



UNH Graduate Students Pitch In On State Budget Analysis

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UNH Senate Study Group: (L-R) UNH students Mark Graham (MBA), Nick Mangee (Ph.D.), Christian Franke (MBA), Josh Stillwagon (Ph.D.), and John Eager (MBA).

DURHAM, N.H. - In one of the most challenging state budget years in recent memory, University of New Hampshire graduate business students pitched in to help the state Senate Finance Committee, providing analysis and research about revenue projections and cost savings.

Five students from the UNH Whittemore School of Business and Economics - three MBA students and two Ph.D. candidates in economics - were part of a team that worked with Sen. Lou D'Allesandro (D-Manchester) and the bipartisan NH Senate Finance Committee for three months. The students used quantitative analysis and economic theories to provide the committee with revenue projections based on already established sources for 2010 and 2011. The students also

analyzed organizational costs and looked for ways to find efficiencies and save money.

"They were just absolutely phenomenal in helping me and Senate Finance put together the budget. I'm going to suggest to the Senate leadership that we plan to do this every budget year," said D'Allesandro, chairman of the NH Senate Finance Committee who had outreached to UNH President Mark Huddleston about having graduate business students assist with the state budget.

D'Allesandro approached Huddleston after seeing a news story about how Harvard MBA students had assisted with state budget preparations. "I thought we should use the state university, the academic center of New Hampshire," he said.

"President Huddleston deserves a tremendous amount of credit. He responded to a demonstrated need from the state legislature. We don't have many resources, and UNH is an untapped resource that we should take advantage of," D'Allesandro said.

John Eager was one of the MBA students who worked on the NH budget project. He continued to work with legislators full time following the completion of the analysis phase as the budget moved through the committee of conference. An accountant in private industry in Ireland for 18 years, he will complete his MBA this summer following the conclusion of his work with D'Allesandro and the NH Senate Finance Committee this month.

"This has been an excellent opportunity for UNH to show the quality of the students in the MBA and Ph.D. programs, and I am very grateful to President Huddleston for supporting us," Eager said.

Eager said the team's revenue estimates were more conservative than other revenue estimates, all of which were taken into consideration by the NH Senate Finance Committee. And when making recommendations on cost savings, Eager said he was sensitive to the fact

that so many residents rely on state programs and services. The goal of the team, which also included Russ Thibeault with Applied Economic Research of Laconia, was to look for ways to be more efficient and calculate cost savings without affecting the actual programs and services.

"There are many ways that UNH can support the state government, and this would be a fantastic project for the business school to engage in every few years," Eager said.

Kevin McLaughlin, visiting professor of finance, supervised the project.

"While the team did not make policy recommendations, their analysis was guided by, presented to, and discussed with those whose position is to make such policy recommendations. To the extent that this represented a hands-on real-world application of budgetary analysis and economic policy analysis, this was a rare opportunity for the students involved to better understand the mechanics of government and the ramifications of public policy decisions. Interestingly, both the MBA students and the economics students marveled at the uniqueness of perspectives of their counterparts given their differing backgrounds and expertise," McLaughlin said.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, space-grant and community-engaged university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

Photos

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/UNHSenateStudyGroup.JPG>

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<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/UNHSenateStudyGroup2.JPG>

UNH Senate Study Group with Senators: (L-R) John Eager, Sen. Lou D'Allesandro (D-Manchester), Nick Mangee, Josh Stillwagon, Christian Franke, Mark Graham, Sen. John Gallus (R-Berlin).

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