

SPRING 2026

NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE

MAGAZINE

Does *College*
Still Matter?

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WRITER/EDITOR

Tracy Searle

GRAPHIC DESIGN

The Bees Knees Atelier, LLC

CONTRIBUTORS

Corey Davis
David DeCew
William Deptula
Shara DiGrazia-Almeida
Heather Mixon

PHOTOGRAPHY

Will Zimmerman—
Miniature Media

Ed Collier—
Ed Collier Photography

PRINTING

R.C. Brayshaw & Company, LLC

New England College Magazine is published two times a year by New England College, 98 Bridge Street, Henniker, NH 03242. It is sent to alumni, donors, current students, prospective students, and friends of the College. The magazine is part of College Advancement, led by Vice President William Deptula.

Send your stories, updates, address changes, or cancellation requests to:
New England College Alumni Relations
98 Bridge Street, Henniker, NH 03242
alumni@nec.edu



Greetings

from Bridge Street



Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr.
President



We've all heard the saying, "When you love what you do, you never work a day in your life." I won't pretend that serving as president of New England College is not a lot of work but, boy, do I love what I do. Every day, I walk into a community that is full of curiosity, resilience, and possibility. That is a powerful and inspiring environment in which to work.

I have spent my career in higher education, and I can't imagine working anywhere else. I love everything about the college experience, but I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge there are those who question if college still matters.

This issue of the *New England College Magazine* asks, "Does college still matter?" That might seem like an odd question for a college to ask, but I believe it is an important question for us to answer. You might think we will say, "Yes, college still matters" simply because we work in this space, but that's actually the least compelling response we could offer. College is so much more than time and money exchanged for a degree. It is lives transformed and a citizenry educated. In this issue, you will read the perspectives of those who chose college and why it matters to them.

Last fall, I asked you to stay tuned for information about NEC's new Strategic Plan and how it provides a bold roadmap for NEC's future. I'm excited to say that we have now launched the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan and that you can read about it in this issue. NEC's future is bright.

This year also marks NEC's 80th anniversary. Our beloved college has changed a lot over the last eight decades, but our commitment to providing transformative educational experiences, creating engaged citizens, and helping our graduates build meaningful lives has never wavered. Here's to 80 more years!

Wayne

GO 'GRIMS!



Does College Still Matter?

A President's Perspective

Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr.

It's a fair question and an increasingly common one: *Does college still matter?*

In a time defined by rising costs, alternative credentials, and rapid technological change, skepticism about higher education is not only understandable but also necessary. But after spending my career in this field, my answer is clear: College does matter. Perhaps now more than ever. The challenge before us is not to defend higher education reflexively, but to articulate its value honestly and to evolve in ways that meet the moment. At its core, a college education is not simply about earning a degree. It is about becoming an educated person. That means being exposed to new ideas, different cultures, and competing perspectives. It means developing the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and continue learning long after graduation. Those habits are not luxuries; they are essential for navigating a world that is changing faster than any generation before us has experienced.

When I graduated with my undergraduate degree in 1991, there was no internet, no social media, no smartphones or tablets, no artificial intelligence shaping daily life. Everything I've needed to learn since then has required adaptability, and the tools to help me be adaptable were provided to me through the college education I received. That is what college, at its best, provides: not just preparation for a first job, but preparation for a lifetime of change.

There is also something uniquely powerful about the college environment itself. For a brief period, typically four years, students are immersed in a setting dedicated entirely to growth. They live, learn, and engage in a community designed to challenge and support them. It is one of the few times in life when individuals can fully devote themselves to intellectual and personal development, guided by faculty who have committed their lives to teaching and scholarship.

That experience is difficult to replicate elsewhere. Workplaces demand productivity. Life brings competing responsibilities. But college offers space: space to reflect, to question, to discover who you are and who you want to become. So, when some would have the college experience reduced to some sort of simple transaction where one attends college in exchange for a degree...well, that misses what's most important about the experience: the process of transformation that accompanies becoming an educated individual.

Of course, we cannot ignore the most persistent concern: cost.

College is expensive. That criticism is valid, and those of us in higher education must take it seriously. Every dollar we charge must be justified. We are stewards of our students' and families' investment, and we have an obligation to ensure that investment delivers meaningful returns.

From a purely economic standpoint, the data is compelling. Over a lifetime, college graduates earn, on average, significantly more than those without a degree, often by a margin approaching \$2 million. But the return on investment extends well beyond salary. College graduates tend to live longer, enjoy better health, engage more actively in their communities, and face lower rates of unemployment and incarceration. These outcomes matter, not just for individuals but for society as a whole.

Still, we must acknowledge where higher education has fallen short. As an industry, we have not always done a good job of making our case. We have been too slow to listen to concerns, too hesitant to adapt, and at times too confident that the value of college speaks for itself. It doesn't. Not anymore.

We must do better.

That begins with aligning education more closely with career outcomes. A college degree should open doors, not just intellectually but also professionally. At New England College, we are working intentionally to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the workforce. That includes building partnerships with employers, creating opportunities for students to "earn while they learn," and ensuring that academic programs are informed by real-world needs.

Imagine a graduate crossing the stage with a diploma in one hand and a job offer in the other. That is not an aspiration. It is an expectation we should be striving to meet.

At the same time, we must resist the temptation to reduce education to a purely transactional experience. College is not just a pathway to a paycheck. It is a transformative process that shapes how individuals think, engage, and contribute to the world. Employers consistently tell us they value graduates who can write clearly, think critically, and adapt quickly, skills that are foundational to a liberal arts education.

As new technologies like artificial intelligence reshape industries, this balance becomes even more important. AI is a powerful tool, but it raises important questions. If technology begins to replace thinking rather than enhance it, we risk undermining the very purpose of education. Our responsibility is to integrate these tools thoughtfully and use them to amplify human capability, rather than diminish it.

"It's a fair question and an increasingly common one."

Higher education must also expand its reach. Today's students are not only 18-year-olds living on campus. They are working professionals, parents, and individuals seeking advancement or career change. Meeting students where they are—through flexible, online, and career-focused programs—is essential to remaining relevant and fulfilling our mission.

Ultimately, the question is not whether college matters. It is whether we are willing to do the work required to ensure that it continues to matter.

For me, this work is deeply personal. My own college experience shaped the trajectory of my life. It instilled in me a commitment to learning and a desire to serve others, values that continue to guide me today. I often reflect on how different my experience might have been in a smaller, more connected environment like the one we strive to create at New England College, where students are known, supported, and challenged as individuals.

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It is one of the few times in life when individuals can fully devote themselves to intellectual and personal development.



That sense of community is not incidental; it is central to the value of higher education. When students feel seen and supported, they thrive. And when they thrive, the impact extends far beyond the classroom.

So, does college still matter?

Yes, but only if we are willing to listen, adapt, and lead with purpose. Only if we hold ourselves accountable for delivering both intellectual growth and tangible outcomes. And only if we remain committed to the idea that education is not just about making a living, but about making a life.

That is the case we must make and the promise we must keep.

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Does College Still Matter?

Alumni and Student Perspectives

Anthony Denizard



BA Business Administration '03
MS Organizational Leadership '04

FROM UNCERTAINTY TO OPPORTUNITY AND WHY COLLEGE STILL MATTERS

Anthony Denizard didn't set out with a perfectly mapped career path. Like many graduates, his journey began with uncertainty...and a retail job he never intended to keep. Today, he leads and transforms companies across industries, from high-tech manufacturing to digital marketing and global hospitality supply. Looking back, he credits his time at NEC with giving him something far more valuable than a straight line: the ability to adapt, observe, and seize opportunity.

A 2003 graduate of NEC's BA in Business Administration program with a concentration in marketing and a 2004 graduate of NEC's Master of Science in Organizational Leadership program, Anthony describes his early career as "starting out of necessity." After college, he took a retail job simply to pay the bills. But even in a role he didn't enjoy, he applied what he had learned at NEC, such as how to navigate unfamiliar environments, manage people, and stay resilient under pressure.

That mindset quickly set him apart. Within months, he entered a management training program, leveraging his academic foundation in finance, human resources, and operations to move ahead. A chance conversation with a customer soon led to an unexpected opportunity in aviation manufacturing. Within weeks, Anthony found himself tasked with running and improving a company's operations, an experience that would define his career.

"I stepped into chaos," he recalls. "But NEC prepared me for that. You learn how to operate in any environment—chaos, calm, or anything in between—and find your footing."

Over the next several years, Anthony immersed himself in every aspect of the business, from operations and staffing to global client relationships. Under his leadership, the company expanded its reach to 70 countries and significantly improved efficiency. When the time came to sell, he negotiated not just for the business, but

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"

for its people—ensuring employees received raises, promotions, and long-term benefits.

"That was non-negotiable for me," he says. "Success isn't just about the bottom line. It's about taking care of the people who make it possible."

Since then, Anthony has continued to build and transform organizations, launching a digital marketing agency, restructuring companies in construction and engineering, and now leading within Regency Group, a global hospitality supply firm in New York City. Along the way, one theme has remained constant: the importance of perspective.

"At NEC, you're exposed to different disciplines and different people," he explains. "You learn to see the world from multiple angles. That's something I use every single day—whether I'm making business decisions or leading a team."

He points to one skill in particular that has proven invaluable: the ability to read people. Through interactions with classmates from diverse majors and backgrounds, Anthony developed a sense of situational awareness that now underpins his leadership style.

"Understanding how people think, what motivates them—that's everything in business," he says. "And that's something I really started to develop on campus."

While technical knowledge has its place, Anthony believes the most lasting impact of his college experience came from outside the classroom.

As a student, he played rugby, served as vice president of the Campus Activities Board, hosted a radio show, and participated in community service and mentorship.

"Those experiences mattered more than I ever expected," he says. "They're the things I still draw on today."

Now, he's giving back to NEC in meaningful ways—hosting student visits, helping to build internship pipelines, and mentoring the next generation of leaders.

"It's important to me to stay connected and create opportunities for students," he says. "NEC gave me so much. This is one way to return that."

In a time when many question the value of a college education, Anthony's perspective is clear.

"College absolutely still matters," he says. "It gives you a controlled environment to try things, to fall down, and to get back up without dire consequences. That's invaluable because it's not how the real world works."

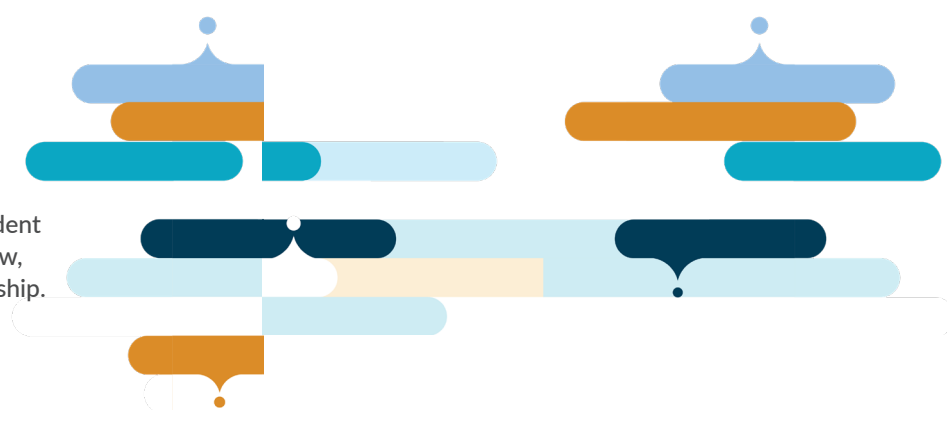
He acknowledges that the prestige of a college name may carry less weight than it once did but argues that the skills and experiences gained are what truly count.

"The college name on a diploma matters less and less," he says. "What matters is your skill set. Can you think critically? Can you adapt? Can you lead? If you're going to invest in college, invest in a place that gives you the tools to succeed, not just a name."

If he could go back and advise his 18-year-old self, his answer would be simple: Do it all again.

"For me, college was 100% worth it, worth every penny," Anthony says. "That environment—the chance to explore, to grow, to figure things out—that's something you can't easily replicate anywhere else."

His career may not have followed a straight path, but that's exactly the point. At every turn, Anthony has embraced the unexpected, turning chance encounters into defining opportunities. And it all traces back to a foundation built at NEC, one that continues to shape how he leads, solves problems, and sees the world.



Anna-Marie DiPasquale

BA Psychology '87



FROM SELF-DOUBT TO LASTING CONFIDENCE AND WHY COLLEGE STILL MATTERS

At a time when many are questioning the value of higher education, Anna-Marie DiPasquale '87 offers a clear and thoughtful answer: Yes, college still matters. But how you approach it matters just as much.

For Anna-Marie, a psychology major and first-generation college student, NEC was more than a place to earn a degree. It was where she found her confidence, discovered her voice, and built the foundation for a life of purpose.

"Intellectually, I didn't always think I belonged," she recalls. "But NEC gave me the confidence to believe that I did."

That confidence didn't come from a single class or assignment. It was built through relationships. During a Model United Nations conference in Boston, Anna-Marie found herself surrounded by students from elite institutions like Harvard and began to doubt herself. Her professor Dr. Montford "Bunny" Sayce quickly intervened.

"He told me, 'You hold your head up high. You are just as capable and hard working as anyone else in this room,'" she says.

Years later, as she interviewed for graduate school at the University of Chicago, that moment came rushing back.

"That message stayed with me," she says. "It reminded me that I deserved to be there."

She went on to earn her master's in social work and build a meaningful career serving others, but she credits NEC with planting the seed.

"That's something college gives you that's hard to replicate anywhere else," she says. "That belief in yourself."

Anna-Marie's career path—spanning Capitol Hill, McDonald's Corporation in Chicago, and ultimately social work—was not linear. But the skills she developed at NEC traveled with her every step of the way.

"Writing, critical thinking, learning how to form an argument and support it—those were things I used right away," she says. "Even when working on Capitol Hill, those were the exact skills I was using."



Her experience reflects a broader truth about higher education: Its value isn't limited to a specific job outcome. It's about building a toolkit that applies across industries and throughout a lifetime.

"It's not just about the material," she explains. "It's how to think, how to solve problems, how to communicate."

Those skills proved essential as she navigated career changes and ultimately found her calling in social work.

For Anna-Marie, some of the most meaningful lessons came when classroom learning connected to real life. As part of a senior project with her advisor Mira Braunstein, Anna-Marie conducted developmental testing with her young nephew, an experience that helped her family advocate for his educational needs.

"It showed me that what we were learning had real impact," she says. "It wasn't just academic; it mattered."

Experiences like that, along with courses that expanded her worldview and a semester studying at NEC's former Arundel campus in England, shaped how she saw the world.

"I didn't expect college to open things up in that way," she says. "But it did. It changed how I think and how I see others."



“
**It's not just about
the material, it's
how to think, how
to solve problems,
how to communicate.**”

As someone who spent years working in education, Anna-Marie understands why families are asking tough questions about the cost of college, and she believes those questions are valid.

"College is expensive," she says. "Students and families have to be thoughtful about it."

In her work as the school social worker at Concord High School in New Hampshire, she worked with immigrant and refugee students. She often emphasized financial literacy, helping them understand debt, weigh their options, and make informed decisions about their futures.

"It's not college at all costs," she explains. "It's about making college work for you."

That might mean starting at a community college, exploring different pathways, or choosing a school that offers the right balance of opportunity and affordability. But for those who choose it and approach it thoughtfully, she believes the return is undeniable.

"For me, it was absolutely worth it," she says. "I would do it again, and I would choose NEC again."

So, does college still matter? For Anna-Marie, the answer goes far beyond career outcomes or earning potential. College provided structure, discipline, and the opportunity to grow in ways that are difficult to replicate elsewhere.

"It teaches you follow-through. It teaches you how to commit to something and see it through," she says. It also offers something less tangible but equally important: exposure to new ideas, new people, and new ways of thinking.

"You meet people outside your own circle," she says. "You're challenged to think differently. That's incredibly valuable."

And perhaps most importantly, it creates a space—especially for first-generation students—to discover what's possible.

"My professors were my mentors," she says. "They saw things in me that I didn't always see in myself."

Looking back, Anna-Marie sees her time at New England College as a turning point, not because it defined her path, but because it prepared her to navigate it.

"It created a foundation," she says. "A kind of confidence and way of thinking that I carried with me through everything."

In today's evolving landscape, her perspective is both grounded and hopeful: College still matters, but its value lies not just in the destination, but in the transformation along the way.



"It's about what you do with it," she says. "If you're open, if you're willing to learn, it can shape your entire life."

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Sumana Krovi
BA Politics and
BA Criminal Justice '28

NOT JUST A STEP TOWARD A CAREER, BUT A SPACE TO DISCOVER WHO SHE IS AND WHO SHE WANTS TO BECOME

For Sumana Krovi '28, college is not just a step toward a career. It is a space to discover who she is and who she wants to become.

A double major in Politics and Criminal Justice, Sumana came to New England College with a clear sense of direction. She plans to attend law school and is already exploring where her interests might take her, from constitutional law to advocacy work focused on voting access. But while her ambitions were well defined, the depth of her growth since arriving on campus is something she didn't fully anticipate.

"I knew college would open doors professionally," she says. "But I didn't realize how much I would grow personally."

That growth has taken shape in both expected and unexpected ways. Sumana has immersed herself in hands-on opportunities that bring her academic interests to life: working on political campaigns, interning with a criminal prosecutor, and even launching a podcast focused on constitutional law. These experiences have given her early exposure to the realities of the political and legal worlds, helping her refine her goals while building practical skills.

"College has given me the space to actually do the things I've always been interested in," she says. "I've learned what I enjoy, like writing policy briefs and building legal arguments, and I've also realized there are paths I don't necessarily want to take. That's just as valuable."

“ College has given me the *space* to actually do the things I've always been interested in, and I've learned what I enjoy. ”

Just as important as those professional experiences, however, has been the personal development that comes with independence. Living and learning in a new environment has pushed Sumana to build confidence, manage her time, and navigate responsibilities on her own. Even the seemingly small milestones—balancing commitments, developing routines, learning how to manage daily life—have played a meaningful role in shaping her.

"Those little things don't seem important at first," she says. "But they really are. They add up to who you become."

At New England College, that growth is supported by a close-knit community that encourages exploration and connection. Sumana points to the value of learning in a small liberal arts environment, where relationships with faculty and peers are not only possible, but central to the experience.

"You're not just another face," she says. "People know you, and they want to help you succeed."

That support has opened doors she hadn't imagined when she first arrived on campus. Through faculty mentorship, she has been introduced to professional networks, invited into conversations and experiences beyond the classroom, and encouraged to pursue her interests in meaningful ways. She worked on the Kamala Harris presidential campaign and serves with Let Us Lead, a youth-led organization dedicated to leadership development, civic education, and community empowerment.

"Professors really invest in you here," she says. "They see what you're passionate about and help you go after it."

Equally impactful has been her growing sense of belonging. While her first year came with moments of uncertainty, she has since found a strong community and a network of friends who have shaped her experience in lasting ways.

"I didn't expect how much a sense of belonging would matter," she reflects. "But your connections—your community—are such a big part of your growth."

Sumana is also clear-eyed about the realities facing today's students, particularly when it comes to the cost of higher education. Financial considerations played a significant role in her college decision, ultimately leading her to NEC, where she found both opportunity and affordability.

"I was looking at schools that would have put me in a lot of debt," she says. "NEC gave me the opportunity to pursue my goals without that burden. You have to find a place that fits you financially and academically, especially if you're planning to continue your education, like going to law school."

For Sumana, that balance has allowed her to focus not just on her future, but on making the most of her present experience. And when it comes to the broader question of whether college still matters, her answer is both thoughtful and emphatic.

“ College has helped me *figure out* the kind of difference I want to make, and it's given me the *tools* to start making the difference *now*. ”

"Absolutely," she says. "But it's also a very individual decision. There are many paths to success."

Still, she believes that for those who choose college, the impact can be transformative. Beyond academics and career preparation, it offers something deeper: perspective, empathy, and a stronger understanding of both self and society.

"Education is power," she says. "It helps you understand the world, have informed conversations, and develop empathy—especially in fields like politics."

As the daughter of an immigrant family, that perspective carries personal significance. It reinforces her commitment to using her education not only for personal advancement, but to create opportunities for others.

Looking ahead, Sumana sees law school as the next step in a journey that is still unfolding. She hopes to pursue a legal career focused on expanding access to voting and civic participation—work that reflects both her academic interests and her desire to make a meaningful impact.

"College has helped me figure out the kind of difference I want to make," she says. "And it's given me the tools to start making that difference now."

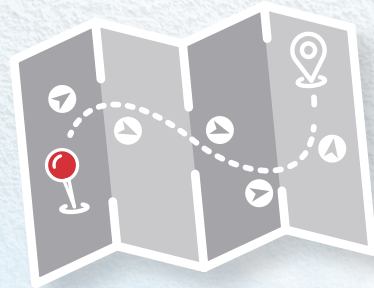
In a time when the value of higher education is often debated, Sumana's experience offers a compelling perspective. College, she suggests, is not simply about earning a degree or securing a job. It is about growth, exploration, and the opportunity to become something more.

Strategic Plan 2025-2030



The next five years will be transformative for New England College. Grounded in our liberal arts tradition and inspired by bold aspirations, our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan lays out a clear and ambitious path forward—one centered on student success, innovation, and impact.

BUILT AROUND **4 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**



- **Position NEC to Thrive**
- **Invest in NEC's Mission and Vision**
- **Build Excitement and Expand Awareness**
- **Foster Institutional Excellence and NEC Pride**

These priorities serve as a roadmap for action—with measurable goals like ensuring graduates' career readiness, launching new academic and athletic programs, and continuing record-breaking fundraising achievements. Just as importantly, it reflects who we are: a close-knit, student-centered college with a bold vision for the future.

Together, we will shape a future rooted in purpose, powered by innovation, and defined by community.



Strategic Priorities and Goals

Position NEC to Thrive

NEC will increase enrollment across its programs, improve student retention and graduation, increase fundraising, expand athletic programs, deepen its connections with academic partners, and increase the flexibility of degree programs to meet student needs.

Invest in NEC's Mission and Vision

NEC will review all its offerings, ensure degree programs align with industry standards, build new academic partnerships, improve career readiness for graduates, and establish industry-related advisory boards.

Build Excitement and Expand Awareness

NEC will invest in advertising and promotion efforts, deepen alumni and community engagement, improve its marketing infrastructure, and leverage developments in AI.

Foster Institutional Excellence and NEC Pride

NEC will develop a robust technology plan to foster college-wide efficiency while continuing to improve employee engagement, student experience, and customer service.

Mission

We foster student success through excellence in transformative education, critical thinking, civic engagement, and career development. We help our graduates build their foundation for a meaningful life.

Vision

We will be a leader in the Northeast, integrating a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum with focused career development.

Our guiding principles reflect *who* we are and *what* we strive to advance every day.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

We are committed to supporting student success by delivering transformative educational experiences and clear pathways to meaningful careers.



INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

We hold ourselves to the highest standards in academics, operations, athletics, and service, continually striving to improve our performance, outcomes, and impact.



COMMUNITY and COMMON PURPOSE

We nurture a culture of belonging, respect, and shared purpose where our entire community feels supported, valued, and empowered to thrive.



INNOVATION and TECHNOLOGY

We embrace innovation and leverage emerging technologies to enhance teaching, learning, communication, and institutional effectiveness.



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT and LIFELONG LEARNING

We grow through strategic partnerships and reinvest in our people, programs, and places to ensure relevance and resilience well into the future.



Impact

The impact of this Strategic Plan will be far reaching and student focused.

Students will receive greater support, gain access to new programs, and enjoy closer connections to work and careers.

Faculty and staff will see new professional development pathways, modernized infrastructure, and strengthened collaboration.

Alumni will have more opportunities to engage, mentor, and give back.

Our community will benefit from increased visibility, deeper partnerships, and a stronger NEC presence.



Implementation

To bring this Plan to life, NEC will:

Work collaboratively across campus departments and with supporters of NEC to accomplish each strategic priority.

Track progress using data dashboards, key performance indicators, and annual milestones.

Engage the NEC community through updates, feedback loops, and strategic forums.

Join Us.

Every member of the NEC community has a role to play in realizing this Strategic Plan. Whether you're a student, faculty member, staff, alumni, or friend of the College—we invite you to:

- ✔ **Get involved in new initiatives.**
- ✔ **Mentor students or lead change.**
- ✔ **Share your ideas and feedback.**
- ✔ **Celebrate our progress and success.**



Scan to Learn More and Get Involved
Or visit nec.edu/strategicplan.



80 Years Bold. Years Strong.

This year, New England College proudly marks its 80th anniversary, a milestone that honors eight decades of transformative education, meaningful community, and unwavering commitment to shaping the future.

Founded in 1946 to serve servicemen and women returning home on the G.I. Bill after World War II, NEC began with a mission to open doors through opportunity and access. Over the years, that mission has evolved and expanded, welcoming students from across the United States and around the world to our vibrant campus in Henniker, New Hampshire.

From our humble beginnings to today's dynamic community of learners, NEC has stood as a place of resilience, innovation, and connection. We've grown into a creative and supportive learning environment offering more than 60 associate and bachelor's degrees, over 20 master's programs, and two doctoral programs, all grounded in the liberal arts tradition.

Throughout 2026, we are marking this milestone through a series of events for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, culminating with Fall Festival Weekend in September. As we celebrate 80 years of New England College, we do so with gratitude for those who came before us and confidence in the future we are building together.

ATHLETICS NEWS

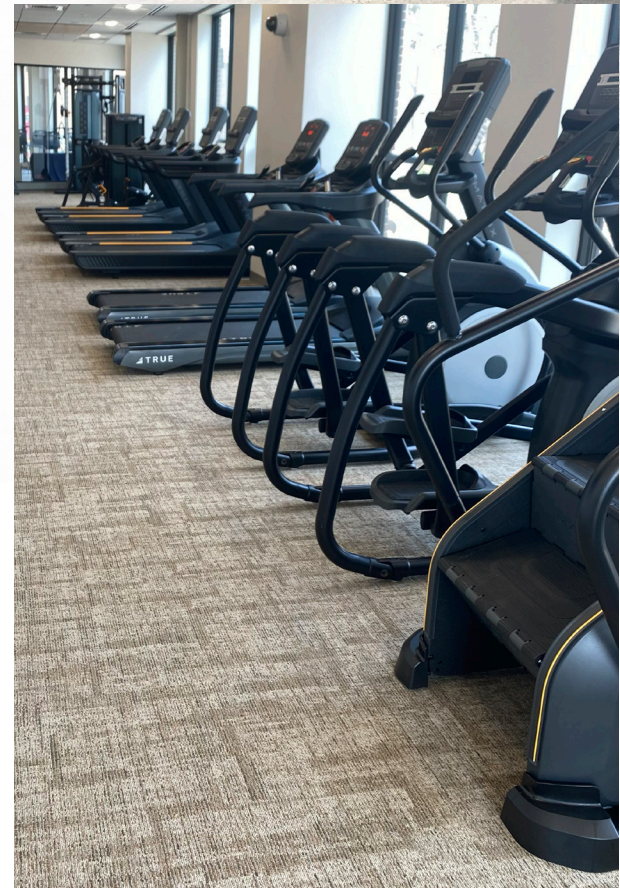


A NEW ERA BEGINS NEC CELEBRATES OPENING OF REVITALIZED ATHLETICS CENTER

A defining chapter in New England College's campus evolution has officially come to life. On April 2, the NEC community gathered to celebrate the grand opening of the newly transformed Athletics Center, marking the completion of a project that reimagines Bridges Gymnasium as a modern hub for athletics, wellness, and campus connection.

What began as an ambitious, multi-phase renovation has culminated in a state-of-the-art facility that reflects NEC's commitment to student success both on and off the field. The project's completion represents not just the end of construction, but the beginning of a new era for student-athletes and the broader campus community.

The revitalized Athletics Center showcases a seamless blend of updated infrastructure and expanded spaces. Inside, the facility now features a significantly enhanced Strength Lab, a campus-wide fitness center, updated locker rooms, coaches' offices, and a comprehensive sports medicine suite, all designed to support peak performance and overall well-being.





Building on the success of earlier upgrades, such as the resurfaced turf field and initial Strength Lab improvements completed in 2024, the finished Athletics Center now stands as a cornerstone of campus life. With a large portion of NEC students participating in athletics or recreational fitness, the space is designed to serve not only varsity teams but the entire student body.

The transformation is equally striking from the outside. A redesigned façade, new entryway, and welcoming front patio with granite seating create an inviting presence at the heart of campus.

The addition of an ADA-accessible entrance, including a ramp and front stairway, ensures the facility is fully inclusive and accessible to all.

The April 2 opening celebration brought together students, faculty, and staff to mark the occasion, offering a first look at a facility that will shape the NEC experience for years to come. The energy of the event reflected the significance of the moment: a shared investment realized and a bold vision fulfilled.

Now fully open, the Athletics Center is more than a building; it is a dynamic gathering place where competition, wellness, and community intersect. For alumni returning to campus, it stands as a powerful symbol of NEC's continued growth and its enduring commitment to providing an exceptional student experience.

STUDENT-ATHLETE SPOTLIGHT



Joseph Bolduc
'28 | MASSACHUSETTS



Camryn Lewis
'27 | MASSACHUSETTS

In March, Joe won the NCAA Division III Regional Championship for Men's Wrestling in the 174-pound weight class. He opened the tournament against Roger Williams University, winning by a 16-3 major decision. In the quarterfinal, Joe took down his opponent from the United States Coast Guard Academy in a 7-3 decision. In the semifinal, he was faced with a test against Johnson and Wales University, a matchup that went into overtime tied 1-1.

A takedown with just under 40 seconds left clinched a finals spot for Joe and guaranteed him a spot in the national tournament. He faced the same challenge in the finals, as he went into overtime tied 1-1 against Williams College. Both wrestlers scored via escape before Joe scored a takedown with just three seconds left in the overtime period and won the tournament.

Joe then represented NEC at the 2026 NCAA Division III Wrestling Championships in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, starting March 13. Joe competed in two consolation rounds before his season ended against Lycoming College.

On the season, Joe wrestled in 36 matches, finished with a 28-8 record, placed first in the 2025 Doug Parker Invitational hosted by Springfield College in November, won the 2026 NCAA Division III Regional Championship, and competed at the 2026 NCAA Division III National Championships.

Cam served as the anchor for the Women's Basketball team over the 2025-2026 season. In March, she earned a spot on the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) All-Conference Second Team for her performance. She started 25 of 26 games and led the lineup with a team-best 290 rebounds. Cam set the single-season double-doubles record with 15, surpassing the previous record of 12. She finished the season averaging 11.2 rebounds per game and 12.3 points per game while shooting 49% from the field.

She netted a season-high 21 points against Dean College on January 31 and recorded a season-high 17 rebounds twice this season: first against Norwich University in the Ed Hockenbury Classic Championship on December 6 and second against Mitchell College on January 24.

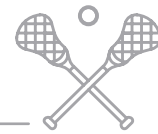
Among GNAC leaders, Lewis ranked fourth in rebounds per game while also placing fourth in field-goal percentage. Her efforts earned her GNAC Player of the Week honors twice, in addition to being a two-time member on the GNAC Weekly Honor Roll.



Brady Philibotte
'26
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Brady Philibotte tied NEC's all-time doubles record on March 16, 2025, against Colby College before being shut down by a season-ending injury. He returned to action in 2026, hitting his 34th career double against VTSU-Lyndon on March 1 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Brady surpassed former teammate Connor Morin '22 and has continued to build on his record. In April, he broke NEC Baseball's all-time hits record with 155 for his career.

Women's Lacrosse



Women's Lacrosse started the 2026 season on a dominant note, besting their first seven opponents. This milestone marked the best start in program history. They defeated Gordon College 17-4, New College of Florida 19-11, Warner University (Fla.) 17-7, Elms College 18-4, Simmon University 13-8, University of Maine-Farmington 12-4, and Regis College 14-8.

Men's Golf



The 'Grims headed back to the Division III Men's Golf 2025-2026 Championship May 12-15 at the Mission Resort and Club in Howey-in-the-Hills, Fla. The team played its first spring tune-up on April 9.



Jaclyn Dehney
'28 | NEW HAMPSHIRE



During the 2025–2026 season, Jackie continued her Women’s Wrestling dominance from the 2024–2025 season. She competed in the NCAA Women’s Wrestling Region I Championships in February. After receiving a bye in the first round, she competed against D’Youville University, pinning her opponent in 21 seconds. In the semifinal, Jackie pinned her Wilkes University opponent in 27 seconds. In the 141-pound final, she took on Western New England University’s (WNEU) Tanya Teneva, whom she went 2-0 against during the season. Jackie scored a quick takedown before pinning Teneva in 1:54.

Jackie represented NEC in the first-ever NCAA Women’s Wrestling Championships in Coralville, Iowa, starting on March 6. Jackie suffered losses in the first round and second consolation round, ending her season with a 16-2 record.

Jackie started the season with a 15-match winning streak and over the season, won 14 matches by pin. She defeated opponents from Princeton University, Columbia University, Felician University, and WNEU to pin her way to the top of the podium at the Princeton Open in November. She won the New Standard Invitational in December and was one of three Pilgrims to take the top spot in December’s round-robin style Nassau Open in New York.



Graham Padgitt
'25 '27 | ILLINOIS



As a Men’s Ice Hockey Defenseman, Graham played in 25 games during the 2025–2026 season. He scored one goal and assisted in six goals for a total of seven points and tallied 22 blocks. His goal against Rivier on November 1 marked his first collegiate short-handed goal.

Throughout his hockey career at NEC, Graham has played in 100 games, scored six goals and made 21 assists for a total of 27 points, and blocked 61 shots.

Graham earned his BA in Business Administration with concentration in Accounting in 2025 with a 4.0 and is now pursuing his MS in Data Science and Analytic at NEC. In 2024, he received NEC’s Male Scholar Athlete of the Year and was named to the New England Hockey Conference (NEHC) Academic All-Academic Conference Team. During the 2023–2024 season, he was named NEHC Academic All-Conference and American Hockey Coaches Association All-American Scholar and was inducted into Chi Alpa Sigma, the National College Athlete Honor Society.



Academic News Roundup

The NewEnglander Wins in Two Categories at the 2026 NENPA Awards

New England College’s student-run newspaper, *The NewEnglander*, has achieved significant recognition by securing first place in the Headline Writing category, awarded to student-journalist Soob Soobitsky, and second place in the Multimedia Reporting category, awarded to student-journalist Lauren Hall. These prestigious awards presented by the New England Newspaper & Press Association (NENPA) highlight the exceptional work and dedication of NEC’s student-journalists.

The accolade was announced during NENPA’s annual awards banquet held on March 14 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The event celebrates excellence in journalism across the region, and *The NewEnglander* stood out among numerous collegiate publications for its insightful and impactful work.

The winning headline, “It’s sap season at Henniker’s Intervale Pancake House,” preceded Soobitsky’s article featuring the owners of the Intervale Pancake House during the 2025 maple sugaring season.

Hall’s winning multimedia article, “NEC legal expert explains Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs’ federal indictment,” explained the complicated legal process during the 2025 Sean “Diddy” Combs trial. Hall’s article and timeline simplified the trial’s facts for *The NewEnglander’s* readers.

“These awards are a testament to the dedication and talent of *The NewEnglander’s* student-reporters. Their work reflects a strong commitment to truth, balance, and creativity,” stated Colleen McElveen, Assistant Professor of Communications and Faculty Advisor for *The NewEnglander*. “With the guidance of Lauren and Soob, the team continues to produce engaging, meaningful journalism. *The NewEnglander* provides an invaluable opportunity for NEC students to put their skills into practice.”

The NewEnglander serves as a vital platform for student voices at NEC, offering news, opinions, and creative content that resonate with the college community. This recognition underscores the publication’s commitment to journalistic integrity and excellence.



from left to right: Professor Colleen McElveen and students Soob Soobitsky and Lauren Hall attend the 2026 New England Newspaper & Press Association awards on March 14.

Learn More
the-new-englander.com



NEC Awarded \$775,000 to Strengthen Community Mental Health Workforce Preparation in New Hampshire

NEC has been awarded \$775,000 in federal funding to support its four-year cooperative bachelor's degree program in Community Mental Health, expanding academic facilities and hands-on training capacity to address critical mental health workforce needs across New Hampshire.

The funding, secured through a bipartisan federal appropriations package championed by U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, will support continued renovation of the Austin and Betty Ann Kovacs Science Center. These renovations will enhance instructional spaces and training infrastructure essential to preparing students for careers in community mental health, human services, and related fields.

“
At the heart of this funding are real people—children, families, and individuals—who all deserve accessible, high-quality mental health care.”



Kathy Simon
Associate Faculty of the Practice in Psychology and Community Mental Health

New Hampshire, like much of the nation, faces ongoing shortages in the community mental health workforce. NEC's cooperative bachelor's degree program is designed to meet this need by preparing graduates with the academic foundation, applied skills, and experiential learning required to serve individuals, families, and communities immediately upon entering the workforce.

“This investment represents more than expanded facilities; it's an investment in the well-being of communities across New Hampshire,” said Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., President of New England College. “By strengthening our Community Mental Health program, we are preparing students with the hands-on experience, professional skills, and sense of purpose needed to step directly into critical roles in the workforce. NEC is proud to help address the state's mental health workforce shortage while creating meaningful career pathways for our students and expanding access to care for the individuals and families who need it most.”

Facility enhancements within the Science Center will directly support the program's four-year curriculum, reinforcing NEC's commitment to providing students with modern learning environments that reflect professional practice and real-world expectations.

“At the heart of this funding are real people—children, families, and individuals—who all deserve accessible, high-quality mental health care,” stated Kathy Simon, Associate Faculty of the Practice in Psychology and Community Mental Health at NEC. “This funding strengthens both our New Hampshire community and the New England College community, and it serves as a powerful affirmation of the importance of community mental health. It will allow us to expand training opportunities, strengthen partnerships with local agencies, and better prepare the next generation of mental health professionals to serve where they are needed most.”

The Community Mental Health program reflects New England College's mission to foster student success through transformative education, critical thinking, civic engagement, and career development, while helping graduates build a foundation for a meaningful life. It also advances the College's vision to lead in the Northeast by integrating a strong liberal arts education with focused career preparation.

This funding aligns with New England College's five-year strategic plan by strengthening high-demand academic programs, modernizing learning spaces, and responding directly to workforce and community needs across the state.

Learn More
nec.edu/communitymentalhealth



NEC and New Hampshire Association of School Principals Partner to Prepare the Next Generation of School Leaders

NEC and the New Hampshire Association of School Principals (NHASP) have partnered to offer an innovative pathway for aspiring principals, providing the knowledge, experience, and mentorship necessary to meet the complex challenges of school leadership today.

This collaborative Principal Licensure Program, launched in May, builds on NEC's deep commitment to supporting K-12 educators and NHASP's statewide mission to strengthen educational leadership. Together, the organizations are creating an accessible, practical, and forward-thinking route for experienced educators ready to take the next step in their careers.



Patricia Corbett, EdD
Vice President of Academic Affairs

“New England College is proud to partner with NHASP to support and empower the next generation of New Hampshire's school leaders,” said Patricia Corbett, EdD, Vice President of Academic Affairs at NEC. “Our shared goal is to prepare principals who lead with vision, equity, and community focus—educators who can drive meaningful, positive change in their schools.”

Bridey Bellemare, Executive Director of NHASP, stated, “We are dedicated to empowering the next generation of school leaders in New Hampshire. As education evolves, it's crucial to cultivate visionary leaders who can foster excellence in our schools. This partnership with NEC offers aspiring principals the skills and knowledge to navigate educational challenges, meet diverse student needs, and create positive school cultures. Together, we are preparing leaders who can make a meaningful impact in our schools.”

Designed for working professionals, the program combines coursework led by accomplished New Hampshire administrators with hands-on field experiences and personalized mentorship. Participants gain critical insight into student achievement, school culture, data-informed leadership, and effective community engagement.

“
New England College is proud to partner with NHASP to support and empower the next generation of New Hampshire's school leaders.”



To make this opportunity even more accessible, NEC and NHASP offered the first course in the series—ED 7060: Learning and Leading at the K-12 Level—free of charge. This introductory course allows educators to explore the principles of school leadership, develop a vision for improvement, and begin building the skills necessary for success as a K-12 administrator.

“NHASP is excited to partner with NEC on this important initiative,” said Kathleen Murphy, NHASP President. “This collaboration offers a meaningful and accessible pathway for educators to prepare for the principalship while staying closely connected to the challenges and opportunities within New Hampshire schools. Together, we are committed to equipping future school leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in today's educational landscape.”

Learn More
nec.edu/programs



NEC Launches Online Doctor of Business Administration to Meet Rising Demand for Applied Executive Leadership

As organizations across industries face increasing complexity and rapid change, NEC has launched a fully online Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree designed for experienced executive leaders who want to apply advanced research to real-world organizational challenges without stepping away from their careers.

The 63-credit, three-year online DBA program is built for working executives, administrators, and educators who want to remain professionally engaged while pursuing doctoral study. Grounded in applied research and experiential learning, the program emphasizes evidence-based decision-making, ethical leadership, and strategic innovation in today's rapidly evolving business environment.

Students may choose from three high-demand concentrations: Healthcare Management, Organizational Leadership, or Technology and AI Strategies. The program also offers two culminating pathways, an applied dissertation or a strategic research project, which allows students to align their doctoral experience with professional goals, whether scholarly, organizational or consulting-focused.

"Today's leaders are being asked to navigate challenges that are broader, faster, and more consequential than ever before," said Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., President of New England College.

"This Doctor of Business Administration reflects New England College's belief that doctoral education should be both intellectually rigorous and deeply connected to practice. Our DBA is designed for executive leaders who want to apply research directly to complex organizational realities and drive meaningful, lasting change."

A distinguishing feature of NEC's DBA is its integration of practical training each term, enabling students to apply doctoral-level concepts directly to professional or consulting contexts.

"Today's leaders are being asked to navigate challenges that are broader, faster, and more consequential than ever before."

Additionally, as students advance through the program, they may earn three stackable certificates: an Executive Leadership certificate, a Specialization certificate, and an Executive Certificate in Applied Doctoral Research. Students can earn a DBA and three doctoral certificates within the same program timeframe and tuition, creating a tailored, personalized learning path that supports career advancement.

The online DBA is delivered in 15-week terms and taught by scholar-practitioner faculty with extensive academic and industry experience. Graduates are prepared for senior leadership roles, consulting, higher education instruction, and executive-level decision-making in domestic and global organizations.

Learn More
nec.edu/doctorate



NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE Designated a Purple Heart College



NEC joins a nationwide network of institutions honoring and supporting America's service members who have been wounded or killed in combat.

On November 10, NEC received designation as a Purple Heart College in recognition of its ongoing commitment to honoring and supporting America's service members who have been wounded or killed in combat. The College hosted a special ceremony in the Simon Center Great Room to mark the occasion.

Governor Kelly Ayotte and Representative Maggie Goodlander (NH-02) served as guest speakers for the event, which also featured remarks from Michael Martioski, U.S. Marine Corps Purple Heart recipient, and Al Varelas, U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, of the Western Massachusetts Military Order of the Purple Heart (Commander Chapter #875 MOPH).

courage, sacrifice, and service of America's Purple Heart recipients. During the ceremony, the College honored any members of the NEC community who are Purple Heart recipients.

"Our connection to the military community has been part of who we are since the beginning. New England College was founded in 1946 to serve returning World War II veterans, offering education and opportunity to those who had served our nation," stated Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., President of NEC. "Nearly 80 years later, that spirit of service and resilience continues to guide us. This designation reaffirms our mission to support those who have served and sacrificed for our nation."

"New England College has had an amazing history since World War II of embracing our men and women in uniform and recognizing and honoring those who serve," Gov. Ayotte remarked. "In New Hampshire, we take great pride and tremendous care in honoring the brave men and women who serve our nation, and to have a college here that also does that wholeheartedly is phenomenal. We are proud of New England College."

"The story of the Purple Heart is as old as the story of America, and one of the most important things we can do right now is remember together and honor together the values and people who makes America what it is—a fragile and extraordinary act of faith," stated Rep. Goodlander. "The debt of gratitude we owe to every recipient of the Purple Heart is a debt we can never repay."

By earning the Purple Heart College designation, New England College joins a national network of higher education institutions dedicated to recognizing the



From left: Rep. Maggie Goodlander (NH-02); Dr. Wayne F. Lesperance, Jr., President of New England College; Al Varelas, U.S. Marine Corps Vietnam veteran, of the Western Massachusetts Military Order of the Purple Heart (Commander Chapter #875 MOPH); Gov. Kelly Ayotte; and Lex Scourby, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at New England College



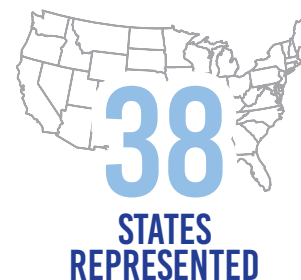
New England College

NEC GIVES 2026

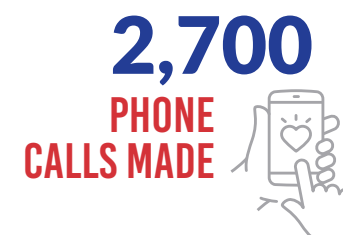
Thanks to NEC's amazing community, including our talented and motivated students, this year's campaign was a huge success.

BY THE NUMBERS

DID WE MISS YOU IN MARCH?
IT'S NOT TOO LATE.
MAKE A GIFT TO NEC.



- 1 **2025**
 - 2 **1975**
 - 3 **2019**
- TOP THREE CLASS DONORS**



- 1**
NEC ANNUAL FUND
 - 2**
GRIMS CLUB
 - 3**
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- TOP THREE DESIGNATIONS**

Dan Lynch '85
Fraternity Challenge

Most Dollars

SPD
\$21,511

SAB
\$7,095

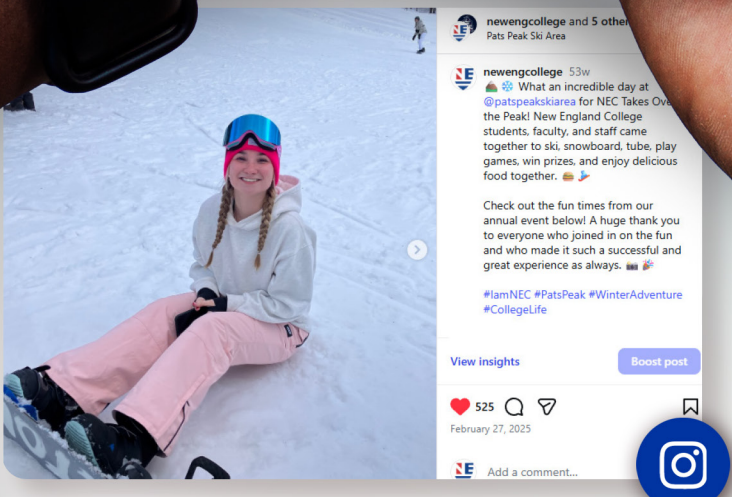
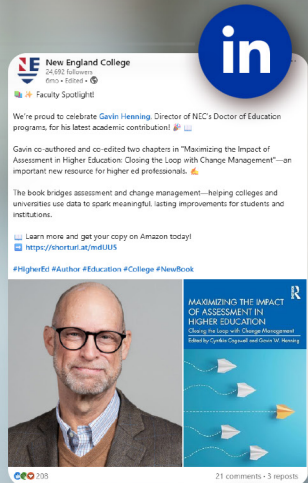
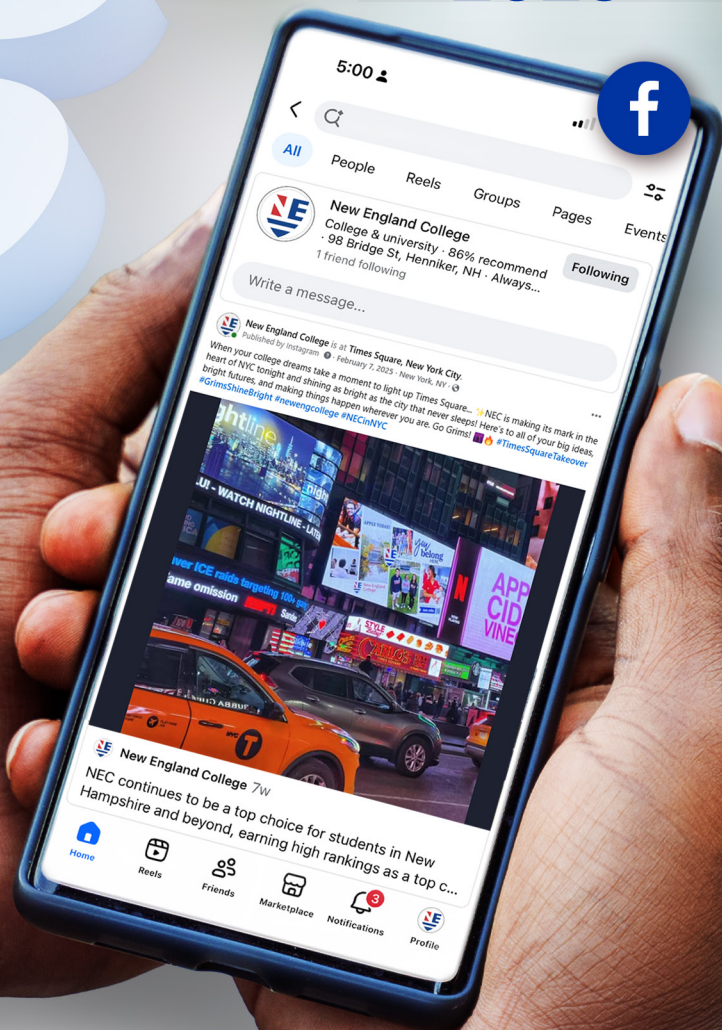
LED
\$3,335

Most Dollars Raised

MEN'S GOLF
SKIING

\$162,587 RAISED

NETOP 5 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS OF 2025



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