

Imposter No More

UNH students present at 50th anniversary celebration of regional philosophy conference

Wednesday, November 16, 2022



KYLEE ROCK '24, UNH PHILOSOPHY MAJOR, PRESENTING HER PAPER ON THE MORAL OBLIGATION TO GIVE OR DONATE.

“I had a little bit of imposter syndrome going into it,” says Kylee Rock '24 of her paper presentation at the Northern New England Philosophical Association (NNEPA) Conference, held at UNH in October. “But, once I got up to talk, I realized I knew my work very well, and I felt more confident to speak on it.”

Rock was one of five [philosophy](#) students, hailing from UNH,

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Bates and Colby, whose papers were selected for the undergraduate session of the NNEPA Conference, which celebrated its 50th anniversary this year.

NNEPA was the brainchild of UNH philosophy professor Peter Sylvester, who joined colleagues from regional institutions to found NNEPA in 1972. Since then, it has grown to comprise 24 member institutions from Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont with the goal of providing a venue for regional philosophers to share their work. An annual gathering rotates among member institutions.

In 2009, when the Conference also was held at UNH, an undergraduate session was added as a permanent part of the gathering. The session gives students the opportunity to hone their presentation and philosophy skills within a larger professional community — and to gain confidence.

“Philosophy is and has been a pretty male-dominated field,” says Rock, “so beforehand I felt very unqualified to give a talk, because most of my peers are males. However, once I spoke, and I received positive feedback on my work, I felt far more qualified to speak on the topics I have studied. This experience has helped me realize that I have something to add to the conversation.”

“...the professors really come to know the students and form a meaningful relationship with them.”

[Paul McNamara](#), UNH professor of philosophy and the executive secretary of NNEPA, says student involvement in a professional conference prepares students to see themselves as professionals and think “We can do what they do!” And they did, he says.

Rock, who plans to attend law school, was grateful for the opportunity, and for the support of her peers and professors.

“The UNH philosophy department is an amazing program to be a part of,” says Rock, “not only because there are experiences like the NNEPA Conference and the Undergraduate Research Conference, but also because the professors really come to know the students and form a meaningful relationship with them. When I spoke, three of my professors were in the audience, nodding and cheering me on.”



STUDENT PRESENTERS AT THE NNEPA CONFERENCE: QIFAN (FRANK) HU, COLBY COLLEGE; KYLEE ROCK '24, UNH; PICO BANERJEE, BATES COLLEGE; ANDRE PROVENCAL '23, UNH; AND TOM FLEMING '22, UNH.

WRITTEN [Susan Dumais '88 '02G](#) | College of Liberal Arts
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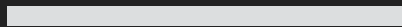
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