Recent studies have shown that as many as 40 percent of new hires in management careers are fired within their first 18 months of work, and another 30 percent leave voluntarily within the same timeframe. Whittemore School professor Tuck Pescosolido believes part of the reason is that new graduates may lack such crucial skills as network building, tactical conflict negotiation, and successful interviewing techniques that bridge the gap between the classroom and the real world. To help Whittemore School students develop these skills, in 2003 Pescosolido established a program called SIGNAL—Students Interested in Growth, Networking, and Leadership.

The program brings organizational leaders from a range of environments and industries who meet with the group to share what has made them successful both as individuals and as business leaders. In turn, these leaders often help students build their professional networks.

Pescosolido says students' real-world success is the most important measure of what they have learned at UNH. "A student who is in my organizational behavior class in the fall of her junior year will be out in the business world in approximately 18 months, putting into practice the things that she learned during class," he explains.

Through their participation with SIGNAL, students graduate feeling more prepared to enter the business world and use the knowledge they have gained in the classroom effectively.

"So, the ultimate test of that student's ability to learn and apply the classroom material is how her career develop over the first few years of her post-college life," Pescosolido says. And the higher level of professionalism and preparedness that SIGNAL offers will only add to an already solid recruitment track record."