



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

December 12, 2012

Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.

—James Madison, <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s35.html>

Final Grades: Per the Faculty Handbook, grades are expected to be entered within 48 hours after the final exam or last meeting date, whichever comes first. The registrar (and I) would like to have all grades entered by Friday, December 21, 2012, before we leave for Winter Break. Your students will also thank you for entering your final grades on time.

PCS Staff Scholarships: The Provost Committee for Staff (PCS) is currently accepting applications for the Staff Scholarship. The \$350 scholarships are designed to help staff participating in the Tuition Remission Program with additional expenses such as textbooks, course fees, and supplies. To apply, or to find more information, please visit the PCS website, <http://pcs.unm.edu/>. The deadline to apply is December 17, 2012 at 5 p.m., and scholarship recipients will be notified the week of January 7, 2013.

Does the Credit Hour Still Make Sense? The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching came up with the credit hour concept in 1906 but is now rethinking its values and utility. As described in the recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://chronicle.com/article/Carnegie-the-Founder-of-the/136137/>, “the unit is traditionally defined as one hour of faculty-student contact per week and two hours of outside work over a 15-week semester. Though it was initially invented chiefly to determine faculty members' eligibility to receive a pension, the credit hour has assumed an importance it was never meant to have. It has come to undergird much of the academic enterprise, including student and faculty workloads, schedules, financial aid, and degree requirements.” In the age of MOOCs, “a likely alternative is to base a standardized unit on some measure of competency instead of time spent in class.”

Service Blueprinting: Professor Carol Parker of our Law School, on an ACE fellowship at ASU, has pointed me to the report from the Center for American Progress, found at http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/10/pdf/service_blueprinting.pdf. While the service blueprinting technique was introduced in a Harvard Business Review article by G. Lynn Shostack in 1984, its application to higher education is more recent. The basic premise is to consider higher education through the eyes of a student and to try to visually map the “pain points.” The following paragraph is intriguing and may help us redesign our processes as we start thinking of ourselves as service providers rather than goods producers: “What happens if we view higher education through this service lens or service logic? We know education cannot be produced and delivered on a platter for someone to consume. Students have integral roles to play in experiencing and co-creating the full value of the service. They need to attend class or go online to gain information, engage with course material, interact with classmates and the professor, prepare assignments, take exams, and apply their new learning through projects. Viewing higher education through a service lens will cause us to think about the true value perceived by the student, how that value is co-created, what the role of the student is, and what comprehensive set of processes and innovations might complement and support the co-creation of value for students. We will start to ask questions like “What is your goal or need?” and “How can we help?” rather than “Here are our degree programs. Which one do you want?” We will start to think about designing processes and experiences that will allow students to solve their problems, achieve their goals, and co-create long-term educational value for themselves and society. This approach can apply across students. If students come to us unprepared, we will start to ask what services and experiences could be provided to prepare them better, instead of blaming them for not performing. If students come fully prepared, we can start to identify new and innovative ways to add even greater value to their educational experience.”

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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: <http://connectu.unm.edu/>. Please also see the Provost's Blog at <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>.