

To whom it may concern:

My name is Lauren Despina and I am Program Director of Project SEARCH; a remarkable program that has been on the seacoast for the past 34 years. It is a collaborative effort between the University of New Hampshire and high schools in seacoast New Hampshire and southern Maine. It is a gifted and talented program that introduces college life to almost 200 students.

Attached is a report of the 2016 – 2017 Project SEARCH program. I have been involved with the program in different capacities since 2001. I can speak first-hand about the importance of this and how it has positively impacted my life as a participant, group leader and now Program Director. Project SEARCH allows students to think about important issues that confront us all.

I want to take a moment to thank Ms. Dorothy M. Byrne, President of The Byrne Foundation. Her generous contribution to Project SEARCH has helped hundreds of young men and women in New Hampshire and Southern Maine. In these difficult economic times the help of people like Ms. Dorothy M. Byrne are the reason this important program continues. I also want to thank all of the advisors and administrators from the Seacoast Schools who support the program. If you have any questions or concerns about this report please feel free to contact me at any time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Project SEARCH is designed to provide an on-campus, intellectually challenging experience for academically motivated high school students. The program has been in operation since 1983.

Participants travel to the University of New Hampshire-Durham campus for eleven seminars throughout the school year. Each seminar consists of a one-hour presentation and a forty-five minute discussion group. During a typical presentation, participants hear informative, controversial, and often alternative perspectives on issues. During the discussion groups, students are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions with peers. A graduate student from the UNH Teacher Education or Counseling programs facilitates the discussion group.

Additional SEARCH activities include a ropes course practice day, a ropes course, and a spring semester fieldtrip to Boston. The ropes course day is designed to develop cooperation, communication, and problem-solving skills, laying the foundation for the discussion group environment. During the fieldtrip to Boston, students experience an afternoon at historic Faneuil Hall and a theatrical production. Participants are eligible to take courses at the UNH-Durham campus through the Challenging Academically Talented Students (CATS) program; upon successful completion of the course, the Program shall reimburse the cost of tuition.

Participating School Information

Coe Brown Northwood Academy-Northwood, NH
Dover High School-Dover, NH
Epping High School-Epping, NH
New Hampshire Home school students
Newmarket High School-Newmarket, NH
Noble High School-North Berwick, ME
Nute High School-Milton, NH
Prospect Mountain High School-Alton, NH
R.W. Traip Academy-Kittery, ME
Spaulding High School-Rochester, NH
Winnacunnet High School-Hampton, NH

Program Mission

- To provide a forum on a college campus where high school students from southeastern New Hampshire and southern Maine can experience a series of presentations covering challenging interdisciplinary topics and interact with each other in discussion groups.
- To foster positive attitudes toward the exploration of new and stimulating ideas through the exposure to presentations and subsequent group meetings through which they can hone their discussion skills.
- To provide UNH graduate students with the experiential opportunity of developing group leadership and critical thinking skills for teaching intellectually curious students.
- To encourage a positive spirit regarding the joy of learning through the collaboration of the high schools, their students, future teachers and practicing educators.

Project SEARCH at the University of New Hampshire
2016 – 2017 Report

Based on a 1-5 scale where 1 is weak and 5 is strong

Session Date: 9-9-16

Topic: Ropes Course at Dover

There is no questionnaire concerned with the ropes course at Dover. All students meet with their groups in order to build bonds of friendship and cooperation. The members of the discussion groups are mixtures of students from the cooperating schools. Many long-term friendships are developed during the SEARCH ropes course. There is a question of safety that should be addressed by the program manager and executive board of the program.

Session Date: 9-21-16

Topic: Factory Farms

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	0%	9%	80%	11%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%
Q/A	0%	0%	12%	6%	82%
GROUPS	0%	1%	7%	2%	90%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	4.0
SPEAKERS	4.8
Q/A	4.7
GROUPS	4.8
TOTAL	4.6

Session Date: 10-5-16

Topic: Entrepreneurship

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	3%	34%	48%	11%	3%
SPEAKERS	2%	10%	60%	27%	2%
Q/A	5%	18%	40%	25%	13%
GROUPS	0%	0%	6%	34%	61%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	2.8
SPEAKERS	3.2
Q/A	3.2
GROUPS	4.6
TOTAL	3.4

Session Date: 10-19-16 Topic: U.S. Presidential Election

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	1%	0%	4%	51%	44%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	9%	48%	43%
Q/A	3%	12%	24%	30%	31%
GROUPS	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%
FINAL AVERAGE SCORES					
TOPICS	4.4				
SPEAKERS	4.3				
Q/A	3.7				
GROUPS	4.8				
TOTAL	4.3				

Session Date: 11-2-16 Topic: Dartmouth Murders

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	0%	0%	1%	99%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	1%	7%	91%
Q/A	0%	0%	3%	27%	70%
GROUPS	0%	0%	3%	7%	90%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	5.0
SPEAKERS	4.9
Q/A	4.7
GROUPS	4.9
TOTAL	4.9

Session Date: 11-16-16 Topic: Occupational Therapy

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	1%	6%	47%	23%	23%
SPEAKERS	0%	5%	50%	40%	6%
Q/A	10%	28%	34%	23%	5%
GROUPS	1%	2%	0%	8%	90%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	3.6
SPEAKERS	3.5
Q/A	2.9
GROUPS	4.8
TOTAL	3.7

Session Date: 12-07-16 Topic: Poetry Slam

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	1%	5%	94%
Q/A	0%	0%	1%	4%	94%
GROUPS	0%	0%	0%	2%	98%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	5.0
SPEAKERS	4.9
Q/A	4.9
GROUPS	5.0
TOTAL	5.0

Session Date: 01-11-17 Topic: Helmetless Tackling

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	1%	9%	39%	45%	7%
SPEAKERS	0%	1%	24%	46%	30%
Q/A	2%	13%	20%	20%	46%
GROUPS	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	3.5
SPEAKERS	4.0
Q/A	4.0
GROUPS	4.9
TOTAL	4.1

Session Date: 01-25-17 Topic: Zika Virus

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	22%	21%	18%	36%	3%
SPEAKERS	59%	36%	4%	1%	0%
Q/A	32%	21%	45%	3%	0%
GROUPS	0%	0%	1%	18%	81%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	2.8
SPEAKERS	1.5
Q/A	2.2
GROUPS	4.8
TOTAL	2.8

Session Date: 02-8-17 Topic: SHARPP

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	0%	0%	6%	94%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	0%	1%	99%
Q/A	0%	0%	0%	13%	87%
GROUPS	0%	0%	1%	4%	95%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	4.9
SPEAKERS	5.0
Q/A	4.9
GROUPS	4.9
TOTAL	4.9

Session Date: 03-08-17 Topic: Mime

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	1%	0%	3%	97%
SPEAKERS	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Q/A	0%	0%	11%	11%	78%
GROUPS	0%	0%	2%	8%	91%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	4.9
SPEAKERS	5.0

Q/A	4.7
GROUPS	4.9
TOTAL	4.9

Session Date: 03-22-17 Topic: Motivational Speaker: Matt Gagne from Sports Illustrated

FINAL PERCENTAGES					
	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC	0%	5%	28%	58%	9%
SPEAKERS	1%	1%	32%	36%	30%
Q/A	1%	0%	9%	38%	53%
GROUPS	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

FINAL AVERAGE SCORES	
TOPICS	3.7
SPEAKERS	3.9
Q/A	4.4
GROUPS	5.0
TOTAL	4.3

Session Date: 4-12-2017 Topic: Blue Man Group, Boston Trip