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# NH'S NEW

# LEADERSHIP

BY ERIKA COHEN, MATTHEW J. MOWRY, MELANIE PLEND AND KATHIE RAGSDALE

NH'S NEW LEADERSHIP <<<<<<<<

**N**ew Hampshire is a small state where those who are involved in business and the community tend to run into people they know all the time. Lately, though, people might find a few more new faces than usual, or at least familiar faces in unfamiliar roles.

Within the last two years, more than 140 businesses and nonprofits in NH had new leaders, and about half a dozen are actively looking for one. Some of those changes are due to baby boomers retiring, while others resulted from prior leaders moving on.

And then there are the political changes. Included in this feature is a profile of U.S. Senator-elect and former Governor Maggie Hassan, who is making history for joining an all-female Democratic Congressional Delegation in Washington D.C.

Each January, *Business NH Magazine* has taken a look at leadership in NH in different ways. We have run The Most Powerful (both business and politics), The Influencer Index and New Nonprofit Leadership, to ring in the new year.

Given the changes over the past two years, we decided to profile some of the many new leaders in the state. While building the list, the number of new leaders became so overwhelming we simply did not have room to profile all of them. We will be running profiles of many of them in the coming months.

## Ian Grant

Director, UNH Peter T. Paul Entrepreneurship Center

So an art student, a techie and an engineer wannabe walk into a building ...

If the building happens to be at the University of NH, it's likely all three have come to see Ian Grant, who has made it his mission to bring together students from different disciplines to brainstorm, learn creative problem-solving and, perhaps, become entrepreneurs.

Grant is the first director of the Peter T. Paul Entrepreneurship Center, commonly called the ECenter, which—though just a year old—has grown rapidly. Created with financial assistance from Peter T. Paul and the Wildcatalysts Network, the center has seen interactions with students, faculty and alumni grow from 2,000 its first semester to more than 4,000 in the second semester.

The center is unique in that it is independent of the business school, and students who use it receive no academic credit. Rather, they, as well as university faculty, staff and alumni, can avail themselves of free coaching from experienced entrepreneurs, boot camps on multiple subjects, “hackathons” on problem-solving and a variety of grants to help fund potential projects.

Students also have access to the center's makerspace with laser and vinyl cutters, 3D printers, sewing machines, tools and more to help bring ideas to fruition. It also has an Idea Connection Board where seekers use old-fashioned index cards to connect ideas looking for people and people looking for ideas. Grant says the board is intentionally low-tech to encourage students to interact.



Grant embodies the entrepreneurial spirit. A high-energy entrepreneur who sleeps just five hours a night, “my most productive times are from 1:30 to 3 a.m.,” he says.

He founded or co-founded three companies that were acquired and led innovation projects within Fortune 500 corporations.

Many students are following suit. Plaques on one wall of the center show logos from the businesses started by student entrepreneurs. Other plaques feature the logos from some of the 3,600 UNH alumni who have founded, co-founded or started their own businesses.

Grant says he likes to have such reminders for students and others that “it’s okay to get out of your comfort zone.”