



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

February 19, 2014

Measuring what Counts: Much like UNM and the State of New Mexico, many universities are currently examining their budgeting processes, and implementing a version of performance-based funding. Easy to measure goals such as graduation rates and number of degrees provide an incomplete picture, however, as more meaningful measures of the quality of the program, such as the learning process and the educational experience are missed. Associate Provost Virginia Scharff is leading our efforts to determine what should be measured in addition to the more standard metrics. The same challenge is being pursued by other institutions such as Sarah Lawrence, which created a process to measure whether their graduates possess the ability to think critically, express ideas effectively through written communication, envisage and work independently on a project, exchange ideas effectively through oral communication, bring innovation to their work, and accept and act on criticism. More information can be found [here](#).

Cutting through the Red Tape: One risk associated with developing more meaningful metrics for student and faculty achievement is that, if you are not thoughtful about doing so, you can increase the administrative burden caused by our already substantial reporting and compliance requirements. While some of our current requirements are sensible or are mandated by law, others are simply duplicative or have outgrown their original purpose. I have thus challenged the team in Academic Affairs to reduce the burden of our reporting requirements by removing two items for every new item added. We are also working with the deans, directors, chairs, and Faculty Senate to consolidate or synchronize the timing of our various reports. As a first step we pulled together a list of known reporting requirements to create an Academic Affairs calendar to help us spot inadvertent duplication or outdated requirements. We will also use technological tools to automate information collection whenever possible, sparing the deans, directors, and chairs from having to do it manually. A good case in point is the faculty workload report each semester. The data required for the report, including information on courses taught, contracts and grants award amounts, and faculty publications, are either already available electronically, or will be soon. This will eliminate the need to manually construct faculty workload reports each semester. Instead, deans and directors will only have to report exceptions to typical faculty workloads each semester. In the future, we plan to also eliminate the need to sign a new paper copy of faculty contracts every year, unless changes in employment have occurred during the year. These all represent steps in the right direction.

Why an Honors College? In Fall 2013, our Honors Program became an Honors College. The number of freshmen enrolled in the Honors College went from 350 in Fall 2012 to more than 600 in Fall 2013. More than 80 percent of the freshman class came from New Mexico, but we also attracted students from California, Colorado, and Texas. More than 45 percent of the incoming class is from underrepresented groups. Despite such results, much work remains in order to attract more New Mexico High School graduates to UNM and to help answer the questions posed in the article "[What's the Point of an Honors College. Anyway?](#)"

University Commencement: The University of New Mexico is embarking on a new tradition to honor our graduates and their achievements. This spring there will be two University Commencement ceremonies: one for undergraduates (associate's and bachelor's degrees) and one for graduates (master's and doctor's degrees). A reminder to faculty, you will soon receive an invitation to be part of these ceremonies from the Office of the University Secretary. President Frank, Faculty Senate President Richard Holder, and I strongly encourage you to attend both ceremonies and celebrate with our graduates.

IFAIR's Third Indigenous Book Festival: On Feb. 20-21, the Institute for American Indian Research (IFAIR) will host its third Indigenous Book Festival celebrating the work of 30 contemporary indigenous poets, novelists, scholars, and writers. Highlighted events for the festival include Thursday's opening keynote address, "The

Sovereignty of Critique,” by Professor Audra Simpson at 10:00 a.m. For the complete program, visit the [IFAIR website](#).

Triple Package: Last week, I discussed the book “The Triple Package.” I heard back from many of you. The opinions, as usual, are divergent, and because of that I am posting it again for a blog discussion on the [Provost’s Website](#).

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A PDF version of this communiqué is available at <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>. Your feedback and input are welcome at provost@unm.edu or at the electronic town hall, here: <http://connectu.unm.edu/>. Please also see the Provost’s Blog at <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>.