

2-27-2013

Wednesday Communiqué, 2/27/2013

Chaouki Abdallah

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Recommended Citation

Abdallah, Chaouki. "Wednesday Communiqué, 2/27/2013." (2013). https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/provost_publications/50

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WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUE

February 27, 2013

It is often easier to fight for a principle than to live up to it.

—Adlai Stevenson

Financial Aid Solutions and the Lottery: In recent years, the cost of college tuition has risen faster than the cost of healthcare. Reasons for the steep rise include reduction in state support, increase in the cost of education delivery, and higher compliance requirements. Last year, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided grants totaling \$3.3 million to organizations working to improve financial aid solutions. “The grants were used to explore recommendations for improving access to postsecondary financial aid so more students can attend and succeed in college and earn postsecondary degrees and credentials. They were awarded as part of the Reimagining Aid Design and Delivery (RADD) project, which seeks to shift the national conversation on federal financial aid toward ideas designed to make college more affordable while giving students the support and encouragement they need to earn a degree or credential; and to seed the field with innovative policies that can make that happen.” As of last week, the last of such reports was completed by the fourteen organizations, representing a mix of thought from leaders in business, higher education, civil rights, and public policy. The last such [report](#) is by HCM Strategists and proposes the following: “1) One federal grant and one federal loan program with simpler terms to promote increased access, affordability, and completion; 2) A single tax credit to complement the new benefits in the single grant and loan programs; 3) New reporting and financial aid eligibility criteria that holds institutions accountable for student access and success; and 4) Provide investments in research and demonstrations to evaluate cost-effective ways to finance more student success.” The other thirteen documents vary in their depth and reach but agree that the current financial aid system is unsustainable and must be made simpler in order to serve more students. The issue is even more acute in New Mexico, as our own lottery scholarship system is undergoing its own growing pains and must be modified in order to remain solvent.

Zombie Cells: The research of Professor Brinker of our Chemical & Nuclear Engineering department and Sandia National Laboratories has recently made it into [popular culture](#). Professor Brinker and his collaborators have tricked nature to help them build 3D structures. “The technique involves first depositing silica onto the tiny structures inside living cells. Then the cells are heated to burn away the proteins they're made of, leaving behind the nonliving but structurally similar zombies.” The cells will find use in commercial applications ranging from sensors, to catalysts, to fuel cells.

Open Access to Research: The following appeared in the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#): “The Obama administration announced last Friday a major new policy aimed at increasing public access to federally financed research. The policy, delivered in a memorandum from John P. Holdren, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, applies to federal agencies that spend more than \$100-million a year to support research and development. In the memo, Mr. Holdren directed those agencies to develop ‘clear and coordinated policies’ to make the results of research they support publicly available within a *year of publication*. The new policy also requires scientific data from unclassified, federally supported research to be made available to the public ‘to search, retrieve, and analyze.’ Affected agencies have six months to decide how to carry out the policy.” (Italics mine).

Center for Effective Teaching Director Finalists: Dr. Aeron Haynie, the second of three finalists for the director position in the newly formed Center for Effective Teaching, will give a presentation on Thursday, March 7, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the College of Education, room 130. Dr. Haynie will present her 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.

Campus Visits Scheduled for Candidates for the Dean of the School of Law: Four finalists for the position of Dean of the UNM School of Law have been invited to visit campus during the weeks of March 4th and March 18th. The candidates— **Alfred Mathewson**, professor of law and acting director of Africana Studies at the University of New Mexico; **Barbara Bergman**, professor of law and interim dean of the School of Law at the University of New Mexico; **Melanie Wilson**, professor of law and associate dean for Academic Affairs at the University of Kansas; and **David Herring**, professor of law and co-director of the Clinic Programs at the University of Pittsburgh—will hold open forums and give presentations to staff, students, faculty and, for the presentations, community members. Short biographies of each candidate and the times and location for the open forums can be found on the Academic Affairs [website](#).

Chaouki Abdallah

Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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