

# Research, Identity, and the Future of UNLV



**Dr. David B. Ashley**  
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As many of you know, UNLV celebrated its 50th anniversary this year with a variety of activities designed to honor the university's past and present. While we have embraced this celebration with enthusiasm, we have also initiated an activity that is very much focused on our future. A strategic planning process, titled "Focus: 50-100," is a manifestation of our desire to address the challenges we will face in the second half-century of our existence—and to identify the abundant opportunities we expect to encounter during this time.

Central to this planning process has been a dedicated effort to better define our identity and values with special emphasis on two of our primary missions—education and research. While education is probably the most visible and time-honored of our missions—and is perhaps the best understood—it is important to note that research is equally significant in shaping our identity. Research enhances the national reputation of the university, aids in recruiting the best and brightest students, and enriches the community and state in many ways. It is an activity that seeks to create new knowledge, and thus informs and improves teaching and generally expands the boundaries of education.

For these reasons, the advancement of research is an extremely high priority for UNLV, and we will continue to seek ways to engender even greater achievement in this area. As our strategic planning process progresses, we will have the opportunity to guide the enhancement of research to benefit our students and the university, as well as the community, state, region, and beyond. We hope you share our commitment to this effort and join us in promoting the value of UNLV research.

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**Dr. Ron Smith**  
Vice President for  
Research and Dean  
of the Graduate College

## Learning More About Our Innovative Research

We are pleased to bring you another issue of *UNLV Innovation*, the university's annual research magazine. This issue contains a wonderful selection of stories representing the outstanding scholarly and creative activity being pursued at UNLV. You will find an abundance of interesting material here, including overviews of faculty-authored books on wide-ranging topics, an article on new initiatives aimed at advancing sustainability, and updates on UNLV's success in building research and graduate education.

We believe in the value of sharing these and other stories about the fine work being performed by UNLV faculty and students. We also seek to provide context for our institutional commitment to research and creative activity. Hence, we present the following articles in an effort to enhance understanding of these critically important endeavors. Please enjoy this publication, and thank you for your interest in UNLV.

**Dr. Ron Smith**, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate College