



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Office of the Provost



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

January 30, 2013

Plans are nothing, but planning is everything.

—Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower

Black History Month at UNM: “For over 25 years, Africana Studies at the University of New Mexico has ushered in the University’s Black History Month celebrations with the Annual Black History Month Kick-Off Brunch the last Saturday in January.” Hill Harper, actor, author, and youth advocate, was the featured speaker at the brunch. For more information, including links to events and speakers, please visit <http://africanastudies.unm.edu/black-history-month-at-unm/BHM2013.html>.

On Compensation: As I have described in earlier communiqués, I was tasked by the Board of Regents and President Frank to work out a long-term compensation plan to bring our faculty salaries in line with peer institutions. I have publicly presented the study and plan to the Academic, Students Affairs, and Research Committee, and to the Finance and Facilities Committee. In all public and private meetings and discussions, I have stressed that I was proposing a plan that must be funded and approved by the Board of Regents and UNM administration and was not promising a certain compensation amount to any specific group. I have also committed to working with the president of the Faculty Senate and the president of the Staff Council to advocate for vigorous baseline compensation for staff and faculty at large, but to also allocate part of any potential funds to merit-based compensation. As you also know, the legislative session just started, so it will be some time before the various state budget recommendations are reconciled and our UNM state appropriations are finalized. Therefore, all numbers and promises made before the final regents’ vote are, at best, proposals and, at worst, rumors.

What is College For? According to a recent *Chronicle* article, http://chronicle.com/blogs/next/2013/01/24/higher-eds-biggest-problem-whats-it-for/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en, “there is no traditional learner anymore. What’s more, we no longer even have a common definition of ‘higher education.’ The lack of consensus about what the higher-education system in the United States should be producing is largely to blame for the pressures facing colleges and universities today, from lagging financial support to proving their value to students and parents” (e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDLuCjCglDg&feature=youtu.be>). Not only is the definition of “higher education” changing, student expectations are as well. According to the article <http://chronicle.com/article/Freshman-Survey-This-Year/136787/> and the accompanying survey, “Today’s freshmen are focused on the future. They are certain they’ll finish their degrees in four years, despite evidence to the contrary; they want to land good jobs after graduation; and they increasingly aspire to be well-off.”

The Learning Curve: is an effort by the Economist Intelligence Unit (<http://thelearningcurve.pearson.com/>) that has recently resulted in the publication of a comprehensive report. The intent of the effort is to “further our understanding of what leads to successful educational outcomes—both economic and social.” For pre-college education, some of the report highlights are as follows: 1) Strong relationships are few between education inputs and outputs; 2) Income matters, but culture may matter more; 3) There is no substitute for good teachers; 4) When it comes to school choice, good information is crucial; 5) There is no single path to better labor market outcomes; and 6) A global index can help highlight educational strengths and weaknesses. The report also presented five lessons for education policymakers: 1) There are no magic bullets; 2) Respect teachers; 3) Culture can be changed; 4) Parents are neither impediments to nor saviors of education; and 5) Educate for the future, not just the present.

The Second Annual New Mexico Film Festival: is scheduled for Friday, February 8, 2013, on the UNM-Valencia Campus in Academics 101, starting at 9 a.m. The focus of the festival is on film and New Mexico. Screenings for this year’s festival include films shot in New Mexico. The Festival will honor John Nichols, the author of the *Milagro Beanfield War*, and will start with the movie directed by Robert Redford, that is based on Nichol’s novel.

That will be followed by *The Milagro Man*, directed by Kurt Jacobsen, which is about the life of author /screenwriter Nichols, who now resides in Taos, NM.

Student Success Summit 2: The Foundations of Excellence® (FoE) in the First College Year Self Study is nearing the halfway point in the process, which will conclude near the end of March. The primary outcome of this project will be an evidence-based action plan for institutional change focused on improving the first-year educational experience. The FoE team is holding the Student Success Summit: Foundations of Excellence Midpoint Review from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on February 7, 2013, in Ballrooms A and B of the Student Union Building (SUB). The summit will include a keynote address by Dr. George Kuh and presentations from each of the nine committees. Please consider joining us at this exciting event, which is open to the public. You may register here: <http://success.unm.edu/events/index.html>.

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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>.