



## HIGHER EDUCATION

**BY DR. TODD LEACH**

Dr. Todd Leach is the Chancellor of the University System of New Hampshire. USNH enrolls more than 32,000 students, and consists of four public institutions of higher education.

**A**t this year's Business and Industry Association's Strategic Retreat, workforce shortages were identified as one of New Hampshire's most pressing business needs, and that sentiment is echoed throughout New Hampshire's business community.

Unemployment data suggests that the State's biggest workforce need is for those with a bachelor's degree and above. Unfortunately, demographic data suggests the need will only grow stronger over the next several years.

Compounding New Hampshire's workforce challenge is the fact that every New England state is facing the same demographic problem and the same workforce challenge.

As a result, our workforce pipeline is going to be increasingly dependent upon building a strong flow of talent. Keeping more Granite State students in New Hampshire will be key to achieving the necessary stream of talent.

The University System of New Hampshire is the state's largest provider of workers with a bachelor's degree and is committed to addressing our state's most urgent workforce needs. Our institutions are particularly focused on State needs for healthcare professionals, educators and STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) workers.

The University System invested over \$5 million into biological science labs in UNH's Manchester facility this year in support of New Hampshire's regenerative medicine industry and all of our institutions are working closely with industry partners in support of their needs, both present and future. We are also engaging in strategic investment in nursing, a profession that is facing acute shortages across New Hampshire and New England.

USNH is focused on working with the State with the goal of doubling the number of nursing graduates in programs at the University of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University and increasing the number of nursing graduates at Keene State College as well. This is a proactive and innovative approach geared to have a significant impact, increasing the capacity in an industry facing critical shortages and one that is imperative for the health and future of New Hampshire.

The key to preparing New Hampshire's workforce is ensuring affordable access to our public colleges and universities. Holding down costs by leveraging economies of scale across the System has long been a focus of USNH.

Those efforts have been enhanced through strategic procurement and the aggressive management of healthcare costs as well as ongoing joint procurement and cost-containment efforts.

The System uses state support to lower tuition for all New Hampshire residents and, to supplement that support, our institutions have raised millions of dollars to provide scholarships to those that need assistance to attend our campuses.

Additionally, all residential institutions are now offering the Granite Guarantee that allows Pell-eligible New Hampshire students to attend tuition free. Last year USNH expanded its commitment to New Hampshire students by including the Granite Guarantee to graduates of the Community College System of New Hampshire as of December 2018.

The expansion of this program now means that qualified in-state students who receive Pell grants and transfer directly from the Community College System to a USNH residential institution can attend tuition free.

New Hampshire's public four-year institutions are critical to the State's talent pipeline and serve as one of New Hampshire's most critical economic engines.

The University System will continue to work to maximize the return on investment for both the State and our students and their families, assuring that we have the future workforce the Granite State needs to be successful into the future.



University System  
of New Hampshire

