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Sierra Club Ranks UNH Second Coolest School in the Country

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DURHAM, N.H. – The Sierra Club has ranked the University of New Hampshire the second coolest school in the country, recognizing UNH’s national leadership in sustainability and its commitment to protecting the environment, addressing climate issues and encouraging environmental responsibility. UNH jumped to #2 in the standings, up from 21 in 2017.

“Since arriving at UNH, it is clear to me that the UNH community is deeply committed to sustainability,” said UNH President James W. Dean, Jr. “We have been engaged in sustainability and leading efforts for a very long time. It is exciting to have our campus wide commitment and engagement around sustainability recognized by the Sierra Club.”

The Sierra Club, the nation’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, ranked 269 schools based on comprehensive criteria such as environmentally-focused curriculum, campus activism, on-campus recycling and waste management, and planning and administrative standards.

Some highlights of UNH’s sustainability achievements include:

- Main campus is powered 100 percent by renewable energy
- Largest public transit provider in New Hampshire
- Home to the first organic dairy research farm in the nation
- Composts 25,000 pounds of dining hall food waste a month
- Ranked second in North America for the study of ecology

In addition to the Cool Schools rating, UNH is one of a handful of schools to achieve a STARS Platinum rating—the highest possible—in recognition of its sustainability achievements from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE). STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System, measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education. To learn more about sustainability at UNH, the STARS report (<https://sustainableunh.unh.edu/unh-pathway-platinum-report>) is publicly available.

“We are very proud of our students, faculty, and staff who have shown tremendous passion and leadership in sustainability,” said Tom Kelly, executive director of the UNH Sustainability Institute. “They are able to connect knowledge to action in our sustainable learning community. Having the Sierra Club commend our shared values, collaboration, and creativity is cause for celebration.”

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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