

***STANDARD I***

## **Mission and Purposes**

## **Mission and Purposes Task Force:**

**Coordinator:** Susan Douglas Franzosa, Associate Professor and Chair  
*Education*

John Aber, Professor  
*Forest Resources, Institute for Earth Oceans and Space*

Kent Chamberlain , Associate Professor  
*Electrical and Computer Engineering*

Daniel A. DiBiasio, Interim Vice President  
*Student Affairs*

Cynthia Gannett, Associate Professor,  
*English, UNH Manchester*

Lyndon Goodridge, Dean  
*Whittemore School of Business and Economics*

John Kraus, Director  
*Institutional Research*

Neil Lubow, Associate Vice President  
*Academic Affairs*

Bruce Mallory, Associate Professor,  
*Education*

Patrick Miller, Associate Vice President  
*Facilities Services*

Shirley Ramsay, Director  
*University Publications*

John Rogers, Professor and Chair,  
*Music*

Sam Smith, Professor,  
*Animal Science*

Fred A. Schnur, Vice President  
*Finance and Administration*

Diane Tebbetts, Professor and Associate University Librarian  
*University Library*

John Wilson, Associate Professor  
*Mechanical Engineering*

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## **MISSION AND PURPOSES**

1993 marks the University of New Hampshire's one hundredth year in Durham. As we celebrate this centennial, we look back at a history of growth and progress. From modest beginnings as a small state agricultural college in 1866, the University of New Hampshire has become the state's only comprehensive research university. UNH is known nationally for its strong tradition in teaching, undergraduate education, distinguished faculty, and the quality of its graduate programs. While a century of evolution and change has occurred, the central mission of the institution has endured. From the first, the University has been defined by its land-grant charter and commitment to an ethic of public service. Throughout its history, its central purposes have been the education of the state's citizens, a commitment to excellence in teaching, and the promotion of theoretical and applied research conducted in the public interest.

## **DESCRIPTION**

### ***Historical Background***

Originally chartered under the Morrill Act as New Hampshire College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, the institution which became the University of New Hampshire separated from Dartmouth College and moved from Hanover to Durham in 1893. A bequest from Benjamin Thompson, a prosperous New Hampshire farmer, had provided for, "an agricultural school, to be located on my Warner Farm, so-called, and situated in Durham, wherein shall be thoroughly taught, both in the schoolroom and in the field, the theory and practice of that most useful and honorable calling."

With the move to Durham, the college's curriculum was expanded to include practical and theoretical study in fields that stretched beyond Thompson's original vision. The agricultural and industrial arts were augmented by a stronger undergraduate curriculum requiring preparation in the liberal arts and sciences. Professional degree programs were initiated, and in 1896 the college became one of the first institutions in the United

States to confer a PhD. In 1923, the college was rechartered by the state legislature as the University of New Hampshire with the responsibility "to teach such branches of learning, and to prosecute such researches as may be necessary and desirable in the education of youth and the advancement and development of the arts, the sciences and the industries, including the education and training of teachers for the public school systems of the cities and towns of the state, and of such nature, scope and standard as usually prevail in the tax-supported universities of the several states."

As the University of New Hampshire evolved from state college to comprehensive research university, its land-grant mission guided the development of schools and colleges that would meet the changing educational and research needs of the state. During the first half of the century, those needs were defined by an economy concentrated in agriculture and the textile industry, as well as a demand for teachers to staff a growing public school system. In 1923 the University was organized into the Colleges of Agriculture, Technology, and the Liberal Arts. The division of the Graduate School was formally created in 1928. A two year program in agriculture, which had been offered since 1895, became the Thompson School of Applied Science in 1939.

At mid-century, economic and educational needs changed and there was a gradual expansion and reorganization of programs in the sciences, engineering, and business. In the 1960s, the Whittemore School of Business and Economics and the School of Health Studies were added, and the College of Agriculture was reorganized as the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. In the 1970s, the College of Technology was renamed the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. A clear commitment to improve access to the University's programs emerged in the 1970s and 1980s when the Division of Continuing Education was authorized to offer associate degree programs, the Nashua Center was opened (1984) in the most densely populated region of the state, and the University of New Hampshire at Manchester was established (1985) for commuter students in the Merrimack Valley region.

In 1963, with the creation of the University System of New Hampshire, the state's two colleges at Plymouth and Keene were brought under the administration of a single University System Board of Trustees. Until 1974, when a separate Chancellorship was established, the President of

the University served as the chief administrative officer of the University System. Within the System, the University of New Hampshire is the oldest unit and the only comprehensive research university. As the state's flagship institution, it has retained the primary responsibility to offer graduate level professional programs and is the only university in the state authorized to confer doctoral degrees.

### ***The Evolution of the University's Mission and Purposes***

Over the course of its history, the University has reinterpreted the ways in which it can best fulfill the responsibilities of its charter to teach and "prosecute researches" in the interest of "the education of youth and the advancement and development of the arts, the sciences, and the industries." This has meant that the University of New Hampshire, like most state universities, has had to regularly assess its direction, reconsider its size and scope, and balance the relations among teaching, research, and public service. In keeping with the circumstances of the state and region, the University of New Hampshire has intentionally limited expansion in order to retain a distinctive character. As graduate programs were developed, research institutes were established, and sea-grant and space-grant status were granted to the University, there was a considerable increase in the faculty's involvement in research. This development was clearly supportive of graduate education, but the University's long standing traditions demanded that research activities must also enhance teaching at all levels and directly contribute to the strengths of undergraduate education. Thus, in interpreting its land-grant mission, the University of New Hampshire has remained moderate in size, selective in its development of high quality graduate programs, and has sought to integrate rather than separate the purposes of teaching, research, and service.

In 1983, when our last accreditation took place, the University of New Hampshire's Self-study Committee noted in its appraisal of the University's mission that "There is no realistic prospect that the nature and role of the University will change materially in the foreseeable future." While it is true that the central nature and role of the University have not changed over the last decade, the University of New Hampshire has nevertheless experienced significant transitions. These transitions have not only altered the look of the campus, but have also served to refocus

institutional emphases and strengthen academic, co-curricular, and research programs. Many of these developments were described in the University's *Fifth Year Report* to the Commission in 1988 and will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of this report. It is important to note here however that the changes that have occurred have been accompanied by considered reappraisals of the most effective ways to realize the University's mission.

An intensive period of institutional reassessment took place from 1984 to 1990 during the presidency of Gordon A. Haaland. Looking forward to the twenty-first century, administrators, faculty, and staff participated in discussions of the University's focus and direction. These discussions resulted in *The 1988 Strategic Plan* which reaffirmed the University's long standing land-grant mission while stressing that the work of the University must "reflect the needs of a rapidly and continually changing world." President Haaland's vision was that by the year 2000 the University of New Hampshire would become "one of the nation's best small public universities." To that end, two major efforts were identified: maintaining the excellence of undergraduate programs, and selectively enhancing the University's role in research and graduate education. Particular emphasis was placed on fostering collaborative and interdisciplinary research, international studies, attention to public service through applied research and consulting, the recruitment of a more culturally diverse student body and faculty, and the improvement of the library, student housing, and instructional facilities.

By the final years of the Haaland administration, several components of *The Strategic Plan* had been implemented within the divisions of the University and considerable progress had been made toward a realization of his vision. However, the economy of the New England region began to falter in the late 1980s and, as the costs for higher education continued to increase, the percentage of total state appropriations to the University System and thus to the University of New Hampshire declined. Financial strains made it necessary to both seek alternative sources of funding and to become even more judicious in the allocation of limited institutional resources. Although there had been a significant increase in research grant submissions and awards, support for academic programs and physical facilities were now more narrowly limited. As a result, in June of 1989, the

Board of Trustees approved the creation of the University of New Hampshire Foundation in order to generate increased levels of private support for institutional priorities.

Dale F. Nitzschke became the seventeenth President of the University of New Hampshire in August of 1990. Facing the need to evaluate institutional priorities within a context of tightly constrained financial resources, President Nitzschke initiated a series of focused university wide planning efforts. Attention was explicitly directed to reassessing and clarifying the University's existing *Mission Statement* as a means for setting specific goals for each division and unit within the institution.

The first steps to revise the *Mission Statement* were undertaken as part of the development of the Academic Plan in 1990 and 1991. A first revision was reviewed by the academic deans, department chairs, the Senate Budget and Planning Committee, and an ad hoc committee representing all University constituencies appointed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. A second revision was endorsed by the Academic Senate and Student Senate. Then, in the summer of 1992, the President charged the newly appointed University Planning Council with reviewing the revised *Mission Statement* and completing a final version. The result, distributed to campus constituencies in the spring of 1993, includes a short version to be used in University publications, and a longer version intended to guide the direction of institutional planning and evaluation. Formal adoption of the revised Mission Statements which appear below will be considered by the Board of Trustees during academic year 1993-94.

### **University of New Hampshire Mission Statement (Shorter Version)**

*The University of New Hampshire is New Hampshire's public research university, providing comprehensive, high-quality undergraduate programs and graduate programs of distinction. It has a national and international agenda and holds land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant charters, but its primary purpose is learning: students collaborate with faculty in the mission of teaching, research and service. From its main Durham campus and its college in Manchester, the University serves New Hampshire and the region through continuing education, cooperative extension, cultural outreach, economic development activities, and applied research.*

## University of New Hampshire Mission Statement (Longer Version)

*The University of New Hampshire is unique among educational institutions in the state. By its original land-grant charter, the University combines the professions with the liberal arts and sciences and serves the public need for educated citizens. This mission, confirmed by the achievement of sea-grant and space-grant status, has expanded as the University has evolved. Now the largest and most diverse educational institution in the state, the University offers a broad array of undergraduate programs, professional programs, and research and graduate programs. Its primary purpose remains service to the citizens of New Hampshire. To serve the state well, the University has achieved national and international stature.*

*The modern land-grant university has a threefold mission: the scholarly functions of teaching, research, and public service are mixed and balanced in a wide variety of programs.*

***Teaching.** All students at the University, from beginning to advanced levels, share the freedom of the faculty to follow academic interests in various directions. Yet all learning that can be shared rests on the foundation of common knowledge and basic skills, and therefore all undergraduate programs of instruction at the University are built on a program of general education. The objectives of general education carry through the undergraduate subject major, as students refine and apply their skills and discover the relationships among fields of study. At the graduate level, students achieve independence as scholars. The moderate size and full scope of the University offer students at every level the advantage of close contact with individual faculty. That this faculty is dedicated to research and artistry is also an advantage for students, because active scholars and artists teach by sharing their own learning.*

***Research.** The activity of research embraces all the arts and sciences at the University. This activity is valuable in itself as it results in original contributions to human understanding and expression, but it is also an integral part of both undergraduate and graduate programs. In doctoral study, and in many masters programs, thesis research is a primary mode of learning. As a land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant institution, the University of New Hampshire has a special obligation to conduct applied research in the areas of agriculture, engineering, and marine sciences, and to disseminate the findings to the state and nation. Although any university must be selective in its quest for excellence in research, the only public university in the state has the responsibility to meet the public need for a broad scope of pure and applied research. The obligation not only to know but to share knowledge extends the University to the larger world of learning.*

***Public Service.** The University is likewise cosmopolitan in its public service activities. It fulfills its special responsibility for the welfare of the state through UNH Cooperative Extension, through the Division of Continuing Education, and through research and consultation on particular needs of New Hampshire citizens. Likewise, the array of professional and graduate programs at the University reflects not only the*



*distinctive expertise of the faculty but also the dedication to the state and region. More broadly, the undergraduate curriculum prepares citizens for full participation in a democratic society. Outside the classroom, too, participation in an academic community dedicated to the public interest inculcates an ethic of public service.*

*The University of New Hampshire is dedicated to collaborative learning inside and outside the classroom. By long tradition, it puts concern for humanity at the center of learning and attends to the ethical dimensions of the intellectual enterprise. From this standpoint, the University community is committed to the free and open exchange of ideas and prizes the scholarly virtues of integrity and honesty. It prepares students for full and active participation in a democratic society.*

## **APPRAISAL**

The University's central mission and purposes remain consistent with its land-grant charter and tradition of public service. Reappraisals of how the objectives of the University's mission should be interpreted and applied within each division and program have been ongoing and thorough during the last decade. Changes in institutional emphases and priorities have evolved in relation to the University's special circumstances. The mission of the University is both well known and well understood within the state and region. However, the University's distinctive resource needs, as the only comprehensive research university within the University System, have been less fully understood by some of its constituencies. President Nitzschke has endeavored to enhance relations with legislators, educators, and businesses within the state through new linkages in public service research. In recent years, while the University of New Hampshire has been particularly successful in recruiting highly capable students and a distinguished faculty, expanding its research activities, and enhancing its graduate programs, underfunding has caused strains on the institution's ability to effectively fulfill its mission.

In its centennial year, the University will continue to face the serious challenges inherent in what the Commission's 1983 accreditation report termed "problems derived from years, even decades, of underfunding." The revised *Mission Statement* is intended to guide us as we attempt to meet these challenges and continue to plan for the future. It places greater emphasis on the distinctive character of the University within the University System, acknowledges the importance of the institution's orientation to the

needs and interests of the state, and more clearly identifies the role of research in relation to the public interest. It elaborates principles of shared governance, integrity, and collaborative teaching and learning within the institution, and commits the University to continued program assessment and improvement in undergraduate and graduate education.

## PROJECTION

While we will no doubt remain the "resourceful institution, experienced and skilled at stretching slender budgets as far as possible" described by the accreditation visiting team in 1983, we will also direct our efforts toward improving the financial circumstances of the University in the coming years. This will entail communicating a clear conception of our mission and purposes to members of the state legislature and Governor, and increasing supportive constituencies within the state. At the same time, to continue to fulfill our mission, we expect to build on our institutional strengths. We will continue to develop new structures for integrating teaching, learning, and scholarship that involve both students and faculty, selectively restructure programs in relation to institutional priorities, gradually but modestly expand in size, increase efforts to recruit a more diverse faculty and student population, and proceed with improvements to the library and our physical facilities. In meeting these goals, it will be especially important to work effectively with the Board of Trustees to reaffirm the values of our land-grant tradition as they are restated in our revised *Mission Statement*, and to carefully articulate the unique contributions the University of New Hampshire makes to the people of the state.

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