



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

November 18, 2015

UNM is thinking of France, Lebanon, and Humanity: A candlelight vigil will be held today at 7 p.m. in front of the UNM Bookstore to honor the victims lost in recent attacks in Paris, Beirut, and elsewhere in the world. The vigil was initiated by international student Marvinn Croizeau of France, in partnership with the Global Education Office. All members of the community are invited and welcome to attend.

The Impossible Will Take a Little While: The events of the last weeks remind us of the need for hope in the face of intolerance. From the bombings in Beirut and Paris, to the difficult but necessary conversations taking place within colleges and across the US, to the political divisions that only seem to be amplified as we head into another presidential election, to the ongoing strife in the Middle East, Africa, and in the many other places that we never hear about, it often seems that we are losing the battle for a better future for all of us. At times like these, it helps to draw strength from the same sources of inspiration we use when we face personal challenges. In my own hardest times, I have relied on works and times when the best of humanity was displayed. In "[The Cure At Troy](#)," Seamus Heaney assures us that "history and hope rhyme":

*History says, don't hope
On this side of the grave.
But then, once in a lifetime
The longed-for tidal wave
Of justice can rise up,
And hope and history rhyme.*

Some of you may find solace in Ray Bradbury's [ode to space travel and the promise of man](#), or in the words of Bob Russell, as [sung by Billie Holiday](#): "The difficult I'll do right now, the impossible will take a little while."

I am fortunate to have family and friends in Lebanon, and relatives and friends in Paris. Each time a senseless act of violence is visited upon a familiar place, I first worry about those I know, but then think of those I don't and try to picture them not simply as anonymous numbers. I am also reminded that each hour of each day, and while we go about our normal lives, so many lives are taken by the deliberate actions of fellow men, without even registering as anonymous numbers on the evening news. But then I find solace in the stories of the survivors, the first-aid workers, and the men and women who counter the savagery of the few with the kindness of the many. For every killer, there are millions of saviors, and for every bad apple there is an orchard of good. For further affirmation of the basic goodness of humanity, see this [TED Talk by Hans Rosling](#), and the book, "The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined," by Steven Pinker. Universities have a special, positive role to play in reducing suffering and kindling humanity's hope. So here is to the difficult but not impossible task of trying, each day, to make us better students, better teachers, better parents, better friends, and better people.

Enrique's Journey: Sonia Nazario, author of "Enrique's Journey," the book selected for his year's Lobo Reading Experience, was on campus last week for several events. Sonia gave a stirring presentation about immigration, violence in Mexico and Latin America, and the plight of parents and children as they seek asylum or reunion with loved ones.

These events take on heightened significance amid the important and intense debates at Missouri, Purdue, Yale, and elsewhere. The events provided a setting to address and discuss difficult topics with understanding and compassion. It is essential to the functioning of our campus community that we have forums like these, and that people can voice

their concerns as part of a civil dialogue. It is equally important that the principle of academic freedom is observed, and that ideas are discussed and not censored. We must all work to hold these values simultaneously.

Sonia will be coming back to campus April 13, 2016, during the Shared Knowledge Conference and the Writing the World Symposium. I strongly encourage everyone in our community to attend the events.

The First Snow: After the first snowfall of the year, I would like to point you to UNM's [inclement weather policy](#). The policy contains rules for class delays and cancellations, including for weather events during Final Exam week.

Operation Registration: For students preparing for registration for spring semester, the Operation Registration team will be available to help you from 9:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 30. Advisors and other staff will be available in the Student Success Center in Casas Del Rio, the Student Residence Center, and the University Advisement and Enrichment Center. You can get your holds removed and register all in one night. You can also visit the online chat service at [success.unm.edu](#).

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. Please also see the [Provost's Blog](#).