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Media Relations

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UNH Launches First Undergraduate Student Managed Angel Fund on East Coast



Jeffrey Sohl, director of UNH's Center for Venture Research; UNH President Mark Huddleston; UNH Provost Lisa MacFarlane; and Deborah Merrill-Sands, dean of the UNH's Paul College of Business and Economics; look on as Mel Rines '47 signs papers establishing a student angel investment fund in his name.

DURHAM, N.H. – Thanks to the expertise of the Center for Venture Research at the University of New Hampshire, a committed team of four students and a generous donor, UNH will become one of the first universities in the country to offer its undergraduate students the opportunity to gain hands on experience in private equity markets and entrepreneurial finance managing an angel investment fund.

The Mel Rines '47 Student Angel Investment Fund will be managed by students as part of a two-credit class and supervised by Jeffrey Sohl, director of the Center for Venture Research, as well as an advisory group of entrepreneurs and private equity investors who will serve as mentors for the student angel analysts.

“We are grateful to have the support of an alumnus like Mel Rines,” said UNH President Mark Huddleston. “Mel’s knowledge of the world of international investment banking is matched only by his generosity. When presented with the idea of establishing this new fund he immediately saw the value in it for our students and redirected an earlier more general donation to the university. Mel is a great champion of our students and a great friend to UNH.”

Kendre Rodriguez, a junior majoring in business administration with a concentration in entrepreneurial studies, was part of the team leading the charge in getting the fund established. Currently participating in the Atkins Investment Group at UNH, which focuses on investing in stocks rather than startups, Rodriguez was eager for this additional experience.

“This is an incredible opportunity for students,” said Rodriguez, noting that the selection process for the first class is underway. “The term angel investing was coined at UNH in the late 70s and the Center for Venture Research is the leading research institute on the topic in the United States. There will be classroom work but we will spend a lot of our time out of Durham, networking around New Hampshire and the region, and that’s what I believe will be really interesting for students. You see it on ABC’s Shark Tank, but we’ll learn all the aspects of what goes into angel investing.”

The first semester of the class will focus on education around startups as well as meetings with local and regional angel investing groups, like E-coast, and the Alpha Loft’s new Accelerate NH program so students can gain experience and learn the steps of due diligence before beginning to invest.

“It is so exciting to see this program come to fruition,” said Deborah Merrill-Sands, dean of UNH’s Paul College of Business and Economics. “It offers our students an opportunity for experiential learning in angel investing which will set them apart in the marketplace. Bringing our alumni back to campus as advisors and coaches will allow students to learn directly from people working in the start-up space.”

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

Image to be downloaded:

http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2015/05/images/img_0226-2974.jpg

Photo caption: Jeffrey Sohl, director of UNH’s Center for Venture Research; UNH President Mark Huddleston; UNH Provost Lisa MacFarlane; and Deborah Merrill-Sands, dean of the UNH’s Paul College of Business and Economics; look on as Mel Rines ’47 signs papers establishing a student angel investment fund in his name.

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