



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

November 23, 2011

2011 United States Professor of the Year: Do you know that a UNM professor received the United States Professor of the Year Award? Last week, I had the privilege of joining Dr. Ursula Shepherd, a faculty member in the Biology department and the Honors program, in Washington D.C. where she was honored as the recipient of the 2011 CASE and The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching Professor of the Year Award for doctoral & research universities. Dr. Shepherd was nominated and introduced by her former student, Justine Garcia, who is currently pursuing a graduate degree at Emory University. Professor Shepherd's acceptance speech as well as a moving speech by Professor Volk of Oberlin College may be found at: <http://www.usprofessorsoftheyear.org/Winners.html>.

Open Forum with Students: Last week, Senior Vice Provost Michael Dougher and Associate Provost Greg Heileman joined me in an open forum at the SUB to answer students concerns and questions about the state of Academic Affairs at UNM. The students were justifiably concerned about issues of accessibility, tuition cost, advising, graduation rates, and the future of UNM. The event was coordinated by ASUNM and GPSA and I hope that it will be the first of many, as we engage our campus in our academic plan.

Are you less popular than your friends? In a 1991 paper titled, "Why Your Friends Have More Friends Than You Do" in the *American Journal of Sociology*, <http://www.jstor.org/pss/2781907> Scott L Feld showed that on the average, your friends are more popular than you are! The basis of the argument is that you are more likely to be friends with someone who has more friends than with someone who has fewer friends. This friendship paradox was used by Nicholas Christakis to efficiently predict the outbreak of flu and other diseases (see http://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_how_social_networks_predict_epidemics.html).

University Governance: In 1968 Princeton University formed a committee to study the structure and governance of the University. Under the leadership of Professor Stanley Kelley Jr., the committee published a report found at: <http://findingaids.princeton.edu/getEad?eadid=AC044&kw=kelley%20report> which remains to this day the standard text on university governance.

A PDF version of this communiqué is available at: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>.

Your feedback and input is welcome at: provost@unm.edu.

Sincerely,

Chaouki Abdallah
Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs