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UNH Ranks as Nation's Best in Geoscience Research

By [Sharon Keeler](#)
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January 28, 2003

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire is ranked as the number one university in the nation for geoscience research, according to a recent report from a national institute in Philadelphia that ranks high-impact U.S. universities.

The Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) provides researchers with resources that enable them to access historical research and keep abreast of the most recent developments in their respective disciplines.

ISI's editorial component, in-cite.com, ranks universities based on how frequently their work is cited by other researchers. It analyzes research performance and identifies significant trends in the sciences and social sciences, ranking the top 100 federally funded universities that published at least 100 papers in more than 8,697 ISI-indexed journals.

Citations are important because they indicate cutting-edge scientific findings that lay the groundwork for advanced research. Papers cited represent "some of the most important scientific advances of our time," according to the institute's staff.

UNH, which previously ranked third, moved to the top spot in the most recent rankings covering 1997 to 2001. During that time, researchers published 281 papers that were cited an average of 10.2 times by other scientists.

UNH tops an elite list of schools, including Harvard University, Princeton University, the University of California, Irvine, and the University of Washington.

"This ranking is a crowning achievement for New Hampshire's university," says UNH President Ann

Weaver Hart. "The citizens of the state, as well as the university community, should be extremely proud. It is a testament to the leadership of our faculty, to the hard work and exceptional minds of our scientists, and to the ongoing support of NOAA, NASA, NSF and the members of our congressional delegation -- most notably Senator Judd Gregg -- who have believed in the research, teaching and engagement work of geoscientists at UNH.

"Our students benefit from being actively involved in this work," Hart continues. "The scientific community benefits from the creation of new knowledge, and the citizens of our state and the world benefit when research findings affect public policy and improve the quality of life and health of all of us."

Geoscience involves many fields of study including geology, geochemistry, hydrology, oceanography, volcanology, climatology, paleontology and remote sensing. At UNH, scientists who work in these disciplines are faculty members in the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture and the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences. Many of these scientists conduct their research as part of the university's world-renowned Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space.

Work being done at UNH in these areas focuses on the integrated behavior of the Earth and its surrounding environment. On-going studies examine such things as climate change, global water issues, land use change and atmospheric chemistry. Some of the highly-cited UNH research noted by ISI includes groundbreaking work on the U.S. carbon sink, on atmospheric changes due to pollution transport, on the effects of population growth on the availability of fresh water, and on the impact of nitrogen pollution on Northeast forests.

These studies have not only laid the foundation for future scientific inquiries, they have also directly impacted policy change. Based in part on research findings from the New England Regional Assessment (NERA) report released by the UNH's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, for example, New Hampshire and Massachusetts have passed first-ever legislation clamping down on power plant emissions, and New England governors and eastern Canadian

premiers have agreed to reduce mercury emissions in the region by 75 percent by 2010, and to scale back greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010.

For more information on the ISI rankings, go to the Web site http://in-cites.com/research/2002/december_2_2002-2.html.

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