



The Interim Provost's Weekly Brief

December 1, 2017

Good afternoon! I hope you had a great Thanksgiving and that your holiday season is off to a good start. I know these final three weeks of the semester are very busy with classes, end of semester meetings, finals, and graduation. In the provost's office, we are working to finalize projects and set the stage for the next semester and academic year.

On a personal note, I will be moving back to my role as the dean of the Anderson School of Management at the beginning of the New Year. I requested this timing to facilitate a smoother transition, rather than return mid-semester. Interim President Abdallah will appoint an interim provost for January and February, prior to his move back to the office. I will continue to stay involved in the budget development process.

I have enjoyed working with the outstanding team in the provost's office, and getting to know faculty and staff across campus. You all are doing incredible things at UNM!

Academic Affairs Budget Discussion

Budget discussions are underway for the 2018-19 academic year. At this point, Academic Affairs has a preliminary estimate of a \$3.6 million shortfall in its portion of the Instructional and General (I&G) budget. The shortfall is the result of changes to enrollment levels and the decrease in state appropriations. We will be holding a special retreat with the deans on Dec. 8 to discuss the situation. The objectives of discussion will be twofold: 1) to identify equitable approaches to allocating the expected shortfall to the colleges and other academic affairs units, and 2) given the allocated amount, to discuss approaches to cover the gap at the unit level.

I do not expect a "one size fits all" approach at the unit level. Colleges and other units will have flexibility in managing their situation. Options will include use of reserves, adjustments to hiring plans, implementation of shared service practices, and revenue growth strategies (online, international, and others). The plans will be conveyed to the Budget Leadership Team, Interim President Abdallah, and President Stokes.

Biology Annex Recommendation

President Abdallah and I were charged with bringing a recommendation to the regents for the use of the Biology Annex on central campus. The Office of Academic Affairs secured an external consultant who worked with internal space planning staff to identify opportunities for use of the facility. First, space needs were reviewed for the schools and colleges and other units in Academic Affairs. After the initial review, I appointed a task force to make recommendations for the Biology Annex Project. After a series of consultations with the task force, the final recommendation for use of the Biology Annex is the creation of an Interdisciplinary Teaching and Learning Lab to facilitate the collaboration between the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Department of Museum Studies and Department of Biology. This recommendation reinforces and supports a central Academic Affairs goal to increasingly move toward interdisciplinary work at UNM. The recommendation will be presented at the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting on Tuesday and at the Board of Regents' Academic/Student Affairs and Research Committee meeting next Thursday.

2017 Mandatory Training Deadline

The Dec. 1 deadline for the 2017 Mandatory Training is today. If you haven't yet, please complete the three designated university-wide mandatory training courses. More information can be found [online](#).

Commencement Ceremony Volunteers

The University Secretary's Office is still looking for volunteers for the Fall 2017 Commencement. Volunteering is a great way to experience the ceremony, and connect with the University community. If you would like to volunteer, please visit the [sign-up link](#). There is a single commencement this year, including graduates from all degree programs and at all levels. The event will be held on Dec. 15 at 6 p.m. in Dreamstyle Arena. For more information, you can visit the [graduation page](#).

Staff Scholarship

The Provost Committee for Staff is now accepting applications for the Academic Support Scholarship for Spring 2018. The scholarship provides financial support for student staff members, beyond tuition remission, to help cover additional expenses, such as textbooks, course fees, and supplies. Applications are due on Tuesday, Dec. 19. More information can be found on the [PCS webpage](#).

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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.