

5-2-2012

Wednesday Communiqué, 5/2/2012

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Recommended Citation

Abdallah, Chaouki. "Wednesday Communiqué, 5/2/2012." (2012). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_publications/43

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WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

May 2, 2012

Feedback & Reviews: As I keep stating in this communiqué, I am a great believer of feedback. Faculty members had an opportunity recently to give their feedback on my performance this past year. They also evaluated some vice provosts and vice presidents who report to me, as well as the academic deans. Many of you have inquired how such surveys are being used and who gets to see the results. My evaluation is provided to the president who will use it as part of my annual performance review. I have requested from the Faculty Senate and the University Secretary to post my own review at: http://facgov.unm.edu/Provost_Eval_SummaryReport.pdf. The link does not include the written comments but I will be responding to some of them in future communiqués. All other evaluations were provided to me and will be provided to the evaluated individuals. I will be using the evaluations as part of annual performance reviews in order to help improve the performance of all involved. Some deans have already taken steps to distribute their evaluations to their constituents and have begun to address their concerns. It is my intent to use this instrument to collect information about how well we are performing our duties, AND to make corrections where needed. I firmly believe that we learn more from honest negative feedback than we do from positive feedback!

Faculty Compensation: The UNM Board of Regents approved the UNM budget on April 27, 2012. The approved budget <http://www.unm.edu/~budget/consolidatedbudget/> contains a 1.75% ERB reversal which appears as 1.75% raise to all employees. There is also a \$1,100 one-time payment to all employees to be distributed in August 2012. In the Academic Affairs budget, I have also secured \$450,000 to start the difficult task of addressing salary inequities for faculty (a more than \$4 million problem). Here is what is planned: at the end of September, the UNM administration committed to examining the available revenue (based on actual student enrollment) and should revenues exceed our budgeted projections, a corresponding raise to the base salary will be allocated. Going forward, I was tasked by the Regents to prepare a multi-year faculty compensation plan to address both internal inequities as well to try to catch up with our peers. I will be working with the deans and the Faculty Senate leadership to put together a plan that will be ready for the various BOR committees in the Fall 2012 semester. As an aside, compensation was one of the most cited concerns in my own faculty evaluation.

Moral Behavior in Animals: While we may think that humans have a superior moral stature, Frans de Waal believes that we share the traits of empathy, cooperation, fairness, and reciprocity with other primates. He writes, "If you ask anyone, what is morality based on? These are the two factors that always come out: One is reciprocity ... and a sense of fairness, and the other one is empathy and compassion." See his entertaining talk at: http://www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_do_animals_have_morals.html.

Can Money Buy Happiness? Yes, if you give it away. I have been reading some of Michael I. Norton's papers after I saw his Ted talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness.html. His website contains other interesting columns: <http://drfd.hbs.edu/fit/public/facultyInfo.do?facInfo=ovr&facId=326229>.

Last Week of Classes: In case you have been too busy to notice, Saturday, May 5 is the last day of instruction for the Spring 2012 semester. The final examination period is Monday-Saturday May 7 – 12, 2012 and the Spring 2012 commencement will take place on Saturday May 12, 2012. Congratulations to our graduates!

Sincerely, Chaouki Abdallah,

Provost & Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs

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