

DAILY LOBO

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1895

January 24, 2005

LANL rep discusses UNM's role in war

Some worry helping terrorism fight will hurt University

By Katy Knapp



Media Credit: Xavier Mascarenas

Dr. Stephen Younger speaks about a university's role in the fight against terrorism. Friday's lecture was part of a series sponsored by the **Institute for Infrastructure Surety.**

UNM might be next to aid Homeland Security's war on terror.

Stephen Younger, senior fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratory, gave a lecture Friday in the SUB titled "A University's Role in the Fight Against World Terrorism."

"Universities have an important role to play in the war on terror," Younger said. "Your business is ideas."

Younger spoke mainly on the social aspects of terrorism, calling it a "social disease manifested by the use of indiscriminate violence against civilian populations."

He said the solution to world terrorism, if there is one, will involve new thinking and approaches.

UNM has a special role to play for two reasons, Younger said.

"The first is it's in a state that has two enormous national laboratories," he said. "The second thing is you have a more diverse student and faculty population than possibly many other universities."

Having people from different backgrounds get together and brainstorm to come up with ways to fight terrorism could be essential, Younger said.

Not everyone in the room supported the idea.

Some faculty, including former UNM instructor Bob Anderson, attended the lecture to voice his concerns about the topic.

"They're trying to tie the University into this whole intelligence apparatus," Anderson said. "As they take more and more military and money for war ends, it changes the mission of the University as one of education to one of research and propaganda."

An article in last week's Chronicle of Higher Education reported the University of Maryland won a bid of \$12 million from Homeland Security to fund a research center aimed at studying how terrorist groups form and recruit members. It will be one of five centers around the country. UNM is potentially one of these centers.

Contingent sociology professor Joel Young said this trend could be dangerous for U.S. universities.

"I am concerned that co-opting academia to do what amounts to intelligence work will make university professors, their graduate students and, thus, American universities legitimate targets for terrorists by further blurring the line between officers or functionaries of the federal government and American civil society," he said.

Young, representing several other faculty members, addressed a list of concerns to Younger at the end of this lecture.

"That effort is chilling," Young said. "His whole idea is that we need to look outward and completely ignores the fact that our foreign policy could be the cause

of terrorism."

Younger said he believes the University's role could mean saving, not endangering, lives.

"We need the best ideas from the smartest people," he said.

Responding to the critics in the crowd, Younger said he respects their collective opinions but doesn't agree with them.

"I come from a national security perspective," he said. "All of my work is devoted to reducing terrorist violence."

Younger was invited to speak by UNM's Institute for Infrastructure Surety as a part of its lecture series.

Edl Schamiloglu, director of Institute for Infrastructure Surety, said his department works mostly on technical aspects of security issues.

Inviting Younger to speak would give an added dimension to the topic, he said.

"He's thinking more of social interactions and implications of terrorism," he said. "We think in the future, we scientists and engineers will be able to communicate effectively with our colleagues in the humanities and be able to address the complex nature of this problem."

Schamiloglu said he believes the critics have good concerns, but he thinks they go about addressing them in the wrong manner.

"I understand what (Young's) concerns are," he said. "His concern is if you are funding Homeland Security centers of excellence, then maybe that takes away money from other research topics, and he has a valid point there. Those decisions are not made by those of us here. Those are made by bureaucrats in Washington."