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Wednesday Communiqué, 4/18/2012

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THE UNIVERSITY of
NEW MEXICO

Office of the Provost



WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

April 18, 2012

“The punishment which the wise suffer who refuse to take part in government, is to live under the government of worse men.” PLATO. Please get involved in the academic plan at the electronic town hall:

<http://connectu.unm.edu/>.

University Council on Academic Priorities (UCAP): Please join us for the first panel discussion in connection with the activities of the University Council on Academic Priorities (UCAP). The panel discussion with four Rhodes Scholars is titled, “Affordability of Higher Education.” It features former United States Congresswoman Ms. Heather Wilson, Dr. Elizabeth Keller, Dr. Manuel Montoya, Mr. John Morrison, and it will be held Tuesday, April 24 at 4 p.m. in the Hibben Center auditorium. A public reception will follow.

UNM School of Law’s new Semester in Washington, DC program: The faculty at the University of New Mexico School of Law has launched a new pilot program to allow students to spend one semester in Washington, D.C. The program was motivated in great measure by interested students at the law school as well as the more than 125 law school alums who live in the greater Washington area and clamored for greater exposure to our existing students. Students in the program will perform externships for credit while working 35 hours per week in a Congressional or law office and will also attend a three-credit-hour class each week. The class will be taught by a D.C.-area alum, and supervised by a UNM professor who spends each fall in the area. The program will be subject to a selection process and will run for one semester each year in the fall, beginning in the Fall of 2012.

Learning how to Measure: We have been hearing about how the new state funding formula rewards outcomes (such as graduating students) rather than inputs (such as how many students we enroll). An even more appropriate and surely to follow measure will focus on the quality of education rather than simply on the number of graduates. This issue was recently highlighted in the NY Times article: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/education/trying-to-find-a-measure-for-how-well-colleges-do.html>. As discussed in the article, “In January, the New Leadership Alliance [released guidelines](#) calling on colleges to systematically ‘gather evidence of student learning’ — though not explicitly advocating standardized tests — and release the results. The report was endorsed by several major organizations of colleges and universities.” The issue brings to light criticism of standardized tests: “In 2008, the Consortium on Financing Higher Education, a group of some of the nation’s most prestigious colleges and universities — including all of the Ivy League — issued a [lengthy manifesto](#) saying that what its students learn becomes evident over decades and warning against a “focus on what is easily measured.” Indirect indicators of learning are collected in the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#), in which UNM participates. Such factors include “how many hours students spend studying and how much they interact with professors. The survey, which began with a handful of colleges in 2000, had more than 700 participate last year.”

Why Companies Fail? The article <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/03/why-companies-fail/8887/> discusses the importance and limitations of culture in the survival of complex organizations (multinational companies, universities). I, for one, am a believer in the wise words of Tomasi di Lampedusa who wrote in his book *The Leopard*: “*If we want things to stay the same, things will have to change.*” This is absolutely true in higher education as college education becomes more necessary and less affordable.

US Education Reform and National Security: The public discourse around education has in general settled the question of economic impact of secondary education. The Council on Foreign Relations assembled a task force to study the “less well known—yet equally sobering—national security repercussions.” The report (http://i.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/TFR68_Education_National_Security.pdf) recommends “three overarching reforms to improve the educational system and enhance America’s future ability to safeguard the country, compete and collaborate with others, and reinforce American leadership worldwide. First, it calls on

governors to not only adopt the state-led Common Core curriculum, but also expand the curriculum to include skill sets—such as science, technology, and foreign languages—that are critical to national security. The Task Force also advocates structural changes that will empower students and their families to choose which schools they attend. Lastly, this report calls on state governors, working in conjunction with the federal government, to establish a national security readiness audit that holds educators and policymakers responsible for meeting national expectations in education.”

UNM Alum Taps Students for Marketing Challenge: UNM is one of 11 schools participating in the startUP Productions Marketing Challenge. Digital Marketing students at the Anderson School of Management are responsible for increasing awareness and registered users for zaahah, which is an online social search platform that allows users to instantly connect with other users who are searching on the same topic. They can then collaborate with each other, via email and chat. This social search platform also includes the ability to organize and save searches, as well as share files using 3GB of FREE cloud storage. Cody Frew, a current student states that students working on a group project can organize their online research with offline data. They can then share their completed project with their professor.

The founder of startUP productions and developer of zaahah is James Sisneros. James is a native New Mexican and UNM alum who received a B.B.A in Marketing. To experience the power of zaahah, register at <http://bit.ly/zaahah-unm>. Let's help UNM win this nationwide marketing competition.

Sincerely, Chaouki Abdallah,
Provost & Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs

A PDF version of this communiqué is available at: <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>. Your feedback and input are welcome at: provost@unm.edu or at the electronic town hall: <http://connectu.unm.edu/>.