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UNH President Delivers 2005 State Of The University Address

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DURHAM, N.H. – University of New Hampshire faculty and researchers brought in more than \$108 million in sponsored grants and contracts last year, an increase of more than 15 percent over the previous year and an amount that doesn't even include UNH's recent \$38 million NASA grant – the largest, single research award in the history of the institution – to build instrumentation for the space agency's Magnetospheric MultiScale (MMS) mission.

The jump in research funding was one of several accomplishments cited by UNH President Ann Weaver Hart in her 2005 State of the University Address, which she delivered Tuesday, Sept. 6. An annual tradition, the address outlined the university's achievements in the last academic year and its challenges for the future.

“This growth in extramural funding holds enormous promise for the university and it supports faculty as they work to answer burning questions and seek solutions to major issues facing our world. Art, scholarship, and research represent a Discovery way of knowing central to our core mission—the creation of new knowledge and new manifestations of the human spirit,” Hart said.

In order to create a more cohesive student life experience, the university expanded its first-year orientation across the entire year. “Young adulthood is a period of explosive personal change and discovery. Recognizing the critical link between personal and academic discovery, we will continue to emphasize improvement in the integration between student life and academic learning,” she said.

As part of its effort to create a more inclusive community, last year UNH developed a Diversity Strategic Plan, with the current focus on faculty recruitment and retention of people of color and women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Hart also re-established the Violence Against Women Committee and created a new position in the Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program office that addresses the issue of domestic or intimate partner violence.

Referring to the previous year's debates around sexual violence, freedom of speech, and civility, Hart said, “Our community is not of one mind on the critical questions that arose, and the dialogue will continue. Leaders in Student and Academic Services have met with The New Hampshire and Main Street magazine staffs to work toward a higher level of professionalism and civic dialogue. The Student and Academic Services division has taken action through the established judicial system. Many across campus, including the journalism faculty, the theatre department faculty and students, and others, are sharing ideas about ways to nurture respect

while advancing freedom of speech and protecting the safety of all members of our community,” Hart said.

Hart said UNH continues to seek ways to enhance funding and cut expenses. In the five-year period between fiscal years 2002 and 2007, revenue to UNH’s Education and General Budget, which comes from multiple sources, is increasing by an average annual rate of 4.8 percent. In contrast, expenses are growing by 5.5 percent.

“If unaddressed, this difference would produce an annual \$1.7 million budget gap. Continued attention and resourcefulness is required,” she said. To address the gap, the president said UNH is aggressively seeking cost savings through initiatives such as the power cogeneration plant, as well as an ongoing search for alternative fuels. UNH also is seeking additional revenue, and is planning its next capital campaign.

“We will continue to advocate for a level of state funding that recognizes the tremendous contribution of higher education to the well being of the state, and its real costs, including those shouldered by our students and their families,” Hart said.

Over the last year, Hart said UNH has made great progress in creating a signature educational experience, and in the next year, the university will continue that work. In addition to welcoming an entering class of 650 graduate students with the highest undergraduate grade point average on record, UNH saw one of its largest and strongest first-year classes in university history this fall. The estimated 2,800 entering students are high achieving, with a sharp increase in the number of top New Hampshire high school students enrolling.

The cornerstone of UNH’s effort to create a signature educational experience is the Discovery Program. The program aims to instill a sense of academic exploration and includes a number of components, including a universitywide dialogue (focusing this year on globalization), honors classes, international study abroad, challenging research projects, and a focus on intensive “inquiry seminars” for first-year students that are characterized by inter-disciplinary thought, discussion, and debate.

“We have taken a significant step in our evolution that will move students from the requirement ‘check-off’ mentality of the ‘shopping mall’ of general education, to pro-active course selections more closely aligned with individual academic aspirations,” Hart said.

The president also reviewed some of the more challenging tasks UNH will face in the upcoming year. They include entering contract negotiations with the UNH chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and continuing to confront the university’s structural deficit in its budget.

“The future of UNH continues to be imbedded in the life and culture of New Hampshire, the nation, and the world. Good relationships across the state are critical to that future, and I will continue to work to represent you and all you do to our broad community through extended County Conversations plus ongoing work with state government and community leaders. The world is our home as well, so we must do everything we can to keep that world front and center in the lives of our students. International research and study grounded in the home we love—this should be an aspiration for all of our students,” Hart said.

EDITORS: UNH President Ann Weaver Hart’s 2005 State of the University Address is available for download at

http://www.unh.edu/news/news_releases/2005/september/lw_050906address.html. The video that preceded the address can be viewed at:

- [WindowsMedia File](#) (2.8MB)
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NHPTV will provide Hart's address in its entirety via the Web at <http://www.nhptv.org/>.
An updated high-resolution photo of Ann Weaver Hart is available for download at <http://www.unh.edu/news/img/hart/annweaverhart.jpg>.