



*WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ*

**Wednesday, December 7, 2016**

**Finals Week:** Next week is our Fall 2016 finals week. Please refer to the [final exam schedule](#) for exact times and information.

**Knocking on The College Door Report:** The [Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education](#) (WICHE) has released its 2016 “[Knocking on the College Door Report](#).” I strongly encourage you to review the report and its findings. The report provides the following sobering conclusion: “After [a] 30-percent increase in graduates from 1995 to 2013, [the] number of high school grads will not grow through 2023. New Mexico will unfortunately fare even worse and will see a drop in high school graduates from about 20,200 to 18,400 by 2023.” Keep in mind that only a fraction, approximately two-thirds, of those high school graduates are college-bound. About one-fourth of those college-bound students will attend UNM, which is actually quite good when compared to some of our peers. These projections have been fairly consistent over the last few years.

The report also documents the continued shift in student demographics, as described by Joe Garcia, president of WICHE: “We are moving toward a time when nearly half of all high school graduates will be students of color, with the largest increases among Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders. Meanwhile, as our population continues to shift geographically, the states that will gain the most population will educate the highest percentage of students of color.” This will be evident in states that will see overall growth, such as Texas, but also in states where the high school graduate numbers will shrink, such as New Mexico.

At a time when most public universities have had limited ability to raise revenues with tuition increases, the growth in the number of college-bound students provided some relief by raising overall revenues. This may be coming to an end. Peace Bransberger, senior research analyst at WICHE and a co-author of the report, said, “Higher education institutions can no longer rely on an ever-increasing pool of high school graduates to fill their classrooms. They also must rethink how they equip their institutions to support a new majority.”

These findings should further convince us at UNM to redouble our efforts to increase our online and recruiting programs for out-of-state students, and to refine our model for educating and graduating more of our citizens in both secondary and post-secondary schools. We must also work harder to attract companies to New Mexico, since that is a key strategy in turning the tide on net state migration and the shrinking high school demographic.

**Weekly Dashboard Challenge:** Last week we had the fourth of five “Dashboard Challenges.” The question was: how many baccalaureate, masters, and doctoral degrees did UNM students earn last year? We received 35 correct answers out of 41 submissions. Participants will be notified via email whether they were one of two to receive a LoboCash card.

Interestingly, there were two possible correct answers to the challenge, depending on when you accessed the dashboard. This underscores one of the features of our reporting, especially when using live dashboards, which is that even official and historical data can be updated from time to time. This happened in the case of these graduates. This could be due to corrections in the data sets, or even retroactive graduations. If you accessed the dashboard early, you would have tallied 5,431 total degrees (3,851 baccalaureate, 1,184 masters, and 396 doctoral degrees). If you accessed the dashboard before the deadline on Friday, there were two additional degrees tallied (one more each for masters and doctoral degrees) for a total of 5,433.

For the final challenge, we would like to introduce a new site: [workforce.unm.edu](http://workforce.unm.edu). While taking the guided tour, see if you can answer this challenge: for graduates receiving a bachelor’s degree during the 2007-08 graduation year, what was their average salary one, three, and five years after graduation? If you send the correct answer to

[provost@unm.edu](mailto: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, Dec. 9.

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