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DURHAM, N.H.— Every year college graduates from across the country answer the call to service, leaving behind family and friends, to become Peace Corps volunteers. This year, the University of New Hampshire at Durham moved up two spots on the top 25 list for medium-sized schools with 25 alumni currently serving as volunteers. Since Peace Corps' inception, 576 alumni of UNH have joined the ranks of the Peace Corps.

“There is a history and a culture of giving at UNH,” says Mark Rubinstein, vice president for student and academic affairs. “The consistency with which UNH is visible on the Peace Corps’ list of leading institutions is a testimony to this culture of involvement and commitment. While New Englanders are often chided in national studies for the seemingly low level of financial support for philanthropic endeavors, the reality is that many of us—and particularly UNH alumni—give of themselves.”

"The diversity of alumni serving as volunteers - coming from all backgrounds and regions of the country - has helped the Peace Corps represent the true face of America," said Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez. "We are pleased that so many graduates have taken the journey to make the world a better place for all of us to share."

Although it is not a requirement for service, the majority of volunteers who have served in the Peace Corps over the past 43 years have been college graduates. Currently, 97 percent of volunteers have at least an undergraduate degree, with 13 percent of those also possessing a graduate level degree.

Schools are ranked according to the size of the student body. Small schools are those with less than 5,000 undergraduates, medium-size schools are those between 5,001 to 15,000 undergraduates, and large schools are those with more than 15,000 undergraduates. To view the entire 2005 "Top Producing Colleges and Universities" list, visit <http://www.peacecorps.gov/news/resources/stats/pdf/schools2005.pdf>. Last year's rankings, for comparison purposes, can be found at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/news/resources/stats/pdf/schools2004.pdf>.

Since 1961, more than 178,000 volunteers have served in the Peace Corps, working in such diverse fields as education, health, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, information technology, business development, the environment, and agriculture. Peace Corps volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment.