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Bee Campus UNH

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Writing and Digital Studies

This week, UNH is launching its new campus pollinator garden. Located next to James Hall, the pollinator garden will



serve as an important space for bees to convene and gradually play a more active role in the area. This exciting event is a milestone in UNH's journey to become [Bee Campus Certified](#).

For Brooke Healy '23 (Wildlife and Conservation Biology major with a minor in Forestry), this has been a long but fruitful process. As the current Healthy Biodiversity and Ecosystems intern at the Sustainability Institute, Brooke worked to help successfully implement the campus

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garden, as well as lead UNH in its process towards reaching certification. Brooke reflects on the accomplishments of the process so far, and her hopes for UNH to become a pollinator-friendly space.

What is the process to become Bee Campus Certified? What are the requirements we need to meet?

Bee Campus is a pretty straightforward process. There are several requirements that we must complete in order to be certified, with the most daunting being creating pollinator gardens on campus. This requires a lot of communication and teamwork throughout different departments at UNH, including facilities, grounds and events, campus stewardship, student government, and then organizations or departments that might be interested in planting and up-keeping their own garden. We've done work with Jan Dean, who has amazing established pollinator gardens with her gardener Ed Wilson, and they are both so excited to spread the word. Working with community members like the Durham Bee City chair Lee Alexander has helped guide us in the proper direction, and discussing future projects with UNH Cooperative Extension has helped us realize our vision. Other requirements are to have further education availabilities regarding pollinator importance, awareness and conservation, as well as signage, website and social media posts. It is a process that we have been trying to accomplish for two years now, and we are finally making so much positive progress, it's so heartwarming and encouraging to see so many different departments and people on campus band together for a common goal.

Recently, we created plans to launch a Pollinator Garden here at UNH. What are we hoping to accomplish with this project? What is the significance of it?



Like I mentioned before, it has taking us two years to get to this point. After working with campus stewardship, grounds and events and other departments we have gotten approval to

create a garden outside of James Hall. Being the hall of the natural resources department, it will bring many benefits to the classes offered there, as well as be beneficial on the tours that highlight sustainability when walking in and around James. We want to bring awareness to the problems plaguing our pollinators and offer education, as well as habitat and food availability. By making the garden on campus, I am hoping to spark a pollinator-focused culture, where students on campus want to be involved and have a say in making and, more importantly, maintaining the pollinator gardens.

Why is it important that we address pollination issues? How does it affect us?

Issues affecting pollinators affect us all. There are over 3000 species of pollinators in New Hampshire, including bees, butterflies, moths, flies, wasps, beetles, bats, birds and more. Pollinators are at risk due to pesticides, as they are often non-targeted victims. Introduced species and non-native invasives create increased competition for resources, including food and habitat availability. Flowering times are also decreasing due to climate change, as the weather is making blooming times shorter, which is also adding to food scarcity within populations of pollinators. Coupled with human impact of habitat loss and degradation, which alters habitat availability and food sources, pollinators are in trouble worldwide. A world without pollinators is a world without life for us. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, "we would miss out on many fruits, vegetables and nuts - not to mention chocolate and coffee" (USFWS 2021). Think of what you enjoy about nature - maybe it's the birds singing after finding seeds on the ground, or the bright green grass and trees, or the beautiful flowers spread around the landscape. Without pollinators, there are no seeds for the birds to eat, no lush forests or meadows, and most definitely no flowers. In order to combat all of these issues, we must fight for them now.

As the Healthy Biodiversity and Ecosystem Intern, what does your role in developing Bee Campus look like?



I've been working on this project for a couple years now. I started as an Ecosystem Intern with Julie Bobyock, where we started developing ideas and a plan of how to get the ball rolling with Bee Campus with Jenn Andrews and Jade Chalkley. We interviewed Lee Alexander, as well as several professors from the Natural Resource and the Environment department. We called the Xerces Committee to ask questions. We spoke with facilities and grounds and events. We read, combed through and digested the Landscape Master Plan (LMP), and started to understand the weight of the project we were taking on. To be honest, it was a lot. UNH had a lot of the framework, but we had to link the different parts together, which was a hefty ask. The next semester, Tyler Garcia joined me as the other Ecosystem Intern, when we started tearing apart the logistics of Bee Campus and gardens on UNH's campus. There were many departments that we would have to go through, many different presentations and meetings we created, and several versions of turf management plans and pollinator garden plans that we hashed apart. Tyler took on turf management with a vengeance, and did amazing work in reformatting what turf at UNH can look like, while I kept my focus on Bee Campus. I had the amazing opportunity of meeting with and admiring Jan Dean's garden, along with her gardener Ed Wilson, and was able to see what a functioning pollinator garden on campus looked like. It was inspiring to see Jan and Ed's passion and love for the gardens, and excitement for the future of Bee Campus. I wrote up a resolution and memo to the Student Government, worked with Troy Troy and after a year passed the Bee Campus Resolution through student government. A requirement of Bee Campus is to have a governing committee, so Jenn Andrews has been a key in reforming the Ecosystem Task Force committee, which was a long standing committee before the COVID era. With this committee being revitalized, they will be the governing body of all things Bee Campus in the future.

This Task Force will consist of a variety of people, and is very exciting to see the collaboration develop.

Overall, I've done a lot of outreach, education and spreading the word of the importance of pollinators to wanting minds. It has been very heartwarming to see the influx of interest in natural spaces, indigenous gardens and pollinator gardens from many different student orgs, students and faculty and staff. I hope to be able to watch this program grow after I graduate.

What are some challenges and milestones in making UNH a more bee-friendly campus?

'Silos' on campus is something I've seen first hand. Departments can be very far removed from one another, and talk minimally. Trying to bring all of the conversations into one room was incredibly hard and difficult - everyone has different schedules, priorities and ideas to bring to the table. As a student, seeing all of the departments being passionate about this though has been very exciting.

What should students interested in helping UNH become more pollinator-friendly do?

If you are interested at all in becoming involved in pollinator gardens, there are things you can do now! Volunteer to help plant, and maintain. The biggest struggle is that facilities and grounds and events are very short staffed and have so much to do, which does not include new gardens. If we want to keep the gardens on campus, we as a revolving student body who has retention of 4 years at most must band together to show that we can and that we want to take care of our natural spaces

on campus.

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