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Wednesday Communiqué, 7/4/2012

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WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

July 4, 2012

Happy 4th of July!

The Morrill Land Grant Act: Although the country was in the midst of a civil war, President Lincoln signed the Morrill Act into law on July 2, 1862. The purpose of the act was, “without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactic, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.”

It was followed by the second Morrill act of 1890, then by the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. Starting with the first act of 1862, the federal government effectively established the model of public higher education focusing on teaching, research, and service. Today, public universities award 85% of the bachelor degrees conferred by research universities, and they perform more than 60% of the research conducted at universities. Against this backdrop, public higher education is currently undergoing dramatic changes and criticism. If the nation could establish such a powerful educational model during an existential threat, then we can rise above today’s issues to ensure its survival.

Why Women Still Can’t Have It All: is the title of a recent article in the Atlantic magazine, by Ann-Marie Slaughter (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-can-8217-t-have-it-all/9020/>). The article quotes research by one of our own, Professor Michelle Arthur of the Anderson School of Management. It makes for a very interesting read and is generating much feedback in the national press. The author praises academic careers and describes family-friendly policies for both parents. Check out the UNM policies at: <http://hr.unm.edu/benefits/fmla.php> and <http://handbook.unm.edu/C215.html>.

Tuition/Formula Funding: UNM’s current state funding has two main components: a 95% component that is based on traditional measures (such as credit hours generated), and 5% that is based on outcomes (student credit hours completed, total awards of certificates and degrees, workforce development, and outcomes for at-risk students). In the upcoming year, the percentage of the outcome component will be increased and a new sector-specific measure (a yet to be finalized research measure for UNM) will be added to the formula. It is then critical for us to improve our graduation rates, to help develop our workforce, to assist at-risk students, and to continue to be research productive.

Course Materials Orders: The bookstore informed me that as of Friday, June 29th, 61% of the expected course materials orders have come in. This is the worst percentage in the last several years and will result in more expensive books for our students. Because of this percentage, the bookstore will be forced to buy new books, rather than used and other alternatives for the over 1,500 titles that will come in over the next 6 weeks. Please send in your book orders ASAP in order to help our students put a dent in their college costs.

Death by Meeting: is the title of a book by Patrick Lencioni that was recommended to me during the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities meeting last week. I have now read it and found the advice of how to structure productive meetings helpful.

Sincerely,

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

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