

Unity

Spring 2005

The Magazine of Unity College



In Search of Unity

The facts and fables behind the little college that could

Exploring One's Paths

The transformative effect of Unity

A Born Activist

Stephanie MacLagan '06 walks a path of her own making

Message from the President



It is mid-April, temperatures are edging into the 60's and even toying with 70, the ice is out of the lake and the loons are placidly moving across the water, seemingly without effort. On campus, we are less placid, because we are only 3 and one-half weeks away from the end of the academic year, and everyone, including students, faculty and staff, is trying to finish up their various projects for the year. It is like this every year, everyone working hard when all we really want to do is soak up some spring. The campus seems particularly busy this spring, however, because in addition to the usual year-end business, we are making plans to add a fourth section to Cianchette Hall to house our growing student body, to provide new quarters for the Health Center, and to finish the renovations of Koons Hall, the science building. In addition, the college is in the early planning stages for significant changes, a transformation really, of the Activities Building. We are also working hard to implement the work resulting from a \$225,000 grant from the MELMAC Foundation that will support campus initiatives designed to increase student success.

As I said, the Class of 2005, which began in 2001, will have Commencement soon. In between the press of activities and trying to get a whiff of spring myself, I pause occasionally and consider that I, too, will be undergoing my own commencement of sorts, because I will be stepping down from the presidency to join the Unity College faculty. I leave the presidency with the college in the strongest position that it has ever been in. I leave also with the knowledge that by objective comparisons with other environmental colleges, Unity College is very strong, and truly can be called "America's Environmental College." Nevertheless, I look forward to teaching again, which was my goal when I first entered the profession.

In my musings, I am struck by how life is a series of commencements. The one that celebrates completion of a college degree is actually only one of the several or many commencements that we undergo as our lives proceed. "Commencement", in fact, is an excellent word for this celebration, as it really is the beginning of something.

So both of us, the student receiving the degree, and the president awarding the degree, will be "commencing." It will be fun in a few years to see these graduates return to campus and compare notes on how we have prospered since we commenced.

David Glenn-Lewin
President



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Unity Student Receives GIS Award
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An aerial photograph of a school campus. The campus features several large, light-colored buildings, a central parking lot, and a large, open field. The campus is surrounded by dense trees and a large body of water in the background. The title "In Search of Unity" is overlaid in large, white, bold letters across the top of the image.

In Search of Unity

By MARK TARDIF

JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?



The facts, fables, myths and mysteries of a mystifying little college that could . . .and does.

As the frigid winter wind swirls, Jimmy Hubbard, a custodian at Unity College for the past quarter century, tends to a veritable arc of wild animals he keeps at his home. There are three llamas, a coyote, Canadian lynx and foxes, sheep, pheasants, and peacocks.

After feeding his personal zoo, Jimmy sets out on foot for work. An Associated Press news photographer snaps photos of this smiling man walking to work.

Each day Jimmy walks five miles round trip. Over the course of twenty five years his daily walks have amounted to hiking the Appalachian Trail 14 times.

"I do it because I have to get places," Jimmy told AP Reporter Glenn Adams. A few days later Jimmy made the national news as Unity's own "walking dude." The resulting attention has both surprised and amused him. After all, he was just doing what he'd always done, nothing special or different.

Just as 60-something Jimmy didn't set out to become a national role model for the latest government initiative urging Americans to get active, neither did Unity College set out to become "America's Environmental College."

How Unity became America's Environmental College is less a story of calculated decision-making than creative evolution.

In various historical documents the founding of the College is referred to as a way to "brighten the future of Maine." Established on a 185-acre former chicken hatchery, the Unity Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences opened its doors to 39 students for the fall semester of 1966.

Just as Jimmy did not set out to become a national role model for walking over riding, Unity became an environmental college more by necessity than design.

Clockwise from top left, the original Unity College welcome sign; Clair Wood, Unity's first "President," though he called himself an administrator; a student at work in today's greenhouse; and Jimmy Hubbard, a custodian for the past 25 years at Unity.



Unity Over the Years
Photos covering the 40 year history of the College show its wide range. From All-American sports and traditional administrative approaches to counter-cultural experimentation, Unity has been many things to many people.



“There was not one single decision for Unity to become an environmental college, it just came about over time,” former college librarian Dot Quimby said. “We were having financial problems, there had been a donation of canoes, the conservation law enforcement program had started, and the college saw becoming an environmental college as a way to save itself.”

By the time the con law major was developed in the 1980s, Unity was well on its way to its environmental focus.

Environmental or not, why a college in the first place? A group of local businessmen in Unity got together in 1965 to form a college. What were they thinking? Perhaps town leaders were concerned over the economic fallout from the newly completed interstate bypassing Unity. Perhaps they recognized the value of a haven from the Vietnam draft.

The early days of Unity College were filled with energy, enthusiasm, missteps and humorous asides. Quimby came to be the first librarian because Bert Clifford, one of the founders, heard about her skills and approached her with an offer she couldn't refuse.

Unfortunately for Clifford, who had no academic administrative experience, the salary model he picked was based on the salary of the longtime librarian of Mt. View High School. “They checked with Mt. View about how much their librarian was making,” Quimby said. “She'd been there many years and they didn't factor that in.”

Clifford offered Quimby the sum of \$6,500 annually, a king's ransom for a librarian in those days.

Books for the library were gathered at the Unity Raceway in a promotion. One free ticket for adult admission would be given for every five books donated. “We got everything,” laughed Quimby. “From good books to pornography, we got it all.”

Those early years through the mid-1970s were particularly turbulent. Longtime employee of the college Claire Smart recalls that in the late 1960s there were times when employees wondered if they would be paid ... or have to work by candle light.

“I can remember some times when the power was cut off and the Trustees had to get money together for a check to get it back on,” Smart said.

The first class of students arriving on campus had been recruited primarily from New York City. Quimby said that many arrived on the same flight into Bangor International Airport, driving south to the “new” campus through towns that may have appeared more Siberian-esque than New England rustic. Had there not been a war raging in Vietnam and the draft, Unity College might not have survived to offer classes in 1967.

Bob Portner came to Unity College as a student from Westchester County in New York, an affluent suburb of New York City. “My initial impression was that Unity was very small, in the middle of nowhere,” Portner said.

So began the first academic year at Unity College in September of 1966. Although many of those early students were young men from the city wearing love beads and bell-bottoms and avoiding the draft, there was also, from the beginning a strong two-year forestry program that brought in young men from Maine whose tradition was rural and conservative. This ‘Yin-Yang’ quality remains a part of Unity's culture today.

Another example of this duality is Unity College's 40-year flirtation with innovation vs. tradition, nowhere more clearly played out than in the “Rams Debacle” of 2003.

The ram is the Unity College mascot. Early in the 2000s, someone asked why. After all, the ram isn't indigenous to Maine. It's the

male of the species, not particularly politically correct. A committee was convened to explore changing the school's mascot.

The dialogue raged through the entire school year.

Assistant to the President Chris Melanson has an interesting take on why the debate over changing the Ram mascot became so heated, and what it meant in a larger sense.

“Being such a young institution we have limited established traditions, so when one of those traditions is challenged, like the idea to change the mascot, folks responded very emotionally,” Melanson said. In the end, tradition won out and the Ram mascot stayed even if no one knows why a Ram was chosen in the first place.

From 1965 until 1974, the yearbook focused a good deal on the many inter-collegiate and club sports offered and on the fraternities. A quick thumb through yearbooks from the early days shows a college apparently beholden to All-American, pom pom waving tradition. The lineup of graduation photos, however, shows male students sporting Jerry Garcia style shoulder-length hair and “summer of love” bushy beards. Some on campus view this dichotomy as the true strength and tradition of Unity.

Fast forward to today where Unity makes its claim to be America's Environmental College. It is not simply that Unity offers more environmental majors than any other college in America. Even more important is the level environmental playing field with all sides represented. In the real America, Bush supporting Republicans who see the Environmental Protection Agency as a haven for out-of-control anti-business eco extremists must find at least some elbow room to work with environmentalists who see melting ice caps and rising mercury levels in water as evidence of natural resources under siege. And between both of these poles, a diversity of thought exists and, at Unity, flourishes.

How did Unity get to today? From the beginning the college hasn't adhered to a highly centralized authority. Service to students and ideal requires the ability to adapt and survive. This shared governance model offered a payoff. Had the college not been flexible and taken Robert Frost's *Road Less Traveled*, it would instead have raged against the dying of the light as described by Dylan Thomas. This idea, that survival is better than the alternative no matter what's on the table, may have saved Unity College more than once.

Unity is now growing and developing a national profile, thus adding value to every diploma awarded, whether such diplomas were issued in May of 2005 or May of 1971.

There have been many storms weathered by the college since 1965: some financial, some having to do with governance, still other challenges dealing with leadership and direction. From the outset there was good evidence to suggest that Unity College was going to be something different.

“The very act of founding a college takes incredible vision and courage,” said Director of College Advancement Martha Nordstrom. “What remarkable people, the individuals behind this venture.”

There hasn't been a yearbook since the late 1980s. Yet no one is going to convince the College community that it needs a yearbook to confirm its vitality. Unity has chosen its own path for decades, using its own internal dialogues as a compass.

So in September, Unity College will turn 40. The milestone will be marked with celebration. Just as Jimmy Hubbard didn't set out to become a role model for walking, neither did Unity set out to be the college it has become. Whatever the future brings, it is a safe bet that both Jimmy and Unity College will keep following a path of their own choosing. 🐑



Exploring One's Possible Paths

The transformative effect of Unity College

It is said that the queen of England never travels out of England. Instead wherever she goes, there too goes England. When students leave Unity, they don't really leave. Instead many of them take Unity along for the ride.

Susan Quarterman Van Asselt received her bachelor's degree in Outdoor Recreation Administration in 1986. Her memories of college life are still vivid.

"My overall [first] impression was that it was a perfect in-the-middle-of-nowhere, small, unpretentious, friendly, fun, community oriented college," Van Asselt said. "My parents, when they saw it for the first time, thought it was perfect for me because I was trying not to fit into the 'regular' mold of others around me."

"I found Unity to be a warm, accepting place to be," said Joanna Clifford Magoon '88, who received a bachelor's degree in Envi-

ronmental Sciences. "It was certainly visionary in abandoning the competitive 'winner takes all' approach to higher education."

The sense of warmth and community that Van Asselt and Magoon mention did not water down the academic quality of the curriculum, evidenced by their later academic and professional pursuits.

Van Asselt went on to earn a master's degree in Applied Behavioral Science from Bastyr University and is now a mental health clinician. She also has a private practice where she does therapy with couples, families, and individuals.

At various junctures in her career Van Asselt saw a connection between what her life after college became and the Unity College education she received.

"As I get older, I see how the two degrees fit together to create a very solid platform which I can use to help people and groups

have more of what they want in their lives," Van Asselt said. While allowing her a good bit of freedom, Van Asselt also credits Unity with helping her to become more focused about what she wanted from life.

First-year students take a course that introduces them to college life in general and the values of Unity College in particular. As is common throughout the history of the College, a segment of the student body interested in hunting and similar sports learn to live and learn with students from the opposite spectrum. This is the Yin-Yang of Unity College that has added a vital, interesting social and academic tension.

"A big impact is often made in the first semester," said Hauns Bassett '97, who received his bachelor's degree in Social Sciences/Environmental Education. "Students figure out very quickly if they belong at the school and either stay or leave. Unlike some

By Mark Tardif



big schools, it can be almost impossible to blend in with the crowd because there simply is no large crowd.”

“I came to Unity with an associate’s degree in General Studies as well as having been to two colleges prior to Unity with five different majors,” said Cristin Bailey Preisendorfer ’98, who received a bachelor’s degree in Outdoor Recreation Leadership. “I fit the transfer student niche in a way that both supported and challenged other students. Coming from a different school and entering into a group of students . . . posed challenges.”

Preisendorfer stressed that her education was a two-way street, where she gave of herself and got much in return. She feels this willingness to take risks and share with fellow students under the guidance of faculty is what makes the experience transformative.

After earning her degree from Unity, Preisendorfer went on to pursue a career in conservation/backcountry resource protection and is today an Appalachian Mountain Club White Mountain Trails Supervisor.

Graham Buck ’87 is the Assistant Director of Training at a leading guide dog school in New York. Buck says he came to Unity Col-

lege needing to feel accepted and supported.

“I came from a broken home and Unity helped create such a strong bond with people it was incredible,” Buck said. “Unity made me feel like I belonged to something good.”

Buck feels the college was shaped by the decade in which it was founded, the Vietnam era. “It began in the ’60s era where people were desperately trying to find a new way, a different direction,” he said. “That may seem so far away now but it remains extremely important. The idea of embarking on something totally new, where no one had gone before, was part of that ’60s era and is part of what Unity is today. This states the real spirit of Unity, people willing to take a chance.”

“Unity College is a different experience for everyone,” he said. “When I was there I noticed that people either loved the school or hated it. Many students could not handle the stark isolation. Other students viewed it as an oasis from the world they knew at home. I liked the small size and the way the staff and students communicated together.”

Buck says Unity College not only shaped him, but is a part of him.

“There was a kind of innocence at Unity and in Maine that you do not experience in

other places,” Buck explained. “I was born and raised in New York and love it here more than ever, but when I have to go to Maine for a conference or business trip I can’t help being taken back to the time I spent in Unity. I see myself in my old Honda praying that it won’t break down on the Maine Turnpike, heading toward Unity. It’s a great thought and to this day resounds.”

How has Unity College helped students to find their own paths and become the people, both personally and professionally, they choose to be? The answers are as diverse as the alumni spread across the United States and the world.

As is common among Unity College graduates, Bassett has a clear vision of who he was when he entered and the person he had become by commencement.

“I started out as a Conservation Law Enforcement major with short hair, a little conservative and naïve about the size of the world,” Bassett stated. “By the time I left I was known as ‘Doc,’ was the President of the Emergency Response Team, received the Environmental Educator Award at graduation . . . and I had a ponytail. My self-confidence level was very high. I was ready to go out into the world and change it.” ♣

From left, Hauns Bassett ’97 at Glacier National Park, Montana, during a 1996 internship with the Glacier Institute; Graham Buck ’87; Cristin Bailey Preisendorfer ’98 with her daughter Ruby; Bassett (rear center) on the Appalachian Trail in 2001.



A Born Activist

When Stephenie MacLagan '06 of Alliance, Ohio quit high school in the tenth grade, it wasn't because she couldn't keep up.

"I knew I could learn more on my own," she said, chuckling at the thought of her old high school. "I was losing too much time in that place."

So the next year, instead of stepping back on the school bus, Stephenie proposed her own curriculum, bought a slew of eclectic books, and began home-schooling herself.

By Joshua Caine Anchors

“I’d usually see my parents off to work,” she explained, “and then pull out the physics books. After an hour or two of textbook exercises, I’d clean the house a bit and head off to the nature center.”

Stephenie was first inspired to volunteer at the local Brumbaugh Nature Center by one of her high school biology teachers, a woman who thought the best science was taught through hands-on learning. This teacher often took her class outside to conduct water testing on streams, give natural history lessons and show young students that biology wasn’t confined to test tubes and textbooks. Before long this teacher got the reputation for being non-traditional, a phrase that isn’t always complimentary in public school systems.

Stephenie, however, liked the sound of non-traditional. Though reading was an important part of her home-schooling routine, she also believed that interacting with nature itself was one of the most effective ways to become a good scientist.

The Brumbaugh Nature Center was the perfect place for a young scientist to start. A combination of young and old growth forests with a bird sanctuary and nature walk trails, the center was located twenty minutes north of Stephenie’s home. The nature center not only offered her refuge from the local booming steel industry, but also gave her the opportunity to lead inner city students on nature walks and expose them to animals for the first time.

“My interest began to transition from biology to the environmental sciences when I started leading groups,” she said. “Most of the students were from the city and had never explored nature before or seen the connections within an ecosystem. Environmental education really helped open their eyes.”

During this same period, Stephenie also began reading authors such as Henry David Thoreau, John Steinbeck, and Chet Raymo. Their works not only crystallized her interest in nature, but also compelled her to dig deeper. Without having to deal with the typical pressures and anxieties of modern high school, Stephenie delved into many philosophical texts that attempted to bridge the gap between religion and science. Though these books served as intellectual fodder for her hungry mind, she observed that many of them created this great rift between humans and nature in which man was the ruler.

Eventually, however, Stephenie got her hands on a book that she was able to take seriously. Very seriously.

Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring*, an intricately-documented account of the harmful effects of DDT on 1950’s America, served as another important turning point for Stephenie.

“It got me thinking about the different ways humans interact



“Reading Silent Spring really steered me in the direction of environmental activism and sustainability. I was already volunteering for the nature center and involved in humanitarian fund-raising for my church group, and the next step was taking these convictions with me to college.”

with the environment,” she said, “and why some people seem bent on destroying it.”

She noticed how many people refused to heed Carson’s warnings when the book was first published. Despite mountains of terrifying facts and Carson’s moving prose, many people hadn’t understood the danger DDT posed. Stephenie attributed this lack of public comprehension to a breakdown in the communication between scientists and the public, a crucial link in the sustainable coexistence of humans and nature.

“Reading *Silent Spring* really steered me in the direction of environmental activism and sustainability,” Stephenie explained. “I was already volunteering for the nature center and involved in humanitarian fund-raising for my church group, and the next



Stephanie MacLagen '06 is interviewed (left) by the local CBS affiliate prior to the Unity "voting parade" on Election Day 2004; MacLagen (below, center) makes a point during a We Lead meeting in the student center; (bottom) MacLagen helped Assistant Professor Mick Womersley and Assistant Director of Admissions Joshua Anchors (right) to fit the skin of a teepee over its frame this spring.



step was taking these convictions with me to college.”

How Stephanie discovered Unity College is somewhat of a mystery. She just remembers driving with her family from Ohio up to Maine one hot summer and falling in love with the place.

Three months later she began classes and not long after that she was an integral part of the campus community. Professor Nancy Ross immediately detected Stephanie's strong leadership skills and nominated her for the Sustainability Committee. Founded in 1991 to oversee and coordinate the College's various efforts at improving sustainability, the Committee strongly appealed to Stephanie's activist sensibilities. In her time at Unity, she has been one of the Committee's most active members and is presently working with Professor Mick Womersley on projects to revitalize sustainability at the College, improve the eco-cottage, and organize a regional collegiate sustainability conference this summer.

In a fortuitous decision, Stephanie also decided to join the Constructive Activists Club her first semester on campus. This club focuses on a wide array of local and global issues and allowed her to get first-hand experience with national activism when the club traveled to Washington, D.C. in March 2004. Funded by the National Wildlife Foundation, the young activists were first trained in lobbying and then encouraged to go put the theory into practice on the steps of Congress.

“That experience opened my eyes to the role government plays not only in environmental issues but in all policy issues,” explained Stephanie. “It also taught me that activists, when working toward a common goal, can make a difference.”

Determined to make a difference herself, Stephanie was first promoted to Vice-President of the Constructive Activists Club after returning from D.C., and earlier this year she took over as President. Her ambitious agenda for the upcoming year includes working on getting Unity's eco-cottage off the electrical grid, traveling again to D.C. for population activism, and reducing Unity College emissions by working with the Climate Campaign Network.

In addition to her demanding course load and extracurricular activities, Stephanie also serves on the Presidential Search Committee and is an active member of WE Lead.

Since her transition from Ohio to Maine several years ago, Stephanie has come to care deeply about both Unity College and Maine's natural environment. Her attachment to Maine recently compelled her to apply for a summer position as a Maine environmental policy intern.

And if Stephanie's agenda doesn't seem full enough already, she also has a full load of environmental policy classes, hikes and canoes whenever she can, and is never short on a few good books to read.

Now that's action!

Women Take the Lead

WE Lead provides support for women in environmental careers

By Mark Tardif

Throughout the 2004-2005 school year, the WE Lead group, a student group supporting the environmental career aspirations of female students, was characteristically vibrant and active.

Their accomplishments read like a *Who's Who* of high profile events. During the fall semester they welcomed Burt's Bees co-founder and owner Roxanne Quimby for a talk in Quimby Library (named for former Librarian Dot Quimby, no relation). Several WE Lead teams also participated in the National Toboggan Championships at the Camden Snow Bowl in Camden, Maine. Unity College won the spirit award at the event and the trophy is proudly displayed in Quimby Library.

During the spring semester WE Lead teams competed in the Kenduskeag Canoe

Race, a 16-mile-long race ending in Bangor, Maine. They concluded a busy year by presenting nationally-known environmental activist Dianne Kopec with the group's annual Environmental Leader award.

Many non-public events for members were also held on a regular basis, with members doing everything from ice climbing to moonlight lake hiking in winter. The emphasis is on companionship, empowerment and support. Many female faculty and staff members contribute to WE Lead.

Despite the high-profile of WE Lead, the focus remains on empowering and supporting each student, a fact best known and appreciated by group members.

As a senior on the verge of graduating, Megan Weber, an Environmental Policy major from Keyport, Washington, knows

that her time with WE Lead is growing short but that her memories of the group and affinity will remain strong.

"At Unity I definitely found that there was a balance of views, there were many viewpoints represented on campus," Weber explained. This fact and her affiliation with WE Lead are both elements that she feels will help her develop an environmental career.

Weber sees the strength of WE Lead in the environment it provides.

"WE Lead doesn't single out women, it includes them," Weber said. "Women on campus aren't just a number, they are individuals and from early on as a member of WE Lead, I had access to some outstanding role models."

By accessing the experiences of women who have pursued environmental careers, Weber and other WE Lead group members are less apprehensive of what will come after commencement.

"I have learned that 'hey, I can do this, I can be part of this field,'" Weber concluded.

As commencement approached Weber was evaluating her job options. In the short term she expects to stay in the Northeast, but expects to eventually move back to the west coast.

Whatever her ultimate destination, Weber feels that the lessons she learned as a member of WE Lead and student at Unity College will serve her in ways she cannot yet imagine.

Nathan Crewe '07, Pepperell, Mass., and Cary Rhodes '05, Hanover, Penn., hit the rapids during the Kenduskeag Stream Canoe Race in April.





MELMAC Grant Supports Retention Efforts

Unity receives education foundation grant . . . now the work begins

By Mark Tardif

When Assistant Provost Alisa Gray heard that Unity College had received a six-year \$224,589 grant from the MELMAC Education Foundation, her first response was utter excitement. “We got the grant! We got the grant!” she exclaimed. But then reality set in as the full import of implementing the grant hit her. “We got the grant...” she repeated, shoulders slouching, head bowed, and voice trailing off. So it goes with grants, among the most welcome but most temperamental critters in the fund-raising kingdom.

One might better understand what a grant is through use of an analogy. The donor who writes a check for a new residence hall is a big, happy golden retriever, flexible and ready to play ball at 2 a.m. if you choose. But a grant, while also a welcomed companion, might be likened to a finicky cat who knows what time she likes to be fed, her favorite foods, when she wishes to be let out and every other detail of her life.

Grants are the felines of the philanthropic world, a fact well-known to Gray. Grants are not gifts anymore than cats are dogs. Grants might bring in a lot of money but they also bring in a lot of extra work.

Gray pointed out that MELMAC officials were flexible throughout the process.

Unity is among several institutions of higher learning in Maine that received a MELMAC grant this year to improve student retention. The devil of the new MELMAC grant will be in the details.

“The funds will be used to create a multitude of programs,” Gray said. Supplemental instruction programming, which includes student support services such as group tutoring, will be included. In this part of the unfolding plan for improving student retention, a student instruction leader will lead two supplemen-



Assistant Provost Alisa Gray

tal instruction sessions a week for a particular course. Faculty helped to identify courses that often pose particular challenges for first and second-year students, and these courses will be the ones that offer student instruction leaders.

In 2006, the focus will be on providing training for Learning Resource Center staff, who will in turn train student tutors in the center. Tutors will be set to implement the program in fall of 2007.

Over six years the grant will achieve a number of other goals, always sticking close to the original plan put before the MELMAC Education Foundation.

The grant allows for the creation of a leadership institute. This would allow for the cultivation of student leaders from the first-year class during the spring semester. Gray says these student leaders would play a role in helping with student retention, since often students who leave are not connected to campus life and have fallen through the cracks. Class leaders might help to bridge these gaps and involve students who are struggling in various ways and are at risk for not returning for their second year.

“We’re developing a college skills course for students who end up on academic probation during their first year,” Gray said.

Other aspects of the grant-backed plan include the development of an advising handbook for academic advisors, survey for parents to administer to students that will help them identify areas of concern, creation of an early warning system for instructors, and creation of a student risk management team.

At the end of the six year grant period, Unity College will have created and implemented a comprehensive program for improving student retention that is sustainable through the college’s own funds. It will be a lot of work but definitely worth the effort.

Meet the Man You Thought You Knew

Vice President for Finance Roger Jolin keeps Unity on an even keel

By Judy Eyerer

In 1989, when Vice President for Finance Roger Jolin arrived at Unity College, the institution's ship of state was riding on some pretty rough seas. "We were pretty close to going under," he remembered recently, in his office at the college. "When I got here, the college was going through its 25th anniversary, but things were pretty bad. Our accreditation was at risk due to financial problems. I heard they had a lottery to see how long I'd stay." Jim Horan, current director of Unity's Learning Resource Center and, at that time, also the faculty moderator, agreed with Jolin's assessment of the situation. Outstanding debt was piling up, there were no sensible centralized purchasing or accounting procedures in place, and faculty and staff were hard pressed to find retail vendors willing to sell them the supplies they needed for their work.

"It was an abysmal situation," said Horan. "We went through about a business manager a month" trying to get the mess straightened out.

Within a few years, Jolin, with the full backing of then President Wilson Hess, had helped the college begin to turn the tide toward financial solvency. "He managed to get control over our spending and instituted sensible approval steps while negotiating successfully with our vendors," said Horan. "Roger's strengths were fiscal controls and stable fiscal policies."

If you ask Jolin about these contribu-

tions to the financial health of Unity College, the best you'll get out of him is a humble, "I guess I had a lot to do with the turn-around for the college." Jolin clearly is not comfortable with any sort of public attention, preferring instead to work steadily behind the scenes, making the sort of major decisions that sometimes made him quite unpopular with faculty and staff. "Roger wasn't very popular at times," said Horan, "because we couldn't buy anything anymore, but he was more interested in getting the college out of debt than in making friends or being popular."

Popular or not, Jolin was needed, and he was expected at his desk no matter what the weather. He remembered one winter in the early days of his time here at Unity College when he was living in a camp on Unity Pond. It had snowed hard the night before and early the next morning Jolin called then President James MacLaughlin to let him know that he would not be able to make it in because his camp road had not yet been plowed. MacLaughlin sent the college's maintenance trucks out and, in a matter of minutes, Jolin was on his way. "I didn't think I was that important," Jolin said with a chuckle, "but I guess they needed me." For the first few years, until he moved into a house off Rte. 139 in Unity, he made a daily commute from Portland where he lived with his wife and daughters.

About 10 years after his arrival at Unity College, Jolin tried his hand at law enforcement. He took Larry Farnsworth's

100-hour law enforcement course here at the college during the famous ice storm of 1998 and became certified as a reserve police officer. For a short time, Jolin would hang up his V.P. hat at the end of a college workday only to don the hat of a patrolman for several hours each evening, going on local patrols. Though Jolin liked meeting people and took satisfaction in this new way of helping others, he did not enjoy the more stressful aspects of patrol work, like the domestic violence calls he and his fellow officers would sometimes have to make, so his stint in law enforcement was relatively brief. "I explored it as an option for retirement," Jolin explained, "not as a career goal."

Summers, Jolin spends time with his wife at her family's camp on Great Diamond Island in Portland's Casco Bay. In earlier days, he and his daughters would fish for mackerel, and the family would enjoy lobster bakes on the shore. He had a little motor boat and remembers one time when his kids were small when the three of them ran smack into a fog bank a ways off shore. "We turned that boat right around and headed for home," he said, showing the same conservative nature personally that he's relied upon at work for the past 15 years.

One area in which Jolin is willing to loosen up his own purse strings a bit is at the college's annual fundraising auction. Each January, you'll find him among the high bidders for the artwork of the college's



artist in residence, Leonard Craig. Jolin has managed to amass a fine collection of Craig's artwork, which he displays proudly on his dining room walls.

Jolin enjoys all that this part of the state has to offer for outdoor recreation. During the winter, you might see him snowshoeing or cross country skiing across his

45 acres. "There's not as much wildlife as I used to see, but I do come across rabbits, grouse, deer and moose." In the summer, when he's not on the family's property in Casco Bay, he's often busy in his vegetable garden, growing 20-pound watermelons, organically, of course.

Over the course of 15 years and along

side four presidents and three interim presidents, Jolin has been a fixture at Unity College, and the institution is much the stronger for that relationship. And for those who, in the early days of his tenure, took a chance in that infamous lottery to guess that his stay would be brief, it seems they turned out to be pretty far from the mark.

in our ELEMENT





The Secret Lives of Bears

This field experience awakens passion as well as bear

By Joshua Caine Anchors

On a cold, clear morning in early March, fifteen students from Unity College donned their snowshoes and followed Maine Department of Inland Fisheries Wildlife Biologist Randy Cross and his crew into the woods.

They wove through dense stands of fir and spruce trees crisscrossed by snowshoe hare tracks. Then they walked across a small marsh where their feet occasionally sank through the snowpack into a yellowish slush. As they got closer to their destination, the handheld antenna carried by biologist Dave Pert, a contract worker for the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), quickened its beep.

When a hand waved at the front of the line the Unity students abruptly stopped. The biologists advanced. They crawled under a blown down log and crept quietly toward the bear's den, tranquilizer gun and jab stick in hand.

Twenty minutes later the high-pitched cry of a black bear cub echoed through the woods and the students sighed with relief. The two hour trip from Unity to Beddington was going to be worth it.

"An experience like this is the essence of hands-on learning," said Callie Davis '06, a Conservation Law Enforcement major. "We get to see professional biologists in action and learn how they solve real problems in the field."

The MDIFW bear tagging program began in 1975 and has played a pivotal role in the education of students from across New England.

"We take out university groups and other organizations all the time," said Cross, supervisor of the bear monitoring program. "It's a good way for students to learn what wildlife research is like and how it can impact wildlife management and policy."

Unity College Professor Jim Nelson agrees. He's taken his classes on these bear tagging expeditions almost every year since 1991.

"This bear project is one of the most extensive and long-standing studies in North America, and it's a good opportunity for students to observe biologists at work," he said.

Of Maine's approximately 23,000 bears, radio collars are used to study roughly 45 to 70 females in three study areas. The information gathered is used to help monitor bear populations across Maine and determine how to best manage this population. The study additionally provides detailed insight into bears' secretive lives.

"This is a real biologist's dream job," said Pert. "I'm back for my second season because you can't beat working out in the field directly with the bears."

Cross is a 24 year veteran of the bear study and knows bears intimately. He's collected data in the middle of snowstorms, crawled into dark caves in search of bear dens, and held dozens of bear cubs in his arms.

When he beckoned for the Unity students to come gather in the clearing where a 234 lb. female bear lay tranquilized, he waited until everyone was present before unveiling the highlight of the show.

Cross pulled a small bear cub the size of a housecat out of a red weighing bag and explained that it needed to be kept warm.

Patricia Marcum '05 was the first to take it in her arms.

"Holding that cub was a magical experience," she said. "It snuggled right against my neck and looked up at me. How often do you get to look into the eyes of a live black bear?"

The cub made the rounds from student to student, sometimes crawling in their jackets for warmth, sometimes falling asleep on their shoulders.

After an hour of data collecting, the biologists placed the bear and cub back in the den and covered them with a blanket of spruce boughs. They gave a brief lecture about black bear physiology, and then sped back down the trail. Two more dens were on their schedule for the day, and it was already 2:00 p.m.

As the students arrived back at their vans, a light, warm breeze began blowing. Before long, the narrow snowshoe path that led a mile in to the bear den would disappear under a cover of fresh snow, but nothing can erase the magic of the day.

Patricia Marcum '05, a Conservation Law Enforcement major from Errol, N.H., snuggles with a bear cub as part of Professor Jim Nelson's North American wildlife class.

Mick vs. **the Mud**

Mick Womersley gives new meaning to DIY

By Mark Tardif

As mud season overtakes Maine in April, Assistant Professor of Human Ecology Mick Womersley surveys his domain in the town of Monroe, knowing how much worse it could be. There will be no medals awarded to Womersley for his brand of home-construction heroism, nor will there be one given to his wife, adjunct instructor of Environmental Science Aimee Phillippi.

“This year we’re going to be working on the landscaping,” Womersley said matter-of-factly, acknowledging that to the casual observer, the sea of mud surrounding his “straw house” seems much the same as it has ever been. However, Womersley knows the difference, and what a difference it is. Their parcel is now “liveable.” A lesser man might have considered mere survival the ultimate reward; landscaping a luxury.

The struggle leading to homestead bliss began early in 2002 when Womersley, then a bachelor, was considering his housing options in the Unity area. Of primary importance was the ability to have a garden. He didn’t like what he found.

“If you’re a renter there is no place in the Unity area that allows you to have a garden,” Womersley explained. “That option doesn’t exist. Buying is too expensive if you have to pay down student loans for a Ph.D.”

As Unity’s resident sustainability expert, Womersley had a wellspring of experience and intellectual capital from which to draw. Nothing could have prepared

him for what was to come.

A friend rented Womersley a patch of land in Monroe on which he could build a house. The arrangement was a typical Maine 99-year “camp” lease. He has an option to buy, which the couple expects to use one day.

Though he had the land on which to build his home in Monroe, Womersley was beholden to hefty student loans and could not afford a conventional home.

His solution was to design a low cost bale “straw house” of approximately 900 square feet that would be framed with timber harvested on site, along with materials scavenged and donated, or obtained in the most low-cost way possible.

The “straw house” would use straw bales as insulation, plastered over for safety and esthetic appeal. It was built for less than \$25,000, including a solar power system for electricity.

Womersley broke ground in April 2002 and that is when the mud first expressed its wrath. He discovered that a particularly attractive part of the parcel had a spring beneath that, when the snow melted, immediately morphed into a lagoon of mud.

The house itself was built on dry ground. The garden was the problem.

Though a soft pudding of muck coated the main garden pretty much evenly, for the entire month after the snow melted, the area above the spring was especially treacherous.

“There were times when I wanted to throw myself in that sink hole,” Womersley admitted. “I was just so utterly defeated by the mud.”

Womersley vowed to work through the challenges. He would have his mortgage-free “straw house” no matter the cost to life and limb. A garden would be the ultimate reward, the one thing denied to a rent dwelling bachelor.

Every trip to the property involved spending hours wading through mud, cutting trees in mud, marking and sawing boards in mud, bringing Womersley to the point of mental and physical collapse more than once. Something inside him, however, would not admit defeat.

Even industrial grade equipment was no match for the mud. “It’s pretty hard to mire a bulldozer,” Womersley stated. “We did it though. And a backhoe too, the following spring.”

However, nothing was going to tame the mud on Womersley’s parcel in Monroe. The best that could be hoped for was an uneasy truce.

Phillippi joined the home construction team and helped to build what would eventually become her home too. However, helpful though she’d be, she kept her apartment to begin with. Smart girl.

Eager to move in as quickly as possible to save money on rent and use it for materials, Womersley built the kitchen of



Assistant Professor of Human Ecology, Mick Womersley (right), takes a moment to rest on the steps of his home; the home's interior features open space with exposed beams; Mick applies an outer layer to seal the compacted straw that serves as the primary source of insulation.



the home with its pot bellied stove first, then continued the rest of the structure while living in the kitchen. During the winter, but before the house was completed, the wood stove had to be brought into service. "This wasn't really safe," Womersley admitted. "The straw bales were still exposed. But it was the only way, or at least I thought so at the time."

Luckily, fire did not visit Womersley in his early days of residence. By January of 2003, the sea of mud on the land had frozen but so had he. "I was too cold and moved over to Aimee's apartment in Damariscotta," he said. As soon as he and the ground had thawed, Womersley was back on the property again, building his homestead. The house was largely finished that year. Phillippi and Womersley got married in early autumn of 2004 and she moved in full-time, the two of them learning to live with the mud when it emerged from hibernation each spring.



The winter of 2004-2005 was fairly comfortable. Womersley and Phillippi have been settling in nicely. They are completing a shed, have chickens, a garden and greenhouse. Raised beds help solve the wet in the garden. Cutting trees to get more sunlight to the ground also helps. Ditching does the rest.

They plan to dig deeper ditches this year, and erect a springhouse to protect the water supply from frost. The mud hole is now a small pond, which the frogs and pet dogs love. By May, the grass grows and plants begin to sprout. By June, all the mud is gone. Hummingbirds come to the feeder; woodpeckers sound in the woods, a phoebe likes the back porch for her nest. There's no mortgage and few bills. They're beginning to save.

All is finally well in their lives.

"We've learned how to drain water on our property," Womersley said. "But we're still working on it." Though his hard won lessons have taught him how to live on the property, in the end there is only an uneasy truce with the mud, not outright victory.

"It will always be wet in the area of that spring on our property," he admitted. "We've just gotten better at dealing with it."



Innovative Teaching Brings Learning to Life

Project based learning connects students with their education

By Stacey Wyman '07

Stop by a classroom at Unity College on any given day, and you're guaranteed to find innovative pedagogy. Professors from all disciplines regularly incorporate unique learning projects in their syllabi that range from making short films to creating a dragon.

Kate Miles, Assistant Professor of Environmental Writing, has set up a program in her Approaches to Literature class called "Literacy in the Classroom."

"It is a cooperative program between my Approaches class and the local elementary schools," Miles said. Students write, design, and edit picture books, focusing on environmental issues. The books are presented in local elementary schools and then are donated to the school's library.

"This class allows students to get out in the community and promote literacy with the children in town," Miles said. "In late April, students take their finished books to the schools and read them to the children. They follow up the reading with an activity based on what they have just read to the class."

"The project is important because it teaches the importance of environmental sustainability through literature in an artful and creative way," Miles said.

Students thoroughly enjoy the project. "I love working with kids, and I think this is an experience everyone should go through," commented Mark Mullen '08.

Similar projects are currently underway in the Environmental Stewardship Core as well. Nancy Ross, Assistant Professor

of Environmental Policy, created a theme-based version of her Perspectives on the Environment course that invites students to produce their own environmental documentary films.

Over the course of the semester, students write, direct, and film two separate short movies. One is about the loss of native trout and the other is about the environmental effects of paper mills.

"The two classes explore the numerous perspectives of each topic," said Ross. "The students research the perspectives, pitch ideas for a film, write the screenplay, and then begin to shoot the film."

"I like the class's unique style in teaching," said Kelly Meyers, a first-year student in one of the Perspectives classes. "Film is a very interesting way to learn about a topic."

The films were premiered for campus in the student center at the end April.

Unity College offers a wide variety of elective courses as well. Associate Professor of Philosophy John Zavodny, is teaching a songwriting class for the second time since 2003. "[Songwriting] is a one credit course that meets once a week," said Zavodny. "It's modeled after songwriting circle workshops."

Students met every Wednesday to share songs and help each other improve their music. They also recorded a CD, played live on WERU Community Radio, visited Unity Elementary School, and participated in the Earth Day song writing contest.

Gary Zane, Dean of Student Affairs, is

also getting students in his Physical Fitness and Wellness class out in the community. "Every student has to do a community service project as an individual or a group," Zane said.

Students volunteered to lead mountain bike trips and held tournaments which included basketball, darts, kickball, dodgeball, and a student vs. staff and faculty volleyball tournament.

Students are required to do all the preparation work, including publicity. "It's very experiential," Zane said.

There were plenty of new experiences in Emma Creaser's Animal Physiology class. There, students worked hard to "build" a dragon.

"Each student was given a different aspect of physiology, and they reviewed how that aspect differs between animals," said Creaser, an Associate Professor of Biology. "An example would be the heart. Some have two valves, others four, and some animals don't even have a heart."

Students researched their part of the dragon and decided what would best suit it. "The dragon could have scales, but it could also have fur, feathers, or even skin instead," Creaser said.

After the students analyzed all the different functions of their parts, they chose which one the dragon should have and wrote a paper about it. The papers were combined and they discovered whether their dragon could survive or not. "Students were excited about what usually can be a very dry subject," said Creaser.



Hannah Brzycki '08 (right) leads a performance of one of the songs she wrote as a part of John Zavodny's (philosophy) song writing course. Students from the class performed their original compositions as part of the Earth Day songwriting contest. The contest, proposed by student activities director Mike Davis, was hosted by Hootenanny, the Music Club at Unity, and was sponsored by Belfast Music, WERU community radio and the Unity Centre for Performing Arts. The goals of the event were to support live original music, celebrate Earth Day and acquaint people with the local (and not so local) music scene. Several contestants from off-campus remarked at what an amazingly supportive and encouraging atmosphere the College provides.

Justin Merrill '07 (below, left) leads a group project to "build" a dragon in Associate Professor Emma Creaser's Animal Physiology class.



New & Noteworthy

New at Unity

Old Town, Maine native **Josh Anchors** has been appointed to the position of Assistant Director of Admissions. A freelance writer for a number of publications across New England, in the fall of 2004 Anchors completed a writing fellowship in Strasbourg, France, which was in association with the University of Strasbourg. The fellowship in France was to conduct research on Maine's Franco-American heritage. The research will inform Anchors second book, a historical novel entitled *Survival* about Maine's Franco-American communities. Anchors holds a Bachelor's degree in English and Environmental Studies and Master of Arts in English from the University of Maine. An avid outdoorsman, Anchors is a registered Maine Guide who enjoys rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, skiing, and extreme sports.

Noteworthy Work

During the spring semester **James Lyon '06**, a Conservation Law Enforcement



major from New Milford, Connecticut, was recognized in January by the state of Connecticut for his actions to save a life. During the summer of 2004

while working as a Park Aide at Kent Falls State Park in Connecticut, Lyon and his partner, Seth Toensing noticed a vehicle in the parking lot when the park was closed. They discovered a highly intoxicated juvenile inside the vehicle. As they were examining the young man, he be-

came ill and stopped breathing. Lyon and Toensing administered first aide, opening the young man's airway and transporting him to the nearest hospital. Lyon and Toensing were recognized for their efforts on January 4th in Hartford, Connecticut at a ceremony honoring the lifesaving actions of 15 Connecticut State Department of Environmental Protection employees.

Assistant Professor **Kathryn Miles** has been invited to write a bi-annual column for the national College English Association. Her column in this peer-reviewed journal will cover service learning.

While many college students headed for the sand and surf during spring break, a group of community service-minded Unity College students spent their spring break working to benefit an environmental research and education center in Virginia. Nine Unity College students and a staff member worked on various projects March 12-19 to benefit the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship in Purcellville, Va. One project included revisiting the blue bird monitoring program established in 2002 by another group of volunteers from the college. "I think that taking the opportunity to pursue worthwhile endeavors to benefit people and the environment during spring break is the best way to use that free time," said **Michael David '05**, an Environmental Policy major who helped organize the trip.

On April 13, Assistant Professor and sustainability expert **Mick Womersley** gave testimony before the Maine State Legislative Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy. Womersley was

speaking in support of LD 913, a bill that would require all Maine state government departments to purchase only



renewable electricity by January 1, 2008. The bill would therefore require the State of Maine to purchase its electricity in precisely the same way that

Unity College already does. Sponsored by District 45 Representative **John Piotti (D)**, a legislative leader in issues facing Maine's farmers and the environment, the bill had not yet been brought for a vote by the legislature at press time. Piotti also serves as Chair of the Unity College Board of Trustees.

The Unity College Admissions Office has been recognized by the Admissions Marketing Report, a national college admissions marketing publication. The College received a merit award in the category of video / CD-Rom viewbook for a college under 2,000 students. "The entire admissions team worked with Ursus Productions of Waterville, Maine, in association with admissions office staff (to produce the viewbook)," noted Senior Assistant Director of Admissions **Susan Fedoush**. This was the first time that Unity College competed in the annual Admissions Advertising Award.

It isn't every day that college students get the chance to act as a granting agency, but on May 5, that is exactly what students in a grant writing class taught by Assistant Professor **Nancy Ross** had the opportu-



nity to do. The class received a cash award from the Unity Foundation to design its own community service grants. They awarded the grants at the Unity Foundation headquarters in Unity on May 5. The class created its own grant criteria and accepted grant applications. They awarded funds to two organizations, Camp Susan Curtis and the Volunteer Regional Food Pantry of Unity, Maine. The funding for Camp Susan Curtis will support an environmental education camp staffed by Unity student volunteers to benefit students from the Mt. View school system. The Volunteer Regional Food Pantry will use the grant funds to create backyard gardens for low income residents in the Unity area with help from Unity College and high school student mentors as well as community gardening groups and local gardening businesses.



Instead of making plans for spring break like her classmates, **Kayla Grenier '08** of Voluntown, Connecticut, a Conservation Law Enforcement

major and Unity, Maine volunteer fire fighter, was dreaming of a 1979 American LaFrance Fire Engine. In February when Grenier's father, Martin, a volunteer fire fighter with the Voluntown, Connecticut fire department made a trip to visit his daughter at Unity College, he was surprised to see that the pager she was issued as a volunteer fire fighter had seen better days. "To put it politely, my father considered the Unity Volunteer Fire De-

Unity Student Receives GIS Award

Angie Stokes '05, a Unity College student, won an award for her efforts on the Growth Area Mapping Project. The project used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective.

"The project was started in 1999 by the State Planning Office (SPO) with hopes to map designated growth areas that are consistent with the Planning and Land Use Regulation Act," said Stokes. "The project was not treated as a priority and was tossed to the side for five years. I came on board to get the project back on its feet."

Stokes started this project as an intern for the Maine State Governor's Internship Program in May of 2004.

Since then, Stokes has collected, interpreted, catalogued, digitized, stored, and managed municipal land use maps. "Once the project is completed the state will use it as a guide for state growth related capital investments and to improve the quality of life in Maine," Stokes said.

Stokes received a \$500 scholarship in March from the Maine GIS Users Group (MEGUG), a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and education of GIS in Maine. She will present a paper during the Environmental Systems Research Institute GIS and Mapping Software International User Conference that will take place July 25-29 in San Diego. —*Stacey Wyman '07*



Angie Stokes '05 (right) and Associate Professor Sari Hou.

partment pager to be 'old school,'" Kayla explained. He also saw her volunteer fire fighting equipment. Back home Martin spoke with town selectmen, fellow fire-fighters, and Voluntown Fire Department Chief Jody Grenier, Kayla's uncle, about how to help the Unity Volunteer Fire Department. The answer didn't take long at all. The entire Voluntown Fire Department voted unanimously to donate their under-utilized 1979 American LaFrance Fire Engine to the Unity Volunteer Fire Department. The engine arrived at its new home, the Unity Volunteer Fire

Department, on March 27. The town of Unity and its fire department are one fire engine richer, and grateful to Grenier and her family.

Since arriving on campus in August of 2004, Alumni Relations Officer **Kate Grenier** has established herself not only as the Alumni Relations professional, but a person with a gift for event planning. Though some colleges employ a full-time events planner, prior to Grenier's arrival Unity had a hands-on, group oriented approach that posed scheduling challenges.

While cooperation is still the order of the day, Grenier has become the go-to person for smooth running events planning. She successfully planned and implemented the December graduation held in the art gallery, Constable Hall re-dedication following renovations, alumni weekend in September of 2004, alumni gatherings in 2005 at the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut and another in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the 2005 Commencement exercises in May.

Associate Professor **John Zavodny** displayed a wide range of skills and creativity during the 2004-2005 school year.



During the fall semester Zavodny was involved in grant planning that brought a sizeable cash award from the MELMAC Education Foundation

in support of student retention initiatives. He also planned a highly successful voter registration and civic involvement drive for students participating in the Unity Experience course. The drive included several debates and a voting parade to the polls. As a member of the Marketing Committee, Zavodny explored marketing issues including work on an Integrated Marketing Plan and events in commemoration of the college's 40th anniversary. During the spring semester, he organized a successful national Earth Day songwriting contest with performances and awards held at the college on April 23. In February, Zavodny was awarded the Maine Campus Compact's (MCC) Campus Civic Stewardship Award. The MCC is dedicated to fostering reciprocal

relationships between communities and colleges and actively supports and recognizes the work of individuals who share in this commitment. Also during the spring semester, Zavodny's Perspectives on the Environment class wrote and acted in a play about the problem of urban sprawl entitled *Who Killed Ima Farmer? A Sprawling Murder Mystery*. "Students internalize the complexities of environmental issues when they get intellectually and emotionally involved in the lives of those affected," Zavodny noted. "Playing

characters that articulate viewpoints very different from their own gives students a chance to stretch their own moral imaginations – to imagine what it might be like to be a farmer, or land developer, or even an animal. Performing the play for an external audience, many of whom are the locals the students are trying to represent, gives student work a relevance that most academic work does not enjoy." Flashing his trademark humor, Zavodny quipped that "the risk of public humiliation is a terrific motivator." ❧

Climate Change Conference Energizes Students

The Third Annual Northeast Climate Conference was held at the University of Vermont in Burlington. Over 300 students from Pennsylvania to Maine attended along with representatives of leading environmental organizations and keynote speakers. What these conference attendees shared was a desire to learn about greenhouse gas emissions and the effects on global climate change and human health.

Organized by the Climate Campaign and partnering organizations, the conference provided students with information, empowerment, and ways to take action to reduce contributions to climate change. Program volunteers facilitated workshops ranging from local campaigning and individual actions, to influencing governments. Keynote speakers included politicians, educators, entertainers, activists, and inspirational speakers.

Student participants were also encouraged to gather into state breakout sessions where schools in a particular state planned campaigns and actions at local and state levels. Most Northeast states have, or are, developing State Climate Action Plans which set goals for greenhouse gas emission reduction, but many states have not yet implemented initiatives that will make the goals reachable.

In Maine this semester, students will be concentrating on a "Cleaner Car Sales" program that will require 11% of the cars on dealership lots to be cleaner cars. To support this program, students will target legislators and dealerships in their areas by campaigning on their campuses and in their surrounding communities. Much of the planning for this program began at the conference.

As always the Climate Conference was an energizing opportunity for students to become empowered to carry out the work we have to do for our own future and the future of our children. Those participating in the conference demonstrated that students not only care about the events happening around them, but want to influence future events to benefit communities everywhere. —Stephenie MacLagan '07

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Wendy Miller '06 fits a disabled man with a climbing harness during Earth Day activities. As part of Assistant Professor J. Andrew McInnes' universal programming course, students learned to help the disabled enjoy outdoor adventure experiences.