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# UNH Is Reaccredited By National Higher Education Commission

## University Is Praised For Its Self-Study Effort

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DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire has been reaccredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges following a rigorous three-year self-study effort.

According to the commission’s findings, UNH meets the standards for accreditation. It commended the university for its “initiative and creativity in its special focus self-study.”

“Through this process, the university was able to demonstrate that it meets the commission’s standards and also focus a significant amount of its time and energy in the self-study on three areas central to implementing the Academic Plan for the future of the University of New Hampshire,” according to Terrence J. MacTaggart, chair of the commission.

The self-study effort, focused on three areas: the undergraduate experience, engagement through research and scholarship, and institutional effectiveness.

“I commend our outstanding steering committee and enthusiastic self-study committees that spent hundreds of hours preparing their reports. These committees included faculty, staff, and students who believed in the importance of tying our accreditation evaluation to our universitywide strategic planning effort. The quality of their effort demonstrates that UNH is committed to fulfilling its mission, ensuring quality in its academic programs, and enhancing its institutional effectiveness,” UNH President Ann Weaver Hart said.

According to MacTaggart, “the University of New Hampshire is to be congratulated on its efforts to intensify the educational experience of its students, to focus the research efforts of its faculty, and to emphasize and enhance overall institutional effectiveness. To be sure, quantitative improvements are worth seeking, but this energetic effort to enhance the quality of the institution is especially admirable.”

UNH’s self-study effort began in the summer of 2001 with an evaluation of the academic strategic plan for possible areas of focus. Three themes in the strategic plan were chosen for areas of study. During the fall of 2001, the themes and the alternative self-study process were discussed with the Faculty Senate, the Council of Chairs, the Deans' Council, and the President's Staff, all of whom endorsed the format.

“We pursued an alternative approach to accreditation in that we focused our attention on several

parts of the university's Academic Plan. We felt that while accreditation occurs once in a decade, strategic planning must be an ongoing process. We did not want the NEASC self-study to be an isolated episode. Rather, to the greatest extent possible, we tried to link the NEASC self-study to academic planning. This was both a challenge and an opportunity," said Stephen Hardy, chair of the NEASC Steering Committee and professor of kinesiology.

As part of the strategic planning process, the provost organized task forces to study the undergraduate experience and engagement. These task forces were reshaped into NEASC self-study committees during spring 2002. During the 2002-2003 academic year, the area committees met with various constituents, conducted surveys, and utilized existing reports to prepare draft reports. They also consulted with selected members of the NEASC visiting team to take advantage of their expertise in advance of the team visit in October 2003.

In April 2003, a small team visited the campus to evaluate UNH's compliance with the NEASC's 11 Standards, which were one of two parts to the university's alternative self-study. UNH submitted its final report to the committee in September and in October, the full team came to campus for a two-day visit to evaluate the university.

"The NEASC accreditation experience has reinforced the value of our strategic plan. It is not just a document in a drawer; it is guiding our efforts," said Bruce Mallory, provost and executive vice president of Academic Affairs.

The university's next comprehensive evaluation by the commission is set for fall 2013, and is scheduled to submit its fifth-year interim report in fall 2008, which is required of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle.