



# The Wednesday Communiqué

**April 4, 2018**

## **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Today marks the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee. This morning, crowds were gathering near the site where he was killed, in both solemn reflection and celebration of the life of the great civil rights leader. There have been a number of thoughtful pieces written for the occasion, including [this one](#) in the New York Review of Books, or [these](#) in the Atlantic. And, of course, if you have not recently read Dr. King's [letter](#) written while he was in a Birmingham jail, it is eloquent, powerful, and timely.

## **World-Class Faculty at UNM**

As the hiring season comes to a close, I can report that we have recruited truly exciting new faculty who will join us at UNM next year in teaching and advancing research and creative work across a wide range of disciplines. I welcome them to our shared work of contributing to cultural life, community engagement, economic development, political democracy, and public service in New Mexico.

## **The Principle of Explosion**

A byproduct of the proliferation of false beliefs, or “alternative facts,” is that practically anything may be deduced from them. When you throw off the constraints of truth, you may end up demonstrating the [principle of explosion](#) (or, Latin: ex falso quodlibet, “from falsehood, anything”). The best example I know of to illustrate this is from [the philosopher and logician Bertrand Russell](#): “Bertrand Russell, so the story goes, once mentioned the principle of explosion in class. A student raised his hand and challenged: in that case prove that  $1 = 0$  implies that you're the Pope. Russell promptly obliged as follows: Let's start with the false proposition  $1 = 0$ . Add 1 to both sides, then we have  $2 = 1$ . The set containing just me and the Pope has 2 members. But  $2 = 1$ , so it has only 1 member; therefore, I am the Pope.”

## **Ranking Research Universities**

The [Center for Measuring University Performance](#) (disclosure: I am a member of the advisory board) “determines the Top American Research Universities by their rank on nine different measures: Total Research, Federal Research, Endowment Assets, Annual Giving, National Academy Members, Faculty Awards, Doctorates Awarded, Postdoctoral Appointees, and SAT Scores.” I highlight this group's work because the introductory chapter of [their 2016 report](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the state of higher education and challenges facing research universities like UNM.

## **Arabic for Middle and High School Students: UNM's STARTALK 2018**

The Arabic Program at UNM has received a STARTALK Grant for the third year in a row to offer an intensive Summer Arabic program. The three-week Summer 2018 program will enroll students in grades 6-12, as well as rising college freshmen. The course (including books, lunches, and extracurriculars) is completely free to students. More information can be found at [the website of the Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures](#). Please direct questions to Dr. Emma Trentman, [etrentman@unm.edu](mailto:etrentman@unm.edu). UNM's Arabic Program has produced two undergraduate winners of the highly competitive Critical Languages Scholarship; congratulations to this year's winner Galiana Key Loorem.

## **Campus Clarity**

As President Stokes highlighted in her Monday message, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. As a part of the campus effort to combat sexual assault, there is a mandatory training for students. For those who have not yet completed the training, the "Think About It" training takes about 45 minutes and can be completed from any computer. Check your inbox for an email from the LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center. Questions can be directed to [loborespect@unm.edu](mailto:loborespect@unm.edu), or by calling (505) 277-2911.

## **Chaouki Abdallah**

**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).