



THE UNIVERSITY of  
NEW MEXICO

Office of the Provost



## WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

September 21, 2016

*Thinking is difficult. That's why most people judge.*

—Carl Gustav Jung

**Higher Education Finances:** For the previous two weeks, and many times before, I have attempted to present my understanding and framing of the challenges facing (public) higher education. Some of you have provided feedback about the history and causes of the current situation. Specifically, some have traced the cost increases to the “corporatization” of the university, and others to the ever-expanding missions and federal and state requirements. While many of these have undoubtedly contributed to the challenges that public research universities are facing, I believe these are only part of the picture. I encourage you to read [this article](#) about the “sacred cows” of financial management. It was written for independent schools, but public universities share many of the same “sacred cows” (I previously wrote about it [here](#)). I also recommend the reports found at the [Lincoln Project website](#).

**Town Hall Discussion:** I am now convinced, more than ever, that the time has come to call on the collective wisdom of our campus community to provide ideas on how to address the immediate and, even more importantly, the structural concerns of our university. The university community is invited to an informal town hall discussion with the president and members of his executive team (including myself) to discuss a number of pressing university issues. The event is tomorrow (Thursday), Sept. 22 from 12:30-2 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom.

To the best of my knowledge, no one has a ready-made solution to the question of how to support and fund public higher education. I am confident, however, that some of the answers will come from [creative thinking](#) by our faculty and community.

**State General Core:** (this is a repeat of the August 24, 2016 posting) The Statewide General Education Steering Committee is proceeding with a series of meetings to construct a new set of New Mexico general education requirements by 2017. I look forward to continuing the discussion around general education at UNM — one that has involved faculty and other stakeholders responsible for delivering general education courses. You may find out more about the process that started a few months ago by visiting the [project's website](#). We will serve our students best if we can offer a distinctly New Mexican vision of general education while also adhering to national standards and to educating students who will live and work across the globe. One national model, known as [Liberal Education and America's Promise \(LEAP\)](#), and outlined by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU), has inspired much of the discussion. It emphasizes a curriculum built around developing personal and social responsibility, intellectual and practical skills and knowledge of human cultures, and the physical and natural world. The process we are engaged in within New Mexico and UNM will allow us to renew our ongoing dedication to diversity, to a strong and broad liberal education for UNM undergraduates, and to a credit distribution model that keeps student learning at the forefront. I look forward to your feedback. You can follow the Statewide General Education Steering Committee's deliberations [here](#).

**Twitter Poetry:** One of our faculty colleagues sent me [this BBC article](#) that made me a Twitter follower of Brian Bilston. My favorite so far is [this poem](#), which illustrates the power of poetry and the importance of context.

**Honorary Degrees:** The Office of the Secretary is still receiving nominations for honorary degree recipients. Please send nominations to the Office of the Secretary, Scholes Hall 103, MSC05 3340, or email [secretary@unm.edu](mailto:secretary@unm.edu) no later than Friday, Oct. 14.

**Move Beyond Civility:** The Division of Equity and Inclusion invites you to join them for the webinar, “Move Beyond Civility: How to Facilitate Difficult Dialogues in the Classroom,” on Tuesday, Sept. 27, from 12-1:30 p.m. in the Collaborative Teaching & Learning Building (CTLB) room 110. You can register for the event [here](#).

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](mailto:provost@unm.edu). Please also see the [Provost's Blog](#).