



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

September 21, 2011

Deans' Retreat: On Friday, September 16, I met with the Deans' Council for a retreat to discuss the short-term (one to two year) and long-term (five to ten year) goals and future of Academic Affairs. Topics included potential models for evening & weekend, intercession & summer courses for the main campus schools/colleges; the process for moving forward with an academic planning effort in light of our search for a new president; our goals for implementing an Honors College; and, how we can implement a structure that supports multidisciplinary efforts. In the coming weeks and months you will hear more from me on the individual efforts that come from these discussions. As always, I will invite broad participation when we move these individual goals forward.

Academic Plan: As mentioned in an earlier communiqué, one of the important tasks for the academic community during academic year 2011-2012 is to draft an academic plan that can be used to publicly articulate our goals and inform a new president. From my point of view as Provost, the academic plan must first answer, "What kind of university do we want to be in 10 years, and how do we get there?" If we can come together as a community to agree on the answers to these questions, we can begin to make decisions regarding what resources and facilities are needed to support these goals. To start the process, I have recruited Dean Geraldine Forbes Isaias of Architecture & Planning to lead a planning team during this academic year that will engage faculty, staff, and students in the discussion and process. The campus community will be engaged through representatives as well as through open meetings and discussions.

Dr. Gerald "Jerry" McNerney is a proud Alumni of UNM who obtained his Ph.D. in Mathematics from UNM in 1981. He is currently the U.S. Representative for California's 11th congressional district, serving since 2007. Dr. McNerney stopped by the UNM Deans' Retreat on September 16, 2011 during his visit with the Mathematics department and his former adviser, Dr. Alex Stone. UNM is proud to be represented by one of only four members of the 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives that have earned a Ph.D. The four representatives with Ph.D.s are: McNerney of California with a Ph.D. in Mathematics from UNM, Bartlett of Maryland with a Ph.D. in Physiology from the University of Maryland, Holt of New Jersey with a Ph.D. in Physics from NYU, and Price of North Carolina with a Ph.D. in Political Science from Yale.

Gateway Program: As prospective students and parents read about UNM admission rates and standards, they may come across the UNM Gateway program. The UNM Gateway program is designed for beginning students from New Mexico who do not initially meet freshman admission requirements. These students are directed to one of the gateway partners (the UNM Branch Campuses, Central New Mexico Community College, Santa Fe Community College, NM Junior College, or San Juan College) for assistance in preparation for admission to UNM. Upon successfully completion of 24 credit hours in the core curriculum, students are able to have seamless admission at the UNM main campus without having to reapply. This year, the gateway program has 229 students up from 123 last year. For more information, please see: <http://admissions.unm.edu/undergraduate/gateway-program.html>

The Curiosity Mars Rover is far larger and more complicated with more experiments than the current Exploration Rovers operating on Mars. Curiosity, scheduled to land in Gale Crater on Mars in August of 2012, will spend at least two years studying the evidence for water and habitable environments. Among

the many instruments on the Curiosity Rover is the ChemCam instrument, which has been developed by a joint US – French team led by P.I. Dr. Roger Wiens of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The team that proposed and will run ChemCam on Mars includes a scientific co-investigator and science team member from UNM's Institute of Meteoritics, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Dr. Horton Newsom and graduate students Nina Lanza and Ann Ollila. Dr. Penelope King, also of the Institute of Meteoritics is a co-investigator and science team member for another instrument on Curiosity, the Alpha Proton X-ray (APXS) instrument, along with graduate student Jeff Berger. These UNM teams have been heavily involved in preparations for the mission including participation in operational tests and simulations led by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and field and laboratory work leading to calibration of the instruments for their use on Mars. Drs. Newsom and King along with their students will be operating these instruments on Mars from UNM facilities. For additional information on ChemCam, including an interview with Dr. Newsom, see this page: <http://www.msl-chemcam.com/>.

A PDF version of this communiqué is available at: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>

Your feedback and input is welcome at: provost@unm.edu

Sincerely,

Chaouki Abdallah
Interim Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs