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Wednesday Communiqué, 6/6/2012

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WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

June 6, 2012

The High School Dropout Problem: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting launched an initiative to study the high school dropout problem <http://americangraduate.org/>. New Mexico's own indicators are as follows: NM ranks 6th in childhood poverty at 27.8%. Our 4th grade reading proficiency increased from 19% percent to 21% from 2003 to 2011, while our 8th grade math proficiency increased from 15% to 24% for the same period. On the other hand, the high school graduation rate decreased from 67.4% to 64.8% from 2002 to 2009. If New Mexico achieves the national high school graduation rate goal of 90%, the additional graduates could deliver an estimated \$64 million in increased annual earnings, \$17 million in increased annual state tax revenues, and \$86 million in gross state product.

The UNM Academic Dashboard: is now available and updated continuously at: <http://dashboard.unm.edu/>. Much of the information about students, faculty, UNM and finances is or will be made available there. Please take a tour of the site and let us know what you think.

SAT/ACT and CLA Tests at UNM: The composite ACT score for NM is 19.8, ahead only of Arizona, Kentucky, Florida, Tennessee, and Mississippi (<http://www.act.org/newsroom/data/2011/states.html>). On the other hand, NM ranks 21st in the nation for total SAT scores (<http://georgiataxcreditscholarship.org/sat-scores/2011-sat-scores-by-state.html>). Note that most of our students (72%) take the ACT.

UNM participates in the national Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). For the 2010-2011 test, 49% of participating freshmen, and 50% of participating seniors, observed scores were at least one standard deviation above expected scores based on entering academic ability and the mean freshman CLA performance at UNM. Thirty percent of freshmen and 28% of seniors scored "well above expected" (at least two standard deviations above expected). The 2010-2011 UNM Seniors' Value-Added CLA Score ranked in the 75th percentile nationally, while the 2010-2011 UNM freshmen scored as well as or better than 71% of participating universities nationally. The CLA results are encouraging but also confusing because our freshmen are in the top 29% of all participating schools, while ACT scores point in the other direction.

Evidence-Based Budgeting: The US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) advised agencies to include information about how they plan to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and link their disbursements to evidence in their 2014 budget requests. The Office said a commitment to using evidence would make approval of budget requests more likely. Like our New Mexico funding formula for higher education, the use of outcome metrics will become a federal government tool (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/worthy-of-government-funding-prove-it/?hp>).

Why Don't We Have More Women in STEM? This is the question that many scholars and national organizations have been investigating for more than 30 years. An interesting twist on this classical question is provided in the Chronicle article <http://chronicle.com/article/For-Women-to-Think/131547/> and by the accompanying preprint: <http://arxiv.org/pdf/1112.4082>.

Graphs & Information: I have become a fan of the site <http://www.informationisbeautiful.net/> ever since I came across the Billion-O-Gram chart. Another interesting site for graphs is "Graphic Detail" from the Economist magazine <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail>. One of the more interesting charts is the one titled: China in your hand.

President Frank's Survey: Lastly, on Monday, President Frank sent out a brief questionnaire that will help give him some insights into your perspectives on the University. With close to 37,000 students, 21,000 employees and more than 140,000 active alumni, the UNM community has a rich and diverse pool from which to learn.

Your participation is essential, and there will be varied opportunities to include your ideas and voices. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey which can be found at <https://esurvey6.unm.edu/opinio/s?s=51752>. The questionnaire will be available through the end of June.

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/>. Please also see the Provost's Blog which can be found at <http://provost.unm.edu/communique/index.html>