



THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Office of the Provost



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

February 4, 2015

The Usefulness of Uselessness: One of our faculty colleagues told me last week about [an article](#) that was sent to her daughter by Tufts University. The article states, “It is often repeated that you need a college education to get a decent job. This is true. No one denies it. But it is not true that the mission of the college is therefore to prepare young people for a career. Colleges do that anyway but a lot more besides. It is easy to forget that ‘lot more.’” The title is intentionally provocative and the article is one of the best I have read on the value and purpose of college education, and it reminded me of the abstract of one of the most influential papers in my field of study, control theory. The title of the paper is “Guaranteed Margins of LQG Regulators,” and the abstract states: “There are none.”

Finalists Selected for the position of Vice President for Research: After a nationwide search, I am pleased to announce the selection of five finalists for the position of Vice President for Research. An announcement with the names and visit dates of the finalists will be sent out through a separate All-Fac email announcement. Dean Coonrod and the search committee have done an excellent job identifying these finalists from a broad pool of candidates, including over 50 applicants and nine semi-finalists who participated in Skype interviews. I look forward to the campus visits of the five finalists. Each visit will include an open forum, during which the finalists will speak, and members of the UNM community will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to the search committee. I encourage you to attend these important events. Information about the candidates, and times and locations for their visits and open forums, will be posted as available on [the search website](#).

Data to Knowledge Day: The Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of the Chief Information Officer invite you to submit presentations for UNM’s Data to Knowledge (D2K) Day by the end of this week. The event will be held on February 20. This is not a formal research conference, but rather an informal day of networking that promotes the sharing of data, approaches, expertise, and tools to solve data-enabled research challenges, as well as encourages critical reflections on how data is used to create new knowledge. To have your presentation considered, please submit a title and a ~250 word abstract to kvwaseta@unm.edu; you will be notified if your proposal is accepted. Event details can be found on [the website](#).

Rebel Film Screening and Discussion: On February 19, 6:30-9 p.m. in the Student Union Building Ballroom C, film director Maria Agui Carter will screen her film “Rebel” (75 minutes), which presents the amazing story of Loreta Janeta Velazquez, who crossdressed as a Confederate soldier turned Union Spy. Following the screening, the director will discuss Velazquez with UNM’s Dr. Jesse Alemán, who has studied and written about her. There is no charge and all are welcome.

UNM Day in Santa Fe: Among the many reasons to go to Santa Fe during the legislative session, the Health Sciences Center (HSC) Faculty Council is sponsoring a trip on February 9 to educate legislators on UNM and UNM HSC issues. The delegation is made up of HSC Faculty Council members and main campus faculty (including Faculty Senate President Pamela Pyle) and is underwritten by Chancellor Paul Roth and funds from the HSC Council’s budget.

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

A PDF version of this communiqué is available at <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/communique-archive.html>. Your feedback and input are welcome at provost@unm.edu. Please also see the Provost’s Blog, which can be found here: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>.