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## Wednesday Communiqué, 2/20/2013

Chaouki Abdallah

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## WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

February 20, 2013

**Accreditation & Accountability:** In his 2013 State of the Union Address, President Obama mentioned college attainment and education. In a supplemental document, [The President's Plan for a Strong Middle Class & A Strong America](#), which was released after the speech, the *Chronicle* [reports](#) that “the president made it clear that he is seeking major changes in the accountability system for higher education... including a call to set benchmarks for affordability and student outcomes as criteria for receiving federal student financial aid. Regional and national accreditors are now the primary gatekeepers for access to those dollars.” A section of the president’s plan states: “The President will call on Congress to consider value, affordability, and student outcomes in making determinations about which colleges and universities receive access to federal student aid, either by incorporating measures of value and affordability into the existing accreditation system; or by establishing a new, **alternative system of accreditation** that would provide pathways for higher education models and colleges to receive federal student aid based on performance and results” (emphasis mine).

**College Scorecard:** The [College Scorecard](#) is a tool provided by the U.S. Department of Education’s College Affordability and Transparency Center. It allows anyone to compare universities based on factors such as cost, majors offered, financial aid, distance education, and so on.

**Global vs. Local Good:** President Lincoln used a simple principle to define the appropriate scope of government, which reflected his understanding of the common good. He wrote in 1854, “The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done but cannot do at all, or cannot so well do, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities.” As we study our new budget model, I hope that we will keep this principle in mind as we look for what should be done and funded at the departmental or college level, versus activities that must be funded at the university level.

**The End of the University as We Know It:** “In fifty years, if not much sooner, half of the roughly 4,500 colleges and universities now operating in the United States will have ceased to exist.” This audacious claim comes from an article in *The American Interest*, [“The End of the University as We Know It.”](#) While you may disagree with the timeframe and the ultimate conclusion, I believe you will find some of the challenges and opportunities described in the article very real!

**Center for Effective Teaching Director Finalists:** Dr. Thomas Angelo, one of three finalists for the director position in the newly formed Center for Effective Teaching, will give a presentation on Tuesday, February 26, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the College of Education, room 130. Dr. Angelo will present his vision for promoting effective teaching and learning at the University of New Mexico. The presentation will be open to all faculty, students, staff, administrators, and community members.

**Demons and Butterflies:** Richard A. Anthes, President Emeritus of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) and highly regarded atmospheric scientist, author, educator, and administrator, is presenting “Demons and Butterflies—Weather predictability and predictions” this Thursday, February 21, at 5:30 p.m. The lecture will be held at the University of New Mexico Conference Center Auditorium, 1634 University Blvd NE.

**SNL/UNM Joint Appointment:** I am pleased to announce that we have embarked on a joint appointment opportunity with Sandia National Labs (SNL). This represents a significant step forward in advancing the collaborative relationship established between our institutions with the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed in September, 2011. The current search focuses on the advancement of our mutual interests in materials sciences with an emphasis on energy technology. For more information on the joint appointment, please refer to the following UNMJobs [quick link](#).

**3-D Printing:** You are probably already aware of 3-D printing as the process of making solid objects out of a variety of materials. More recently, I came across an [exciting application](#) of this technology, namely, to print molecules. “The idea is to make a device that could download plans for molecules and create them, in exactly the way that 3D printers can download plans and create objects. The software would be the product; the materials would be commodities. What would this mean? It would mean that you could print your own medicine.”

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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