



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

August 22, 2012

First Week of the Fall 2012 Semester: I am confident you are all enjoying your 3rd day of the Fall 2012 semester. As you approach your work this semester, many goals may seem possible and within reach. While I feel the same, I tend to overestimate my abilities and underestimate cost and time for almost everything I do. It may behoove us to consider the “planning fallacy, or the tendency for people and organizations to underestimate how long they will need to complete a task, even when they have experience of similar tasks over-running.” The 1979 article (Kahneman, Daniel; Tversky, Amos. "Intuitive prediction: biases and corrective procedures". *TIMS Studies in Management Science* 12: 313–327) originally formulated the planning fallacy principle. “Since then the effect has been found for predictions of a wide variety of tasks, including tax form completion, school work, furniture assembly, computer programming and origami. The bias only affects predictions about one’s own tasks; when uninvolved observers predict task completion times, they show a pessimistic bias, overestimating the time taken.”

Organization Dimension: The second dimension in our upcoming Foundations of Excellence (FOE) effort is the Organization Dimension. “Foundations Institutions create organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year. *These structures and policies provide oversight and alignment of all first-year efforts. A coherent first-year experience is realized and maintained through effective partnerships among academic affairs, student affairs, and other administrative units and is enhanced by ongoing faculty and staff development activities and appropriate budgetary arrangements.*” The rationale of this dimension is that: “Organization is a key determinant of an institution’s ability to realize its purpose for the first year. On many college campuses, no individual, office, or group has oversight for the various components of the first year. Redundancy, confusion, and resource inefficiencies often result from inadequate organization, lack of communication across campus, and insufficient collaboration between units. While we believe that there are multiple ways to organize effectively, the key is intentionality and evaluation – determining what first-year organizational structure works best at a given institution and evaluating that structure periodically to determine whether it is effective in managing and/or coordinating the institution’s first-year approach.”

Plagiarism in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): This one is a real head scratcher! Why would someone cheat when (almost) nothing is at stake? It turns out that plagiarism is becoming an issue in MOOCs even when students are taking free non-academic credit courses (<http://chronicle.com/article/Dozens-of-Plagiarism-Incidents/133697/>). This poses yet another wrinkle in the migration of such courses into credit-bearing degrees. One possible explanation may be that students in such courses may not have the same boundaries or definition of plagiarism as those grading them.

Distinguished Professors: The rank of Distinguished Professor is the highest faculty title that UNM bestows, and it is awarded to only a few of our most prominent faculty. I am very pleased to announce that, based on their outstanding scholarly and scientific achievements, seven new Distinguished Professors (three from main campus and four from the HSC) were recently selected for this prestigious honor. The new main campus Distinguished Professors are: David Brookshire (Economics), Jane Lancaster (Anthropology), and Eric (Sam) Loker (Biology). The four new HSC Distinguished Professors are: Marianne Berwick (Internal Medicine), David Schade (Endocrinology), Victor Strasburger (Pediatrics, Adolescent Medicine) and Howard Yonas (Neurosurgery). Congratulations to you all!

Extraordinary Bosses: A recent Inc. Magazine article (<http://www.inc.com/geoffrey-james/8-core-beliefs-of-extraordinary-bosses.html>) describes what makes some bosses extraordinary. The following 8 points are stressed: 1) Business is an ecosystem, not a battlefield. 2) A company is a community, not a machine. 3) Management is service, not control. 4) My employees are my peers, not my children. 5) Motivation comes from vision, not from

fear. 6) Change equals growth, not pain. 7) Technology offers empowerment, not automation. 8) Work should be fun, not mere toil.

Provost & Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs

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