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## UNH President Hart Announces New Communications Initiatives

By [Kim Billings](#)  
UNH News Bureau  
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DURHAM, N.H. -- University of New Hampshire President Ann Weaver Hart announced this week new plans for university communications, including hiring a senior level executive in public relations and marketing and establishing a Council on University Communications and Advancement.

"The new council will be a connecting rod for all the communications and advancement work that goes on at the university," Hart said. "It will develop consistent messages for UNH so that our external audiences will know our ambitions and results in New Hampshire and beyond."

The council is expected to begin its work in January.

Just four months into her presidency, Hart said this is her first major initiative because UNH needs to strengthen its internal and external communications.

"One of the most important tasks facing the University of New Hampshire is to raise friends and funds through a comprehensive strategy of development initiatives and alumni relations," she explained, "but first we need an excellent communications program."

The search for a public relations and marketing executive is expected to begin immediately. "I expect a small committee made up of professional communications and public relations staff and faculty will best be able to lead such a search," Hart said.

The Council on University Communications and Advancement will be chaired by Young Dawkins, president of the University of New Hampshire Foundation. It will include leaders from the major

offices of the university, such as Enrollment Services, the Alumni Association, the UNH Foundation, Academic Advising, University Relations, New Hampshire Public Television, the Office of Research and Outreach, Student Affairs, Athletics, faculty, students, and Cooperative Extension.

"It is our hope that this council will successfully identify UNH's most important and strategic messages, and then help disseminate that information in a comprehensive way to our internal and external audiences," said Dawkins. "We want the university to speak with one voice because our story is powerful and compelling."

In addition, until the search identifies the successful candidate, Dawkins will provide interim leadership for the Office of University Relations, comprised of University Publications, Public Programs and Events, and the News Bureau.

Kim Billings, director of the News Bureau, has been named university spokesperson. "Kim has long worked directly with the media on public issues related to UNH," said Hart, "and she will now take a leadership role in working with me and the rest of the university on assuring timely and coordinated interactions with the media at the highest levels."

J. Gregg Sanborn, executive assistant to the president, will serve as Hart's government affairs liaison to work with all public constituents to the university. "Gregg has a long history of distinguished experience and broad knowledge of public affairs and governmental issues at all levels in New Hampshire and in the town of Durham," Hart noted, "and I believe that he will be a tremendous asset to me in this new official capacity."

According to Hart, the series of new initiatives comes after months of study, analyses and discussions. "The time spent on this has been worth it," she said. "The memories of and the reputation of the university are shaped by the experiences students, citizens, faculty, and staff have at UNH, and it is important that we plan and execute carefully our communications to our internal and external audiences as we work to advance the mission and vision of the university."

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