

May 11, 2005

Dear colleagues,

Spring has sprung, proving once again that even the most granite-hard skepticism about things ever getting better can be softened by the slow movement of the earth through its reassuringly predictable orbit. It has been a hard winter in meteorological as well as social and personal dimensions. We lost members of our community to accident and disease, we sometimes forgot the rules of civil discourse as we grappled with contested issues, and we confronted the reality that our revenue/expense balance is not sustainable in its present form. However this year, more than others, it seemed that the equinox brought with it relief and a sense of hope. Maybe it's just that the Red Sox are playing again, but I think it is more likely that our resilience as a community and our commitment to the University are carrying us forward, ready to face the challenges ahead.

So this letter will focus on matters worth celebrating as well as continuing challenges, as another academic year comes to a close. We are aware of our challenges, primarily related to insufficient resources needed to achieve our aspirations. This awareness often occupies much of our time. So it is important to acknowledge that there are many things to celebrate—the accomplishments of our students, the excellent teaching and mentoring by our faculty that contributed to those accomplishments, the remarkable scholarship and creativity demonstrated in our schools and colleges, the construction of a new engineering building, the success of our annual fund-raising efforts, and on and on. I urge you to take time in the remaining weeks of the semester to reflect on the good work you have done and to thank those around you who have helped to make it possible.

The most important celebrations that we conduct each year are the Honors Convocation and Commencement. The new chief faculty marshal, Nancy Kinner, has sent you all information regarding the details of your participation in these ceremonies. This year, we have scheduled these two events contiguously, on May 20 and 21, to ease the burden on families who must travel some distance for both. The Honors Convocation, which will be limited to graduating seniors beginning this year, will take place on May 20, from 4:00 to 5:30, in the Whittemore Center. Professor Gale Carey, an expert in obesity and diabetes and an outstanding teacher and advisor, will deliver the faculty address. Your presence at the Convocation is a tangible expression of your appreciation for our most successful students. Faculty robing will occur in the skybox lounge at the Whittemore Arena at 3:30 p.m. I hope to see you at the Convocation.

Commencement will take place on May 21, at Cowell Stadium, at 10:00 a.m. Your presence is requested at the stadium at 9:30 a.m. in rooms 025 and 027 in the Field House. These rooms will be used for faculty robing and to secure your belongings during the ceremony. After much deliberation in the wake of our two most recent ceremonies, when we all got more or less drenched, we determined that we have no other option than to continue to hold our commencements outdoors, rain or shine. However, beginning this

year we will simulcast the ceremony in the Whittemore Center, to allow those who need or prefer cover to still witness the event and to be near their families. Faculty participation in Commencement adds great color and pomp, and signifies our desire to wish our students well as they leave our tutelage to pursue new forms of learning and living. I look forward to seeing you on a bright, clear, morning on the 21st.

We are also celebrating the appointment of two new deans. After careful and arduous work on the part of the respective search committees, for which I am very grateful, I am pleased to announce that Joseph Klewicki, current chair of the department of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Utah, has accepted our offer of appointment as dean of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. And Kristin Woolever, director of the Center for Creative Change of Antioch University, Seattle, has accepted our invitation to become the next dean at UNH Manchester.

Dr. Klewicki is a widely recognized expert in fluid mechanics and surface turbulence (watch for the wind tunnel he will be shipping from Utah to Durham over the summer!). His work is intensely collaborative and interdisciplinary. He is a strong advocate for teaching excellence, undergraduate involvement in research, expanded opportunities for graduate students, and the role of science and engineering as means to “address fundamental altruistic concerns relating to the quality of life and the future of our society and culture”, as he put it in his letter of application.

In addition to her most recent work at Antioch University in Seattle, Dr. Woolever has served in several key roles at Northeastern University, where she was professor of English with a specialization in technical and legal writing. She has held positions as director of assessment, department chair, interim dean of Cooperative Education, and director of graduate studies in English at Northeastern. She brings to Manchester extensive experience in the design of innovative academic programs and curricula, a proven ability to connect higher education with community assets and needs, and a deep commitment to collaborative leadership. Thank you in advance for welcoming both Joe and Kristin to our Durham and Manchester communities.

The third reason to celebrate this spring stems from recently published evidence that the University has achieved its long-held goal of fair and equitable faculty salaries with respect to our New England and national peer institutions. Given the long-held view that UNH faculty have not been adequately compensated, we are delighted to reach this milestone and proud that our faculty salaries are now in line with our comparator group.

In the current year, UNH average faculty salaries are \$95,400 for full professors, \$71,600 for associate professors, and \$60,200 for assistant professors. With respect to our national comparator set of 14 other public research universities, full professor salaries are half a percent shy of the mean, associate professor salaries are 2.2 percent above the mean, and assistant professor salaries are 2 percent above the mean. Compared to the five other New England land grant institutions (a subset of our national comparators), UNH exceeds the mean by 3.6 percent, 1.8 percent, and 5.7 percent at the three ranks.¹

¹ All data reported here are from [Academe](#), March-April, 2005.

The current collective bargaining agreement (this is the second year of the three-year contract) increases the tenure-track faculty salary base by roughly five percent annually for each of the three years. Over the last two years, the average national increases in faculty salaries for all institutions were 2.1 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively. As a result, we have made significant progress in the current contract period. I believe this progress is the result of the commitment of both parties in our last round of negotiations to the achievement of a fair, equitable, and competitive compensation structure for the faculty. Simply put, good-faith bargaining in which the focus is on common interests produces good results.

It is the case, I believe, that we continue to face challenges in our compensation structure relative to the comparator groups I cite above in two ways: UNH does not have a systematic approach to the recognition of merit or equity discrepancies, and we provide relatively generous employer-paid health benefits. This year, I have heard directly from faculty who tell me they are seeking positions at other institutions where performance is connected to compensation, including merit and equity processes as well as ways to address salary compression. In some cases, we have lost outstanding faculty for this reason. In light of our relatively competitive average salaries, this component of compensation has become more salient to many faculty members who feel their individual salaries are either inequitable or do not reflect their performance.

Regarding the cost of health care, this is a regional and national problem that affects us all. You are aware of the University's current and future financial problems if you have had a chance to read Vice President Corvey's letter to the community (dated April 15, e-mailed to you on April 21). Over the six-year period beginning with FY 02, the cost of fringe benefits has grown at a rate of 10.4 percent in the academic units (9.3 percent for the whole university; FY 06 and 07 projected). This is largely due to increases in health care premiums. With the average revenue growth in the schools and colleges during this same period at exactly half this pace (5.2 percent), we have a problem. It seems that solutions will have to be a combination of actions taken by the University System as it negotiates with vendors and by UNH as it tries to balance its revenue and expenses in the coming years.

The above information is meant to share data about our relative compensation position. Even as I report it, I fully respect the requirements that negotiations that may lead to changes in compensation are properly addressed between the University and the AAUP-UNH in the collective bargaining process, which will begin again sometime around the middle of the next academic year. The University is looking forward to that process and the continuation of our collective bargaining relationship. In anticipation of that process we believe it is in the interest of all concerned to have information regarding faculty salary and benefits at UNH and comparable institutions. Faculty members with questions or concerns regarding this information should contact their union representatives.

Of course, faculty compensation is only one aspect of our budget challenge. The RCM review that is underway is already pointing to multiple areas for reconsideration, including the allocation of financial aid expenses, the distribution of state appropriations, practices related to indirect cost returns on external grants and contracts, and the structure of assessments.

It may seem odd to close a letter about reasons to celebrate with sobering references to the University's financial situation. Perhaps so, but I think one of the remarkable characteristics of UNH is its ability to work its way through difficult situations and come out stronger on the other side. We are like the "little engine that could" as we huff and puff our way up the hill. We are smart, creative, and energetic. We may have some old habits, rooted in a time when we were a different kind of institution, that need to be adjusted. We may need to look in the mirror and ask ourselves hard questions about quality and affordability. But we are clear about who we are and what we want to become. With your collective ideas and participation, we can get there from here.

Best wishes for a successful conclusion to the academic year,

Bruce L. Mallory
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

cc: Presidents Cabinet
Deans Council
USNH Board of Trustees