

The University of New Hampshire in 2020: Breaking Silos, Transforming Lives, Reimagining the University

We live in uncertain times. The pace of change is quickening. Global interdependence is shrinking distances and perforating borders, with consequences that are difficult to discern. Demographic shifts are changing the face of our nation, reshaping the contours of society in general and redefining the college-going population in particular. Digital technology is poised to overwhelm our print-based culture, transforming how we create and convey information, and perhaps even how we think. Threats to our eco-system are making the cause of sustainability truly urgent. Can America's land-grant research universities reinvigorate their historic mission and respond energetically and effectively to these new challenges?

The University of New Hampshire can, and will. Through these strategic initiatives, we will align our strengths with the needs of our state, our nation and our world. For 143 years we have served the people and communities of New Hampshire and the New England region. Today we are a national research university, a celebrated center of teaching and learning, and an increasingly important hub in an expanding network of scholarly communities stretching around the world. Over the decades we have built programs and facilities on the solid bedrock of our Granite State. In good times we have learned to invest wisely; in hard times we have learned to do with less. In both, we have worked to remember what it means to be a land-grant university in service to our state and nation.

Our plan is addressed to all constituencies of the University—including the residents, business leaders, and policy officials of New Hampshire who look to UNH as a key provider of programs and services that ensure the continued economic and social well-being of our state. More broadly, the plan addresses stakeholders in the extended New England region and throughout the nation who benefit from UNH's work in the production, dissemination, and application of knowledge as a public land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant university.

The University of New Hampshire in 2020

It's late June, and the summer term is in full swing. A UNH-Manchester junior teleconferences from the urban campus on Commercial Street with an advisor in Durham's recently renovated Conant Hall, the new home of the Academic Commons; she's about to begin an internship with the Carsey Institute that will take her to Ghana to work with an NGO on literacy and urban development, and wants to discuss incorporating her experience into her capstone project for her self-designed major in Comparative Education Policy.

Next door, in Dimond Library, a marine science graduate student, just back from field work in New Zealand, is using technologies developed at the Research Computing Center to create video simulations of changing ecosystems; he'll compare results with a

post-doctoral fellow at EOS working on the Gulf of Maine, so that they can prepare a policy recommendation to the New England fishing industry. His dissertation committee has faculty from COLSA, CEPS, EOS, and Cooperative Extension.

Over at the new Center for the Arts, technicians working with the departments of Music, Theater and Dance and the Center for the Humanities prepare to host an international multidisciplinary conference on world literature and traditional jazz (“New Sounds in A Global Century”) with UNH’s partner universities in China, Brazil, the Netherlands, and South Africa: the participants will come together electronically for concerts, lectures, roundtable discussions, and master classes. The proceedings will be catalogued through the Learning Portal, and made available to schools throughout the state.

Originally supported by seed money from the New Ventures Fund, the New England Alternative Technologies (NEAT) group heads to Concord to meet with representatives from northern New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont: a collaboration between CEPS, the Paul College of Business and Economics, the School for Community and Public Service, and the Sustainability Academy, faculty, staff, and students are working with private industry and state and local governments to redesign the electric grid to include wind, solar, and wave power.

In a living-learning community in Congreve Hall, students debate health care policy and bioethics in their first-year seminar. Close to two-thirds of all UNH freshmen take an interdisciplinary seminar, and the training they receive makes their transition into upper-division courses seamless. The faces of these students mirror the increasing diversity of New Hampshire. Several are international students from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe. Most are beneficiaries of increased financial aid that make their UNH educations affordable; and none is yet certain about a major. All love their professor. They are all also adamant that the summer term is a great time to work hard, meet new people, and enjoy New Hampshire’s beaches, lakes, mountains, and cities.

Consider these sketches as only a small sample of what will be happening, in Durham, in Manchester, around the state, and the world, on that June day in 2020. UNH’s potential is limited only by our imaginations.

Our Foundation: Five Requisites for Change

Although the world is changing—and although this strategic plan will position us to change with it—our institutional values are fixed, as the vignettes sketched above suggest. In 2020, as today, our efforts will be animated by the spirit of **discovery**. Our faculty, students and staff will be committed to being **engaged** in our **communities**. And we will continue to be **resourceful** and **effective** in all we undertake. This plan thus builds on and reinforces the central themes of UNH’s existing Academic Plan. Moreover, whatever pedagogical change or research agenda we might come to embrace, there will

always be room at UNH for the single scholar in his study, for the lead scientist in her laboratory, for the well-crafted lecture, the virtuoso performance, and the Socratic discussion.

But in this new century, our success in creating, transmitting, appreciating, and applying knowledge will require that we examine both our habits of thought and the structures that support them. At its core, therefore, this plan describes a University of New Hampshire that will be, must be, a place where collaboration flourishes and traditional boundaries are freely crossed. We must become an institution that is agile and responsive. Our daily practices, the rhythms of the year, and breadth of our collective activities—in sum, the ways in which we make our values visible in a changing world—must be transformed.

Specifically, UNH must embrace interdisciplinary activities across our campuses, redefine scholarly practices and rewards, ensure that a spirit of enterprise permeates everything we do, re-conceptualize academic time, and realign budget priorities better to support our multiple academic missions. These transformative practices provide a responsive, sustainable, and durable framework for the strategic initiatives described below, both now and in the years to come. Although less tangible or dramatic than a call for new buildings, these are the conceptual foundations upon which we create different structures and mechanisms for teaching, research and engagement, for approaching and evaluating academic work, and for funding programs and operations across our University. They foster our continuing commitment to the values that have inspired UNH's rich history and position us to be what we aspire to become: the very best small public research university in America.

- *A deep commitment to interdisciplinarity.* Most of the challenges facing society in the twenty-first century demand thinking beyond the boundaries of any one academic discipline. Sustaining our health and that of our planet; reducing hunger and poverty; inspiring a new generation with words, images and performances; building bonds of common accord among different nations and cultures: all these require synthesizing knowledge from different fields of study. While colleges and universities routinely affirm the need for interdisciplinary approaches to address complex societal problems, too often we encounter both structural and cultural impediments to effective collaboration among faculty, students, and staff, and across academic units. We commit to encouraging and rewarding collaborative work in all its manifestations, across all dimensions of our institution.
- *A broadened definition of scholarship.* Although we frequently assert that the three main elements of the university's mission—research, teaching and engagement—are intertwined, we too rarely embrace real integration in practice. Through this Strategic Plan, we will be a national leader in the emerging effort to create a genuinely seamless understanding of scholarship, one that affirms the essential interconnectedness of teaching, research, and engagement.

- *An enterprising spirit.* To prosper in a world of change is to be nimble, adaptive, imaginative, and flexible. In all its component parts and in all its activities, UNH must embody an enterprising spirit, ready to seize promising opportunities, adopt fresh perspectives, serve new constituencies, tackle pressing social problems, reward innovation and recognize untapped markets. Practicing and teaching the spirit of enterprise will help prepare our graduates to be purposeful leaders and cultivate among our faculty and staff the capacity to be highly effective partners in collaborative efforts on campus and off.
- *Flexible allocations of time.* Many of our aspirations require thinking differently about time. The standard academic calendar too often impedes rather than facilitates the achievement of our missions. The University's Faculty Senate has already authorized an experimental change to the academic calendar that allows for the addition of a January term, which creates new opportunities for student internships, alumni mentoring, national and international study away from campus, community service, and professional development for students, faculty and staff. Over the next two years the Office of the Provost, in partnership with the Faculty Senate, will review and rethink other ways in which time is allocated, academic credits earned, faculty and staff responsibilities fulfilled, and student aspirations achieved.
- *A budget system aligned with strategic priorities.* Achieving the goals of our strategic plan will require that the University realign responsibilities and opportunities. The first step in this process will ensure that the University's financial and budgeting systems support the strategic directions this plan sets forth. UNH needs a budgeting system flexible enough to respond to promising new initiatives, both within and across the University's academic units. Where our current budget system fails to promote the goals of our strategic plan, we must recast the system itself.

Our Materials: Programmatic Initiatives

The foundations we create will provide a firm base on which to complete the work we have already begun, and to create new opportunities for faculty, staff, and students. We have identified eight programmatic initiatives that will be essential to the university we will become:

- ❖ *Creating a New Ventures Fund.* To promote bold new interdisciplinary and collaborative research, teaching, and engagement initiatives, we will establish a New Ventures Fund (NVF). The fund will be directed by the provost, who will be advised in its use by a faculty council. The strategic planning working groups identified several possibilities, and among those, multidisciplinary teams are currently pursuing the following:

- *Three interdisciplinary “schools”*
 - *School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering.* UNH currently has one of the best Marine Science and Ocean Engineering programs in the country—and one of the best hidden. A School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering would create the appropriate venue for integrated marine science and ocean engineering research, education and engagement on campus and around the world.
 - *School of Public, Community, and International Service.* This school would engage academic programs and research capacities that focus on public policy and responsive community engagement, helping to foster sustainable communities and promote accomplished, engaged scholarship as a core value of the UNH experience.
 - *School of Earth System Science.* Earth System Science is a highly interdisciplinary field that links studies of marine, terrestrial, freshwater, atmospheric, and geological systems into a framework essential for understanding complex environmental problems and addressing important policy-related issues of management and sustainability.

- *Sustainability “Academy”*

UNH is world-renowned for its leadership in the “greening” of American higher education and its work in organic agriculture, eco-gastronomy, environmental engineering and global climate change. A UNH Sustainability Academy would extend the University’s innovative and collaborative work in this field for both on- and off-campus audiences through programming that focuses on the challenges and opportunities of sustainability that lie at the intersection of the sciences, humanities, and engineering.

- *Research Leveraging Initiative.* The Research Leveraging Initiative will provide start-up support for promising research projects that address problems of critical importance and contribute to the intellectual vitality of the institution. Examples include healthy communities, nanotechnology, energy efficiency, and New England culture. Support could take the form of “cluster hires,” space, graduate and undergraduate assistantships, among other things.

The New Ventures Fund will supply planning funds with which to test the viability of each initiative. New programs will undertake a careful test of financial sustainability: typically, the capacity to cover their own operating costs and an appropriate share of central University costs within five years of launching.

- ❖ *Supporting independent research and scholarship.* Although we have a strong commitment to collaborative work, we also recognize that many of our faculty and students will continue to work alone, within and across the bounds of current disciplines. For many of these scholars, especially those in the arts and humanities, external funding is rarely available. To ensure continued strength in these areas,

which are core to the university and its mission, we will increase and stabilize funding for both faculty and students for travel, assistance, summer support, and internal grants to provide uninterrupted time for research and writing.

- ❖ *Internationalizing UNH.* Among the most collaborative and interdisciplinary programs at UNH are those that help internationalize the University. We will build on the success of those programs by expanding offerings in the international curriculum, enhancing opportunities for study abroad, strengthening language offerings, and supporting efforts to recruit international students and scholars. We will foster reciprocal relationships through faculty, student, and staff exchanges, collaborative work with global institutions, and the formation of strategic international partnerships. We also need to increase significantly the funding available for students, faculty, and staff to travel abroad for study, research, and collaboration. A second set of actions will bring the world to UNH—including the creation of international professorships, the establishment of international summer/winter academies, an increased enrollment of international students, expanded international faculty and staff recruitment, and a strengthening of international research partnerships.
- ❖ *Making UNH More Inclusive.* Through a complementary set of strategies and initiatives we will make a parallel investment in making UNH more inclusive and diverse. We will develop new opportunities for UNH students to work and study at institutions in different parts of our country, where they will engage with faculty and students whose cultures and life experiences are different from their own. We will redouble our efforts to recruit a more diverse faculty and staff, in part by exploring ways to establish reciprocal exchanges with institutions whose missions and student bodies reflect scholarly traditions and experiences now not sufficiently present in our University. To achieve a truly diverse community entails more than drawing together people of different backgrounds and circumstances; the fact of inhabiting a common learning community must become a basis for a genuine interaction, leading to an increased understanding and respect. Through these and other means, UNH will create campus environments that foster inclusiveness and quality engagement for all.
- ❖ *Supporting a Learning-Centered Environment.* The education our future demands depends on intellectual experiences that are enriched and augmented by travel, research, engagement, professional experience, and integrating general education with areas of specialization. We commit to extending our support for this integration and those opportunities: through interdisciplinary classes, large and small, from the first-year through graduate studies; through enhancing collaborations amongst academic units and student affairs; through faculty and staff development and training; through increased funding for student research, travel, and curricular opportunities. A feature of this will be:
- ❖ *Building a Learning Portal.* The Learning Portal (LeaP) recognizes that academic programs will increasingly demand new teacher-learner relationships, new

pedagogies, and new technologies. LeaP will consist of a repository of “learning objects”: theme-based lectures, exercises, assignments, data or digitized media that can be accessed, repackaged and used by anyone on campus using a wide array of creative interfaces. Enabled by a new high capacity cyber-infrastructure (as proposed below), LeaP will greatly enhance the ability of faculty, students, staff, and alumni to build communities of shared interest, helping to foster interdisciplinary collaborations and diverse engagements across the University community.

- ❖ *Becoming a Partner for Life.* As a land-, sea-, and space-grant university, UNH produces, conveys, and applies knowledge to address challenges of global scale and consequence. Still, one of the University’s most important constituencies is made up of the residents of New Hampshire. Understanding that our continued vitality depends on the good will and support of the state’s people and their elected officials, UNH will strengthen existing outreach initiatives such as those of the Carsey Institute, Cooperative Extension, and the Joan and James Leitzel Center, and develop new engagement initiatives that reinforce the University’s role as a Partner for Life with citizens of the state. Among the initiatives UNH might undertake or expand are non-credit learning experiences for community members, public policy consulting for state and local government, and deepened involvement in PK-12 public education across the state.
- ❖ *Commercializing UNH’s intellectual capital.* Closely related to “becoming a partner for life” is the idea of fully exploiting the University’s enormous and ever-expanding reservoir of intellectual capital. Although considerable strides have been made in recent years to help faculty and staff bring the fruits of their research to market and to increase revenue streams from start-up companies, licensing and royalty agreements and other conversions of intellectual property, much more work needs to be done; the possible affiliation with Pierce Law Center will help this initiative enormously. The University can and should be the primary engine for sustainable economic growth in the state and region. We need to work more closely with private sector entrepreneurs to translate UNH-generated intellectual capital into new ventures and new jobs for the people of New Hampshire.

Our Built Environment: Major Capital Investments

We commit with this plan to a program of serious change, much of it cultural and organizational: to a fully integrated academic mission, highly flexible administrative arrangements, new directions in teaching, research and engagement. Still, more is needed to accomplish our objectives. UNH must also make fundamental capital investments, some of which are already fully planned, others of which have yet to be designed. They include, in no particular order:

- Renewal of Conant Hall and provision of appropriate space for the Department of Psychology;
- Restoration of Hamilton Smith Hall, home to the Departments of English and Philosophy, and one of UNH's signature buildings;
- Completion of the new building for the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics;
- Construction of new space and renovation of existing space for UNH Manchester;
- Creation of a University Club where faculty and staff can dine, host speakers, and gather for conversation; and where visitors to the University can be entertained.
- Renovation of Parsons Hall, home of the Department of Chemistry;
- Expansion of the Academic Commons to provide both a physical and a virtual home for all co-curricular advising and support activities and campus-wide academic programs (for example, the Discovery Program, the Center for International Education, the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research, the University Honors Program, the Writing Program, the Advising Center, etc), and therefore extend their opportunities to all students.
- Realization of the master plan for athletics and recreation, including a rehabilitation of locker room and training facilities, as well as a build-out of the stadium and the creation of a Performance and Wellness Center.
- Construction of a high capacity cyber-infrastructure that will allow faculty and students to create virtual environments, provide data visualization and pattern recognition, navigate massive data computation, and support data and text mining along with new exploratory data analysis techniques.

Beyond these projects (and others) to which the University has already committed, UNH needs to undertake one major new capital initiative, an initiative that promises to transform life not only on campus, but in Durham and the broader Seacoast:

- ❖ *A Center for the Arts.* A new Center for the Arts at UNH will offer a studio, teaching, and performance venue for the arts and their interdisciplinary collaborators. It will be an active partner in the vibrant state and regional cultural community, with links to the City of Durham and New Hampshire's seacoast artist colonies. The Center will also provide the quiet spaces for study and writing for our poets, historians, scholars of literature, and others in the humanities. In addition, a Center for the Arts will

become part of an expanding global network of libraries, academies, and scholarly communities, all contributing to ensuring that the arts at UNH are a multi-disciplinary and cross-campus presence. The Center will be a staging ground for new productions and new ideas, helping advance research, scholarship, creative activities, and engagement in the arts, humanities, and culture. There we will celebrate—through performance, exhibition, scholarship, and colloquia—how the arts and humanities can and must speak to and about an ever-changing world, and how they sustain the human spirit.

The Sum of Our Ambitions

Can we afford these initiatives? UNH is already experiencing serious economic difficulties. For several years, our base costs have increased faster than our base revenues. None of the conditions that have resulted in our structural deficit—the rapid increase in the cost of University-provided health care and other benefits; the decline in the buying power of our appropriation from the State of New Hampshire; the continued increases in the financial need of our students, particularly those from New Hampshire; and our desire to acknowledge merit in providing raises that exceed inflation—is likely to change over the next decade. As before, we will continue to search for and find internal savings from more efficient operations, but, as before, those savings will not provide the investment capital that this plan and our future demand.

Nonetheless, we will find a way. Indeed, for UNH to prosper in what we all know will be an enormously turbulent and challenging environment, we *must* find a way to make these investments. A portion of the necessary programmatic funds will come from being enterprising--expanding current markets and developing new ones. Another portion will come from increasing our research efforts and the sponsored funding they supply. We will also continue to make our case to the State of New Hampshire, looking for new ways to partner with the state as well as other New Hampshire organizations.

Ultimately, however, only a broad, unprecedented capital campaign--one that inspires and animates our friends, alumni and all who support our mission in New Hampshire and beyond—can make our planning a reality. Today only a handful of universities is positioned to plan and execute a capital campaign capable of raising hundreds of millions of dollars—even a billion dollars—over the course of a decade. The University of New Hampshire must now join that circle.

The Way Forward: Skating to Where the Puck Will Be

With this Strategic Plan, UNH sets a course that will transform the University. Reimagining our daily practices creates opportunities for creating and recommitting to institutional priorities, administrative structures, and programmatic directions. We will

expand cooperation between and among colleagues in different disciplines, departments and colleges, universities, and countries. We will create new relationships between and among undergraduates and graduate students, their teachers, and the staff who support their work outside the classroom, on and off our campuses. We will achieve new and deeper connections with our neighbors, with our alumni, and with the wider world. We will invigorate how we can support and welcome all whose backgrounds, talents, ambition, and character contribute to the quality of our shared intellectual life and our collective mission. We will continue to build sustainable relationships with our natural surroundings.

The plan itself and the process that produced it are dramatic evidence of a University that has committed itself to creating a different institutional culture: one that makes possible new pathways to innovation and discovery among faculty and students and new partnerships between the University and its many constituencies in the State of New Hampshire, the New England region, and beyond. This plan advances a vision of a University that transcends boundaries of academic disciplines, of financial circumstance, of operational domains that in the past have limited its reach. And indeed, in this mutable new century, these practices will not be optional academic trimmings: they will be the means by which we secure our institutional future. They will enable us, as Wildcat fans will appreciate, “to skate to where the puck is going to be.”

The plan set forth here is attainable. It builds on firmly established strengths, including an attractive New England location; ties to businesses, communities, alumni, and students throughout the region; and a faculty, staff, and administration committed to creating the academic environment that allows the University to attain its full potential and serve as a national exemplar of a public university: a New Hampshire university that is professionally satisfying to its faculty and staff, educationally enriching for its students, and relevant for citizens of a rapidly changing world.

Appendix: An Inclusive, Deliberative Process

In developing these initiatives, we sought to model the future we envision: one that is, on the one hand, deliberative and independent, and, on the other, integrated and inclusive. The strategic priorities outlined here emerged from a planning process that combined focused deliberation with broad consultation and engagement across the University community. The President, the Cabinet, the Faculty and Student Senates, the Graduate Student Organization, and the Staff Councils identified a Steering Committee whose 40 members represent the University's range of programs and operations. A set of campus roundtables identified broad themes of concern to our community. These themes, in turn, became the basis for nine focused workgroups.

Each workgroup was composed of 14-16 faculty, staff, students, administrators, and members of external communities, and each met intensively from February through March of 2009. An electronic forum augmented discussion in these workgroups, allowing for broad participation both inside the University and beyond its campuses; a Durham campus meeting in March sparked a spirited discussion which prompted the Steering Committee to refine its work. In May, a final set of University-wide roundtables provided an opportunity to test and refine the key themes and goals that emerged from the planning process.

As we go forward, we will implement our initiatives in ways that extend this inclusive and broadly representative process: the Faculty Senate and the Administration, the Staff Councils, the Student Senate and the Graduate Student Organization, our colleagues and partners in the state, the region, and the world will work together to transform this document into a tangible reality.