



For Immediate Release
April 30, 2009

Contact: Alarie Ray-Garcia
(505) 231-7350

Governor Bill Richardson Appoints Dr. Peter White Secretary of Higher Education

SANTA FE-Governor Bill Richardson today announced his appointment of Dr. Peter White to serve as Secretary of the New Mexico Higher Education Department. White is a professor of English and American Studies at the University of New Mexico with many years of university administration experience.

“High quality, affordable educational and research opportunities are key to building a strong and dynamic economy in New Mexico,” Governor Richardson said. “Throughout his career, Dr. White has committed himself to improving the educational experience and has achieved strong results. I’m pleased that we now have him leading our Higher Education Department, where he will put his extensive academic and administrative experience to work guiding our state’s higher education institutions.”

“I am very pleased to accept this position,” Dr. White said. “The Governor and I agree that we need to work on a plan to streamline and modernize the general education requirements in our colleges and universities to improve the undergraduate educational experience and to help students progress more quickly toward a major, a degree and a career.”

Dr. White has been at UNM since 1977. In addition to his many years in the classroom, he has served as Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (2006-2008) and Dean University College (2000-2008).

During his leadership tenure, Dr. White helped raise freshman enrollment to the highest in UNM history and the university set a freshman retention record. He established and expanded programs that fostered recruitment and retention, including Freshman Learning Communities, and has been instrumental in securing funds to support these efforts. In 2006, he was honored as Outstanding Student Advocate by the Center for the First-Year Experience.

Dr. White created the first major in Native American Studies at UNM. He also established the Research Service Learning Program and organized the first Undergraduate UNM Research and Creativity Symposium.

Dr. White is currently the Director of the New Mexico Musical Heritage Project in which he teaches violin making. In addition, he is an award winning author, co-authoring titles such as “The Lore of New Mexico” and “Solving Problems in Technical Writing.”

Dr. White earned his PhD from Pennsylvania State University in 1976, his Master of Arts from Bowling Green State University in 1971 and his Bachelor’s degree from St. Bonaventure University in 1969.

Dr. White replaces Dr. Reed Dasenbrock who stepped down this month to become Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Hawai’i Mānoa.

##