

March 29, 2011

Dr. Milton D. Glick, President
Dr. Marc Johnson, Provost
President's Office
University of Nevada, Reno
1664 N. Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89557

Dear President Glick and Provost Johnson,

I write this letter to describe the scientific activities and tremendous benefit of the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology.

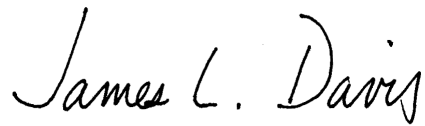
About myself: Until recently I was a senior geodesist at the Smithsonian Institution's Astrophysical Observatory. I am now a Lamont Research Professor at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. I have worked for over twenty years in the field of geodesy and geophysics, leading a group for most of that time. I am a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union (AGU), and recent past president of the AGU's Geodesy Section.

Let me focus on the area that I know best: geodesy, including its applications to geophysics, natural hazards, hydrology, and geothermal energy. In the Nevada Geodetic Laboratory, the NBMG has one of the most innovative and productive research groups anywhere in the world. Their ability to obtain external funding (at both the federal and state levels, I believe) attests not only to the capabilities of this group but their capacity for innovation and the confidence that their colleagues have in their ability to manage projects. The publications of the members of this group, led by Dr. Geoff Blewitt, span a wide range of topics. The scientists in the Lab are particularly known for their interest and expertise in research that benefits not only science but also society in general. An excellent—and highly relevant given the recent events in the Pacific—example would be the group's research on tsunami warning systems that utilize the highest degree of accuracy available in global geodetic systems. An important part of the Lab's research also focuses on understanding the tectonic stresses and ongoing deformation of the crust within Nevada, including the causes and effects of some of the region's large earthquakes and unusual seismicity.

The activities of the Nevada Geodetic Laboratory, and other highly respected groups of the NBMG, afford UNR with an extremely high profile in the Earth sciences, not only within the U.S., but also around the globe. This profile is much greater than would ordinarily be expected from a state institution of this size. The contribution of this impressive profile to the ability of UNR to obtain external funding in this area cannot be overstated. I would also suppose that this is a significant factor in attracting good students and outstanding faculty.

I understand that this is a difficult time for you and for the University, and that you have some hard decisions to make. I hope that the information that I have provided helps you assess the importance of and benefits from continued support for the Bureau of Mines and Geology.

The opinions expressed are those of the undersigned:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "D".

Dr. James L. Davis
Lamont Research Professor

cc: J. Thompson
J. Price
G. Blewitt