Candidate Statement
Chaouki T. Abdallah

I am honored to be considered for the position of Interim Provost/Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs at UNM. I joined UNM in 1988 as an assistant professor and have risen through the Academic ranks to a full professor, and since 2005, I have been the very proud chair of the Electrical & Computer Engineering department.

Ever since I was nominated, I have been researching for a clear idea of what a provost does. In my attempt to learn more than the word originated as a description of a “prison keeper”, I came across an excellent description from the University of Cincinnati:

“The provost is akin to an orchestra-symphony conductor. Just as an orchestra is made up of different instruments with different tonalities, a university is a group of individual students and faculty focused on very different things. The power of a university relies on the full orchestra sound, bringing those sometimes dissonant voices together into something that is very magnificent and that has an impact on society. A provost can create a coherent response just as a conductor can create a coherent musical voice using different parts of an orchestra.”

Given the provost/conductor analogy, here is how I view the job of the interim provost at UNM. Our university’s state will oscillate between highs and lows and the provost’s job is to lift the lows and take advantage of the highs. In my years as a professor and administrator, I learned to take my job seriously, but not take myself too seriously, and I strive to never act when angry. I believe that a good academic leader should give credit to his/her team (faculty, staff, students), take responsibility for the problems and lead by example. By virtue of my technical background I believe in feedback, both positive and negative and in the creative energy of different opinions. I believe in treating everyone professionally, including colleagues, superiors, students, and staff. I believe in getting the best out of people’s strengths and weaknesses and I believe in transparency and confidentiality but not in secrecy. I want to know about issues and concerns, before they become real problems. I believe in setting goals and priorities that can be communicated to supervisors, colleagues, staff, and students. I believe in an engaged Academic community that keeps the administration focused and the outside world informed.

My experience in managing academic teams has taught me that:

- The Academic Mission of the University supersedes every other function.
- Research & teaching go hand in hand.
- External partnerships are essential.
- Goal alignment is required.
- Societal impact is fundamental.

These are the values I bring to the position of Interim Provost and I look forward to elaborating upon them in my public presentation.