



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

October 10, 2012

It is not about graduation rates and test scores. It's about what those things mean to the outcome of human lives. It's about potential realized or squandered, dignity enhanced or denied. Salman Khan (Khan Academy).

Foundations of Excellence: In the last nine weeks, I have posted information about the nine dimensions of the Foundation of Excellence (FOE) initiative. As we have already discussed, the FOE is an “initiative designed to study all aspects of the first year of college and to produce a plan for institutional improvement leading to higher levels of student learning and persistence in college.” This initiative has already been launched and we are aiming to have the plan completed by early Spring 2013 semester, in order to start full implementation shortly thereafter.

The Impact of Education: As we keep discussing the costs and benefits of education, the conversation has mostly focused on economic outcomes. According to the site <http://apps.unitedway.org/forecaster/>, education benefits are also “linked to health, life expectancy, voter turnout, incarceration, self-worth and dignity, and prospects for one’s children.” The website includes a tool to forecast how life might improve for all of us if educational outcomes were to improve. Check out some of the specific improvements for New Mexico.

State of Academic Affairs Report: After my first year on the job, I felt it was important to put together a report that provides an overview of all our schools/colleges and units including an accounting of our major activities and goals as they relate to goals set by the Regent’s Academic/Student Affairs Committee. Please take a look by visiting: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/state-of-academic-affairs.pdf> and provide feedback to provost@unm.edu.

Bonds C & B: Also related to the impact of education: As we head to the polls on November 6, please remember to and encourage others to vote on Bonds B & C. Bond C requires no commitment in the form of new taxes to the citizens of New Mexico. The language that voters will see on the ballot reads as follows: *The 2012 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of higher education and special schools capital improvement and acquisition bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed one hundred twenty million dollars (\$120,000,000) to make capital expenditures for certain higher education and special school capital improvements and acquisitions and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?*

Bond B would provide funds to make capital expenditures for public library resource acquisitions. The bonds would not exceed \$9,830,000. The language that voters will see on the ballot for Bond B reads as follows: *The 2012 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Act authorizes the issuance and sale of library acquisition and construction bonds. Shall the state be authorized to issue general obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed nine million eight hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$9,830,000) to make capital expenditures for academic, public school, tribal and public library resource acquisitions and construction and provide for a general property tax imposition and levy for the payment of principal of, interest on and expenses incurred in connection with the issuance of the bonds and the collection of the tax as permitted by law?*

Dean Searches Timelines: In the last few weeks, there has been a flurry of activities regarding our searches for deans, and I have heard many concerns about the compressed timelines for such searches. In all searches, I have tried to balance the need for quick decisions with established processes and faculty oversight. In the case of the dean of the Office of Graduate Studies we had a short window for the selection of an internal candidate, and while I initially intended to hire an interim dean, I received feedback that many potential candidates would only be interested in the position if it were a regular appointment. We also needed to hire an interim dean of the School of

Bergman as the interim School of Law dean selection was completed quickly in consultation with the University secretary. We are currently engaged in a national search for the Vice President for Research, which will take place under a normal timeline. I am working closely with the Committee on Governance and the Faculty Senate to better communicate with regard to the conduct of searches.

New Mexico CS for All: The lack of Computer Science and Computational thinking in K-12 is one factor in the low number of Computer Science and Engineering majors at US universities. The Santa Fe Institute (Irene Lee, PI) and UNM's Computer Science Department (Associate Professor David Ackley and Professor Emeritus Ed Angel, co-PIs) were just awarded an NSF Computer Education for the 21st Century (CE21) grant "NM CS for All" to address this problem. Using the Extended University (EU) on-line system, the three-year project will involve 60 high school teachers and 1200 high school students across New Mexico. Each Fall Semester, the high school students will enroll in a dual credit course in Computer Science delivered through EU with the assistance of the teachers who will take their own CS course during the Spring Semester.

Be Part of the Solution: President Frank has initiated a focused and broadly inclusive strategic planning process believing that as UNM citizens, we each have a duty to help shape what we want our university to be in 2020. In order to participate, please go to <http://unm2020.ideascale.com> and contribute your ideas and comments.

Inauguration: The University of New Mexico Inaugural Installation ceremony for Dr. Robert G. Frank, will be held on Sunday, November 18, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. in Popejoy Hall. UNM faculty members are invited to participate in the faculty processional at the ceremony. If you are able to participate, we ask that you fill out the regalia signup and participation form on the Inauguration website at <http://inauguration.unm.edu> (click on Faculty Signup). It is important that faculty planning to participate in President Frank's installation ceremony fill out this form, even in the case of faculty having their own academic regalia. The deadline to order regalia was Friday, October 5, 2012. Faculty who sign up to participate will NOT need to pick up a ticket to attend the event. Faculty will be seated together in a designated area. Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the University Secretary if you have any questions or concerns.

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>.