

Dick Cannon to Retire

**UNH's Vice President of Finance and Administration
Announces a Curtailment of His Own**

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Dick Cannon has spent his last winter as the mythical man behind the snow day.

After nearly nine years as vice president of finance and administration, Cannon will step down around the Thanksgiving holiday. Not for a new position—although there is little doubt he will remain active professionally—but to retire. A self-described compulsive planner, he’s thinking only about tackling a stack of books and possibly a few MOOCs.

“I’m very optimistic for UNH’s future,” he says. “We’ve collectively been doing a lot of the right things to prepare for the times we are in, accommodating the demand for universities to adapt and change. We’ve become more flexible and able to respond more quickly to what students and parents need. Our physical assets are in better shape, our housing, dining, and transportation operations are constantly adjusting to student and staff needs while keeping quality high, we have introduced a number of creative wellness and health cost containment strategies, we’re approaching our human resources and talent in thoughtful ways, and our financial organization is stronger than it’s ever been.”

And about those snow days? And his communications about snow days trending on Twitter? Cannon says it’s just part of the job. “Why do I do it? Because my team is responsible for cleaning up the mess,” he says with a laugh. “On the one hand you want to do everything you can to maintain the availability of the campus while at the same time the weather in New England can be quite hostile and variable. This year we decided to communicate early with the community about what we saw in terms of the forecast and what we were thinking about, and I believe it really made a difference.”

The chance to make a difference is what first drew Cannon to UNH. “UNH is big enough to have a lot of offerings and breadth of programs but yet not so large that you can’t put your arms around it and measure your progress and contribution over time. I feel I’ve been able to be a trusted advisor and partner to the president. He can throw me any challenge and it’s my job to find a way to say yes.”

“Dick has played a central role in every major institutional advance at UNH during the last eight years,” says President Mark Huddleston. “He is the most thoughtful and creative administrator I have ever had a chance to work with. Dick has a tenacious and unselfish commitment to helping his colleagues achieve goals that make this a better place. He leads a team that provides the finance and administrative services necessary to support our faculty and students in doing their work. We couldn’t have survived, much less thrived, over the last decade without Dick’s leadership.”

“My job has been to keep the trains running on time with few interruptions,” Cannon adds. “There is always more to do, but I feel really good about the progress of our teams. We’ve been able to rebuild a lot of the campus physical structure and repair its heart and lungs—the systems under ground, behind walls, and on roofs. We’ve become an exemplar in how to provide energy, and the information technology organization is enormously productive, while maintaining very high up time on our network and introducing technology increasingly in all that we do.”

Cannon is hard pressed to identify his biggest accomplishment, citing recent progressive and responsive changes in human resources as well as the creation of Healthy UNH as recent highlights, but notes that one of them was also the most surprising. “It’s been really a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with the University

System of New Hampshire board of trustees and participate in their initiative of change management and conceptualizing different relationship between campuses and the board. It was very gratifying work. The work we did resulted in important changes to the way the campuses work with the system office that will be enduring and establish more balanced relationships.”

President Huddleston will appoint a committee to conduct a national search for Cannon’s replacement.

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