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UNH Expands Opportunities for High Impact Learning in Sustainability

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DURHAM, N.H.—The University of New Hampshire’s Center for Social Innovation and Enterprise (https://www.unh.edu/social-innovation) (CSIE) will join its Sustainability Institute (https://sustainableunh.unh.edu) (UNHSI) to create an integrated platform to help students contribute to society’s most pressing sustainability challenges. UNH has long been a recognized national leader in sustainability, and the new partnership will significantly increase opportunities for students to engage in tangible, high-impact, community-engaged sustainability projects on campus and beyond.

“This partnership is a great example of how UNH is enacting our strategic priorities, focusing on state-of-the-art teaching and learning to prepare our graduates to become engaged and ethical global citizens, who thrive in their first jobs and throughout their careers” said UNH President James W. Dean Jr. “UNH places high value on sustainability, and CSIE has a proven record of connecting students with meaningful experiences to affect positive change. This partnership will create many new and accessible pathways for students to engage in sustainability.”

CSIE was formed as a joint initiative of the Peter T. Paul College of Business & Economics (https://paulcollege.unh.edu) and the Carsey School of Public Policy (https://carsey.unh.edu), and works to inspire, educate and engage the next generation of changemakers who are eager to make a positive impact on the world. By offering opportunities such as the Social Venture Innovation Challenge, social innovation internships and B Impact Clinic to apply and hone skills in real-world settings, CSIE embodies the principles of community-engaged learning through active collaboration with businesses, nonprofits, and the broader community.

“The scale and complexity of the world’s challenges, including climate change, must be addressed by collaboration across public, private and nonprofit sectors,” said Tom Kelly, chief sustainability officer and executive director of UNHSI. “The tools of public policy and ethically governed commerce are critically important to mitigating and adapting to these challenges in a just and equitable way. The partnership will allow more students to experience and master vital tools for accelerating the transition to a more sustainable and equitable world. We have exceptional programs such as the sustainability dual major and fellowships, and we are excited to expand them and reach exponentially more students.”

Recognized as a pioneer in higher education, UNHSI is the oldest endowed higher education sustainability program in the country and its efforts to integrate sustainability throughout UNH operations, research, curriculum and community engagement have contributed to UNH’s national leadership in sustainability. UNH is consistently rated a cool school by the Sierra Club, and in September 2017, the UNH Durham campus became one of only three institutions of higher education to earn a STARS Platinum rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).



The partnership will bring Fiona Wilson, executive director of CSIE, into the UNHSI as deputy chief sustainability officer and director. In this new role, Wilson will work to advance the goals of the new partnership by growing direct student engagement and experience-based learning.

For Paul College Dean Deborah Merrill-Sands, the partnership creates a stronger educational platform for students who want to use the knowledge and skills of business to pursue careers that have a positive impact on society. "They are demanding a new type of education, one that is more experiential and aligns with their career motivations. This is where the partnership between Paul College, Carsey and the Sustainability Institute can help our students thrive," she said. The Carsey School's director, Michael Ettlinger, adds "As we develop solutions to the range of societal challenges faced globally, nationally and locally, the tools of business, and businesses themselves, can play a significant constructive role. Through its education, research and public engagement CSIE develops and promotes this intersection between public policy and business. The addition of the Sustainability Institute to the partnership and connecting CSIE to SI's already renowned suite of programs will be an important boost to these efforts."

The University of New Hampshire 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. As one of the nation's highest-performing research universities, UNH partners with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, and receives more than \$110 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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