

## **FAQs: The Future of the Thompson School**

UNH has been educating students, developing new knowledge and technologies, and engaging with producers in the diverse fields of agriculture for over 150 years. The Thompson School of Applied Science has been a part of that history for 125 years, by providing applied 2-year degrees within agricultural, and more recently in food, forestry, companion animal, and civil technology sectors in the state of New Hampshire and beyond. The market has changed: there is increased competition in availability and price for two-year associates degrees, fewer students in the applicant pool, and a significant increase nationally in the market for short-term credentials. All of this has led to decreasing enrollment and offerings not in line with state and regional workforce needs.

### **What is the plan for the Thompson School?**

Transform the Thompson School of Applied Science to re-focus on our core agricultural mission and to augment the school by incorporating a state-of-the-art, job ready, professional development and training academy.

### **Is the Thompson School as we know it going away?**

The Thompson School is not going away. The work the Thompson School does to prepare and build the state's workforce as well as support the agricultural community is still needed and valued. This is a great opportunity to ensure the school remains relevant and responsive to evolving needs.

### **What is going to change? Why?**

We will continue with the three associate degree programs that best align with the mission of the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, are considered as more viable and are targeted directly to the state's primary agricultural sectors. Four associate degree programs will be phased out over the next academic year. In addition, in partnership with UNH Professional Development and Training (PD&T), we will increase our offerings to better meet the demand from employees and employers for specific career and job ready skills, within agriculture and beyond.

### **Why more PD&T?**

There is a growing need in the state for new, less expensive and highly targeted non-credit training opportunities. The number of short-term certificates awarded nationally grew by 151 percent in 10 years (2000-2010) and PD&T at UNH is seeing a similar increase in demand.

### **What programs will continue?**

Forest technology; animal science with a livestock focus; and veterinary technology with an emphasis on large animals.

### **What programs will be phased out?**

Civil technology, horticultural technology, integrated agricultural management and culinary arts will not be offered after the 2018-19 academic year.

### **How was the decision made?**

This change comes after four years of strategic planning that has involved faculty, staff, administrators and external stakeholders. This work included a review of the competitive landscape. For example, 26 colleges, universities, technical institutes and community

colleges in New England and New York offer similar associates degree programs and all but seven of those are priced significantly lower.

**When will this happen?**

This change will occur over the next 12-14 months.

**Will the university maintain its commitment to agriculture?**

Yes. Our baccalaureate agricultural programs within the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture remain strong, and the New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station will continue to undertake research that benefits the agriculture community in New Hampshire, New England and the nation. UNH Cooperative Extension will continue to effectively bring the university's agricultural and other programs directly to New Hampshire residents.

**What does this mean for students?**

Nothing will change for current Thompson School students. The university will continue to provide the same quality and level of support until every student graduates in 2019. The Thompson School will accept students into continuing programs but will not accept any new students in programs that are being phased out. The university is in the process of communicating with those who applied and will work with each one individually to ensure their needs are met.

**What does this mean for faculty and staff?**

There will be no change to faculty and staff for the next twelve to fourteen months. During that time, we will work together to discuss potential opportunities for those faculty and staff who may be impacted.