May 8, 2013

TO: The Campus Community  
FROM: Andrew Carnie, Interim Dean of the Graduate College  
RE: Phased retirement of Assoc. Dean Maria-Teresa Velez

It is with deep regret that I have accepted the request of Dr. Maria Teresa Velez, Associate Dean of the Graduate College for a three year step-down retirement starting this July 1st. Maria Teresa’s title will remain Associate Dean, but her responsibilities will focus solely on further increasing the diversity of the University of Arizona and developing our graduate international programs.

Maria Teresa (often known as "MT") has held the Associate Dean’s position in the Graduate College for 17 years, at different points supervising graduate admissions, graduate degree certification and teaching assistant training, as well as chairing many committees. However, her most important contribution has been in diversifying the graduate student body. Since she took the job, she has garnered approximately 40 million dollars in extramural funds to recruit and fund graduate students, prepare and motivate undergraduates to go to graduate school, and obtained UA funds to support Diversity Fellowships--now called Graduate Access Fellowships--to help attract low-income/first generation and minority students to the Graduate College. The UA now leads all our other AAU-member universities and peer institutions in the percentage of graduate students who are Underrepresented Minorities (18%). The UA is also first in the country in graduating Native American PhDs and 8th in graduating Hispanic PhDs outflanked only by minority universities and those that graduate a much larger total number of PhDs each year. She has also developed specific IMOAs with the governments of Mexico, Chile and Brazil to bring in sponsored graduate students from those countries, and created robust summer and winter undergraduate research programs for students from those countries, and created robust summer and winter undergraduate research programs for students from these and other Latin American countries.

Maria Teresa has received many awards for her outstanding years of service, including the Diversity Vision Award from the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering (NACME), the Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for Campus Internationalization from NAFSA, and the Stanley C Israel Regional Award for Advancing Diversity in the Chemical Sciences from the American Chemical Association in the last four years. From UA she has received many awards including the Honorary Alumnus Award from the UA Alumni Association and recognition from both the Hispanic Alumni and the Native American Alumni, the Outstanding Mentor Award from the Graduate and Professional Student Council, an Induction into the Women’s Plaza of Honor, the Peter Likins Inclusive Excellence Award, and the Vision Award from the Commission on the Status of Women. She has served on many national and state committees including the national board of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanos and Native Americans (SACNAS), the Executive Committee of the Arizona Psychological Association, and the Advisory Committee to the Director of NIH Diversity Work Group. She currently serves on the Search Committee for the Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Development at the National Institutes of Health.

Please join me in congratulating Maria Teresa for her 30 years of exemplary work at The University of Arizona and offer her our profound thanks for her service to the institution.