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Jan Nisbet Named UNH Senior Vice Provost For Research

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September 4, 2009

University of New Hampshire Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs John Aber has named Jan Nisbet as UNH's senior vice provost for research. Her appointment is effective Sept. 21, 2009.

Nisbet, internationally known for her work in the field of disability services, was one of three finalists for the position. Nisbet, an associate professor of education as well as founding director of the university's Institute on Disability, received the UNH Alumni Association's most prestigious award, the Pettee Medal, for extraordinary achievement and distinguished service to the state, the nation and the world in 2007. She also has received the UNH Excellence in Research, and Excellence in Public Service awards. She founded the institute in 1987 and has successfully competed for more than $100 million in federal and state funding. She will be leaving her position as director to assume this new position.

As part of a university wide plan to further integrate teaching, research and outreach on campus, President Mark W. Huddleston has moved the research position into the provost's office. Nisbet will be the first to fill this newly defined role.

"Dr. Nisbet has demonstrated creativity and leadership in a number of arenas," said Provost Aber. "The institute she leads addresses some of the most difficult questions that we face in advancing the quality of life for those in challenging circumstances. In leading her team, she has worked effectively with agencies at the state and federal level, and has demonstrated the ability to judge her own success by the success of those who work with her. She understands
opportunities for support, as well as the regulatory hurdles that need to be addressed. She will be able to help all of our faculty achieve their goals in scholarship and research."

Under Nisbet's guidance, the institute has set as its vision a world where all people, including those living with disabilities, are fully engaged members of their communities and where support is available to help individuals and families achieve independence, productivity and a satisfying quality of life.

"I am so pleased to be offered this important position," said Nisbet. "I decided to apply for the position after serving as co-chair of the President's Blue Ribbon Panel on Research with Amitava Bhattacharjee. The entire process was a wonderful learning experience and inspired me to want to, as Mahatma Gandhi said, 'be the change you wish to see in the world.' UNH is a place filled with brilliant and tenacious scholars working in departments, centers, institutes, and field-stations trying to advance knowledge; and many are working to address some of the most difficult and pressing issues facing our communities across the world. I look forward to supporting these aspirations and helping to resource them."

Nisbet is past president of the executive board of directors of The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, a national organization focused on improving the lives of persons with severe disabilities and their families through research, training and advocacy; she chaired the Program Committee for the national Association of University Centers on Disability, and is a founding board member for the Endowment for Health. She has published extensively in the field and has conducted research for more than 25 years.

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