



# The Acting Provost's Weekly Brief

**May 10, 2017**

Good afternoon. It has been a while in the making, but it looks like progress on the budget may be in sight. While the outcome of the State's process is still speculative, there are some definitive dates on the horizon. The lawsuit between the Legislature and the Executive Branch regarding the Governor's veto will be heard in the New Mexico Supreme Court the week of May 15. Also, the Governor has called a special session to begin on May 24. Hopefully, between these two events some resolution can be reached that provides more certainty for our own budget planning. Once the State appropriation is known, the Budget Leadership Team will reconvene and make final recommendations to the President, followed by a budget meeting with the regents.

The regents and the administration are keenly aware of the anxiety and uncertainty caused by the current situation. The University, under Acting President Abdallah's direction, helped develop an *amicus curiae* brief from the Council of University Presidents to the New Mexico Supreme Court regarding the situation. The brief can be found [here](#). It does an excellent job of detailing many of the detrimental impacts of the current budget impasse, including threats to public health and student success; disruption to recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students; and other concerns, such as accreditation issues and school financing. We will keep you informed as more details emerge.

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2017! With only a couple days of finals week left, we can look forward to celebrating your achievements during commencement. The [main UNM commencement ceremony](#) for graduate and undergraduate students will be held Saturday, May 13 at 9 a.m. at WisePies Arena. This year's keynote speaker is Joshua Cooper Ramo, the co-chief executive officer and vice chairman of Kissinger Associates. He is a third-generation New Mexican who grew up in Albuquerque. The times and locations for all of the graduation ceremonies can be found [here](#).

Finally, this will be the last regular Weekly Brief until next Fall, however you can expect to hear from me on occasion as events arise, including news on the budget and other major items. I hope the summer months are both productive and rejuvenating, and look forward to seeing faculty and students return in August!

## **Graduation Rates Expected to Increase**

UNM has worked diligently over the past six years to improve student success outcomes. A large number of initiatives—developmental and introductory course reforms, advising reforms, curricular changes, and working on the general climate about the need to improve student academic success—have all contributed to the improved outcomes. For the sixth year in a row, UNM will reach a record high four-year graduation rate. For the 2016-17 year, the four-year rate is expected to be 26 percent, up from 15 percent in 2010-11. The six-year graduation rate will be close to an all-time high at just under 50 percent. The baccalaureate degree numbers have likewise been on an upward trend from 3,379 in 2011-2012 to 3,851 in 2015-16. UNM's enrollment management estimates that the increase in four-year and six-year graduation rates saves students approximately \$5 million per year in avoided tuition and fee costs.

## **Nobel Laureate Visit**

Physics and Astronomy is hosting a lecture by Nobel Laureate W.E. Moerner tomorrow (Thursday), May 11, at 3:30 p.m. in Regener Hall, Room 103. Moerner, the 2014 Nobel Laureate, and the Harry S. Mosher Professor of Chemistry and Professor of Applied Physics at Stanford University, will present "What Can You Learn from Watching Single Molecules? From Super-Resolution Imaging to Nanoscale Probes of 3D Dynamics in Cells." The event is free and open to the public.


## **Provost Committee for Staff**

The Provost Committee for Staff has announced the winners of the "Outstanding Staff & Workgroup Award." The staff award winners are Brooke Stieger, Christine Sraha, and Stephanie Hands. This year's workgroup award winners are: Continuing Education IT, and the Residence Life & Student Housing Custodial Staff.

## **Recent Events**

There have been a number of great events over the past week, including two early graduation ceremonies. The LGBTQ Resource Center held the Sixth Annual Rainbow Graduation on Thursday, May 4. El Centro De La Raza held its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Raza Graduation on Friday, May 5. Over the weekend, the 88<sup>th</sup> New Mexico State LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) Convention took place in Alamogordo.

The Community Engaged Research Lecture was presented by Claudia Isaac, associate professor of Community + Regional Planning. She was the recipient of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Engaged Research Lectureship Award, which honored Dr. Isaac's outstanding research at UNM. Her talk, which took place on Thursday, was titled "Community Based Planning: Co-Creating Knowledge & Action." Dr. Isaac's research



and work on community-based planning projects begins by responding to community needs, and so she has naturally engaged with communities during planning. This represents a change in approach to traditional models of planning, as her talk highlighted, in which projects were imposed upon communities with little input. Dr. Isaac's message is timely, as the challenges our University currently faces require the creativity, resourcefulness, and determination of our entire campus community.

I hope you managed to attend at least one of these events last week, and I look forward to seeing you at commencement ceremonies beginning this weekend!

## **Craig White**

**Acting Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**

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