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## Friends of USNH Advocate for a Restoration of State Funding

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*UNH Media Relations*

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## Media Relations

November 8, 2012

### Friends of USNH Advocate for a Restoration of State Funding

DURHAM, N.H. – More than 1,400 friends of Keene State College, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University and Granite State College – alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff and voters – have joined the state’s four-year public colleges and universities in calling for lawmakers to restore state support and make higher education a priority. This support, representing resident from more than 170 New Hampshire towns and cities from all 10 counties, continues to grow and advocates will be writing letters, contacting their local legislators, and reaching out to friends and neighbors.

The four institutions comprise the University System of New Hampshire (USNH) and enroll more than 30,000 students.

In 2011 the New Hampshire state legislature cut support for in-state students by nearly 50 percent, the deepest cut to higher education in the country ever. The state’s appropriation to its four-year public college and university system is the same now as it was in 1988 and accounts for just 6 percent of total operating budgets. In return for restored funding the schools pledge to freeze in-state tuition for two years and increase financial aid for students in need.

“For young people who aspire to a life of service as I did when I graduated from UNH, it is imperative that our new legislature reverse the punishing cuts made to the university system budget,” said James Garvin, a 1967 graduate of UNH and retired state architectural historian. “This funding is especially crucial to the student who is willing to offer a career of service to New Hampshire and accept a modest salary as the price of that service. Such a pathway may be closed to the graduate who leaves Durham with a crushing burden of debt. If the idealism of the next generation is thwarted, New Hampshire’s decline is practically guaranteed.”

For Steve Fortier, a parent of two students at Keene State College and a 1986 graduate himself, it’s clear that the state must step up.

“Public higher education is a public service—but not when just 6 percent of revenues come from the state of New Hampshire,” the Alstead resident said. “The legislature has abdicated its responsibilities and passed the burden on to parents like me. That is unfair and unjust. Thousands of other New Hampshire parents and I need our elected officials to provide appropriate support for the University System. In doing so, we are not asking for a hand-out; we are asking for an investment that strengthens our state’s economy and our children’s futures.”

For more information and to become an advocate, go to <http://www.unh.edu/president/become-unh-advocate> or <http://advocates.keene.edu/>.

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