

Dr. Robert Miller

New Dean Plans for Future of Nevada Medical

Dr. Robert Miller's penchant for surgery started as a young boy in New Orleans. Like so many boys who play in the outdoors, bugs and various backyard creatures become the source of endless hours of fascination and the unwitting subjects of experimentation, all in the name of science.

Miller's primary patient base was composed of green lizards. Many of these little reptiles often suffered from severe ailments that could only be corrected through surgery. So, armed with a knife, Miller would perform exploratory surgery and patch them back up with his mother's needle and thread.

"My patient survival rate was not good," recalls Miller, "But I learned at a very early age that I not only wanted to be a doctor, but a surgeon."

After high school, Miller packed his bags and headed for Tulane University—an institution where he would spend a significant portion of his life.

Graduating with a bachelor's degree

"The prospect of developing what could be the last academic medical center is truly exciting."

in biology with a minor in chemistry, he stayed at Tulane for his medical training. It was during that first year in medical school when he came up with a design for an implantable artificial lung. He submitted his idea and drawings to the school's chair of surgery who promptly poked holes in Miller's plan. He liked Miller's passion, however, and invited him to work in his laboratory. There, Miller spent the rest of his years as a medical student conducting

research on liver transplantation.

Upon graduation from medical school, he originally went to the UCLA Medical Center to serve his residency as a liver transplantation specialist. During that time, however, he also worked in general surgery and found his true calling in head and neck surgery which covers the anatomical area between the clavicles and the base of the skull.

"Probably the most interesting year of my life was working in Washington, D.C.," says Miller of his time spent as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow. From 1996 to 1997, he worked with Louisiana

Senator John Breaux to develop four pieces of health policy legislation—three of which became law.

"Coming from Louisiana, I was somewhat of a cynic about government. That experience, working so closely with everyone in the Capitol, changed my opinions. The vast majority of senators are very bright people who are trying to do the right thing. The work they do is amazing," he says.

Miller then returned to Tulane to serve as the vice chancellor for clinical affairs where he ran the medical school's clinical



enterprise.

"People don't practice medicine without going to medical school, and I believe the same should go for running a business," says Miller. While at Tulane, he went back to school and earned an MBA.

In 1999, the University of Nevada School of Medicine conducted a search for a new dean that drew more than 70 candidates.

"The potential for the school was really what attracted me," says Miller. "We have a solid educational program here and some fantastic people. Plus, the prospect of developing what could be the last academic medical center is truly exciting."

The academic medical center, which would be loosely modeled on the Texas Medical Center in Houston, could be the home for several health-related programs such as cancer research, dentistry and pharmacology.

see MILLER on back

MILLER...(continued)

"The medical school is going through a strategic planning process right now to look at where we need to go in the future," he said.

One of his first actions was to hire Terry Duffey as the school's first chief financial officer to help manage their \$70 million per year operation.

Miller adds that faculty have worked harder and made personal sacrifices to help the school become more operationally efficient.

"Another issue we are examining is the low number of minority applicants to medical school," he said.

Miller states that minority enrollments

nationwide have dropped over the past few years. Although the school has several minority recruitment programs in place, he has hired a consultant from Meharry Medical College, the largest private historically black health education institution, to take a closer look at the school's recruitment programs and see what can be done to increase minority enrollments.

"I am truly honored to be here," says Miller. "We have had some challenges and will continue to have them, but our potential is nothing short of remarkable. For example, our students have had a 100 percent pass rate on the USMLE test for the past three years. Not many medical

schools can say that."



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INSIDE: DISTANCE ED ONLINE CATALOG DEBUTS | MILES JOINS UCCSN



**Dr. Robert Miller
Discusses
the Health of
the Nevada
School of
Medicine**

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In the short time since my election as Chair of this Board, I've found one fact to be inescapable: We, as a Board, have a lot of work to do. As you know, as Nevada's system of higher education, we not only have to effectively manage our day-to-day operations and strategically plan the future for more than 90,000 students, we must also respond to the heavy demands made upon us as we enter the biennial legislative pre-season.

Over this past year, we have been working and re-working the plans and funding needs we will ask Gov. Guinn to include in his next biennial budget. It is important that we convey the increasing importance our institutions not only provide our students, but the state as well.

We all recognize how crucial the next few months will be as we undergo several critical leadership transformations. The UCCSN will have a new Chancellor as well as a new president for CCSN and an interim president for UNR.

I ask each of us to reflect on why we are involved in higher education. I believe it's because of our students and that each of us believes that our citizens can improve their lives through higher education. As Regents, we want to make sure that access to education is available for all.

Naturally, each of us may take a different approach to advance this goal, but the goal itself is one which we must all rally behind.

In these next few months, each of us, despite any differences, needs to focus our collective efforts and energies on working as a team...as effective advocates for higher education. That focus will never be more important to our students than it will be during the next 10 months.

We have an incredible opportunity before us. Please, let us all rise to the challenge.

Thalia Dondero
Chair

Miles Joins UCCSN

During their June meeting, Nevada's Board of Regents appointed Dan Miles to serve as the UCCSN's Interim Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration.

Miles, who was the senate fiscal analyst for Nevada's Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), will be filling a position that has been vacant for nearly one year.

"I'm looking forward to the challenges we will have preparing for the next legislative session," says Miles who had been with the LCB since 1977. "One of my top priorities is working with the Regents and our eight institutions to put together a

budget that will meet the needs of Nevada's students."

A Silver State native, Miles was raised in Carson City and earned a B.S. in business administration from the University of Nevada, Reno.

In 1969, he began working for the state and has held several positions including chief assistant budget administrator for the Budget Division and deputy fiscal analyst for the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

UCCSN Launches Online Course Catalog

After months of collaboration and innovative web engineering, a newly redesigned and updated online catalog for Nevada distance education classes was launched in July.

The Fall 2000 catalog, which can be found at www.nevada.edu/disted/, includes all of the distance education classes that are offered by Nevada's four community colleges and two universities.

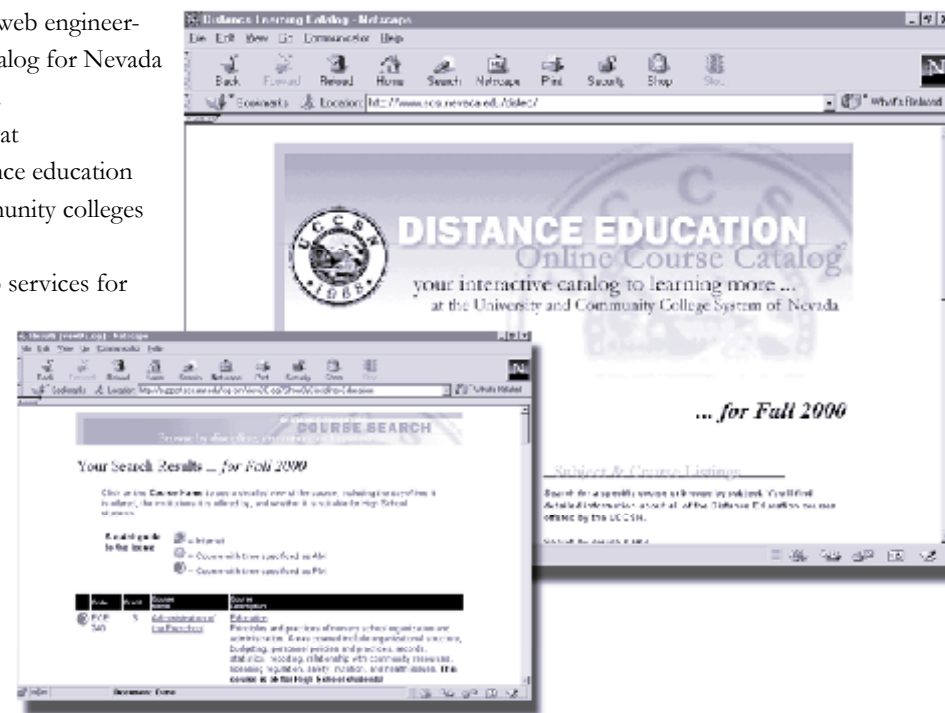
"This web-based catalog provides one-stop services for our distance education students that puts the UCCSN on par with other states," noted Interim Chancellor Jane Nichols. "Enrollment in our distance education courses have more than doubled in the past three years and totaled 6,094 students in the Spring 2000 semester. By any standard, that is amazing growth."

The new catalog allows students to search for distance education courses by discipline, institution, course name or keyword. The web site also provides links to each institution's online registration forms.

The Fall 2000 Distance Education Catalog contains 250 courses in 13 disciplines. Basic college courses are offered in English, the humanities, math, science and social science as well as such career areas as business, computers, education and health.

In addition, more than 140 courses can be taken by high school students to earn college credit while still in high school.

The new catalog also provides links to several self-tests that can help students evaluate whether they will learn effectively via distance education.



UNR Hits Milestone for Campus

On August 15, UNR will be celebrating what could possibly be the largest capital improvement accomplished at one time in the university's 126-year history.

The opening of several new buildings and improved facilities comes on the heels of the new Millennium Scholarships which are likely to result in the institution's largest enrollment surge since World War II. The new and renovated buildings and facilities that will be ready for faculty and students this fall include:

- Student Services Building
- New residence hall

- Frandsen Humanities Building (renovation)
- Jot Travis Student Union Dining Commons and Manzanita Lake walkway
- Athletic Facilities—new track, new Mackay Stadium turf and practice field improvements.

"The unveiling of these new buildings and facilities will help the University of Nevada, Reno ascend to a new level of service that reaches a student body residing in every corner of Nevada and far beyond," said President Joe Crowley. "We're opening the doors symbolically



and literally, as we have for the past 126 years to everyone who has, or would like to have, a stake in higher education."

A Candid Chat with Regent Howard

What are your top priorities for the upcoming year?

Rosenberg: Securing a top-notch Chancellor and first-rate Presidents for CCSN and UNR. At the same time, I want to keep our kids on target and make sure they get what they need to make the most of their education.

Do you have any predictions on how higher ed will fare during the next legislative session?

Rosenberg: I think we'll do fine. We won't receive near enough funding, but then we never do. Since joining the Board, I've learned that for every dime we could spend on our kids we only get a nickel.

I've also discovered that, many times, it's not the amount of money you have to spend, so much as it's the judicious use of that money that makes the difference.

Some people say the Board of Regents is no longer working as a cohesive team...

Rosenberg: Balderdash! This Board is doing a damned good job. All you've got to do is look at the individual institutions. Look at the decisions the Board has been making that have had such tremendously positive outcomes for our students.

Forget the hostile newspapers who are far more concerned with selling advertising than in printing an accurate story.

Given the circumstances of Nevada's Open Meeting Law, the Board of Regents is operating well.

Now, there are times when we may not behave as some people feel we



should, but those same people must try to understand that we cannot talk amongst ourselves in private so we end up debating our ideas—in public sometimes in an exceedingly spirited manner.

I would even admit that, at times, I might come across as a horse's you-know-what, but feelings run high, passions tend to take over, and things are said that might better have been left unsaid.

By the same token, there are difficult discussions from which we all profit and questions which need to be asked. Perhaps we can learn to have these discussions and ask these questions a little more kindly than we have in the past. I know we're all trying.

You're coming into your 40th year of teaching. Do some of your students think it's time for you to retire and move to Italy?

Rosenberg: Probably, and if they'll provide the finances, I might seriously consider it.

But seriously, "retirement" isn't in my vocabulary. You retire from something you don't really enjoy doing. I love teaching, and, if indeed education is a shared experience, then our kids are teaching me what they know as I teach them what I know. You can't ask for anything better.