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Wednesday Communiqué, 4/3/2013

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WEDNESDAY COMMUNIQUÉ

April 3, 2013

I've been wrong so often, I don't find it extraordinary at all.

—Ronald Coase, Nobel Prize Economist

It Takes a Village: In my case, the village is named Rachana. I spent Easter there in the little village where I was born, where I grew up, and then left to go to college thirty-three years ago. I was fortunate to live in a small village, where everyone had a hand in raising all children. From the sculptor, to the priest, to the stonemasons, the farmers, the doctor, and the author, they all shaped my life and those of my boyhood friends. Participating in Easter mass in the old church, many memories rushed through my head as I watched the old faces that were once young, and the sons and daughters of the boys and girls I grew up with. Life's twists and turns, which brought me from my village of three hundred to the city of Albuquerque, have scattered my friends around the world. For each one of them, their path bears a trace of olive trees, the smell of earth and wild flowers, and the echoes of the voices of our elders—the sculptor, the priest, the stonemason.

It Takes a University: in order to produce successful authors, architects, businessmen, engineers, and doctors. At UNM, we are no longer simply concerned about providing education in the form of lectures and laboratories. We have become a commercial hub, a healthcare provider, and a center for entertainment and athletics. UNM operates dormitories, a student center, a hospital, its own power plant, a fine arts center, and a stadium. We also provide legal and business services to the state and support services to those students who face academic or personal difficulties. We get involved with our students prior to their attending UNM in order to prepare them for college and to ease their transition from high school, and keep in touch with them after they graduate to make sure they land a job and stay connected to UNM. Such duties were once considered unusual, but have now become important, even essential.

It Should Take 120: In my last posting, I discussed the number of hours that our students attempt and the hours that they earn to graduate. Some of you have written back to me on whether we should attempt to move students through their college years as quickly as possible, or whether we should allow them to sample and choose as they find their passion. It is unfortunate that the main measure of student success is their graduation rate, rather than a measure of their learning. It is also unfortunate that most students who take longer to graduate from UNM are not necessarily sampling interesting subjects or earning double majors. Instead, many of our students are in need of catch-up courses, of strong and accurate advising, and of academic and social support services. For such students, it is important to help them obtain a degree as quickly as possible in order to launch their life opportunities. Simply letting them drift and accumulate college debt is not helping them and is costing the state and the university precious resources that should be spent more efficiently. In fact, we should quickly examine the 128 hours required by UNM to earn a bachelor's degree and to reduce it in most cases to 120 student credit hours as was done by most other universities.

58th Annual Research Lecture: This year's recipient is Dr. Scott W. Burchiel, Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology. He will deliver this year's lecture on Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 5:30 p.m. in the UNM Student Union Building, Ballrooms A and B. The lecture is titled "ToxicoGenomic Bases for Human Susceptibility to Environmental Injury and Disease." The Annual Research Lecture award is one of the highest honors that UNM bestows on a faculty member. It is selected by the UNM Faculty Senate Research Policy Committee, and nominated by peers from across the United States and abroad. Dr. Burchiel is noted for his long history of sustained excellence and innovation here at UNM, which extends more than 30 years, as well as for his leadership of faculty and dedication to student success. For more information, visit <http://research.unm.edu/ResearchLecture13Flyer.pdf>.

2012 Outstanding Book Award: UNM Professor Sharon Erickson Nepstad received the American Sociological Association's 2012 Outstanding Book Award in the section on Peace, War, and Social Conflict. Her book,

Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late Twentieth Century, examines revolutions in China, Panama, Kenya, and other locations in search of reasons why some of these uprisings succeed, and others fail. The resulting book is an important contribution to the discussion of political conflict resolution. I encourage you to read it, and to join me in congratulating Professor Erickson Nepstad on her achievement.

Si Se Puede Awards: It is my pleasure to congratulate Alma Rosa Silva-Bañuelos, director of UNM's LGBTQ Resource Center, on receiving the Dolores Huerta "Sí Se Puede" Award for 2013. "The Recuerda a César Chávez Committee presents the annual César E. Chávez "Sí Se Puede" Award and Dolores Huerta "Sí Se Puede" Award to two individuals who have exemplified the ideals of César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta by making meaningful contributions to our communities through leadership, service, and education." For more information on the awards, as well as the 20th Annual César Chávez Day event this Saturday at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, visit <http://www.cesarchaveznm.org/>.

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Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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