Charting Our Future

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023
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Participants in the Strategic Planning Process
Message from the President

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.

James D. Herbert
President
Introduction

UNE is deeply engaged with the world, both regionally and globally. Our faculty and students pursue study and research throughout the U.S. and in places as diverse as Morocco and Iceland. Experiential learning by students occurs within communities that represent every form of human difference. These connections have given us profound respect for, and concern about, the health of our world—its physical environment, its communities, and its people. When we speak of UNE as a source of “innovation for a healthier planet,” it is this respect and concern that we draw on. Coupled with our nimbleness, sense of urgency, and capacity for innovation, this perspective helps us in our efforts, large and small, to contribute meaningfully to the world.

With this purpose in mind, we are seizing on our fundamental strengths to chart a bold course for UNE’s future. We are nationally recognized for our programs in the health professions; biological, environmental, and marine sciences; and neuroscience. We are also national leaders in interprofessional clinical education and practice. While strengthening and building on these core assets, we will also accelerate our development of excellence in other strategically focused disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. We will expand on our strengths in active and problem-based learning, and we will double down on our commitment to experiential learning, placing our students in communities where their work not only addresses local needs and challenges but can be scaled to similar communities around the globe. This will establish UNE among the premier sources of education, expertise, and innovation for sustaining the health and well-being of our globe—its people and communities as well as the air, water, and land on which they depend.

This broad conception of health demands that we focus on interactions among individuals, communities, and the environment. Solutions to the most significant challenges we face will not be found solely within any one discipline. We will, therefore, promote collaboration within and among academic disciplines and professional programs as well as through our 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.

Our new strategic plan charts a bold path forward. It is a vision that we believe will prepare UNE students for a world that is evolving at an ever-accelerating pace. Inspired by this vision and guided by this strategic plan, UNE will empower students to anticipate and meet the challenges of this new world and be active leaders in creating its future.
**Mission**
With a distinctive and integrated approach to professional, experiential, and liberal education, the University of New England prepares students to thrive in a rapidly-changing world.

**Vision**
UNE will be among the most experientially driven institutions of higher education in the nation, one that conjoins problem-based and hands-on learning, liberal education, and professional training to immerse students in an educational experience that prepares them with:

- **Habits of mind**, such as cultural, quantitative, and information literacy, critical thinking, tolerance for ambiguity, and problem solving;

- **Discipline-based knowledge** in their chosen programs of study; and

- **Professional competencies**, including the ability to collaborate in diverse teams, communicate persuasively, and be a thoughtful leader.

In this way, we will be an institution that challenges students to learn broadly, master their professional skills, and ask deep questions in order to prepare themselves for further study and successful careers, deeply rewarding lives, and meaningful contributions to their communities and the world.
**Core Values**
We are guided by the following values, essential to the culture of the UNE community.

**Student Centeredness**
We put the aspirations, needs, and success of our students at the center of all we do.

**Diversity, Inclusion, Connection**
We believe the benefits of a richly varied campus community arise not only from the diversity of its people but also from a sense of belonging and the context this creates to explore and celebrate differences in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, underpinned by a sense of cultural humility.

**Relentless Inquiry**
We take nothing for granted and view thoughtful—even uncomfortable—questioning as essential to the pursuit of knowledge, contribution to society, and a life worth living.

**Boundary Crossing**
Solutions to the complex and varied challenges we face in our personal and professional lives, our communities, and society will not be found in any single discipline, college, physical location, or individual. Thus, our ability to move easily across such boundaries makes us better problem solvers and more likely of success in whatever ventures we undertake.

**Learning Everywhere**
We believe that teaching and learning should occur beyond traditional classrooms and laboratories—in any place ripe for inquiry and experimentation, including clinics, environmental and field-study sites, libraries, museums, theaters, and places of civic engagement, among many others.

**Progressive Change**
We are not afraid to take thoughtful risks in the pursuit of our shared goals.

**Stewardship of Our Planet**
We recognize that the health of individuals, communities, and the natural environment is essential to the survival of the planet and its inhabitants and to a well-functioning society.
Strategic Priorities
To realize our vision, we will focus on the following six priorities and associated goals and initiatives. These represent broad areas to which we will commit UNE’s energy and resources over the next five years.

I. Exceptional Teaching and Learning
We will prepare students for success in their personal and professional lives by bringing together career-focused knowledge and skills with preparation in liberal education to build the habits of mind and interpersonal skills that will be demanded of our graduates in their careers and communities. In particular, we will increase our emphasis on active learning in the classroom and its integration with innovative experiential learning—internships, field work, faculty-directed research, civic engagement, and many other activities—as well as integration of curricular and co-curricular activities and programs. And by asking students to reflect critically on these experiences, during and afterward, we will help them reinforce the connection between classroom and hands-on learning, enhancing both.

Toward these ends, we will:

1. **Focus teaching and learning around the development and integration of habits of mind, discipline-based knowledge, and professional competencies.**
   - Create a task force to examine the current undergraduate curriculum and develop an integrated model for emphasizing these three capacities and their necessary interconnections across all academic programs.
   - Resolve barriers that impede students who study across colleges and programs, seek dual degrees, or wish to transfer between programs.
   - Integrate academic and co-curricular experiences to support the development and integration of the three overarching skill sets.
   - Expand the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to support faculty development efforts, particularly in the areas of active learning, experiential learning, and online/hybrid instruction.
   - Develop a more consistent University-wide First Year Experience for all undergraduates.

2. **Create new high-quality experiential learning opportunities and deepen their integration with academic curricula, with the goal that every UNE student will be engaged in at least one top-tier experiential learning opportunity during his or her academic program.**
• Create a task force to better define experiential learning, inventory current opportunities, and develop strategies for increasing capacity.

• Create the infrastructure necessary to better support and coordinate experiential learning University-wide in order to increase awareness of the breadth of opportunities, track inventory and outcomes, and improve the process for matching students to experiences.

• Grow the number, quality, and disciplinary variety of internships and faculty research projects in which students are directly engaged and ensure that they are linked closely with program curricula.

• Create other top-tier experiential learning opportunities such as capstone projects, senior design initiatives, and other applied activities, including those associated with global education and meaningful civic engagement.

• Cultivate innovative partnerships with organizations in the private, public, and not-for-profit sectors that will increase opportunities for experiential learning, including simulation, research, and clinical experiences.

• Increase collaboration among faculty, Career Services professional staff, and UNE’s experiential-learning partners to (a) ensure that the needs of employers inform our experiential learning activities and (b) improve the integration of classroom and experiential learning.

3. **Create distinctive interdisciplinary and interprofessional programs as well as collaborative practices across our colleges and departments.**

• Reestablish the IPE Council as the Interdisciplinary and Interprofessional Council—a vehicle for coordinating and better integrating interdisciplinary and interprofessional practices across the University.

• Develop collaborative teaching and scholarship approaches that encourage interdisciplinary inquiry and problem solving.

• Incentivize faculty and students to form interdisciplinary/interprofessional teams for teaching and scholarship projects that address regional issues of importance (opioids, aging, pain, marine food systems, etc.).

• Engage with external partners to expand and integrate interprofessional clinical education and interprofessional practice in a manner that creates a continuum of learning from classroom to experience.

4. **Develop multiple teaching and learning formats that respond to evolving research on effective pedagogy and that increase student access, support improved retention, and foster degree completion.**
• Expand our use of active-learning pedagogies in classrooms, labs, and off-campus sites.

• Establish an electronic portfolio platform for students that will allow them to create and build a professional digital presence and enhance their ownership of their learning experiences.

• Redesign our approach to online learning by broadening and better supporting the current resources for online offerings and by developing combinations of online and face-to-face formats—hybrids that are attractive to both current and new students.

• Increase the use of simulation tools with students in the health profession programs, and explore other promising applications of simulation across our academic programs.

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

Attracting, retaining, and graduating larger numbers of students and ensuring their success, at UNE and after they graduate, is fundamental to our future. We will focus intensely on the student experience in and out of the classroom to maximize the success of all UNE students. We will also focus on developing a continuum of engagement with students, starting well before and continuing long after their college years—expanding our role in a lifetime of educational engagement.

1. **Optimize new student recruitment.**

   • Grow our share of existing student markets through increased recruiting efforts, enhanced follow-up, and improved marketing and advertising that emphasizes UNE’s powerful value proposition.

   • Strategically target new student markets and venues for increased recruitment activity.

   • Engage our faculty, professional staff, students, and alumni to promote UNE and increase our visibility.

2. **Develop a comprehensive approach to enrollment management with a particular focus on increasing retention and graduation rates.**

   • Identify factors influencing retention, persistence, and graduation and recommend initiatives to improve them.

   • Use our findings on student retention and completion to inform our approaches to new-student recruitment.
• Develop and sustain a powerful culture of responsibility for retention, persistence, and graduation among faculty, professional staff, and administrators.

3. **Deliver comprehensive, integrated academic and personal support services that address the success of students—from UNE prospects to loyal alumni.**

• Assess and refine current services and develop new services based on analyses of UNE data and consideration of best practices nationwide.

• Develop a more comprehensive “360 degree” advising model that integrates faculty, professional staff, and support services to provide a continuum of support that is tailored to each student.

• Create a communication plan that ensures students, faculty, and professional staff communicate effectively about student-support services—their importance, purposes, availability, timing, and accessibility.

4. **Create new programs and credentials that add value for current students, create interest among prospective students, and attract alumni and other adult learners seeking continuing professional and personal development.**

• Link enrollment strategies and academic planning so that we are better able to create and modify academic programs nimbly in response to changes in student demand and the needs of employers, in a manner consistent with UNE’s mission.

• Establish a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to continuing education, including consideration of new types of academic credentials that would be useful to learners at different stages of their lives and careers.

• Expand graduate degree programs, including traditional and professional master’s programs, professional doctoral programs, and accelerated undergraduate-graduate programs.

**III. Focused Research and Scholarship**

We are a collaborative community of scholars in which students and faculty pursue research that is intellectually stimulating, regionally responsive, and globally relevant. We confront the most pressing challenges of our society through foundational, translational, and interdisciplinary approaches to inquiry. 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 an essential part of students’ educational experience. This exposure to the
hands-on creation and application of knowledge prepares UNE students for success in careers and graduate study and as responsible citizens.

1. **Identify focal areas of research and scholarship that will distinguish UNE and have priority for future investment, faculty recruitment, and external fundraising.**
   - Conduct an assessment of UNE research that examines progress against milestones set by prior institutional and external evaluations.
   - Create incentives for collaborative, interdisciplinary research initiatives that focus on local/regional needs with national and global relevance.
   - Establish external partnerships with academic institutions, research centers, and laboratories that complement our strengths, extend our research and scholarship capacities, and increase our impact.

2. **Increase meaningful student involvement in research and scholarship.**
   - Increase and improve the integration of research into curricula and with experiential learning University-wide.
   - Create more research and scholarship opportunities that are credit-bearing or offered as paid fellowships.
   - Encourage and create incentives for students to disseminate the results of their research and scholarship to UNE faculty and students; among academic and disciplinary associations externally; and to policymakers, public agencies, social service organizations, and other relevant communities.

3. **Expand faculty involvement in scholarship and research and create a strong UNE culture of knowledge production and application.**
   - Create and strengthen policies, processes, and infrastructure (e.g., bridge funding, research space, start-up packages) that support faculty success in scholarly activities.
   - Establish a program for faculty mentorship and professional development in research.
   - Coordinate tenure-track faculty hiring among departments and colleges in order to facilitate interdisciplinary research in areas of strategic focus.
   - Promote faculty research and scholarship broadly—beyond traditional academic forums—in public and non-academic settings and in a widely accessible manner that contributes to public understanding and allows for dialogue, application, and further creation by others.
• Expand the role and forms of research and scholarship within the medical, dental, pharmacy, and other health programs, including the greater engagement of clinicians and clinical practice in the research enterprise.

IV. A Welcoming, Inclusive, and Vibrant Community
UNE is an exceptionally welcoming community of students, faculty, and professional staff. We will build on this environment to create a climate on and around our campuses that respects and honors all dimensions of human difference. We will ensure that people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints are represented and supported on all of our campuses and extended learning sites. Moreover, we believe that diversity is about more than a particular head count; it must also reflect the frequency and quality of our interactions. Thus, we will foster vigorous and constructive discourse among the members of (and visitors to) our community that will support our fundamental mission of promoting learning, research, and personal growth. In addition, these efforts will instill in our students, faculty, and professional staff the desire and capacities to promote greater equity, fairness, and justice in the numerous professional and community settings where they will lead their lives and in society at large.

1. Build a UNE community that is diverse along all dimensions of human difference.

• Enhance strategies for recruiting more diverse students, faculty, and professional staff, engaging all relevant University constituencies in this effort.

• Develop programs for mentoring and supporting members of our community from underrepresented groups.

• Regularly publish clear and accurate data on the demographic composition of the UNE community to help inform discussions of campus diversity.

2. Enhance the inclusiveness of our community, fully integrating all students, faculty, and professional staff into the life of the University as respected and recognized members.

• Foster formal and informal interactions that create a vigorous and respectful exchange of differing perspectives among individuals across our campuses, online, and between these physical and virtual spaces.

• Establish learning outcomes with respect to global awareness and cultural humility that guide the development of curricula and courses.
• Increase professional development focused on diversity and inclusivity for faculty and professional staff.

• Provide a rich co-curricular environment that exposes members of our community to experiences and perspectives different from their own.

• Develop an infrastructure that strengthens diversity and inclusion and that supports initiatives, such as regular assessments of campus diversity and inclusiveness, creation of a University statement of diversity and inclusion, and an institutional diversity and inclusion plan.

V. **Engagement with Local, Regional, and Global Partners**

Our beautiful campuses are not only retreats for learning and reflection but also portals to networks of people, organizations, and communities worldwide from whom we can learn and with whom we can work to solve important problems. We build meaningful connections with business and industry, educational institutions, public and not-for-profit agencies, as well as with governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world. These relationships greatly increase the knowledge, expertise, and opportunities available to our students, faculty, professional staff, and alumni beyond what we can provide alone. And for students, such connections not only enhance learning but also pay dividends long after graduation—in their careers, their personal lives, and in the contributions they make to their communities.

1. **Enhance our international presence to build students’ global competency and cultural humility.**

   • Increase the number of students who study abroad.

   • Develop digital “global classrooms” to link students in our Maine campuses with those in partner institutions around the world.

   • Increase the number of international students who study at UNE, both in matriculated degree programs and also as short-term, visiting students.

   • Explore new forms of and venues for global and intercultural experiences, such as international rotations and practica, experiential learning in domestic communities that are culturally and linguistically diverse, and similar initiatives.

2. **Encourage committed engagement with the communities around UNE.**

   • Develop and formalize meaningful research, scholarship, civic engagement, and experiential learning opportunities for UNE’s students, faculty, and professional staff that support a long-term commitment to our communities.
• Increase engagement with our campuses by promoting UNE events, programs, and facilities in our local communities and explicitly inviting our neighbors to join us, where appropriate and feasible.

• Expand and initiate new pipeline programs and mentoring networks between K–12 schools and UNE students and faculty.

3. **Broaden and strengthen our engagement with UNE alumni worldwide to increase their affinity with, loyalty to, and pride in their alma mater.**

• Expand opportunities for UNE alumni to connect with each other and with the University around areas of common interest, in particular, taking advantage of social media and other digital technologies to deepen their engagement.

• Develop programs through which alumni offer mentorship and support to current students with similar backgrounds and interests.

• Deepen and expand the roles for alumni to assist in student recruitment and to work more broadly as “brand ambassadors” helping to increase UNE’s visibility and reputation.

• Make UNE the provider of choice for alumni looking for continuing education, professional development, and lifelong learning.

• Enhance opportunities for alumni and students to provide philanthropic support to UNE.

4. **Expand affiliations with other institutions of higher education to increase opportunities for research, student and faculty exchanges, and new and expanded academic programs.**

• Expand partnerships with research universities that allow us to establish dual degree programs at the doctoral level.

• Develop new joint academic-degree programs with international institutions around issues of common interest and complementary expertise.

**VI. A Strong and Sustainable Resource Base**

To achieve the goals of this strategic plan, we must 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 time frame of this strategic plan, for the benefit of past, current, and future students.
1. **Continue to strengthen our financial foundation.**
   - Foster a strong culture of entrepreneurship, including projects associated with revenue generation and expense management.
   - Hone financial policies, procedures, and processes that strengthen our centralized management model while ensuring proper accountability as well as institutional and unit-level flexibility.
   - Promote and support effective compliance programs and ethical behaviors throughout the University.

2. **Expand, support, and enhance our valuable human resources.**
   - Create enhanced strategies to recruit, develop, and retain a talented workforce that will contribute to the University’s overall mission.
   - Become recognized as an employer of choice for both faculty and professional staff by providing robust orientation programs, leadership training, professional development, and succession planning.
   - Promote diversity and foster an atmosphere of inclusion among all employees of the University.

3. **Grow, optimize, and secure our physical and virtual resources to effectively support the dynamic nature of the UNE community and our external partnerships.**
   - Continue to build an up-to-date and flexible information technology infrastructure capable of supporting every function of the modern university.
   - Maintain and optimize the University’s physical infrastructure (plant, property, and equipment) through a consistent process of needs and environmental impact assessment and prioritization.
   - Streamline communication and enhance collaboration across the University, fostering a cohesive community among our online, Maine-based, and international campuses.
   - Increase the transparency, efficiency, and service quality of our administrative processes.

4. **Reimagine UNE’s brand identity and create a robust communication plan that increases awareness of UNE’s distinctiveness and heightens its reputation.**
Conclusion and Implementation

This strategic plan and the transparent, inclusive process through which we created it have empowered the UNE community. The University’s success and growth over the past decades have provided us a solid foundation. This strategic plan articulates a vision of a bold and exciting future and a road map for the next phase of our collective journey.

But now, our real work begins. We must transform how we will work day to day as individuals, constituents of specific colleges and administrative offices, residents of campuses in Maine and Morocco, members of a physical and virtual community with shared values, as well as partners with numerous external organizations. It is this hard work that will empower us to achieve our vision.

Several immediate steps are critical to reach the goals we have articulated in this strategic plan.

- Develop an implementation plan that prioritizes the initiatives we will pursue to achieve each goal; describes how we will operationalize these initiatives; and indicates how we will measure our progress.
- Define a UNE brand identity and consistent messaging that clarify our vision and direction to the members of our community internally and that increase awareness of the University’s distinctiveness and heighten its reputation externally—among prospective students and their families, our alumni and partners worldwide, and the public at large.
- Ask each college to develop or revisit its strategic plan and specific goals to better align them with the direction set by this strategic plan.
- Link our resource allocation process to the goals and initiatives of the strategic plan.
- Prepare an annual report on the status of implementation of the strategic plan, noting progress on each goal and initiative, identifying new opportunities and changed circumstances, and outlining steps to respond to such changes.
- Undertake a more comprehensive review of progress at the midpoint of the term of this strategic plan (early 2021) and refresh the goals and initiatives as needed to ensure that the plan remains a highly relevant, living document.
Appendix

Participants in the Strategic Planning Process

The dedicated work of the following individuals drove the development of our strategic plan.

Project Sponsors

James D. Herbert, President
Joshua Hamilton, Provost

Strategic Planning Coordinating Committee

Ellen Beaulieu, Vice President for Strategy and Communications, and Chair of the Committee
Frank Daly, Emeritus Chair of the Faculty Assembly
Dani Deason, Emeritus Chair of the Professional Staff Assembly
Michael Sheldon, Interim Provost (2017-18), Associate Provost (2018-)
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