



*WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ*

**March 2, 2016**

**The State Budget:** Gov. Susana Martinez signed off Monday on a \$6.2 billion spending plan for the coming budget year that relies on one-time fixes, such as diverting money from government accounts and drawing down the state's cash reserves, to avoid steep budget cuts. Funding for higher education will be slashed by \$19.6 million, with UNM's I&G (main campus and HSC) budget being trimmed by \$6 million. In addition, our current budget is being cut by about 0.6%.

**The Challenges at Public Universities:** Last week, I reviewed the financial challenges faced by public higher education. Some of you have asked how other states and universities are faring. As I mentioned, the University of California, Berkeley is undergoing an extensive examination of its functions and structures. Others, such as Chicago State University and Western Illinois University are contemplating layoffs due to the failure of the [Illinois state government](#) to enact a budget. A similar budget impasse in [Pennsylvania](#) could lead to cuts at Penn State. Other public universities, such as Arizona State, have expanded their course and program offerings into the online world, or have [teamed up with businesses](#) or with [MOOC providers](#) to provide a different kind of college education at a large scale for a new group of students. Some universities, including [Georgia Tech](#), are delivering specialized graduate level education at a scale and lower cost designed to generate new revenues. Some universities are focusing on adult learners while others are looking for out-of-state and international students to supplement their in-state students. In the coming weeks and months, I hope that we will be debating some of these ideas and others that are sure to emerge in this difficult environment.

**Higher Ed Trends:** The Chronicle of Higher Education published its second "Trends Report" for higher education. These trends are not in themselves positive or negative, and not all of them apply to UNM. Rather they represent a compilation of what universities are facing. "In a year of turmoil — marked by campus protests, free-speech controversies, scandals involving academic research, questions about the value of a degree, and more — higher education continues to be on the defensive. Public scrutiny and the social-media environment mean college leaders must be prepared to respond to critics on and off campus, at any time." The trends, identified by Chronicle reporters, include: 1) A fresh wave of attacks on free speech, often coming from students; 2) Efforts by colleges to combat sexual assault by creating new cultural norms on the campus; 3) The growing use of metrics to measure faculty productivity; 4) The need for college leaders to react quickly to events that can rapidly spin out of control; 5) Widespread attacks on shared governance; 6) The outsourcing of services that are a core part of a college's mission; 7) Increased scrutiny of academic research; 8) A movement to overhaul the college transcript; 9) The rise of the instructional designer; and 10) A reliance on better marketing to survive enrollment challenges and create a stronger institutional identity. For more information, you can read the [executive summary](#) (a subscription is required for the full report).

**North Korean Nuclear Capabilities Talk:** Dr. Sig Hecker will present a talk on North Korea's nuclear capabilities on Monday, March 7 at 4 p.m. in Dane Smith Hall (DSH) Room 325. Dr. Hecker is currently a professor at Stanford University and the foremost U.S. expert on the North Korean nuclear program. Dr. Hecker is a former Los Alamos National Lab Director and a former President of the UNM Board of Regents. This talk is a 2016 NSSP Annual Symposium event. The main session of the seventh NSSP Symposium will take place April 5 and will include a panel of ex-senior NM NSA Laboratory personnel discussing the global state of nuclear nonproliferation.

**Lightning Lounge:** There will be a Lightning Lounge this evening, from 5:30-7 p.m. in the Faculty Staff Club (1923 Lomas Blvd). The presenters include Marc Davidson (Language, Literacy & Sociocultural Studies), presenting "Encouraging Youth as Critical Change Agents;" and Trish Henning (Physics & Astronomy), presenting "Discovering Hidden Galaxies Behind the Milky Way." I will be the third speaker, presenting "Why Faculty Matter:

Public University Model 101.” As usual, we will provide refreshments, and there will be plenty of time for questions. I hope to see you there.

**Watt Family Innovation:**Dr. Dennis Lester, the associate director of the Watt Family Innovation Center, will be at the Institute for Design and Innovation (University Advising and Enrichment Center, Room B20) on Monday, March 7 from 4-5:00 p.m. The presentation is open to the public.

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

A PDF version of this Communiqué is available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Your feedback and input are welcome at [provost@unm.edu](mailto:provost@unm.edu). Please also see the [Provost's Blog](#).