

Academic Dispatch

April 17, 2020



Keeping Sight of the Future

This is a time unlike any that most of us have known. An unseen virus has infected more than two million worldwide, led to nearly 150,000 deaths, impacted families and friendships, and jobs and businesses. It has altered nearly every aspect of our daily lives, its mindless replication challenging the sense of control and structure we crave as sentient beings. Our history is filled with tragedies and achievements, yet seldom do we anticipate the moments that will test us and change us forever. In our adaptations to the present, we are also creating changes likely to last our lifetimes.

Universities are durable institutions. The University of Karueein was founded in 859, the University of Bologna in 1088, the National University of San Marcos in 1551, the same year as the National Autonomous University of Mexico. Harvard was founded in 1636, and the University of New Mexico in 1889. Each of these institutions has faced great challenges and changes over their long histories. And each is wrestling today with the challenge brought by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

At UNM we are continuing to teach, learn, create and serve, all while maintaining the social distancing that will flatten the curve and keep our community safe. I believe the processes of learning and of creation are at their core social activities, and humans are social creatures, so we are all exploring

together how best to provide this communal experience of discovery. I hope each of us: student, staff, and faculty, will reflect on this experience and grow.

We are also thinking about the future, and how we will teach, learn, create, and serve this summer and fall within both the known and the unknown constraints of this public health emergency. Teams of faculty and staff are considering now the various scenarios for continuing to deliver on our mission. We must do this, because UNM's mission is central to the future of our state. Our academic deans play a special role in leading the response both to our present challenges and helping to shape our community for the future. I am therefore both pleased and melancholy to report some changes in our academic leadership.

I am thrilled to announce [the appointment](#) of Dr. Hansel Burley, currently Professor of Educational Psychology from Texas Tech University, as the new Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences. Professor Burley presently serves as Chair of the Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership at Texas Tech University, where he has also served in multiple Associate Dean roles. Professor Burley's interests are broad. He has studied mentoring, student belonging, resilience, and student achievement, as well as self-efficacy and the commitment of learners to the profession of teaching. His work has considered factors of race and gender as important characteristics in shaping outcomes for students. He has also studied topics ranging from student perceptions of clinical educators to theories of the effects of media. The College of Education and Human Services is centrally important to the future of the state of New Mexico, and I am confident the outstanding and committed faculty, students and staff of the College will thrive under Hansel Burley's leadership.



Dean-designee Burley will assume his duties at UNM on July 1, 2020, or as soon thereafter as our current public health emergency allows. I also take this moment to thank Interim Dean Deborah Rifenburg for her selfless service to the College and to UNM. Deb has been a joy to work with during my first year at UNM.

I also must share the more bittersweet announcement of the impending retirement of Professor Richard Clement, Dean of the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences. Professor Clement will step down as dean effective July 1, 2020, and retire from UNM shortly thereafter. While Rick's family has been in New Mexico since the 1940's, I understand he now has a grandchild in Kansas – a wonderful reason to move on from the archives and spend more time with his family. I hope you will join me in thanking Rick

for his service to UNM. Senior Associate Dean Fran Wilkinson will serve as Interim Dean while we search for a permanent dean for the Libraries.

We have continuing searches for deans in the Anderson School of Management, the School of Architecture and Planning, and the College of Fine Arts. Stay tuned. There are bumps in the road, but the future is bright.

Thank you to all the health care workers, grocery store employees, public safety officers, gas station attendants, and all those others whose work, too often unseen, sustains us all at this moment.

James Paul Holloway

Professor of Nuclear Engineering

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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