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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER
GROUNDBREAKING
CHANCELLOR JOHN E. CHRISTENSEN

OCTOBER 24, 2012

Good afternoon. Welcome and thank you for joining us today....a day we've worked toward for several years and a day that symbolizes the future of UNO. I'm John Christensen and I have the privilege of serving as UNO Chancellor and Emcee for this special event.

Let me begin by introducing special guests with us today:

Mayor Jim Suttle

Former Mayors Hal Daub and Mike Fahey

Regent Randy Ferlic and Regent Bob Whitehouse

President Emeritus Ron Roskens

Brian Hastings, University of Nebraska Foundation CEO & President – welcome to Omaha Brian

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who may not know, Barb and Wally in the mid 90's were the supporters of our original ventures into Service Learning as a new pedagogy and engagement strategy. Clearly, this was the catalyst for all we celebrate today.

Earlier this month Barbara Holland, an international expert in community engagement visited our campus. She remarked that UNO "is on the cusp of a significant shift in academic culture, one in which a university's faculty and researchers work hand-in-hand with members of the community to address the challenges that community faces." At the same time, an engaged university enriches the teaching/learning experience for the students through the application of knowledge as well as creating a culture of active citizenship throughout the campus. Dr. Holland also indicated that UNO is the first place she knows of that's actually building a facility like the one we break ground for today, and she added "many other institutions will be watching to see how this goes, and they better not blink." Dr. Ira Harkavy, Chair of the National Anchor Institutions Organization and Director of Engagement at Penn University, also spent time on campus earlier this week to discuss the facility and our engagement activities. He confirmed Dr. Holland's observations and suggested that this center would be transformational for UNO's already strong engagement agenda, and so we again thank you all for your support.

President Milliken is ill today and is unable to join in the celebration. He of course offers his heartfelt thanks to the Weitz family, the Scott's family, and our friends at UP. President Milliken has long been a strong supporter of the engaged metropolitan university and for that we are appreciative. Get well JB.

It's now my opportunity to introduce B.J. Reed, Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs and a leader in the center's planning and development.

And last, but clearly our most important speaker is Julie Smith. Julie is a graduate he celethe

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Closing

Thank you all for attending and being part of this special day.

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