Our World, Our Future

Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023
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Introduction

UNE is at an enviable point in our evolution, a point from which we are poised to leap to ever greater heights.

At the center of our new strategic plan is a daring and expansive perspective on “health”: We will establish UNE among the premier providers of education, expertise, and innovation for sustaining the health of our world’s people, communities, and natural environment.

We are ready. Even a short list of our achievements demonstrates the force that UNE has become:

- We offer an exceptional return on our students’ educational investment. More than 93 percent of UNE undergraduates start a job or enter a graduate program within six months of receiving their diploma. The Brookings Institute ranks us number one among all of Maine’s colleges and universities for our ability to increase students’ career earnings.

- We prepare students to be culturally fluent members of an increasingly global workforce. UNE undergraduates study abroad at five-times the national average, spending semesters at UNE’s very own campus in Tangier, Morocco, as well as at affiliated campuses in Spain, France, and Iceland.

- We are Maine’s leading provider of health professionals. Offering our state’s only medical school and Northern New England’s only dental school, as well as programs in pharmacy, nursing, and a range of other health professions, UNE plays a leading role in meeting the health care needs of underserved communities throughout the Northeast and beyond.

- We are a national leader in interprofessional health care education (IPE). Research clearly demonstrates improved health outcomes when patients are cared for by teams of health care professionals—doctors, nurses, physician assistants, physical therapists, and social workers working side by side. UNE prepares aspiring health professionals for such collaborations by having them learn and work beside other students representing the full range of health professions programs.

- We engage in important research and scholarship. The work of UNE researchers has improved breast cancer detection, led to better understanding of how the Zika virus spreads, demonstrated how dehumanizing speech leads to violence and discrimination, uncovered how psychiatric medications can cause diabetes and bone fractures in children, and even unlocked the secret life of sharks. Our success is demonstrated by 800 percent growth in external funding over the past decade. More importantly, UNE students benefit, too. Just under half of all our
undergraduates work with faculty on research projects (compared to 23 percent nationwide).

- We graduate students who possess real world experience. Virtually all UNE students engage in some form of hands-on experiential learning, gaining invaluable disciplinary knowledge and interpersonal skills through internships, clinical rotations, service learning, and countless other opportunities to apply classroom knowledge in community organizations, businesses, government offices, and many other work settings.

- We are committed to fostering a robust marketplace of ideas. In an era when society has found itself increasingly divided along partisan ideological lines, we foster an environment in which the hard conversations essential to a true education still occur, challenging members of our community to reach beyond their intellectual comfort zones. Our Center for Global Humanities, George and Barbara Bush Lecture Series, P.D. Merrill Business Ethics Lecture, and President’s Forum, among many other events, offer venues where a diversity of ideas can thrive through civil and respectful discourse.

We are ambitious and restless—an institution that is of the world. Look around, and you will find our students, faculty, and professional staff in places as diverse as Morocco and Iceland, and in clinics and field sites across our nation’s cities, villages, forests, and oceans. You will see us learning from experiences in communities representing every form of human difference. These cultural, personal, and geographic connections reflect the profound respect and concern that the UNE community holds for the health of our world—its people, its communities, and its physical environment. We couple this concern with our nimbleness, flexibility, creativity, and sense of urgency to make UNE a powerful source of innovation for a healthier planet.

We have a strong legacy and a prestigious set of programs in the health sciences. But we are a comprehensive university, and creating a healthier planet requires more than talented health professionals. It requires leaders from all disciplines, including the natural and social sciences, humanities and arts, business, policy and more—bringing their diverse and complementary skills to bear on the most pressing challenges of our world.

We are seizing on our foundational strengths to:

- Expand active and collaborative teaching and learning through pedagogical innovation and enhanced technologies;

- Enhance our commitment to experiential learning;

- Create even more opportunities for students, faculty, and professional staff to work together across academic disciplines and professional programs; and
• Adapt and scale up the solutions we find working on problems in local communities in order to address similar challenges around the globe.

These steps chart a bold new course for UNE:

We will be one of the nation’s top providers of education, expertise, and innovation for sustaining the health of our world’s natural environment, people, and communities.

This broad perspective on health requires us to focus on interactions among individuals, communities, and the environment. Moreover, it demands that we look for solutions to our world’s pressing challenges by drawing knowledge and expertise from many academic disciplines. This means exposing students to discipline-based knowledge, cross-disciplinary habits of mind, and professional competencies that are discussed in this strategic plan. With these skills, UNE students will be ready to bring the fullest breadth of understanding and expertise to bear on improving the condition of people, society, and our planet.

Inspired by this vision and guided by this plan, UNE will empower students to anticipate and meet the challenges of this new world and to become active leaders in creating its future.

UNE—for the health of our world.
**Mission**

The University of New England prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing world and, in so doing, to improve the health of people, communities, and our planet.

**Vision**

We will realize this mission by committing to a distinctive approach to education that will make UNE among the most experientially driven institutions of higher education in the nation. We will provide teaching and learning 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 emotional intelligence, the ability to collaborate in diverse teams, communicate persuasively, and be a thoughtful leader.

We will be an institution that challenges students to learn broadly, master their professional skills, and ask probing questions. In this way, they will 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 and a commitment to ethical ideals.

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. Our commitment to University-wide academic freedom is fundamental to this value.

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 in order to collaborate with colleagues 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, online forums, 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 and scholarship, 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.

   • Charge a committee 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 faculty development, 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 all UNE students engage in at least one top-tier experiential learning opportunity during their academic program.**

   - Charge a committee to better define experiential learning, inventory current opportunities, and develop strategies for increasing capacity.
   - Enhance the support and coordination of 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 and scholarship efforts in which students are directly engaged and ensure that they are linked closely with program curricula.
   - Develop additional 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.

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1 A top-tier experiential learning opportunity is defined as following an academic rubric that includes goals, metrics, benchmarks, student learning outcomes, and an objective evaluation.
• Incentivize faculty, professional staff, 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 fosters a continuum of learning from classroom to real-world 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.

• Further engage our faculty, professional staff, students, parents/families, 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.

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

4. **Establish new programs and credentials that add value for current students, generate 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 the variety and availability of graduate degree programs by offering academic and professional master’s programs, professional doctoral programs, and accelerated undergraduate-graduate programs in both online and in-person formats.

III. Focused Research and Scholarship

We are a collaborative community of scholars that values all forms of scholarly inquiry. Our students and faculty pursue research and scholarship 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 further 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.

   • Provide more research and scholarship opportunities that are credit-bearing or offered as paid fellowships.
• Establish 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 stronger UNE culture of knowledge production and application.**

• Develop 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 promote the 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 UNE students 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 the wider UNE community 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, students, and the extended UNE family 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 fiscal management model while ensuring proper accountability as well as institutional and unit-level flexibility.

   • Engage UNE alumni more strongly with the University to increase their loyalty and fundraising potential. Enlarge the pool of other external funders, including individual donors, philanthropic foundations, government agencies, and corporate funders.

2. **Expand, support, and enhance our valuable human resources.**
• Develop enhanced strategies to recruit and retain a talented workforce that will contribute to the University's overall mission.

• Expand professional development opportunities, career advancement, and mentoring for faculty and professional staff.

• Continually monitor and address workload of faculty and professional staff as needed with respect to ongoing operations as well as the implementation of the initiatives outlined in this plan.

• Become recognized as an employer of choice for both faculty and professional staff by providing robust orientation programs, leadership training, ongoing 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.

• Encourage environmentally sustainable practices in all aspects of University operations and promote environmental awareness among students, faculty, and professional staff.

4. **Reimagine UNE’s brand identity and create a robust communication plan that increases awareness of UNE’s distinctiveness and heightens its reputation.**
• Develop new brand messages and visuals that differentiate UNE and emphasize our powerful value proposition.

• Increase media attention to UNE in order to enhance our recognition and reputation in Maine, New England, and nationally.

• Collaboratively develop communications initiatives that engage and support current students to build community and improve retention.

• Work with all UNE academic and administrative units to ensure the use of consistent messages and visuals about the University.
Conclusion and Implementation

This strategic plan and the transparent, inclusive process through which we developed 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*

**University Trustees**
- David L. Anderson, Ph.D., *Chair*
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John Braunstein, Director

Others

In addition to the many faculty, students, and professional staff who contributed to this plan through various modalities and forums, many other stakeholders have participated in its development, including alumni; business, governmental, civic, and nonprofit leaders; parents and other family members; and local community members. We are grateful for their partnership and dedication to UNE.