



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

October 26, 2016

State General Core (again): Beginning in [August](#), I have posted many times about the effort to reform and revitalize general education for New Mexico colleges and universities. I encourage you to learn more about it. The [Statewide General Education Steering Committee](#) continues to make progress in constructing a new set of New Mexico general education requirements. If you want to understand the background of this effort, you can read [this two-page document](#), which outlines the relevant state laws and administrative codes, the current challenges in managing the transfer of core courses between institutions, and how this current effort seeks to resolve those challenges. Please note that the core itself is stipulated in state law, and that state administrative code specifies the particular requirements for its implementation. For instance, the administrative code specifies the particular subject areas the core must cover, along with the number of credit hours that must be satisfied within each subject area. You can find out more about the process at the [NM Statewide General Education website](#).

Where are the jobs? Part of the statewide discussion about the general education core revolved around the question of what a college graduate should know. In related discussions, much has been made about the role of education to provide marketable skills, as well as preparing graduates to be citizens in a democracy. It turns out that while we know a lot about the [highest-paying jobs](#) for college graduates, it may not be immediately obvious what jobs follow from specific majors. As an extreme example, a [recent article](#) highlights the connection between music education and cybersecurity careers.

In fact, as it states in the article, “the principal security engineer at the telecommunications services firm [Level 3](#) has noticed that a great deal of the people on his team have some music background. ‘Those personalities are more creative,’ he says. They’re able to ‘think outside the box; able to think on demand, or construct complex elements into patterns.’” He went on to state “that his music skills helped him excel in the technical world; ‘Particularly security,’ he adds. ‘The guys that are good at jazz improv tend to be good at technology.’”

Higher Learning Commission: As President Frank announced in his [Monday letter](#) to campus, the dates for our upcoming accreditation site visit have been confirmed. The visit will take place March 4-5, 2019. In preparation for the visit, we formed a number of committees to collect evidence and begin preparing a report, which will be submitted prior to the visit. To find out more about the accreditation process, including its importance to our university and students, please see [this video](#) by our own Associate Provost Greg Heileman. A website has also been created to support the work of the committees, and you can follow their progress at the [UNM HLC Accreditation website](#).

Weekly Dashboard Challenge: As I shared with you last week, the recently redesigned [dashboard.unm.edu](#) contains visualizations of data about students, faculty, and staff at UNM. Having access to easy-to-understand information can support and improve decision making around campus. To encourage you to navigate the dashboards, I will include a “Weekly Dashboard Challenge” in each Communiqué until Thanksgiving break. If you send the correct answer to provost@unm.edu you will be entered into a drawing for a \$10 Lobo Cash card (accepted at [these locations](#)). You must submit your answer by 5 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 28. Today’s challenge: according to [dashboard.unm.edu](#), since the 2013-14 academic year, how much has the 4-year graduation rate improved, on a percentage basis?

May the Power of thinking be with you: One of the more interesting blogs that I subscribe to is Brainpickings. The blog is now 10 years old and a [recent posting](#) was full of positive thoughts.

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

A PDF version of this Communiqué is available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Your feedback and input are welcome at provost@unm.edu. Please also see the [Provost's Blog](#).