



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

March 24, 2016

Any philosophy that can be put in a nutshell belongs in one.

—Hilary Putman (1927-2016)

In the Communiqué of February 13, 2013, I posted a paragraph that I reproduce below:

“‘*E pluribus unum*’ or ‘Out of many, one’ (alternatively translated as ‘One out of many’ or ‘One from many’) is a phrase on the Seal of the United States, along with *Annuitcoeptis* and *Novus ordoseclorum*, and adopted by an Act of Congress in 1782. Never codified by law, *E pluribus unum* was considered a *de facto* motto of the United States until 1956 when the United States Congress passed an act (H. J. Resolution 396), adopting ‘In God We Trust’ as the official motto.” Today, I am proposing that we use *E pluribus UNM* to remind us that despite our many backgrounds, areas of expertise, responsibilities, and job functions, we must coordinate our efforts in order to succeed. At a time when universities are being criticized and blamed, we cannot afford to waste energy or resources, nor can we afford to let our egos, personalities, and historical grudges slow us down!”

I re-read that post after the meeting of the board of regents on Monday, the 14th of March. Most of you should by now be aware of the governance restructuring that the Board of Regents undertook during that meeting. I encourage everyone to read the E-book of the March 14 meeting found [here](#). My message as usual is addressed to the whole university community. Regardless of what you believed on March 14, or what you have learned since then, I [ask that](#) you “do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumor...” but instead, please take your time to learn and think about the Regents’ decision. The challenges ahead of us in 2016 are, if anything, greater than they were only a few years ago, and we will all need to join together to face them.

Higher Education Turbulence: As UNM strives to maintain the funding levels needed to sustain ourselves as a true flagship research university amid reduced public funding, limited tuition increases that have not kept up with inflation, recent enrollment declines, and the resulting budget reductions (past and current), we too face turbulence. In confronting that turbulence, we will be seeking new efficiencies in our operations as well as assertively making the case for why future economic and social progress in New Mexico depends upon sustaining a research university that meets flagship status, with the funding to support it.

One higher-education leader at the recent [South by Southwest 2016](#) event described the imperative of higher education today: “that is what all of us who lead colleges and universities need to do. We need to unshutter windows and open doors, not close them. We need to help people walk through those doorways, not stand in their way. We need to tear down walls, not build them. We need to let in air and light and hope.”

Campus Climate and Free Speech: Difficult Conversations: We also need to remember that public universities must be places where we can debate the most difficult questions of our time, freely speaking our minds in an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect. Campuses from the University of Missouri to Yale have seen students and faculty demand action on racial and other forms of inequality and problems with campus climate, while some have worried about threats to free speech. We are fortunate to be hosting Dr. Jonathan Holloway, Dean of Yale College, for a lecture and other gatherings on April 5. Titled “Crybullies, the Death of Free Speech, and Other Red Herrings: Universities and the Public in the Age of Social Media,” the lecture is a first-person account of the turmoil at Yale in the 2015 fall semester, reflecting on the risks of difficult conversations on campus. The lecture will be at 6 p.m. in the Hibben Auditorium, with livestreaming and broadcast on the big screen in the SUB atrium, with questions coming in via Twitter. For more information, see [here](#).

State of Academic Affairs Report: The State of Academic Affairs Report for 2014-15 is completed and [available on the Academic Affairs website](#). The report includes contributions from the main campus college deans, Office of Academic Affairs, and the various academic areas within the University of New Mexico (UNM). The respective

leaders were charged with providing a brief description of their units, including information on function, budget, and personnel, major activities of Academic Year 2013- 2014 (AY 2013-2014), and plans for the future.

UNM Faculty Technology Survey:UNM's annual faculty technology survey was announced two weeks ago. This year's survey includes questions that probe how well UNM Learn supports your teaching activities, as well as questions regarding Classroom Technologies, Investment Priorities, and Technical Support and IT Services.

UNM Learn is our standard learning management system supporting both online and face-to-face courses.

A reminder message with a survey link should appear in your inbox shortly after this message. Your responses will inform a faculty-led effort to evaluate UNM Learn and to consider improvements, upgrades, or a replacement. Please take the time to complete the entire survey and help ensure that UNM Learn best supports your instructional activities and student learning.

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](#).