

MANCHESTER CHAT

Stephen Reno's Living Room, Manchester, NH, January 10th, 2007 – 6:00pm

HIGHER EDUCATION IN NH

Presenter: Stephen Reno (University System of NH), Host: Matt Cookson (University System of NH)

Attending: Brad Cook, Kathy Cook, David Jenkins, Jon Greenberg, Kathy Moore, Betty Hoadley, Sandy Conley, Nury Marquez, Sally D'Angelo, Andy Volinsky, Katie Merrow, Kyle Finney, Joe Waldvogel, Edda Cantor (LNH Staff), Melanie Waldvogel (LNH Staff)

The University System of New Hampshire, and its Plans for 2007

Chancellor Stephen Reno outlined the University System's 5-part mission, summarized:

1. Provide an exceptional Higher Education experience
2. Provide programs of excellence
3. Promote a diverse student body
4. Engage in research and
5. Have a system that can be used as a resource

USNH is NOT a state agency. The Board consists of 27 members, including the Governor and the President of each University (currently all women – the only system in the US where this is true!). USNH is one of the smallest systems in the US. Of its 900 million operating budget, only 13% comes from the state. The budget is dependent on out of state tuition costs, and the colleges are increasingly competitive. USNH is also the state's single largest landowner.

There is an emphasis on partnerships, and USNH's goal is to be system in the US. The criteria USNH uses to constantly measure its contributions included:

1. Is it student-oriented?
2. Are there programs of excellence?
3. Are resources being used efficiently?
4. Is USNH a partner of choice for organizations?

USNH faces unique challenges, some which are the same nationally. NH is a rapidly aging state (the 6th oldest in the US), a challenge for employers. Only 27% out of every 100 NH 9th graders will graduate college. Technology required by the students, and the general upkeep of updating of buildings, dorms, etc. is very expensive. Arts and sciences are the core of NH curriculum, and NH Govt. needs to address the drop out rate and low college attendance rate. Students graduate with an average debt of \$22,500.

Projects and partnerships through USNH that are currently creating change include: Project Mentor, Community Tech College System Partnerships (www.nhtransfer.org), Affordable College Effort (ACE), and relationships with the business community (research, internships, R+D network).

In response to questions, the Chancellor announced the following:

- The highest priorities for USNH are Access and Affordability. The highest drop-off rate for students is after high school graduation. Cost is a factor in students dropping out of college, and interruptions make it harder for students to return.
- Mentor-ships between teachers and students are key. USNH promotes "Get Ready for College" posters with how-to's and steps.
- It is a shame funding from many national programs, such as Outward Bound, are being cut nationally
- Housing costs are one reason why NH is losing its younger population. USNH can be a convener for construction and preservation courses and information. NH ought to make an effort to retain at least 5% more of its graduates in the state. We need a better sense of why our young people leave the state and a better way to market and match jobs to graduates.
- There is a gender breakout in college attendance: more women than men are entering and graduating.
- Committed and dedicated teachers are needed.
- Growing fields for graduates include: Business, Healthcare and Engineering.

Attend the Industry Forecast on January 18th!

For further information, please visit: <http://www.usnh.unh.edu/>