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Recommended Citation
https://scholars.unh.edu/news/4408
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January 21, 2014

UNH Hosts Corporate Governance Event About B Corporations Feb. 4

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire will host “To B or Not To B: Are Benefit Corporations the Corporate Governance Architecture of the 21st century?” Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2013. The event, which includes workshops, a keynote address and a panel discussion, will focus on how benefit corporations, commonly known as B corporations, may provide a new model for corporate governance.

The event is sponsored by the UNH Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project, the Sustainability Institute, and the Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics. All events are free and open to the public, but registration is required.

Benefit corporations are for-profit businesses that focus on society and the environment as well as profits. By meeting higher standards of transparency, accountability, and performance, benefit corporations are tasked to make decisions that are ethical and sustainable and drive profitable growth in ways that respect the constraints of earth’s limited resources and the needs of individuals.

“In the wake of governance scandals and unprecedented cases of corporate malfeasance over the last decade, many have suggested that capitalism needs a major overhaul if it is to fulfill its original promise of creating value for society broadly and not just for a limited group of shareholders. The suggested needed reforms to our current version of capitalism include more responsible and effective corporate governance and approaches to business, which create value for society in ethical and sustainable ways,” said Stephen Trzaskoma, director of the UNH Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project, which is the lead sponsor of the event.

The UNH Responsible Governance and Sustainable Citizenship Project promotes ethics, citizenship, principled leadership, responsible governance, and the creation of sustainable institutions. For more information, visit http://cola.unh.edu/lill/rgscp.

Companies can seek voluntary certification from the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. Today, there are more than 900 Certified B Corporations from 29 countries and 60 industries. In addition to certification, 20 states have passed legislation to create a new legal corporate status, the benefit corporation, which requires businesses to simultaneously create shareholder value and social value. New Hampshire is one of 18 states currently considering legislation to create this new corporate status.

The follow events are planned:

Two Pre-Event Workshops
3-5 p.m.: UNH Paul College Executive Development Suite

- Workshop for sustainable businesses, social enterprises, entrepreneurs and students to understand the steps needed for a company to become a Certified B Corporation and the benefits of certification. The workshop will be led by B Lab.

Register: https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event_id=16052
• Workshop for general counsels, attorneys, law school faculty and students to understand how a company’s social mission can survive through changes in ownership or management and how companies can acquire capital that is respectful of their journey to benefit all stakeholders, not just shareholders. The workshop will be led by B Lab’s co-founder and is sponsored by UNH Law and The Warren B. Rudman Center for Justice, Leadership and Public Policy. Register: https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event_id=16054

Main Event Keynote Speakers and Panelists
5-6 p.m.: Welcome reception
6-7:30 p.m.: Keynotes and panel discussion
Huddleston Ballroom
Register: https://www.events.unh.edu/RegistrationForm.pm?event_id=16022

Keynote speakers and panelists include:

• Bart Houlanan, co-founder of B Lab.
• Jim Post, John F. Smith Professor of Management, Boston University School of Management.
• Peter Graham, chairman of the board, Seventh Generation, a Certified B Corporation.
• Anders Ferguson, founding principal of Veris Wealth Partners, a Certified B Corporation.
• Rebecca Hamilton, director of product development at W.S. Badger Company, Inc., N.H.’s first Certified B Corporation.
• N.H. Sen. Molly Kelly (D-Keene), cosponsor of legislation to create the new legal corporate status, benefit corporation, in New Hampshire.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state’s flagship public institution, enrolling 12,300 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

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