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## UNH's Institute on Disability Awarded Grant to Sustain Leadership Series

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DURHAM, N.H. -- A statewide training initiative at risk of discontinuation at the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire will fundraise and undergo a strategic planning process, thanks to a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation.

The Institute on Disability was recently awarded a \$19,939 grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to support strategic planning and fundraising activities to guarantee sustainability of the NH Leadership Series.

The first NH Leadership Series began in 1988 with a mission to provide individuals with disabilities, family members and graduate students at UNH with state-of-the-art information and leadership skills to impact state and local organizations. Through the series, families and individuals learn to advocate for themselves and others in the struggle for equality – and no voice is more credible to policymakers and service providers than the voice of those who are impacted by the policies and services offered.

However, because of the changing political climate, the reduction of state and local agency funding, and the rising costs of accommodations, meals, presenter fees, etc., the Leadership Series is at significant risk of discontinuing. The grant provided by the NH Charitable Foundation will ensure the NH Leadership Series continues to provide individuals with disabilities and their families with vital leadership and advocacy skills.

"In the past we have relied almost exclusively on state and federal funds to run the series," says NH Leadership Series Coordinator Beth Dixon. "As we enter an era of shrinking state dollars, due to a climate of budget cuts and rising operating costs, we realize the need to develop a fundraising strategy to sustain the series in order to continue to thrive in this new environment. This capacity to raise money is a skill that needs to be developed."

For information about the NH Leadership Series, visit the Institute on Disability's Web site at [www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu).

The NH Charitable Foundation is a statewide community foundation, established in 1962. This permanent endowment comes from gifts from many individuals, families, corporations and organizations. Earnings from the endowment are used to make grants and loans to nonprofit organizations serving the state and scholarship awards to NH residents.

The Institute on Disability's mission is to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities into their schools and communities. The Institute works with students and faculty, conducts statewide training, participates in grant-funded model demonstration projects, conducts research and engages in collaborative partnerships with other statewide organizations that are committed to improving the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.

The Institute on Disability, together with the Center for Genetics and Child Development at Dartmouth Medical School; the Institute for Health, Law, and Ethics at Franklin Pierce Law Center; and the School of Community Economic Development at Southern New Hampshire University, comprise New Hampshire's University Center for Excellence on Disability (UCED).

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