

Help Spread the Word About the Contributions UNH Makes to the State

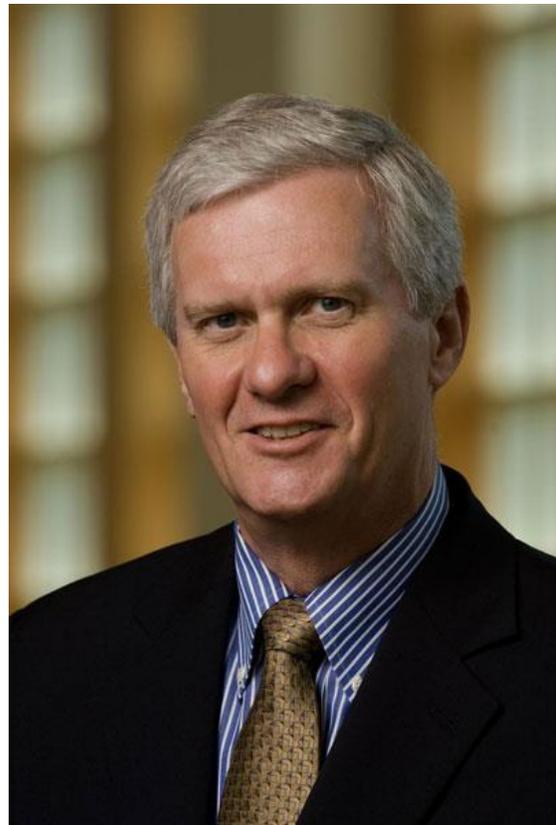
Thursday, September 20, 2012

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On Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2012, the Board of Trustees which officially determines our state appropriation request and tuition levels-voted in support of asking lawmakers to restore the 2010 budget cut of 49 percent in exchange for UNH providing more financial aid and freezing tuition for New Hampshire students for two years. This is a position that 71 percent of New Hampshire adults support, according to [a recent poll from the UNH Survey Center](#). I hope you will join me in making sure our elected officials and those seeking to serve understand the need to prioritize funding for UNH and public higher education.

In the last legislative session, public funding for in-state students at New Hampshire colleges and universities suffered the largest cut in our state's history, indeed in our nation's history. At UNH, our appropriation from the state has been reduced to just 6 percent of our operating budget. New Hampshire was already last in the nation in per capita funding for public higher education.

At UNH, we recognize that these are tough economic times, but we also know how essential it is to provide world-class education to our students. We do so at the most affordable price possible. After the recent budget cut, we instituted new cost-saving



measures, including layoffs, early retirement incentives, and a hiring freeze, to minimize the impact of the lost funding on the quality of our educational experience. In all, we absorbed more than 80 percent of the loss through administrative savings. Even so, we were forced to raise in-state tuition to make up for the portion we could not absorb. Although the tuition increase was kept to a minimum, I know that every time tuition goes up, it hurts New Hampshire families and makes their children's futures less secure. It is essential to understand that, in good times and bad, the funding we receive from the legislature has a direct impact on tuition levels.

With the fall election season upon us and with the next state budget starting to be developed in January, we are preparing next year's appropriation request. Recently, an influential leader in the N.H. Legislature stated that he may seek additional cuts to our funding in the next biennium. He commented that UNH is "inefficient and unproductive" and that "by throwing more money at it, we are just going to increase the problem." He remarked that the legislature's near 50 percent funding cut was "a signal to UNH and to the university system as a whole that it can't go on." He asserted that our faculty teach only eight to 10 hours a week and then take long sabbaticals.

I am very proud of the way we managed the 49 percent cut from the state while minimizing tuition increases. We are good, frugal Yankees at UNH, very fiscally responsible with every dollar. In fact, our cost per credit hour is 70 percent of the average of our peer institutions.

I am also very proud of the excellent work our faculty do. UNH faculty put in long, hard hours teaching courses, working shoulder-to-shoulder with our students on research projects, and lending their knowledge and expertise to businesses, nonprofits and communities throughout the state. Last week I stood on the deck of a home overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee and listened intently to two members of our faculty, Jim Haney, professor of biological sciences, and Jeff Schloss, a water resources specialist for Cooperative Extension, and two of their research students, speak to a group of homeowners about their path-breaking work monitoring the quality of New Hampshire lakes and analyzing the growth of toxic bacterial blooms. These bacterial blooms, even in our freshest and cleanest lakes, are potentially serious threats to public health. Given the hundreds of thousands of New Hampshire residents and tourists who enjoy our lakes and rivers, this kind of cutting-edge research is crucial to our well-being. It is staggering to imagine that any responsible public official would be dismissive of this sort of work.

Indeed, what is most troubling about the legislator's comments and the legislature's decision to cut funding is that they so misrepresent and underappreciate the impact of New Hampshire's public colleges and universities. UNH and its sister institutions keep our state's economy strong and its people healthy. A recently released economic impact study shows UNH contributes \$1.4 billion to the state's economy each year through workforce development, direct expenditures, and employment. That's an extraordinary return on the state's investment of less than \$40 million! In addition, UNH works actively to promote commercialization of intellectual property and to support entrepreneurial activity in the state.

I need your help in setting the record straight. If you want to keep UNH strong and help make UNH as affordable as possible for New Hampshire families, I ask you to join me in conversation with our elected officials. If you believe as I do that we must make a commitment to restore funding to 2010 levels for UNH, I ask you to let your voice be heard. Whether it is writing to your local papers, asking those who want to represent you in Concord to lead on this important issue, or emailing your friends and neighbors, you can help support our students and their families struggling to produce the next generation of leaders. Our quality of life and economy depend on your involvement. I encourage you to review a fact sheet and some highlights that are helpful in telling our story; you can find them by [clicking here](#). You can join this effort and help keep UNH strong by [signing up here](#).

I understand that in any election season, the truth may be stretched by candidates and pundits to create a tactical political advantage. But the truth about UNH is too important to you, your family, and the entire State of New Hampshire to allow misstatements and mischaracterizations to go unchallenged. We simply cannot ignore the financial hardships that reduced state support for education impose on New Hampshire families - or the impact of today's misguided decisions on tomorrow's economy.

We need your help in the next few months in spreading the word about the invaluable contributions UNH makes, day in and day out, to our state and its future. Join me in engaging our state's leaders in this important conversation. Keep UNH strong. Keep New Hampshire strong.

In the coming weeks and months, I will continue to reach out to you to share news of the great work happening on our campuses and to seek your help as advocates for UNH.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Mark W. Huddleston
President

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SUSTAINABILITY



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