



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

January 21, 2015

The State of New Mexico Higher Education Budget: There are currently two recommendations for the higher education budget for the State of New Mexico. The first is the [legislature budget](#) proposed by the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC), which adds around 2.1 percent to the UNM total funding from the state to the tune of \$6.8 million. Note that the Instructional & General (I&G) portion of the UNM state-funded budget is about \$189 million, while the total amount is around \$315 million. The second recommendation is from the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), and is considered to be the [executive recommendation](#). It proposes adding around 1 percent or \$3 million to the UNM budget. Both recommendations assume about \$140 million in new revenues and a price of oil around \$66/barrel. New estimates for additional revenues will certainly come out much lower, as the price of oil is currently less than \$50/barrel. The two budget recommendations are therefore considered optimistic. The legislative session started on January 20 and will last for 60 days, ending on March 21, at which time we will have the final legislative budget recommendation. The governor then has about two weeks to finalize the budget (she can line-item veto any specific expenditure). Our final state appropriation will then be known in early April. For more information about the UNM budget, see <http://www.unm.edu/~budget/>.

On Writing: When I passed my qualifying exam, my Ph.D. adviser gave me a copy of the book “The Elements of Style” by Strunk and White, coupled with the advice: this is the most useful gift I will ever give you. I have carried on the tradition with my own students, but recently came across an essay by Steven Pinker in the Chronicle, as well as [this interview](#).

I found both very intriguing and have since started reading Pinker’s latest book: “The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person’s Guide to Writing in the 21st Century.” I believe I have found the next book to give to my future Ph.D. students.

The Ideal Leader: One of the best descriptions of an ideal leader I learned from John Cleese, of Monty Python fame. In a [recent interview](#), he stated:

“In the book ‘Life and How to Survive It,’ which I developed with Robin Skynner, we decided that the ideal leader was the one who was trying to make himself dispensable. In other words, he was helping the people around him acquire as many of his skills as possible so he could let everyone else do the work and just keep an eye on things, minimizing his job and the chaos that would come with a transfer of authority.”

A much longer list, but no less useful in characterizing effective leadership, is decoded in [this article](#).

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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