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Changemaker Fellow Explores Sustainability, Gains Experiences with Passionate Cohort

Jocelyne Bisson

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by Cassie Hollasch '22 | English, Writing and Business Administration

Throughout the year, the Changemaker Fellows have explored career paths, built a professional network, made connections and learned how to make the most out of their experience at UNH.

The Changemaker Fellowship is a dedicated program of the [Changemaker Collaborative](#) that selects notable admitted UNH first year students with a passion for making change. Fellows meet monthly with Changemaker Coaches (peer mentors to the Fellows) and guest speakers and are pre-accepted into to the [Semester in the City](#) program for a future semester.

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Jocelyne Bisson has spent this year studying in the Peter T. Paul School of Business and Economics with an interest in sustainability. She was drawn to apply to the Fellowship program because their efforts to “impact people and make change” resonated with her personal goals of working for a nonprofit organization after graduation.

Since committing to the program, Jocelyne has valued the meetings especially because “it’s one of the only organizations as a freshman that was consistently hosting in-person events which was really great for me when I first started here and I didn’t know many people.” These once-a-month meetings have led to interesting discussions on facilitating change on campus and finding solutions to different problems relating to the United Nation’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#). In addition to brainstorming original solutions, Fellows will also analyze how other countries combat sustainability issues. One valuable example Jocelyne researched was the solution to a religious conflict in Thailand through the implementation of a Symphony Orchestra for children. The community she researched had “created this band and all these kids became friends. It was a cool way to stop the violence for future generations because the kids realized that they weren’t that different from each other despite religious barriers.”

Jocelyne’s main goal as a Fellow has been to learn more about what sustainability means for different communities. Her prior experience with issues of the economic and environmental aspects of sustainability have been limited, “I haven’t been introduced to sustainability issues in high school so I think my goal would be to learn as much as I can about these issues and figure out how my future career can make a difference.”

Jocelyne has paired her learning experience at the Sustainability Institute with volunteer work and an internship for [Girls at Work](#). Girls at Work is a nonprofit organization in Manchester, NH dedicated to building



confidence in girls located in underprivileged parts of the city. The organization develops after-school or summer camp opportunities to teach girls how to build independently using power tools. These girls are usually within the ages of 8 to 12 years old and the experience empowers them to overcome adversity and build the confidence needed to face current and future life challenges. Jocelyne volunteered by helping the girls manage the tools and last summer she interned with the company as a Camp Supervisor. As Camp Supervisor, she led activities both in and outside the shop, and got to hear stories from the girls about their experiences growing up in Manchester. Girls at Work recently moved to a new location in the historic Mill Yard in Manchester, and Jocelyne had the opportunity to paint feminist inspired murals on some of the workshop walls. She is passionate about the program because of all the successful ways they've promoted social sustainability within New Hampshire communities.

Jocelyne advises other students and incoming freshman to get involved with the Changemaker Fellowship for the opportunity to “meet other people who are like minded and passionate about similar sustainability issues.” Additionally, she praises the Fellowship for the ability to “use the things that you learn or talk about and apply them to other activities you're involved in.” The Fellowship is open to any first-year or new transfer student who is passionate about making a difference and learning about how others have successfully fostered change. You can [apply to become a](#) Changemaker Fellow or contact program director Faina Bukher. The Changemaker Collaborative is a partnership of UNH's Sustainability Institute, the Peter T. Paul College of Business & Economics, and the Carsey School of Public Policy.

Learn more about [Girls at Work](#).

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