martin’s contract,” said Laura Conniff, chair of the Board of Regents, following the vote. “His leadership and commitment are extremely valuable to the future of New Mexico State. He and Mrs. Martin have strong ties to this community, and we hope they will be here for a long time to come.”
The regents approved extending Martin’s contract to 2012, with a pay increase from $293,840.98 to $335,000, a housing allowance of $6,000 a month, and a deferred payment of $100,000 if he stays at NMSU until the end of his contract. The contract also contains four additional one-year options for Martin to remain at NMSU. That means while his contract is extended three years, he could opt to stay four additional years.

Conniff pointed out that the housing allowance and the deferred payment were supported by private sources—not state funds. That accounts for 85 percent of the new funding, Regent Bob Gallagher explained as he noted that continuity in the president’s office is an important component of a university’s success. All of the regents took time to note their feelings about the extension with Regent Steven Anaya, calling Martin “a keeper.” Regent Blake Curtis making an analogy that the president was capable of the “long haul.” Student Regent Edward Kellum noted he was proud to serve on the board that had hired Martin.

NMSU Capital Outlay Plan

The regents also approved the university’s capital outlay plan for 2008 and the fiscal year 2008-09 capital outlay requests. Key items for each campus include:

- Las Cruces main campus: The Arts complex; the Southwest Center for Rangeland Sustainability
- Alamogordo: New Mexico Advanced Technology Education Center; the administration and general classroom building renovation
- Carlsbad: Allied Health and University Transfer Center; infrastructure renovation and expansion
- Dona Ana Community College: Funding Phase VI of the East Mesa Center; infrastructure renovation and expansion
- Grants: Arts and Sciences building; infrastructure and renovation and expansion
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture: NMDA Research Center

The university also is seeking more than $14 million for technology improvements, such as upgrading the core network and providing wireless networking to the major academic buildings, their surrounding areas, and three student activity buildings.

The other item of business approved by the regents was the operating budget for fiscal year 2007-08. The budget for all campuses is $597.4 million with operating funds of $533.1 million and capital outlay of $64.3 million.

A breakdown shows individual campuses and their budgets:

- Las Cruces: $506.9 million
- Alamogordo: $14.4 million;
- Carlsbad: $13.5 million
- Dona Ana: $53 million
- Grants: $9 million.

UTAH
State Reporter: Steve Kerr (Weber State University)

No report.
While the Wyoming legislature emphasized other state priorities this spring (water and highways especially), education still fared well. Salary and benefit increases were funded for both community college and university employees, and rising utility costs were also addressed. Preliminary construction costs for a National Center for Atmospheric Research super computer, to be located in the state capitol Cheyenne, Wyoming, were funded by the 2007 legislature. The goal is to have the facility and computer functional by 2010. The research capabilities of a computer of this magnitude have lots of people excited. The state’s hope is that the computer will help to diversify the state’s economy and help attract top-flight scientists.

The Hathaway scholarship funds and faculty endowment funds have been secured in perpetuity. There were plenty of conversations about new rules for the Hathaway scholarship requirements at the high school curriculum level. The compromise was a “success curriculum” at Wyoming high schools for the higher levels of scholarship awards. I hope to be able to report on specifics in a future newsletter.

“The University Of Wyoming Board Of Trustees has given UW President Tom Buchanan a four-year contract that will extend his presidency through June 2011.” As some of you may recall, Dr. Buchanan became president in 2005 with single-year contracts as the sole candidate in a presidential search that had two external candidates withdraw at the last moment.

“During the past two years Tom Buchanan has demonstrated the qualities and strengths necessary to lead this great university into the future,” says UW trustees President Dick Davis. “He is committed to raising the academic bar and has demonstrated the ability to build strong relationships with the university's many constituencies, including university faculty, staff, and students; the governor's office; the legislature; the agricultural and industrial communities; and most recently the Alumni Association.”

http://www.uwyo.edu/news/showrelease.asp?id=15002

In May 2007, vice president for Academic Affairs Myron Allen agreed to continue service under President Buchanan. He has already begun conversations for Academic Plan III, which will be published in 2009.

The 2006 Legislature established a $70 million endowment for the creation of senior faculty positions the “Excellence in Higher Education Endowment.” “The costs associated with each position include salaries commensurate with those received by top academics, employer-paid benefits, ongoing budgets to support the research and instructional activities of the faculty recruited into the positions, as well as one-time start-up expenses which are especially critical to recruiting distinguished scholars with large established laboratory research programs.” The first acceptance is Terry Tempest Williams, who will be University of Wyoming’s first “Eminent Writer in-Residence” during the 2007-2008 academic year. She is the author of well-known nonfiction books that focus on nature, the environment, art, and politics. President’s newsletter, April 2007.

Hiring plans for new faculty positions in areas of distinction authorized and funded by the legislature last year continue. The Department of Zoology and Physiology is searching for a distinguished biomedical
physiologist to train students in physiology and health sciences, while the College of Education is seeking distinguished professors in the fields of science education and literacy and language.

**Building Projects**

As reported in January, the “domino theory” of multiple UW building projects continues, and parking will likely be part of the conversation starting this summer. Two projects scheduled to start this summer are the library addition and a new information technology building. The need for construction site space has led to planning for new temporary walking paths for students to get to classes from the dorms. In addition, there will be a reduction in core campus parking. Multiple renovation projects are also progressing in many buildings. The latest new building planned (a $10 million dollar gift) is for a Center for Natural History and Conservation, which will house all of the University of Wyoming’s life science collections. As with previous gifts, the state of Wyoming matching program allows this to become a $20 million dollar gift.

In fun news, the Wyoming Cowgirls won the WNIT in basketball with 15,462 fans in attendance. It was fantastic to see the state pull together to support a women’s team. The Wyoming Cowgirls drew 44 percent of the WNIT’s entire tournament total, with 52,079 fans for six games in Laramie. (Please note that the latest estimate for the city of Laramie is about 27,000 according to the Census Bureau.)


**Transitions**

**KATHY DEAN** has resigned from the IR Analyst position at the University of Idaho, effective April 20, 2007. She is engaged to be married in May and will be pursuing other opportunities in Seattle.

**ERIN MAGGARD**’s position with the University of Wyoming has been reclassified as of April 1st. The position changed from “Information Specialist” for University of Wyoming/Casper College Center (UW/CC) to “Programmer Analyst, Senior,” a joint position between UW/CC and Outreach Technical Services.

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**Idaho:** Archie George (University of Idaho)  
**Montana:** Jim Rimpau (Montana State University, Bozeman)  
**Nevada:** Linda Heiss (Nevada System of Higher Education); Coordinator: Tracy Viselli (Western Nevada Community College)  
**New Mexico:** Carol Bernhard (University of New Mexico)  
**Utah:** Steve Kerr (Weber State University)  
**Wyoming:** Lisa Muller (University of Wyoming)