



The Acting Provost's Weekly Brief

February 8, 2017

As I serve in my new role as acting provost, I intend to use these weekly briefs to provide my perspective and impressions of academic affairs and the university, including its organization and planning processes. In the past month or so, I have become more familiar with the Board of Regents, its committee structure, its interactions with different parts of the University, and how those interactions inform the overall decision-making process. As an ongoing item, I will point out some of the functions of the committees and how they work with faculty and administration.

The [Board of Regents](#) has four standing committees: 1) Academic/Student Affairs & Research (ASAR), 2) Finance and Facilities (F&F), 3) Health Sciences Center (HSC), and 4) Audit and Compliance. The duties of the HSC and Audit and Compliance committees are outlined in detail in the [Regents Policy Manual](#). The duties and functions of the ASAR and F&F committees are defined more broadly:

“[Both ASAR and F&F] shall include at least gathering information, conferring with members of the administration, faculty, staff, student body, and public on the topics within the committee's duties, and making recommendations for action by the Board of Regents.”

Each of these committees meets monthly. The Office of the Provost participates most directly in the ASAR Committee, with the provost serving as a voting member (along with the presidents of the faculty senate and staff council). As the name implies, the main function of the committee is addressing academic, student affairs and research issues. You can get a better sense for ASAR topic areas by looking at the agenda and e-book, which can be found on the [ASAR page](#) of the Academic Affairs website.

The ASAR Committee met this past week to conduct both routine business and updates on major strategic initiatives. The reports from the February meeting recommended to go forward to the full Board of Regents are Vice Provost Greg Heileman's student success update and Rob Del Campo's Innovation Academy update.

Acting President Abdallah's Message Regarding Immigration Issues

I want to direct your attention to [Acting President Abdallah's special message](#) regarding immigration issues that impact the UNM community. In addition to describing the University's approach to many of these topics, it provides links to frequently asked questions and other resources regarding this issue from around campus. I encourage you to reference this message as you seek additional information.

Budget Leadership Team

The [Budget Leadership Team](#) will have an extended meeting on Thursday, Feb. 16 from 8-12 p.m. The subcommittees will be presenting options for inclusion in the proposed FY '18 budget. (I wrote about the subcommittee structure in a previous [weekly brief](#)). The extended time for this meeting will allow committee members to review each of the recommendations in depth. Budget drafts for further discussion will be developed based on these recommendations. These drafts will be further discussed and forwarded to the President for review and broader campus conversation.

Monty Hall Problem

Ian McKinnon, who spoke at the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the McKinnon Center for Management, provided examples of the importance of critical thinking in problem solving. One of the illustrations he discussed is known as the [Monty Hall Problem](#). Here is a description from the Wikipedia page, quoting Marilyn Vos Savant in Parade magazine:

“Suppose you're on a game show, and you're given the choice of three doors: Behind one door is a car; behind the others, goats. You pick a door, say No. 1, and the host, who knows what's behind the doors, opens another door, say No. 3, which has a goat. He then says to you, "Do you want to pick door No. 2?" Is it to your advantage to switch your choice?"

What do you think? Feel free to give us feedback at provost@unm.edu.

Spoiler Alert

The answer is that to maximize the chance of winning the contestant should always switch doors.

Craig White

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A PDF version of this weekly brief is available on the [Academic Affairs website](#). Your feedback and input are welcome at provost@unm.edu.