



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

October 7, 2015

On Governance: One of the bedrock principles of the modern American university is the concept of shared governance. Unfortunately, as with the principle of academic freedom, shared governance is often misunderstood. Given the complexity of the arrangement, misunderstandings may arise over the mechanism of shared governance—it is often mistaken to mean that governance is simply a matter of committee consensus—or the various relationships between governing boards, faculty, staff, and administration. In 1966 there was a joint effort to clarify the concept of share governance, which resulted in the “[Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#).” The statement was created by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). All three of those organizations—representing faculty, future administrators, and governing boards—then endorsed the statement and commended it to their membership. One of the most important conclusions of the statement is that “a college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems.” I encourage everyone to look carefully at what the statement advocates and how it can be best implemented at UNM.

Challenges & Opportunities: You may already be aware that UNM, similarly to many other four-year colleges, is facing a drop in traditional student enrollment. This is largely due to demographics (there were fewer babies born 18 years ago, no increase in immigration to New Mexico, and stagnating high-school graduation rates). Another factor is the changing economy. This last point is clarified in a [new paper](#) showing “a correlation specifically between the performance of the housing market and college attendance for some groups.” In fact, “the housing boom accounts for about 30 percent of the slowdown in college attendance of young adults aged 18 to 25” between the late 1990s and 2006. More specifically, “a booming job market increases the opportunity cost of higher education. Each week, month, or year that an individual is in school rather than working is time and money sacrificed. This trade-off is economically worth it if a college degree will almost certainly provide a higher salary at the end of the road, but there are some industries where a college degree isn’t a necessity. And during boom years, that trade-off can be much less appealing.”

At UNM, we saw a drop in the non-traditional and part-time students the last couple of years, but thanks to very concentrated efforts by our enrollment management division, colleges, faculty and staff, we saw this year an increase of our first-time, full-time freshmen. Going forward, we need to start educating more non-traditional students, as well as to increase the pool of qualified New Mexico high school graduates. This is a multi-year and multi-prong effort that will benefit from the efforts of our College of Education, from positive stories of our faculty and staff, as well as by our ability to better tell the UNM story. However, getting a qualified student into UNM is the beginning of the journey, as we must then make sure that they graduate in a timely manner while acquiring a valuable UNM education. The challenge is to continue to improve the UNM experience (academic and otherwise) in the face of dwindling external resources. The universities that continue to improve will enjoy an easier time attracting students, and their graduates will be better off, as the value (real and perceived) of their education continues to increase.

Honorary Degrees: The Office of the Secretary is still receiving nominations for honorary degree recipients. Please send nominations to the Office of the Secretary, Scholes Hall 103, MSC05 3340, or email secretary@unm.edu no later than Friday, Oct. 16.

Shaping the Future of Online Learning: For an easy way to stay on top of developments in the rapidly changing world of online learning, you can participate (virtually, and at no cost to you) in the 21st Annual Online Learning Consortium International Conference 2015, “*Shaping the Future of Online Learning*.” On Oct. 14-16, you can stream sessions on a variety of topics, from keeping students engaged in online courses to tips on teaching in an

online environment. Registration information and access is available at UNM's [Extended Learning website](#). For questions or more information, contact Veronica Sanchez, vtsanchz@unm.edu or 277-6409.

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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