



The Wednesday Communiqué

March 28, 2018

On Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

As a non-native English speaker, I have often sought the clarity and guidance of writers such as George Orwell. One of my favorite essays by Orwell is "[Politics and the English Language](#)" where he sets forth rules for writing "clear and tight prose."

Orwell points out that "Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers." Nor, [it appears](#), is it a concern exclusive to the Humanities. Math teachers have turned to the tight prose of "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" to help their students learn, in the belief that "the combination of mathematical, literary and personal reflection, along with students' genuine interest in the story, leads to higher student engagement."


Indeed, competency and engagement in reading and interpretation appear to be predictors of student success in math, as UNM Pure Math master's student Linh Ward found in her [2017 thesis](#) analyzing undergraduate performance in intermediate Algebra (Math 101-102-103) at UNM.

Federal Higher Ed Funding

Whether or not Orwell's dictum was on the minds of legislators, the [recent Omnibus bill](#) signed by the president "increases spending for most programs important to higher education." In particular, PELL grants and other student federal grants were increased, as was the funding to NSF, NIH, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Budgets and the Academic Mission

As reported by President Stokes on Monday, at last week's Budget Summit the Board of Regents approved the unanimous recommendation of the Budget Leadership Team to lay the foundation for a budget next year that avoids the most immediate threats to our academic mission and ongoing improvements in student outcomes. The new funding flows will help us invest in campus safety; student financial aid; staff, student, and faculty compensation; and retention of our strong faculty while



simultaneously absorbing some of the cuts of recent years. The coming year will by no means be a flush budget year, but we have space to move our research, teaching, and service forward in exciting ways.

At Least They Did Not Ask Him to Fill it in Triplicate

Next time you are asked to fill in a form or follow a process, you may take comfort in the knowledge that you are not being singled out by the stultifying operation of the bureaucratic machine—[Buzz Aldrin had it worse!](#)

Internship Fair

Tomorrow (Thursday) from 3-5 p.m., Innovation Academy and STC.UNM are hosting an internship fair at the Lobo Rain Forest building, at 101 Broadway NE. This is an opportunity, open to all students and majors, to meet and network with start-ups and other local employers interested in hiring interns. For more information, and to [register](#), please see the [Innovation Academy](#) website.

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