

## **Environmental Council Academic Year 22/23 Report – Approved 4/26/23**

Presented by Laurie Mathes and Jasmine Bouchard, Co-Chairs of the Environmental Council  
April 26, 2023

The UNE Environmental Council (EC) was active during the 2022 – 2023 academic year. The EC continued to gain visibility and standing in the UNE community, while working to extend previous gains with the help of the Sustainability Office. Laurie Mathes served her first year as co-chair of the EC and two students served as co-chairs for the first time in EC's history: Ariana Walker for fall semester and Jasmine Bouchard for spring semester. Jasmine Bouchard is graduating and therefore stepping down as co-chair. The Council enthusiastically elected Will Kochtitzky, Assistant Professor, School of Marine & Environmental Programs, to serve as co-chair for the 2023/2024 academic year with Laurie.

Formal voting membership on the EC remained relatively stable from the previous year, with the notable addition of visiting undergraduate students from CAS at the encouragement and incentivization of faculty. Consistent with its by-laws, the EC continues to recruit and attract participants from faculty, staff, and students at the Portland and Biddeford campuses. Refer to the end of this report for a complete list of voting members during AY 2022-2023.

The UNE EC met monthly during the academic year. Important activities of the EC are discussed below.

### By-laws revision

Environmental Council membership revised and approved a revised version of the Council's by-laws, which were last updated in 2015. During this process, Council membership reaffirmed their commitment to the development of an annual report and distribution of the report to committees at UNE to maintain transparency and engage the community. The first charge of the Environmental Council is to communicate sustainability practices, processes and decisions to the UNE community and raise awareness of UNE's environmental impact. This report offers an opportunity to discuss the impacts that the EC has made each year.

### Senior leadership representation

At the encouragement and request of former EC co-chairs, Bethany Woodworth and Cathleen Miller, President Herbert invited Associate Director of Sustainability, Alethea Cariddi, to join University Council. At the completion of the first year of representation with senior leadership, EC is encouraged by the communication and engagement this appointment is providing.

### BOT Sustainability Showcase

Sustainability at UNE got a major platform at the November Board of Trustees meeting. Alethea Cariddi, Eco-Reps, and some members of EC put a great deal of time and energy into making this event interactive and impactful. There were stations that highlighted green building practices, sustainable landscaping, green energy (solar and RECs), recycling/waste reduction, Parkhurst Dining, student clubs and organizations, transportation, Climate Action Plan, and the Living Shorelines project. This informative opportunity was a positive outcome and directly related to Alethea Cariddi's newly appointed seat on the University Council.

### Bi-annual meeting with President Herbert

In their meeting with President Herbert, co-chairs Laurie Mathes and Ariana Walker emphasized the importance of an investment grade energy audit to move forward with the Climate Action Plan and expressed concern that we hadn't been successful in securing funding for the audit in the previous two budget cycles. This study is imperative to reaching carbon goals, and we can't develop the next Climate Action Plan until we have the results of an audit. The Council is thrilled to learn that the funding for this study was approved for FY '24.

### PHC updates on CAS/WCHP faculty workshop & Solve Climate by 2030

In January, the Planetary Health Council sponsored a workshop for CAS/WCHP on bringing climate change conversations into all courses. Numerous EC members served as table moderators for the event, which engaged faculty with others in their disciplines to emphasize the relevance of climate change to the entire curriculum. Later in the semester, many members participated in the [Solve Climate by 2030 panel](#)

## [discussion.](#)

### Letter from President Herbert to UNE community

At the fall meeting between the EC co-chairs and President Herbert, EC was asked to draft a letter highlighting UNE's sustainability initiatives and to issue a call for personal action on reducing the university's carbon footprint. Several members worked with Alethea Cariddi on this draft, which was polished by communications and the President's office, and sent to the UNE community before the start of Earth Month. See attached addendum.

### Bird-safe buildings

Bird glass on the Ripich Commons has proven a successful intervention against bird strikes, and there is interest within EC to advocate for bird-safe building solutions that are more scalable and less expensive, in addition to educating our community about how to bring these principles into their home environments. Noah Perult maintains a spreadsheet documenting bird strikes on campus—everyone should report to Noah any bird strikes you see (either bring the bird to Noah, or at least send a photograph with the building and time/date of sighting). This is an area that we will develop communication and advocacy strategies around.

### [Green Revolving Fund](#)

Environmental Council members value the ability to contribute to the annual fund with a directed gift to the Green Revolving Fund. The fund is championed by members in meetings, over social media, and in direct email appeals to faculty, professional staff, students, and alumni. This year's donations netted \$6,200 with 26 people donating to the fund, bringing the total to \$31,682 over the past five years.

### Project proposal process review

EC developed a project proposal process over a decade ago to help the UNE community gain support for innovative initiatives. The "green sheet" process structures the development of the idea through sections pertaining to description, goals and objectives, justification, case studies, schedule, budget, measurements of success, and stakeholders. Co-chairs led the EC membership through a "refresher" and two students presented their idea of "alternative lawns" (clover or moss) at one meeting. It was noted at the meeting that two years ago a student project proposal for participation in a community solar farm, with EC support, led to the investigation of, and eventual purchase of, RECs for half of the university's carbon emissions attributable to electricity.

### Monthly sustainability updates

The Sustainability Office plays an active role in EC activities and routinely comes prepared with updates to keep the members informed and engaged. Updates for this year included the transportation survey distribution and results, Earth Month planning, progress on the solar project for the Alford Forum, and proposals submitted for capital and deferred maintenance budget consideration. Parkhurst Dining is another regular contributor of sustainability updates as they pertain to the food service programs, and student environmental club, Earth's ECO, regularly contributes updates pertaining to club activities, events, and goals.

### Thermal imaging study done by students

A faculty member in the School of Marine and Environmental Programs shared a thermal imaging study done by a student of some residence halls and library demonstrating cold infiltration during the winter months. EC members were intrigued by the visuals provided and there is interest to discuss strategies for mitigating heat loss in our buildings for next year.

### **Voting EC Members Academic Year 2022/2023**

Ariana Walker, student class of 2023, EC co-chair fall semester

Jasmine Bouchard, student class of 2023, EC co-chair spring semester

Laurie Mathes, Access Services Librarian, EC co-chair

Andrew Cole, student, CAS, USG representative liaison to EC

Laura Taylor, Metadata Librarian, PSA representative liaison to EC

Alethea Cariddi, Associate Director of Sustainability  
Amanda Leen, User Experience and Web Services Librarian  
Brenda Edmands, Coordinator, SASC Portland Campus and Online  
Bethany Woodworth, Teaching Professor of Environmental Studies  
Pam Morgan, Professor of Environmental Studies  
Cathleen Miller, Education and Outreach Archivist  
Lee Cote, Audio Visual Event Videographer  
Andrea Perry, Welcome and Solutions Desks Manager  
Tom Klak, Professor of Environmental Studies  
Cadence Atchinson, Online Research and Teaching Librarian  
Jason Coombs, Resident District Manager, Parkhurst Dining  
Michelle Cote, Center for Excellence in Collaborative Education (CECE) Staff Assistant  
Jan Froehlich, Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy  
Davis Martinec, Environmental Health and Safety Specialist  
Tiffany Nelson, Administrative Assistant, OHC  
Noah Perlut, Professor and Assistant Academic Director School of Marine and Environmental Programs  
Ethan Williams, Coordinator of Student Life  
Will Kochtitzky, Visiting Assistant Teaching Professor  
Rick Peterson, Professor of Environmental Studies  
Ronnie Souza, Director, Environmental Health & Safety  
Audrey Szeredy, Office Manager, COM  
David Mokler, Professor Emeritus of Pharmacology  
Isabella Franz, CAS, Parkhurst sustainability intern  
Isabell Paquette, CAS, Parkhurst sustainability intern  
Ruth Ellis, student, CAS  
Annabelle Wells, student, WCHP  
Miranda Carrabba, student, CAS  
Emma Lake, student, CAS

**Visiting students to EC:**

Isabella Leo, Ari Lazos, Julia Bryant, Isabella Petroni, Rachel Lee, Lydia Sawyer, Devin Norman, Julia Manning, Tori Anderson, Eli Tetreault, Cloey Parlipiano, Kayla Clark, Lucas Cunningham, Ana Accordino, Alexa Livingstone, Sawyer Ohmar, Alec Worthen-Sluz, Leah DiCenso, Rachel Lee, Sean Conroy, Devin Norman, Jill Newman



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear UNE Community,

As we prepare to celebrate Earth Month in April, I want to share some of the important work we are doing to advance UNE's environmental sustainability goals. We have laid a foundation for careful stewardship of our natural resources and human capital, and we are taking substantial steps toward meeting our goal of carbon neutrality.

I'm especially proud of the Board of Trustees' vote in December 2020 to modify our endowment portfolio to a reduced carbon allocation, which is transformational for our institution's reputation and significantly decreases our investment in fossil fuel dependent industries. Last year, we purchased Renewable Energy Credits, which will cut our carbon emissions from electricity production in half by investing in wind power. This is the largest emissions mitigation strategy our institution has undertaken to date. Additionally, I appointed Alethea Cariddi, assistant director of sustainability, to our University Council, UNE's leadership team, in 2022, demonstrating the significance of that role in keeping UNE's sustainability initiatives front and center to senior leaders.

We have several upcoming projects that will further reduce our carbon emissions. Next summer, we will install our largest solar array at the Alford Forum, a project that will produce enough electricity to power six of our residence halls. Our newest building, the [Harold and Bibby Alford Center for Health Sciences](#), will showcase some of our greatest accomplishments in green building practices. It will feature state-of-the-art energy efficiency equipment, realizing a 76% decrease in energy consumption over a comparable building, and uses mass timber, which is a low-carbon building material that helps to sequester carbon. We will also expand our electric vehicle charging program and advocate for sustainable transportation across our campuses.

UNE's biggest challenge in mitigating our carbon footprint is reducing our transportation emissions. This is one area where we can all make a difference. Carpooling, taking public transportation, walking, and biking to campus are important steps that you can take. UNE offers free transportation for faculty, professional staff, and students on any of the [BSOOB Transit](#), [Greater Portland Metro](#), or [South Portland buses](#) with your UNE ID card, offering reliable, safe, and environmentally friendly transportation options. In addition to transportation, you can make an impact by joining the Sustainability Office's [Green Office](#) certification program, and I hope each department will consider becoming certified. I encourage you to find a place to make an impact, whether by participating in campus [Earth Month](#) activities, implementing renewable energy, conservation, recycling, and composting projects at home, joining an organization focused on environmental issues, or advocating for environmental protection at the local governmental level. We all have a part to play in solving the climate crisis.

Our strategic plan places an emphasis on improving the health of people, communities, and our planet. Research shows that each tenth of a degree we can slow or reverse global temperatures saves lives and economies. If we work toward this goal in community, we are more likely to feel supported and to approach the work with hope. I'd like to thank the Environmental Council for their leadership and advocacy for campus sustainability.

Sincerely,  
James D. Herbert  
*President*