



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

August 3, 2011

International Affairs: As one of the last pieces of my reorganization, I am pleased to announce that Dr. Natasha Kolchevska has agreed to serve as the Associate Provost for International Initiatives. Her passion for international issues, distinguished service as Chair of Foreign Languages and Literatures as well as involvement in the Faculty Senate Task Force on Study Abroad makes her well-prepared to take on this important position. I look forward to her increasing the profile, and championing of our international initiatives.

Graduation Project: As you may already know, one of the main challenges of UNM is to increase our graduation rate, which currently stands at around 44%. One of the University's current graduation rate strategies is a program called the Graduation Project. The Graduation Project was started by David Stuart in 1996 as a program designed to provide specialized assistance to students who have left the University with over 98 credit hours so they can return and finish their bachelor's degree. The four main reasons students say they leave UNM (not including "personal") are: inconsistent advisement, financial, course availability, and parking. This is a program that has been very successful as shown by a graduation rate of 72% for the 2879 returning students. The Graduation Project is lead by one staff member (Ms. Vanessa Smith) and two project assistants. To learn more, visit [Graduation Project](#).

Students and Programs That are Making a Difference: Carolina Gomez is an undergraduate student pursuing a B.S. Degree Program in Signed Language Interpreting in the Department of Linguistics. Carolina is originally from Bogotá, Colombia. Due to political hardship and fearing political threats, Carolina's mother came to the United States in December 2000 looking for a new place to raise her family. Carolina and her brother followed her in June 2001. Carolina returned to Bogotá in July 2011 to begin a six-month study abroad program at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Carolina plans to study Colombian Sign Language and to work with the deaf community in Bogotá. Her aspiration is to establish a bridge between Colombia's deaf community and UNM and to establish a foundation to assist deaf Colombians. "I'd like to find the means to sponsor deaf Colombian people to come study at UNM, taking whatever class they want, as I interpret for them." Carolina's dream is that such a program could assist deaf people from across South America so that they can be provided interpreters and start social movements in their countries to improve the conditions for deaf people.

Administration: Does UNM have too many administrators? The answer is yes, maybe, no, and it depends! A comprehensive study by the faculty on the UNM administrative structure and costs is found at the UNM Faculty Senate web site: [Faculty Report on Upper Administration Costs](#). In a future communiqué, I hope to be able to discuss this issue in greater detail.

Presidential Search: The Board of Regents' Academic/Student Affairs and Research Committee has already had one public and two private meetings for a variety of constituent groups to solicit comments and suggestions for criteria for the search for our next UNM President. There will be one more private meeting for the remaining constituent group representatives and one public meeting on August 29.

Details will be announced. Please make every effort to attend and/or submit your comments for this important search.

Feedback: Much of your feedback so far has focused on parking services (both good and bad), and on issues related to student funding, UNM administration, and multidisciplinary programs. I am answering some of your e-mail individually and will address others in this forum.

Finally, I would like to recommend another Ted talk. It is by a physicist who has close ties to New Mexico, and whose research and ideas are intertwined with UNM as you can see from this talk. [Geoffrey West: The surprising math of cities and corporations.](#)

Chaouki Abdallah

Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.