President Robert G. Frank awarded the first-ever Presidential Awards of Distinction during the Fall 2013 Commencement ceremony. Distinguished Professor of Electrical Engineering and Physics Steve R.J. Brueck received an inaugural award at the Fall 2013 Commencement on Friday, Dec. 13, at University Arena. President Robert Frank established the award to recognize outstanding career achievement, scholarly excellence, leadership in a profession, noteworthy public service or humanitarian endeavor.

The new award will be one of the university’s most prestigious. Frank said, “It is a reflection of the high regard in which these individuals are held by their peers. We wanted to create a way to acknowledge the vast accomplishments they have made in their careers and highlight the impact they have made on the lives of so many others.”

Brueck is being honored for nearly 30 years of leadership and service to UNM in creating internationally recognized research at the Center for High Technology Materials in the areas of photonics, nanotechnology and microelectronics. He has more than 400 refereed publications,
has presented more than 230 invited papers and seminars, and holds 49 US patents.

In his letter to the recipients President Frank noted Brueck’s leadership at CHTM has provided an excellent example of what can be achieved by a visionary leader from the ground up. Over the years 425 M.S. and Ph.D. students have conducted all or part of their research at CHTM. Researchers working at the center have received more than 136 patents, a substantial portion of the university’s technology portfolio. During his tenure as director, researchers have published more than 2,000 refereed journal articles and received more than $188 million in outside research grants.

Brueck currently serves on the board of directors of LightPath Technologies, a global manufacturer, distributor and integrator of proprietary optical components and high-level assemblies. He has been active in professional societies chairing the Conference on Lasers and ElectroOptics in 2000, the Electron, Ion, Photon Beam Nanofabrication and Applications Conference in 2008 and the Lithography Workshop in 2013. He has also served on a number of National Academies Panels including chairing a recent study on infrared and visible sensor technology. Brueck is currently a member of the NRC Air Force Studies Board, and is a fellow of the IEEE, the OSA and the AAAS.