



The Wednesday Communiqué

April 18, 2018

What if we tried this?

In launching the effort to re-design the university, I began to research how other universities have dealt with financial and cultural challenges. One flagship university that has consistently ranked high in the “Great Universities to Work For” [survey](#) is the University of Michigan. The survey ranks universities in a range of categories, including: collaborative governance, compensation, confidence in senior leadership, diversity, teaching environment, the tenure process, and work-life balance. Regarding work-life balance, two administrators at the University of Michigan described in a recent [Chronicle article](#) how they “adopted a new policy on when people in the dean’s office should send emails—and, perhaps more important, when they shouldn’t.”

That simple change, implemented by limiting email traffic to working hours (except for emergencies), trying to communicate in person, avoiding email forwarding, and respecting working hours led to great improvements in morale and performance.

Sentence Complexity

Languages are always evolving, but recent articles in one of my favorite magazines, “[Nautilus](#),” opened my eyes to how dynamic and complex those changes are. Two interesting takeaways: there is an inverse relationship between sentence and word length and complexity. Sentence length has been decreasing over time while word length has increased. In addition, while writing increased overall complexity once it “freed us from the constraints of our memories,” the specialization of scientific communities reduced sentence complexity as “specialized knowledge allowed complexity to be encoded into word instead of grammar.”

Lobo Reading Experience

The Lobo Reading Experience Committee announced that next year’s Lobo Reading Experience selection, by popular demand, is “Just Mercy.” The Center for Teaching and Learning will host workshops in April for faculty on integrating the book into Fall courses, and workshops for staff on incorporating the book into community-building programming. If you are interested in serving on the 2019-20 selection committee, or if you have ideas about campus events for “Just Mercy,” please email loboreading@unm.edu. The selection committee will meet in late April. If you would like to suggest a book, please fill out this form: <https://lre.unm.edu/suggest-a-book/index.html>.

Outstanding Staff Awards

The deadline for nominations for The Provost's Committee for Staff Outstanding Staff Awards was extended to this Friday, April 20. Please nominate outstanding individual staff members or workgroups who serve students and the community. The nomination form is [here](#).

Spring 2018 University Commencement

Spring Commencement is fast approaching. This year's ceremony will include Dr. Garnett Stoke's installation as our new president. These events benefit greatly from the involvement and attendance of our faculty, staff, and administration, in addition to the students, their family and friends, and all others who attend. Please consider attending or volunteering this year. The Spring 2018 UNM Commencement and Presidential Installation will be held in Dreamstyle Arena (The Pit), on Saturday, May 12 at 9 a.m. Information on volunteering can be found [here](#), and general information can be found [here](#).

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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.