



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

January 25, 2012

Changing the Subject: According to Winston Churchill, “A fanatic is someone who can’t change his mind and won’t change the subject.” I am still receiving spirited feedback on the relative value of Wikipedia versus more traditional encyclopedias. I am happy to report that you are verifying my references and statements, and finding inaccuracies and inconsistencies, as well as extensions and support.

NM Legislative Session: The 2012 session of the New Mexico Legislature opened at noon on Tuesday, January 17, 2012. This is a short 30-day session that will eventually propose a budget for UNM among other things. For more information and updates on this important activity for all of us, please visit: <http://govrel.unm.edu/legislative-sessions/index.html>.

The Role of Universities: What are Universities for? The answer to this question, and more specifically what the role of UNM is (or should be) at the heart of our academic plan. While searching for the answer(s), I came across one of the first documents on the subject by John Henry Newman <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/>.

In my opinion, the most complete document is the appropriately titled: What are Universities For? It was published in 2008 and may be found at: <http://www.leru.org/index.php/public/publications/publications-2002-2009/>.

“The Information Diet” is a book by Clay A. Johnson that I am almost done reading. While I found the central thesis of being selective about how much and what kind of information we consume intriguing, one of the most insightful quotes I encountered (pertaining to food, not information) from the book is the following by Michael Pollan, “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”

World Economic Forum: Our own Computer Science Professor Stephanie Forrest is attending the 2012 WEC forum in Davos, Switzerland. She was invited to give a short talk on the topic “Biological Models for Software Security” as part of a session on complexity science. The talk will be delivered using the Pecha-Kucha format as seen for example on: <http://www.pecha-kucha.org/>.

Donald Randel Visit: We had a very successful inaugural talk in our academic planning lecture series by Dr. Donald Randel, President of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation on Monday, January 23. You can listen to his talk at: <http://unmlive.unm.edu/>.

Check out the ASAR Workplan: The workplan of the Academic/Students Affairs & Research Committee of the Board of Regents is the first item found on the site: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>. The Academic Affairs Office is executing on this workplan and will post progress updates monthly.

Welcome back! As many of you know, our next president, Dr. Robert Frank, is a native New Mexican who also received his college degrees from UNM. Professor Luci Tapahonso is another New Mexican

who is coming home. She recently accepted a position in the UNM English Department teaching Native American literature and creative writing. Her book, "*Blue Horses Rush In,*" was awarded the Mountain and Plains Booksellers Association's 1998 Award for Poetry. She was also awarded The Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers Storyteller of the Year award in 1998. Born and raised in Shiprock, New Mexico, she attended UNM where she completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees. She has gone on to become one of the most widely recognized Diné poets whose work has been anthologized internationally, and is now back at UNM.

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.

Sincerely, Chaouki Abdallah, Interim Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs