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## Wednesday Communiqué, 8/15/2012

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## WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

**August 15, 2012**

**Welcome Back:** The Fall 2012 semester classes start on Monday, August 20, and I for one am looking forward to teaching! We will be joined this year on main campus by new colleagues: 71 tenure/tenure-track, 9 lecturers, 7 adjuncts, 4 research professors, 2 post docs, and 2 visiting faculty members. Make them feel at home, and help them to succeed.

**Best Universities to Work For:** The August 5, 2012 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* presents the results of the survey of the “2012 Great Colleges to Work For.” The survey rates colleges on collaborative governance; compensation and benefits; confidence in senior leadership; diversity; facilities, workspace & security; job satisfaction; professional and career development programs; respect and appreciation; supervisor or department chair relationship; teaching environment; tenure clarity and process; and, last but not least, work/life balance. At UNM, we do better in some of these categories than others, but I would like to issue a challenge to the UNM community: in 5 years, UNM should be one of the great colleges to work for! In order to get there, President Frank has directed me to present him with a plan to achieve that goal. I will be reaching out to you to figure out how to actually get there.

**The Philosophy Dimension:** Last week, I mentioned the FoE initiative for first-year success. The first dimension of the process is the philosophy dimension. The rationale of this dimension is spelled out in the FoE guidebook: “The first year should be grounded in a clear philosophy that guides institutional policy and practice. Scholars of the first year have noted that over the last 50 years many first-year purposes have been utilitarian – generating revenue to support upper-level instruction, being a weed-out or sorting process, or serving as a place for parents to ‘park’ students, often away from home, until they have reached a more desirable level of maturity. And even today, when task force groups begin a discussion about philosophy or purpose, their conversations often center first on ‘retention’—that is, ‘we believe that the purpose of the first year is to retain students until the second year.’ We hope that each task force will find a way to engage the campus community in a consideration of philosophy, to acknowledge utilitarian purposes but to move beyond those to what we as educators believe the first year should ideally be designed to accomplish and why. *The philosophy/rationale is explicit, clear and easily understood, consistent with the institutional mission, widely disseminated, and, as appropriate, reflects a consensus of campus constituencies. The philosophy/rationale is also the basis for first-year organizational policies, practices, structures, leadership, department/unit philosophies, and resource allocation.*”

**Science Debate:** Here is an interesting website (<http://sciencedebate.org/>) that asks candidates for office to discuss the top science questions facing the nation and the world. “This is a grassroots initiative spearheaded by a growing number of scientists and other concerned citizens. The signatories to our ‘Call for Presidential and Congressional Debates on Science & Technology’ include the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Council on Competitiveness, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, the Institute of Medicine, over 150 leading universities and associations, Nobel laureates and other leading scientists, major business leaders, presidents of universities and major associations, congresspersons of both major political parties, religious leaders, former presidential science advisors, the editors of America’s major science journals, writers, and many others.”

**Music, The Brain, Medicine, and Wellness:** is a symposium that was presented in association with the 40th anniversary of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival that took place on August 4-6, 2012. The symposium was orchestrated by our own Cheryl Willman, Director & CEO of UNM’s Cancer Center. An informative article about the symposium appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443991704577577001430372414.html>

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