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### University of New Hampshire NEASC self-study report 2003. Part 2: The area reports. Undergraduate experience. Academic plan for the future of the University of New Hampshire 2002-2007

University of New Hampshire. Committee on the Undergraduate Experience

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## ACADEMIC PLAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE 2002-2007

### VISION AND VALUES

*The University of New Hampshire will be distinguished for combining the living and learning environment of a New England liberal arts college with the breadth, spirit of discovery, and civic commitment of a land-grant research institution.*

- Our academic goals are achieved through the provision of *high quality, integrated learning experiences* from the freshman year through doctoral research. High quality programs are characterized by effective and engaging instructional strategies, high standards for student learning and assessment, an emphasis on critical analysis, the development of excellent communication abilities, a balanced integration of liberal and professional education, and interdisciplinary approaches where appropriate. It is acknowledged that two forces driving the University – the desire to be comprehensive and the desire to achieve excellence – are in constant tension. In cases where they conflict, the University of New Hampshire will always opt for quality. We will not be “all things to all people;” we will focus on areas that are consistent with our mission and in which we can excel.

### STRATEGIC THEMES

The Academic Plan is structured at two levels—strategic themes that embrace our multiple responsibilities in teaching, scholarship, and public service; and a set of strategic goals and actions that will serve as the basis for annual and multi-year planning and decision-making. The strategic themes and the subsequent goals and actions affirm and strengthen the University’s mission and identity, vision, and core values.

The strategic themes that guide the 2002-2007 Academic Plan for the Future of the University of New Hampshire are *Discovery, Engagement and Outreach, Resourcefulness, Institutional Effectiveness, and Community*.

#### ***Discovery***

The processes, rewards, and challenges of intellectual and creative discovery serve as the foundation for academic goals related to undergraduate and graduate curricula, research endeavors, and artistic activities. Within the theme of discovery, goals are focused on the integration of teaching and learning, the quality of both in-class and out-of-class experiences, the pursuit of new knowledge through research, and the critical role of our library and technology infrastructures. Even as the University of New Hampshire continues to respect and preserve the integrity of academic disciplines, its strategic future will be guided by the goals of increasing coherence in our students’ education and collaboration across academic disciplines and administrative units in order to foster the processes of discovery.

The University builds on a number of strengths as it emphasizes this strategic theme, including:

- A strong commitment to undergraduate education and teaching, enhanced by opportunities for undergraduate research, with consistently positive assessments by students of the quality of faculty as instructors and advisors
- At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, a substantial number of highly competitive major areas of study as well as innovative interdisciplinary majors, minors, and specializations
- An attractive array of study abroad programs and community-based learning experiences
- A comprehensive writing program that supports students across all majors
- Professionally oriented graduate programs that are competitive regionally and effectively preparing students for leadership roles in all sectors
- A significant growth in the scope and reputation of scholarship, creative activities, and research over the past decade, as reflected in individual faculty initiatives, the success of our research centers and institutes, and new partnerships with external agencies

## **STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIONS**

The mission, vision, values, and strategic themes articulated here will be realized and sustained through the pursuit of specific goals and actions over the next five years. These goals and actions are tied to each strategic theme, as follows:

### **Discovery**

**The University of New Hampshire will provide undergraduate students an innovative, high quality, coherent, and integrated educational experience.**

*Strategic Actions:*

- a) Ensure the completion of the general education reforms as proposed by faculty planning and governance groups; move to implement the first-year and subsequent curricular recommendations; and seek to integrate general education more fully with the major area of study and with out-of-class experiences
- b) Establish and fund course development and implementation plans for a revised general education program
- c) Foster high expectations for academic excellence for all students
- d) Make undergraduate research, experiential learning, service learning, community-based initiatives, internships, international study, and the Honors Program more integral to the academic experience

- e) Integrate academic and non-academic aspects of student life into a more cohesive experience
- f) Provide library and information resources and instruction to ensure academic success and provide skills for lifelong learning

**The University of New Hampshire will continue to grow strategically in its role as a significant and excellent research university while balancing research with its primary commitments to undergraduate education and high quality teaching.**

*Strategic Actions:*

Increase the involvement of undergraduate students in research and allocate the necessary resources to support undergraduate research and discovery activities.