January 22, 2019

Dear students, faculty and staff,

I hope that your winter break was relaxing and fun, and that the fresh (and heavy!) blanket of snow covering our campuses finds you safe and warm as we welcome the new year and the promise of a great new semester. I'm writing to share some updates on our work to support academic excellence across UNH.

**Student success** continues to be our primary goal in the provost’s office, and I have been very impressed with the campus-wide response to the retention teams’ efforts. Over the break, the Deans’ Council received an update from the four retention task force teams, including ongoing efforts to engage all students.

This spring, we will introduce a pilot program recommended by the task force team chaired by Associate Dean Brett Gibson. It identified key gateway courses in which 3,000 students will be enrolled. Through MyWildcat Success, faculty and staff in these courses will provide feedback to at-risk students during the first few weeks of classes. These students and others identified by the Academic Standards and Advising Committee (ASAC) will be referred to the Center for Academic Resources (CFAR) and offered additional support with study skills. These are just two examples of our new efforts to increase student retention. I will be meeting with the four retention teams at the end of January to learn more about their ideas. Please send me your suggestions in an email or share them with one of the deans.

On the research front, we can all be proud that UNH has been recognized for our very high research and scholarship activities by the Carnegie Classification system. This R1 designation recognizes UNH as a national leader in research and scholarship, and puts UNH in the top 43 of all U.S. higher education institutions that do not have a medical school. This is great news that honors the hard work of our faculty and staff, who contribute to scholarship and graduate education.

In academic affairs, we hope to finalize appointments for permanent deans in the College of Liberal Arts and the Graduate School by the end of the spring semester. We are also searching for a new director of the School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering. I am working with the executive committee in the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences on initiating a national search for a permanent dean. In more recent news, Senior Vice Provost for Research Jan Nisbet, a key leader in our achieving R1 designation, will be stepping down from that role after 10 years and returning to our faculty. We will soon be initiating a national search for her successor.
The new year is also a time when our community renews its focus on UNH’s future success. During the fall semester, President Dean led a university-wide effort to identify UNH’s key strategic priorities for the next few years. He will present this bold vision, “The Future of UNH: Four Strategic Priorities,” on Thursday, at 1 p.m., in the Granite State Room of the MUB. I encourage you to attend, or watch the live video stream at www.unh.edu/future.

As I look out my window at the bright white snow, I see the promise of a fresh beginning to 2019. UNH students arriving in Manchester, Concord and Durham are looking forward to a fresh start as well. I am incredibly proud to be part of the UNH community, where everyone is committed to helping students find the fresh start that will help them achieve success.

Thank you for everything that you do in support of UNH and the success of our students.

Wayne E. Jones Jr.
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs