

November 3, 2018

Dear Members of the UNE Community:

The University of New England is a special place. Like most visitors, it didn't take me long, after I arrived as UNE's sixth president (and a new Mainer) a year ago, to notice that we are an unusually tight-knit community — supportive of each other and at the same time deeply engaged with local affairs as well as regional and global challenges. Over the past year, as I learned more from faculty members, students, professional staff, alumni, trustees, and supporters of UNE all over the nation, several qualities of the University stood out: We embrace hard problems. We are nimble. We defy easy classification. We break stereotypes.

I came to understand that the strong values in which our community is deeply grounded derive in part from our precursor institutions: St. Francis College, Westbrook College, and the New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. The most important of these values, and UNE's fundamental purpose, is the success of our students. This is our reason for being. It informs everything we do. Indeed, we welcome students from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we empower them to dramatically transform their lives. They emerge as well-prepared, engaged, and passionate leaders, poised to make their marks on a rapidly changing world. In the process, working closely with our faculty and professional staff, they are transforming not only their own lives, but society and our very planet itself.

This past fall, as my understanding of UNE's deep roots and rich culture grew, I initiated a year-long strategic planning process to create a vision of our future and a roadmap to achieve it. Together, our community engaged in a highly inclusive and participatory effort involving all stakeholder groups. The resulting plan, *Charting Our Future: 2018-2023*, articulates our collective mission, vision, and core values. It describes six high-level priorities and key goals for each. Each goal will be operationalized with specific initiatives and associated metrics, deliverables, and timelines. Our plan is specific enough to serve its guiding function but broad enough to allow us to act on unforeseen opportunities as they arise.

Too often strategic plans are forgotten as soon as they are complete, tucked away neatly on a shelf. In contrast, this plan, created through the efforts of so many people, will be at the center of our day-to-day operations. It will be a living document that we revisit regularly and against which we measure our progress. We will fulfill its promise.

I am very proud of our community's plan and equally proud of the process we followed to develop it. Let us now devote ourselves to working together to realize our exciting vision of UNE's future.

Sincerely,

James D. Herbert
President