



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

January 29, 2014

Decision is a sharp knife that cuts clean and straight; indecision, a dull one that hacks and tears and leaves ragged edges behind it.

—Gordon Graham

Black History Month: “For 28 years, Africana Studies of UNM has created and hosted a Black History Month Kickoff Brunch.” This year’s brunch was held on Saturday the 25th of January and featured Sybrina Fulton, mother of Trayvon Martin. This year marks “the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the national theme for Black History Month is Civil Rights in America.” You can find more information about the Black History Month events on the [Africana Studies webpage](#).

Innovation: what is it and where do I get it? It seems like everywhere we turn these days, we keep hearing about innovation. Of course, to “innovate” does not *necessarily* improve anything – we want innovation that produces positive change. I thought that in light of the Innovate ABQ momentum, we should have a conversation about what it means to innovate and how we can use our many talents and initiatives to nurture and create innovative programs. Here are some of the papers and books I have been reading in order to learn more about innovation. First, “The Wall Street Journal is out with a funny (and brutally honest) takedown of a word that has achieved almost-mythical status among business thinkers [Stop Me Before I “Innovate” Again!](#)” The most informative reference, however, has been the book of Tony Wagner, titled “Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change The World.” Wagner is the author who defined the seven survival skills for the 21st Century as: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across networks and leading by influence (see for example [IDEOs Culture of Helping](#)), agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurship, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination. He then proceeded to add the following ingredients: play, passion, and purpose.

Measures and Metrics: “Employers the world over tell us that what truly counts in hiring decisions is not the rote knowledge that helps college students answer examination questions, but skills and competencies that are essential for, and often developed at, work.” This, however, will require us to teach and assess for the long term. “To link education to meaningful outcomes, what’s needed is the ability in colleges to assess – in detail and at scale – the development of real world-relevant skills. That’s an area ripe for collaboration between the educational and corporate worlds, as well as non-profit and public sectors. Assessing skills is tough, but not impossible. The Collegiate Learning Assessment, and its new version, CLA+, are already in use by over 700 institutions around the world. What these instruments do is assess the effectiveness of college courses in developing not discipline-based knowledge, but the ability to “analyze and evaluate information, solve problems, and communicate effectively.” See [How Business Can Help Measure Education Outcomes that Matter](#).

Up to Us: The “Up to Us” competition, a program to raise awareness of the National Debt, was launched nationwide last week. UNM was one of 25 schools [selected to participate](#), and our students are doing creative and exciting work, like this [parody](#) of the hit TV-show Breaking Bad. Students will be judged in part on the number of times people visit their YouTube videos and take the national debt quiz, and students from the top five schools will join former President Clinton at next year’s Clinton Global Initiative, where they will have the opportunity to serve as panelists on the national debt.

Keeping Meetings on Track: A bad meeting is an impediment to progress, in addition to being a miserable experience. Leading good meetings is a skill and an art – one that can be learned. The article “[The Seven Imperatives to Keeping Meetings on Track](#)” proposes the following strategies: (1) Make the purpose clear, (2)

Control the size, (3) Set the right tone, (4) Manage ramblers, (5) Control tangents, (6) Make careful transitions, and (7) End the meeting well.

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