

The Wednesday Communiqué

September 5, 2018

“Redesigning the University” and Shared Governance

Last week’s communiqué talked about some of the challenges and opportunities facing the University of New Mexico. Some very smart staff, faculty, students, and other university leaders spent last spring thinking about those challenges and opportunities, in six different task forces set up under the rubric of [“Redesigning the University”](#) (originally “Re-Engineering the University,” but that’s a different story). Those task forces have now weighed in with analysis of the challenges, presented some opportunities, and offered ideas about how UNM might best respond. Academic Affairs will release those reports, plus a briefer overview of them, as soon as they are formatted for distribution (see next week’s communiqué).

The release of those reports will represent the start of a dialogue about how UNM can respond to our situation today. Universities at their best are not run as top-down fiefdoms, and UNM Academic Affairs, at its best, has a strong tradition of [internal shared governance](#) under the overall authority of the Board of Regents and president. Shared governance takes three forms: First, the University strives to provide opportunities for a variety of stakeholders to offer their views (as appropriate for a given issue or decision): staff, students, faculty as individuals, the alumni association, the retiree’s association, and sometimes community groups or nearby neighborhoods (when relevant on an issue). Second, on matters central to the academic mission, the faculty as a body have a special and crucial voice, by virtue of their academic expertise and the fact that historically faculty were the university. As a result, the curriculum and other matters related to the academic mission largely belong to the faculty. The university makes decisions largely through formal consultation between administrators and faculty bodies. Third, even in areas where chairs, deans, and staff and faculty leaders in the central administration have their own autonomous authority, they often exercise that authority through informal consultation. Shared governance is complex—and sometimes a little cumbersome. But it’s what built the best university systems in the world, and the Redesign effort will advance through shared governance wherever appropriate.

In the weeks ahead, Academic Affairs will be reaching out to governance and stakeholder bodies to think together about the ideas from the Redesign task forces. If you’d like a voice, reach out to Staff Council, ASUNM, GPSA, the Faculty Senate committees, or other bodies that represent stakeholders within the University. By reading the Redesign reports when they come out and by getting involved via the

representative bodies, you can have voice in some important decisions that help UNM move into the future.

UNM's Welcome to All Students

As we welcome students back to the new academic year, Academic Affairs wants you to know that we are committed to making UNM an inclusive community where everyone can thrive—whether you come from urban or rural or suburban origins, from in or outside of New Mexico, or from another country, and inclusive of whatever abilities, racial/ethnic identity, gender, political or religious beliefs, or sexual preference you claim. Here, we can all learn and thrive. Since September 5 represents the first anniversary of the original effort to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for “DREAMers,” today I especially want to signal UNM’s warm welcome to all immigrants and refugees, regardless of documentation status. In higher education, we need all voices. We value our undocumented/DACA students, staff and instructors at UNM and have been working hard at making our campus immigrant friendly by developing policies to comply with New Mexico Senate Bill 582 (2005). Along with various community organizations, UNM offers great resources, services, and advocacy to support this diverse community (see below).

DACA protections and other aspects of immigration policy are currently under review and may possibly be terminated. It is unclear what ongoing negotiations in Congress about a possible DACA fix will bring, and we know that this causes even more stress and uncertainty for a significant number of UNM students and staff. As the national debate and conversation surrounding DACA continues, we want to make all of our students aware of their rights and the resources available at UNM for all students to succeed. We value each and every member of the university community, precisely because each of us defines all of us.

For a clearinghouse of information related to resources and information for undocumented students, please see the [UNM Undocu-Taskforce](#) and [El Centro de la Raza](#) websites. In addition, all faculty and students should know their rights as they relate to undocumented students; learn more via this “[Know Your Rights](#)” video. Also, the [LoboRESPECT Advocacy Center](#) is available as a place to receive counseling and emotional support to all UNM students. Finally, this Friday a training session for faculty, instructors, and staff, “[How to Support Undocumented Students at UNM](#),” will take place in the Rodey Theater on UNM’s main campus from 1-3 p.m.

Lobo Reading Experience

Please join the Lobo Reading Experience to hear the incredible story of a man who spent over 17 years on Florida's death row for a crime he did not commit. The event will be held Wednesday, September 19 from 12-1pm in the SUB Theatre. More information is available on [the event flyer](#).

Religious Holidays and Observances 2018-19

The University calendar of [religious holidays and observances](#) has been updated for 2018-19 academic year.

Richard L. Wood

Interim Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Sociology

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