



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

November 23, 2016

Our Campus, Our Values: My last communiqué generated many responses, mostly in agreement with the sentiments I expressed. This week, I would like to call on everyone who expressed their support, and those who did not, to come together around a second but just as important a message, namely to uphold the values of intellectual pursuit and respectful disagreement. Specifically, we owe it to our students and colleagues to provide them the space to seek the truth with no fear of retaliation. To quote again from [Maalouf's book](#), "To approach someone else convincingly you must do so with open arms and head held high, and your arms can't be open unless your head IS high." To disagree in the pursuit of truth is part of what a university should be about, and the philosopher Daniel Dennett [actually provides](#) "a map for how to compose a successful critical commentary: 1) You should attempt to re-express your target's position so clearly, vividly, and fairly that your target says, "Thanks, I wish I'd thought of putting it that way. 2) You should list any points of agreement (especially if they are not matters of general or widespread agreement). 3) You should mention anything you have learned from your target. 4) Only then are you permitted to say so much as a word of rebuttal or criticism."

I am convinced that this country and our university are better than the sum of our worst divisions and fears, and to give you a hint of why that is so, I remind you that on Nov. 8, "at the same time Donald Trump was watching the Presidential-election returns from Trump Tower, in New York, [Ilhan Omar](#) was in the Courtyard Marriott in Minneapolis, watching the returns and learning that she had also been elected, as a Minnesota House Representative for the city's 60B District." She is a Muslim, an immigrant, and the first American-Somali legislator in the United States.

Last week, I asked that "No one should be made to feel unwelcome or unsafe because of who they are, what they think, or how they vote. We say we protect the pack, and that goes for everyone, including those who disagree with us, and those of us who came here from elsewhere attracted by American values and better lives." I urge you this week to make sure that our university remains a marketplace of ideas and solutions, and may Thanksgiving be a day for all of us to call on "the better angels of our nature."

Project ECHO: One of the best projects to come out of UNM, and one that epitomizes how our faculty, staff, and students have come together to solve local and global problems, is project ECHO, led by Dr. Arora. Here is a [Harvard Business Review article](#) that will warm your heart and proves once again how a few can change the world.

UNM Promotional Video: On Friday, the [new UNM promotional video](#) went live and online. It is a stunning 30-second celebration of UNM. You can share it on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and tag it on [Instagram](#).

Black Lives Matter: The [fourth session](#) of #BLACKLIVESMATTERATUNM will be held on Thursday, Dec. 1, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in Lobo A & B in the Student Union Building. This session, "The End of the Post Racial Myth," will examine the impact of a shifting national climate on the civil liberties and personal freedoms of Black students, Faculty and Staff. The goal of the #BLACKLIVESMATTERATUNM series is to discuss, identify, and work toward solutions to improve campus climate for Black students at UNM.

Volunteers are needed for Fall 2016 Commencement: I encourage you to volunteer for one of the two upcoming graduation ceremonies. The graduate ceremony will be held on Thursday, Dec. 15 at 6 p.m.; and the undergraduate ceremony will be held on Friday, Dec. 16 at 6 p.m. Both ceremonies will be held in the WisePies Areas (a.k.a. The PIT). Volunteer hours for the graduate ceremony will be between 4-7 p.m. and for the undergraduate ceremony 4-8 p.m. You can volunteer [here](#), or find more information at: <http://graduation.unm.edu/>.

Weekly Dashboard Challenge: Two weeks ago we had the third of five "Dashboard Challenges." The question was: what year did UNM become a majority-minority institution? The answer, according to [dashboard.unm.edu](#), for

overall University enrollment is 2011. For an explanation of the answer, as well as tips for navigating the dashboard, see [this video](#) from Associate Provost Greg Heileman.

The question produced a wide variety of responses, showing us that the question was not as straightforward as we thought. The answer varies depending on whether you look only at beginning freshmen (2004), only the undergraduate population (2007), or total UNM student enrollment (2011).

Given the wide range of interpretations of the question across the responses we received, we have accepted any answer for which you submitted a reasonable justification. The two winners of the drawing will be notified via email. Finally, with Thanksgiving break beginning tomorrow, we have decided to announce the fourth challenge in next Wednesday's communiqué.

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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](#).