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Media Relations

January 25, 2013

N.H. Businesses, Parents and Alumni Form Advocacy Councils to Secure Restoration of State Funding

DURHAM, N.H. – Supporters of the state’s four-year public colleges and universities have formed advocacy councils -- comprised of prominent business leaders, parents, alumni, and students – to lead the effort in calling for lawmakers to restore state support and make higher education a priority. More than 2,300 supporters of full restoration of the USNH budget have come forward to make their voices heard in support of the proposal to freeze in-state tuition and provide additional financial aid to New Hampshire students.

This support on behalf of Keene State College, the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University and Granite State College comes from alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff and voters in more than 170 New Hampshire towns and cities from all 10 counties. Advocates have been 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.

“I was eager to offer my support for an initiative that will not only help restore the state’s support of higher education but enhance it,” said PSU Advocacy Council member Peter Powell, owner of Peter W. Powell Real Estate in Lancaster and the son of former Governor Wesley Powell. “The problems of the North Country may soon be the problems of all of New Hampshire if we don’t do everything possible to ensure businesses in the state have the skilled workforce they need and our young people stay. It is time for our legislators to do the right thing.”

For J. Michael Hickey ‘73, there was never a question about getting involved.

“We must invest in the future of the state and its young people,” said Hickey, president of UNH Alumni Association Board. “We must make the crucial investments to recruit and retain the talented students who will be the state’s teachers, nurses, government leaders, farmers, and engineers. New Hampshire is now 45th in the country in the per capita number of engineers and scientists. We can and must do better, for the good of all New Hampshire.”

Gregg R. Tewksbury, president and CEO, of Savings Bank of Walpole, serves on the Keene State College Advocacy Council. He said, "Savings Bank of Walpole needs employees with strong problem-solving skills, those who can communicate quickly and effectively, and who can offer ideas and multiple perspectives in their positions. All four USNH institutions cultivate graduates with these abilities, and ultimately build a pipeline of potential employees who fit the needs of New Hampshire's businesses. What they seek is the support that every other state offers its future leaders."

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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