



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

April 2, 2014

On Data & Budgets: There is a quip about statistics that maybe you have heard, that some use data in the same way a drunk uses lamp-posts — for support rather than illumination. In our recent budget discussions, there were many numbers and data used by all sides (including myself) to support their positions. I am therefore embarking this year on a campaign to help explain our budget and data through a variety of venues and meetings. To begin with, please see the information in the [Performance Effectiveness Report](#), comparing UNM to other New Mexico universities (the three research and four comprehensive institutions), as well as to our own peers. I direct your attention to the executive summary (pages 7-21). On another front, and after weighing data presented by various sides (including myself), the UNM Board of Regents (BOR) approved last Friday our Fiscal Year 2015 budget and compensation plan. As you probably know, the BOR approved three percent raises for our faculty (similar to last year) and, for the first time in many years, a two percent raise for our staff and graduate assistants. The BOR also determined that there would be no increase in tuition or fees, except for the Los Alamos branch, and differential tuition increases for Anderson School of Management, Architecture & Planning, and Speech and Hearing Sciences. The challenge now is to develop a plan for funding compensation, which will be presented to the Regents' Fiscal and Finance subcommittee meeting this Friday, April 4.

UNM Personnel as Public Intellectuals: What role should academics play in public affairs? The debate has a long history, and the answers vary widely. Plato was an early proponent of intellectuals as not just outspoken, but [in charge](#), though the actual political record of Greek intellectuals was less decisive. Arguments for expanded public roles are seen by some as manifestations of anti-intellectualism, attempts to make academics less academic. The debate was taken up again when Nicholas Kristof wrote an [op-ed in the NY Times](#). The responses from professors were [swift and diverse](#). How should we frame the discussion about UNM's role in public but non-partisan life in New Mexico? An [article](#) from the American Association of University Professors might be a good place to start: "Academics must seize the moment to assert higher education's primary role in the democratic work of the country and collaborate with the public to address society's core challenges. We must lead by assuming roles as public intellectuals. We must fill the leadership vacuum created by political intransigence and obstruction." While I encourage you to think about our role with respect to public engagement, I also believe that our public intellectual work ought always to be grounded in our specific disciplines (with evidence of that via peer-reviewed publication); otherwise when we speak we speak only as fellow citizens, not public intellectuals. What do you think? You can continue the conversation on the [provost blog](#), and if you're already convinced, you might begin by visiting the [UNM Newsroom](#), and signing up as a [faculty expert](#).

Anti-Plagiarism Technology for Teaching and Research: The Provost's IT Liaison Stephen Burd has been working hard with the Faculty Senate, UNM IT Services, and others to acquire and deploy anti-plagiarism tools. **Turnitin** is now available to UNM faculty. Turnitin is an analysis and feedback tool for written works that provides originality checking, grammar/style checking, management of paper submissions, and student peer review. Turnitin is available to UNM Faculty for \$100 per instructor, per year. TurnItIn fees for HSC faculty have been paid in advance. Visit the [TurnItIn site](#) for more information and to sign up. **iThenticate** is also available to faculty, staff, and graduate students free of charge, and provides plagiarism detection for scholarly publishers, funding agencies, and researchers. Visit the [iThenticate site](#) for more information and to sign up.

Taking Positions: In this space and on the provost blog, I often reference or quote from reports or other national or international sources. Most of the time, my intent is to generate discussion rather than take a position either as an individual or in my capacity as provost. In a few cases, I have taken a personal position for or against a certain point of view. As we continue our intellectual engagement, I would request that if you disagree with a particular position, you first distinguish posts in which I have or have not expressed a preference, and to express your support or disagreement on the blog or in other forums.

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