

University of New England Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee

Initial Framework for the Strategic Plan:

Introduction/Message from the President

[To be drafted]

Mission *[To be drafted]*

Describes the University's purpose—why it exists, who it serves, and what its most-desired impacts are.

Vision *[To be drafted]*

A big idea that captures what will make UNE distinctive—an overarching aspiration, one that the University will be well on the way toward five years from now.

Core Values *[To be drafted]*

A small set of ideas, each described in a phrase or sentence, which together characterize the ethos and culture of the College, governing its official and unofficial actions and behavior. Stating core values up front in a strategic plan is a good way of emphasizing principles that are more expansive than any single goal but infuse many of them.

The paragraphs below are a few ideas the SPCC has been working on that will ultimately become part of the introduction and/or vision statement.

UNE: A Distinctive Focus on the Health of Individuals, Communities, and the Environment

We will build on our nationally recognized education and research programs in marine, environmental, and biological sciences and the health professions to establish UNE among the premier sources of expertise, education, and innovation to sustain the strength and well-being of our planet—its air, water, and land as well as the communities and people who depend on and care for it.

Re-conceptualizing “health” this way will demand that we focus on interactions among individuals, communities, and the natural and anthropogenic environment as well as the effects of each of these on the others. Solutions to the most significant challenges in these spheres will not be found solely within any one discipline. We will, therefore, promote collaboration within and among disciplines and professional programs—including the natural, social and health sciences as well as the humanities and arts—and in partnerships with external entities. In these ways, UNE will bring its full range of perspectives and expertise to bear on improving the health of people, society, and our planet.

Strategic Priorities

To realize our vision, we will focus on the [seven] priorities below, representing long-range, aspirational ideas. To address them, we will pursue the goals listed beneath each and undertake the specific measurable strategies and initiatives described.

I. Innovative Teaching and Learning

We believe that it's a false distinction to separate career preparation and liberal education. In truth, innovative teaching and learning blends these to prepare students for success in their personal and professional lives. Thus, our academic programs will bring together the technical and knowledge-based skills students need for specific careers with preparation in the habits of mind and interpersonal interactions that will be demanded of our graduates by their future employers and their communities. In this way, UNE students will graduate as empathetic, nimble and resilient problem solvers—lifelong learners who are adaptable to a world of ever-changing careers and workplace expectations.

Possible goals to develop

1. Reenvision the undergraduate Core Curriculum, refocusing it around: *habits of mind* (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, argumentation, etc.); *discipline-based knowledge*; and *career-readiness* (e.g., teamwork, written and oral communication skills, etc.).
2. Expand curriculum-wide active learning in our classrooms and integrate it with meaningful experiential learning outside the classroom.
3. Create national models of interprofessional education and practice across our health professions programs.
4. Develop new degree programs and credentials that complement existing offerings; sharpen our focus on the health of individuals, communities and the environment; and address emerging workforce demands and regional needs.
5. Build bridges between online and on-campus delivery formats so that students in both traditional and online programs can benefit from a richer array of academic programs and learning modes
6. Develop “internal articulations” that integrate all undergraduate academic programs to establish seamless pathways of success for every student in every track regardless of major.

II. Experiential Learning for All Students

We will expand experiential learning opportunities and deepen their integration with classroom experiences, with the goal of engaging every UNE student in at least one meaningful, top-tier experiential learning opportunity during their academic program.

Possible goals to develop

1. Enhance the orientation of students to the variety and value of experiential learning, and provide them easy means for learning about available opportunities, matching to them, and applying for them.
2. Grow the number and quality of internships, and ensure that they are linked closely with classroom and on-campus experiential learning.
3. Expand the number and disciplinary variety of faculty research projects in which students are directly engaged.
4. Create other top-tier experiential learning opportunities such as capstone projects, senior design initiatives, and other applied activities, as well as activities associated with meaningful civic engagement.
5. Develop criteria and a process for creating and assessing high-quality experiential learning opportunities, as well as easy ways for faculty, staff, students, and outside partners to catalog them.

III. Increased Enrollment, Progress to Graduation, and Lifelong Learning

Attracting larger numbers of students and ensuring their success, both at UNE and after they graduate, is fundamental to our mission. We can do this best by connecting with them well before and long after their college years—expanding our role in a lifetime of educational engagement. Hence, we will engage potential undergraduate students during their secondary years (and potential graduate students wherever they are in their education or career) both to encourage them to explore UNE and to help them assess their fit with and preparation for the University.

We will also expand what we provide students as they transition to work or graduate education, and when they become alumni/ae to ensure their career and personal success. And in between, we will build the programming, support, and campus community necessary to offer a truly engaging intellectual and personal experience—one that increases students' affinity with UNE and ensures their steady progress toward commencement.

Possible goals to develop

1. Sustainably grow applicants and yield from existing markets and develop new student markets.

2. Increase retention and graduation rates through a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan linked to academic reform that allows us to create and modify academic programs more nimbly in response to changes in student demand and the needs of employers.
3. Develop and deliver comprehensive and integrated academic and personal support services that address educational success of students from UNE prospects to loyal alumni/ae.
4. Create new programs and credentials that add value for current students and attract alumni/ae and other adult learners seeking continuing professional and personal development.

IV. Strategically Focused Research and Scholarship

We prioritize research and scholarship that is regionally responsive and globally relevant—confronting the most pressing challenges of our society through foundational, translational, collaborative, and interdisciplinary approaches. And in addition to the contributions our faculty make to solving these problems, they engage undergraduate, graduate and professional students directly in this work, making research and scholarship a part of students' educational program. This exposure to the hands-on creation and application of knowledge prepares UNE students for success in careers, graduate study, and as responsible citizens.

Possible goals to develop

1. Strengthen a UNE-wide culture of scholarship and research, and supporting infrastructure that includes clear expectations and policies (upon hiring and for promotion and tenure) and appropriate facilities, resources, and administration.
2. Emphasize and create incentives for collaborative, high-impact, interdisciplinary research initiatives focused on local/regional needs that have national and global relevance (e.g., improving quality of life for elderly rural populations; studying the effects of climate change on the natural and social environments).
3. Tightly integrate student research and scholarship with classroom and experiential learning.
4. Expand UNE research collaborations with external academic and industry partners.
5. Expand the role and forms of research within the medical, dental, and health programs, including the greater engagement of clinicians and clinical practice in the research enterprise.

V. A Welcoming and Vibrant Community

Building on our exceptionally welcoming community, we will create and sustain a climate at UNE that stimulates healthy, vigorous and constructive discourse among diverse individuals. We will ensure that individual differences are well represented and fully supported on all of our campuses and extended learning sites. Moreover, we recognize that diversity is about more than a particular head count; it must also reflect the number and quality of interactions. By creating respect for and celebrating differences among individuals, we will create a rich environment to promote learning, research, and personal growth.

Possible goals to develop

1. Build a diverse community of students, faculty, and professional staff along all dimensions of human differences.
2. Foster interactions that build inclusiveness, respect, and a vital exchange of diverse perspectives.
3. Promote intercollegiate, intramural, and recreational athletics to build teamwork, as well as to foster lifelong physical activity and wellness.
4. Encourage interaction between the University community and surrounding communities to create mutual understanding, affinity, and greater opportunities for members of both groups.
5. Fully integrate all of our faculty, professional staff, and students—undergraduate and graduate, online and in-person, adult and traditional-age—into the life of the UNE community as respected and recognized members.

VI. Regional and Global Engagement with Communities and Strategic Partners

Our beautiful campuses are not only retreats for learning and reflection but also portals to networks of people, organizations, and communities from whom we can learn and with whom we can work to solve problems regionally and globally.

It can be time-consuming and complicated to build meaningful connections with industry, other educational institutions, UNE alumni/ae, community agencies, and not-for-profit entities, as well as with universities, governments, and non-governmental organizations around the world. But these relationships greatly increase the knowledge, expertise, and opportunities available to our students, faculty, professional staff, and alumni/ae beyond what we can provide alone. Such experiences pay dividends to students long after graduation—in their careers, their personal lives, and in the contributions they make to their communities.

Possible goals to develop

1. Enhance our global presence to build students' global and cultural competency.
2. Deepen civic engagement—in Biddeford, Portland, Maine, and beyond—to produce graduates committed to civic participation throughout their lives.
3. Expand affiliations with other institutions of higher education to increase opportunities for research, student and faculty exchanges, and new and expanded academic programs.
4. Broaden and strengthen our engagement with UNE alumni/ae and friends worldwide.
5. Expand partnerships with organizations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors that will increase opportunities for experiential learning, research, and clinical experience.

VII. A Strong and Sustainable Resource Base

Achieving the goals of this strategic plan demands that we continue to build a strong foundation of human, financial, and physical resources. Moreover, we must systematically connect our resource allocation decisions to our priorities in order to steward the University's resources carefully. By doing this, we will enhance our institutional efficiency, flexibility, and resilience and secure UNE's future well beyond the period of this strategic plan.

Possible goals to develop

1. Strengthen our financial foundation.
2. Foster a strong culture of entrepreneurship, including projects associated with revenue generation and expense management.
3. Sustain and enhance our valuable human resources (e.g., improved recruitment, orientation, professional development, and succession planning).
4. Increase the efficiency and service of our administrative process, and optimize use of our physical resources.
5. Build an up-to-date and adaptable information technology infrastructure capable of supporting every function of the modern university.
6. Improve the timeliness, relevance, and accuracy of communication and information among all members of the University community.
7. Create UNE-wide culture of sustainable living and environmental care.

8. Define a UNE brand identity and robust communication plan to articulate the vision of this strategic plan, and create clear and consistent messages that increase awareness of UNE's distinctiveness and heighten its reputation.

Conclusion *[To be drafted]*