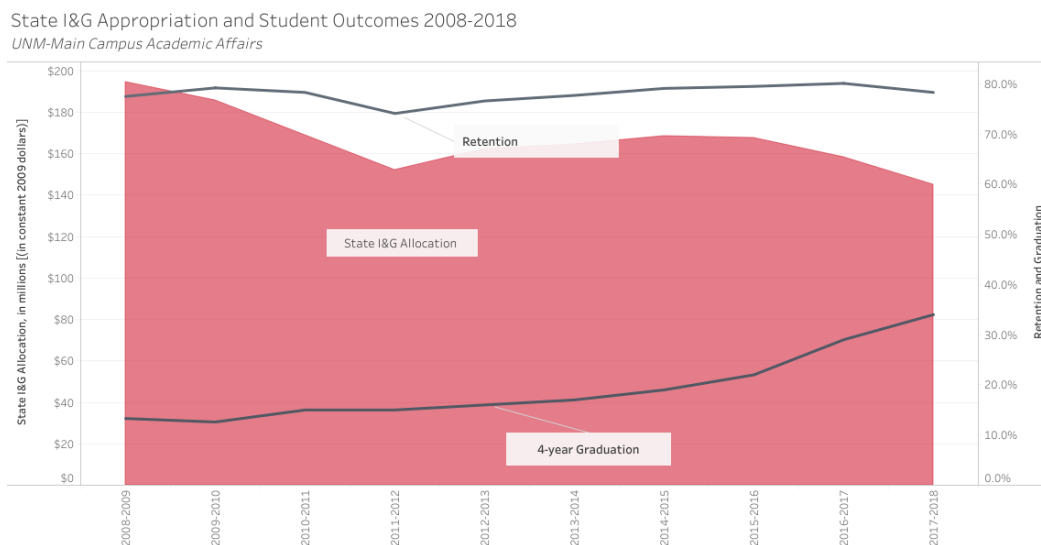


The Wednesday Communiqué

February 13, 2019

Things feel strapped in your academic unit? There's a reason for that: UNM main campus academic affairs I&G revenue is now about \$24 million /less than it was in 2009, when we had about the same number of students (if revenue is measured in "constant dollars," i.e. controlling for the higher education rate of inflation). Despite these steep cuts in support for UNM, we have dramatically improved student success via careful use of funds and strategic investment in wrap-around student services. The following chart shows that story, plotting falling state I&G appropriations alongside our four-year graduation rate and third-semester retention rate.



Note: Figure only shows state appropriations for Academic Affairs; excludes tuition & fees; if included, funding decline is less steep: about an overall \$24 million fall in real-dollar I&G. This is "constant dollars," i.e. controls \$ each year for the higher education price index. Thanks to Heather Mechler (Office of Institutional Analytics) and Bob Berrens (Dept of Economics).

This is a huge success for the University: UNM's 4-year graduation rate is now ten percentage points *above* what is typical of universities of similar profile (data, available upon request, predicts a 25% rate—while ours is now 35%). This transformation was possible because of fine work across a wide variety of units. Our challenge now is to sustain and build upon these gains amid a potentially large new round of cuts (depending on what happens on enrollment and legislative appropriations fronts in coming weeks).

Consolidating Student Orientation and Coordinating Engagement

As part of proactively addressing our budget rescissions and enrollment decline, Academic Affairs has worked with Student Affairs to consolidate new student orientation under one office. This office will also collaborate with other student support and academic units to foster student engagement. Across UNM, many faculty and staff members effectively engage potential and current students, empowering them to achieve success at UNM. The soon-to-be-named unit, under José Villar, will work with those individuals

and their offices to assure UNM is doing all we can to make studying here a great, transformative experience. The consolidation will also save money, which will be reinvested to support new initiatives, connections, and pathways for students, helping to ensure that our collective efforts produce an even greater impact. While the scope will continue to evolve as needs are assessed, the orientation team is well underway to getting our campus ready to welcome our newest Lobos! Encourage new incoming students to visit nso.unm.edu to reserve their orientation date.

UNM Speakers Bureau

We will soon reach out to all who responded to a call in this communiqué and volunteered for the new Speakers Bureau. We hope to build good encounters with potential UNM students via their high schools, community groups, congregations, and neighborhoods—wherever we can!

Grand Challenges

Join us as UNM refines our approaches for tackling three new [Grand Challenges](#): **Sustainable Water, Substance Abuse, and Successful Aging**. On Feb. 22 at 9 a.m. in SUB Ballroom C, you are invited to help hone our Grand Challenges plans. During this 90-minute [interactive event](#), team leaders for each of the Challenges will present their goals, teams and plans, and respond to audience questions. [RSVP here](#).

HLC Site Visit: Public Forums

The site visit from the Higher Learning Commission's team of peer reviewers is just weeks away. Reviewers will visit UNM-Gallup and UNM-Taos on March 1, and the team of seven will be on main campus March 4-5. I encourage all faculty, staff, and students to attend one of [the three public forums](#) (also accessible via Zoom) at the following times and locations, which are organized around the [HLC criteria](#).

Spring 2019 University Commencement

[Spring Commencement](#) is right around the corner. Please consider attending or volunteering this year to join in the celebration of the Class of 2019. Commencement will take place Saturday, May 11 at 9 a.m. Information on volunteering can be found [here](#).

Venezuela in Crisis: Teach In on Monday

Join a panel discussion on the current crisis in Venezuela: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18 @ 1 PM.

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.