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President Presents Strategic Plan To Campus Community; Calls For UNH To Reposition Itself For The Future

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President Presents Strategic Plan To Campus Community; Calls For UNH To Reposition Itself For The Future

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Editors: A script of UNH President Mark W. Huddleston's speech is available at:
http://www.unh.edu/president/markhuddleston/speeches/huddleston_UNHin2020.html

DURHAM, N.H. – University of New Hampshire President Mark W. Huddleston presented the university's 10-year strategic plan, "Breaking Silos, Transforming Lives, Reimagining UNH: The University of New Hampshire in 2020," to hundreds of members of the campus community Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2010, citing a need for the institution to reinvent itself and become a model for the rest of higher education in America.

"UNH is poised at a genuinely historic juncture," said Huddleston. "The reigning paradigm of higher education, hallowed and beloved though it is, is broken. It is not equipped to withstand the turbulence to which it is being subjected, turbulence created by economic, political, and demographic forces far beyond our control.... Either we change the paradigm or we go out of business."

Huddleston called the 16-month strategic planning process an example of shared governance in action, noting that many of the hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and business and community leaders who participated in creating the plan told him this was "the first time they had seen faculty, staff, students, trustees, and community members work together so seamlessly, the first time such large, consequential questions about our collective future were addressed in such an open, democratic, bottom-up fashion."

The plan calls for fundamental changes in how faculty work together, with a focus on interdisciplinary collaboration and a true integration of teaching, research and engagement; a need to expand and find new revenue streams; and reevaluation of the traditional academic calendar.

"We need to think differently about time and space," said Huddleston. "The current academic calendar, where we meet two or three times a week, 15 weeks per semester, two semesters per year...is an increasingly dysfunctional throwback to the agricultural needs and pedagogical styles of an earlier century, serving no one particularly well."

In addition, the plan outlines eight overall initiatives, which include a New Ventures Fund to seed innovative, enterprising and interdisciplinary teaching, research and engagement projects; making UNH a more global and diverse institution by expanding programs and funding that bring New Hampshire to the world and vice versa; strengthening the university's role as a partner for life with New Hampshire citizens; and turning the university's intellectual capital into commercial opportunities as a way not only to expand revenue streams but to enhance economic development and job creation in the state.

The third piece of the plan focuses on capital projects, which include raising the \$25 million match to build a new business college, expanding the university's urban campus in Manchester, and building a new center for the arts.

Huddleston acknowledged that the plan will require the university to undertake an unprecedented capital campaign, but stressed that many of the goals do not require money to achieve. "They require resolve, a steadfast commitment to change our culture. We can do that."

Huddleston concluded his presentation with a hockey metaphor and urged the campus community to join together to make this vision of UNH a reality.

"What we could do now is make a dash for the puck, which is what the crowd, including the higher education crowd, is always inclined to do," said Huddleston. "Instead, what we at UNH must do is follow Wayne Gretzky's immortal advice: We need now, and always, to 'skate to where the puck is going to be.'"

The entire strategic plan, "Breaking Silos, Transforming Lives, Reimagining UNH: The University of New Hampshire in 2020," is available at:
<http://www.unh.edu/strategicplanning/images/TheUniversityofNewHampshirein2020.pdf>

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