

# Renewing our Commitment to NH

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Monday, January 27, 2020

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SINCE I ARRIVED in New Hampshire in July 2018, I have written a monthly email update to the University of New Hampshire community. In it, I note important events on campus, share the books I've recently read and talk about the progress we're making in advancing the university's four strategic priorities. I want to share our progress with you as well, because we can't be successful without you, the people of New Hampshire.

Our four priorities reflect the heart of UNH's mission: student success and well-being, academic excellence, a renewed commitment to the state of New Hampshire and a

strong financial foundation.

You might expect to hear that the success of our students and financial health for the institution are priorities. But I bet you were not expecting a renewed focus on New Hampshire. While people can, and should, assume their flagship public university is committed to its home state, including it as a priority emphasizes our renewed focus on deepening our partnerships with New Hampshire businesses, communities and families. We are working hard to make everyone in New Hampshire incredibly proud of the University of New Hampshire.

We want students to grow up here aspiring to come to UNH. It should be the first choice of many of our best and brightest students. We believe that UNH will prove itself to be a trusted, valuable and consistent partner in advancing New Hampshire's quality of life and supporting its economy. No matter where I travel in this state, I want residents to be proud to call UNH their university. We have recently been in the news for announcing a freeze on in-state tuition thanks to the support of the state legislature and the governor and I am pleased to note that we have increased financial aid by nearly \$10 million over the last several years.

I spent my first six months as president meeting with faculty, staff and students on all three of our campuses (Durham, Manchester and Concord). I traveled across the state and listened to hundreds of government and business leaders, students, parents, alumni and educators. They told me that the most important issues facing our state are K-12 education; health care, including behavioral health and opioids; the environment and particularly concerns around energy; the economy and the state's workforce.

We took that information and conducted a survey across the university to understand all of the research and outreach programs we have that address each of these themes.

The results are impressive: the work of more than 600 faculty and staff impacts education across the state with over 300 of them working directly with K-12 educators or administrators. In addition, nearly 300 faculty and staff collaborate with health care and wellness organizations and 250 support low-income youth, adults and families across New Hampshire.

Our research and engagement with state agencies helps to steward the state's natural resources, protect our waters and support agricultural producers.

Where there remain gaps between what we're doing and what the state needs, we will collaborate with partners around New Hampshire to generate the resources to do more. That's the role of a state's public flagship university. We must make sure that our work is aligned with the most important priorities of the state. I think people will be pleasantly surprised that it mostly is. We are taking other steps, too. Because attracting and preparing a workforce for New Hampshire is one of the biggest contributions that the university can make, we're partnering with businesses that are eager to work with us. Through a business advisory council I established, we're listening to what they need most to further economic development, including how we can prepare our students for thinking broadly about the problems of the future.

In turn, businesses are hearing what we need: scholarships, career mentors and internships. We're also working to deepen our relationships with New Hampshire high schools, and make sure they know how strong UNH is today.

I have already visited several schools and hope I will have the opportunity to meet you or your student. To learn more, visit [unh.edu/nh](http://unh.edu/nh). Let us know your thoughts and help us make UNH your university.

James W. Dean Jr.  
President, University of New Hampshire

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