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Lori Wright  
*UNH Media Relations*

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Media Contact: [Lori Wright](#)  
603-862-0574  
UNH Media Relations

April 11, 2008

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DURHAM, N.H. – Students in the University of New Hampshire chapter of Pi Delta Phi, the French national honor society, are helping a museum in France honor comic playwright and actor Molière.

The chapter raised about \$780 — or 500 euros — for a museum in Pézenas, France. To raise money, the students held an on-campus raffle and received financial support from faculty and alumni members of the chapter. Each year, the students are required by the honor society to do a project that promotes French culture.

The museum will use the money to acquire “le fauteuil de Molière,” a seat used in 17th-century productions of the play “The Imaginary Invalid” by Molière. Molière’s performance in the title role of this comedy marked his last appearance on stage. The centuries-old chair will be the focal point of an exhibit in the city museum of Pézenas that will commemorate the passage of Molière’s troupe.

“Molière is one of the most celebrated authors of French drama. His works are read in several different classes at UNH and are performed around the world. It is not often one gets to preserve a part of theater history — few stage properties survive this long — and it is even more rare to be able to preserve a property with such a personal connection to the playwright and author,” said Barbara Cooper, professor of French and faculty moderator of the chapter.

The chapter also will initiate its newly elected student members on May 1, 2008. Students to be initiated include Kristina Nelson of Manchester, Shana Friedman of Amherst, Corey Sweeney of Nashua, Nicole Lucey of Keene, Guillaume Delloue of Atkinson, and Carolyn Dempster of Keene.

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