



The Weekly Communiqué

February 20, 2019

Welcome back after a nice day of snow in Albuquerque. If you got so little snow where you live that you were thinking “really, a snow day for this?” do note that some parts of town got much more snow than others. The East Mountain area behind the Sandias, home to many students, staff, and faculty, got a lot of snow. The snow day reflected the difficulties in getting to campus for folks in those areas. I hope you enjoyed the day, whether you worked from home or had time for other things. Special thanks to all those critical employees who keep the university running and had to report to work despite the snow day!

Careful readers may notice the subtle change of title above: We have had uneven success getting this communiqué out on Wednesdays, due to a combination of me juggling multiple balls and some technical distribution issues. So let’s call it “The Weekly Communiqué” from here forward.

Five New UNM Regents

The University of New Mexico welcomes five new regents to the board following their [nomination](#) by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and [approval by the state Senate](#) last Friday. The incoming regents are Sandra K. Begay, Douglas M. Brown, Kimberly Sanchez Rael, Robert Schwartz, and Melissa C. Henry. In addition to other qualifications, all have deep ties to the University: Begay and Brown served on the Board in the past, and Schwartz was a long-serving professor of law. Sanchez Rael has a background in business, including six years on the NM State Board of Finance. Student regent Melissa Henry was a leader in GPSA and is pursuing a doctorate in counselor education at UNM. We look forward to working with the new members of the Board and we stand to gain from their collective experience and dedication to the state and UNM.

I hereby extend UNM’s gratitude to our outgoing regents: Bradley Hosmer, Suzanne Quillen, Garrett Adcock, Tom Clifford, and Michael Brasher. Of particular centrality to our academic mission, the Board’s subcommittee on Academic/Student Affairs & Research was guided for many years by the steady leadership of Brad Hosmer, Suzanne Quillen, and Garrett Adcock (and currently by continuing regent Rob Dougherty). We appreciate the dedication and service of all the outgoing regents.

News from Santa Fe

Would you like to stay up-to-the-minute on the Legislative session? Susan Moczygamba-McKinsey in UNM Governmental Relations does it; sign up [here](#). She notes that “House Appropriations and Finance gave its approval to a \$7.013 billion-dollar state budget, which features a 10.8 percent spending increase and 22 percent for reserves in anticipation of the next bust.” Most of the new money would go to K-12 education, a good place for investment. But higher education does not fare nearly as well, with 2% new money proposed for the sector (plus additional compensation funding). We hope to do better as

appropriations advance in the Legislature, in order to avoid another hard fiscal year as a result of funding shortages from previous state cutbacks and recent enrollment declines.

Professor Attitudes Matter for our Students

[New research](#) published in “Science Advance” analyzes how professors’ attitudes toward under-represented groups may help or hinder students in the classroom, particularly in STEM classes. Professors who believe that intelligence is fixed and communicate that to their students undercut the performance of underrepresented students. Notably, this occurs with professors across all backgrounds: “It seems that fixed mindset beliefs are not gendered, generational, endorsed only by majority group members, simply a function of accumulated teaching experience, or more concentrated in certain STEM disciplines.” We all may teach better by recognizing how students’ abilities develop over time.

Women in Computer Science

In the U.S., computer science is dominated by men. But that’s a reflection of social norms, expectations, and biases in American life and the computer science sector. That’s the insight from a recent New York Times [article](#) that draws on research by UNM’s Dr. Roli Varma on settings where women are fully represented among computer scientists. UNM is committed to providing a more diverse pipeline of well-trained students and future faculty in this and other technical sectors.

The Flavor of What We Do

Last week, I received a lovely note from Dr. Marie Lynn Miranda, the Provost at Rice University. Because it captures the spirit of so much that we strive to do with our students, I share that note with the campus community:

At the beginning of the current academic year, Dr. Nathan Dautenhahn joined the Rice University faculty as an assistant professor in the department of computer science. As you may know, Nathan did his undergraduate work at the University of New Mexico. We are very much reaping the benefit of the excellent training that your institute provided. The success of the academy depends on a relentless commitment to providing the very best education possible. We are grateful for all that the University of New Mexico did to shape and influence Nathan as a scholar and teacher. We are absolutely delighted to count him as a faculty colleague.

Have a great rest of the week!

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.