

# McKay Farm and Research Station End of Year Report 2022-23

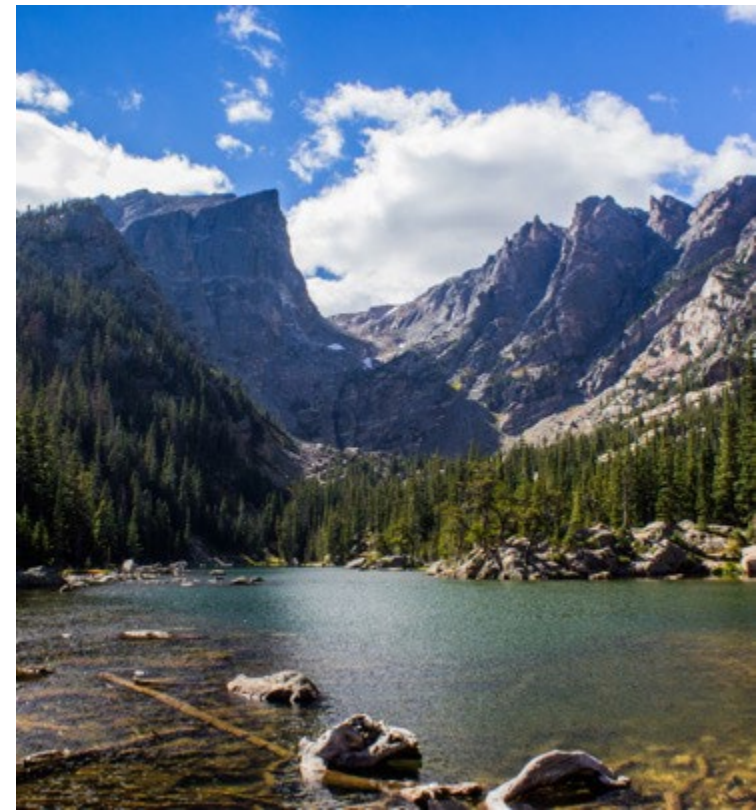
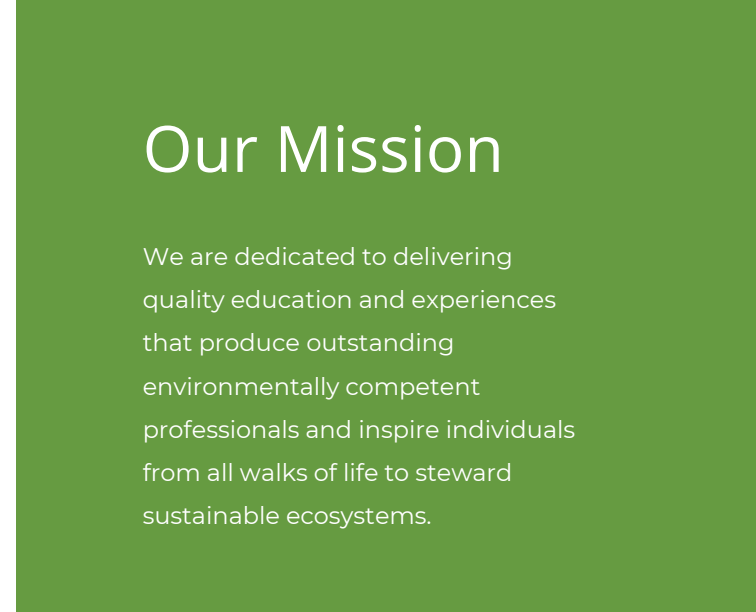
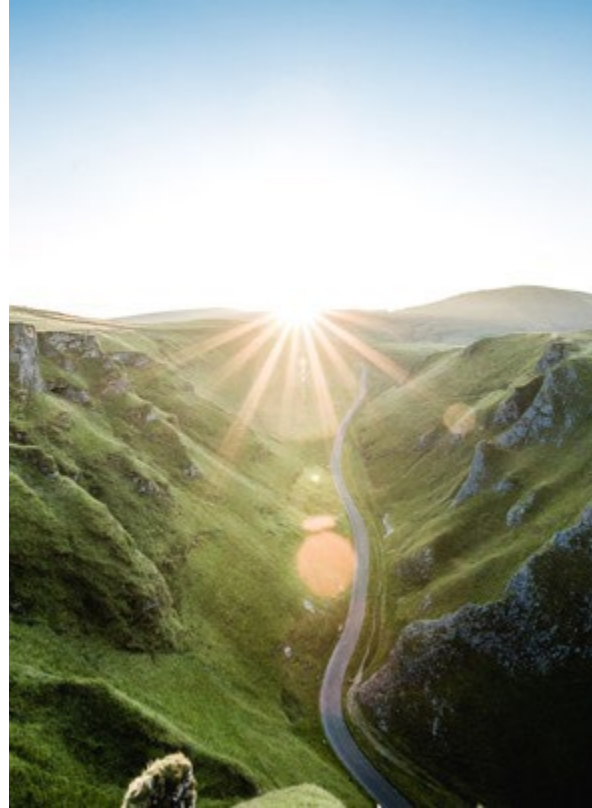
Unity Environmental University



**Unity Environmental University** is more than an institution of higher education; we are a multifaceted organization with various Sustainable Educational Business Units (SEBU).

The **Sustainable Ventures** SEBU represents a portfolio of purpose driven products and services aimed at growing environmental awareness with new audiences. Each venture is a real-world business manifestation of Unity's curriculum helping to expand the mission of the University.

# About Our University



# A Letter from Unity's President

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Thanks to your generous gift, Unity can offer the public a real-world manifestation of our curriculum.

Dear Izzy,

Thank you for the gift of McKay Farm and Research Station, since 2013 it has been a key learning resource for our students. Students took a break from the farm during the pandemic and in the years that immediately followed, however I happy to share that during the upcoming Hybrid Learning term (which starts in late August of 2023), our professor Kathy Crowley will be teaching an in-person class – Plant Identification there.

Upon his arrival last year our farm manager did some market research and found that locally grown, organic, culinary herbs and edible flowers are missing in the regional market, so he has begun cultivating and selling them through a wholesale distributor. They are branded and packaged under the Unity Environmental University – McKay Farm & Research Station name and available at local grocery stores. The farm remains MOFGA certified and through our partnership with Cultivating Community, we are teaching and assisting new-Mainers who want to enter the agriculture industry. This is a program that I am very excited about, and I hope you enjoy reading their thoughts and stories as much as I did.

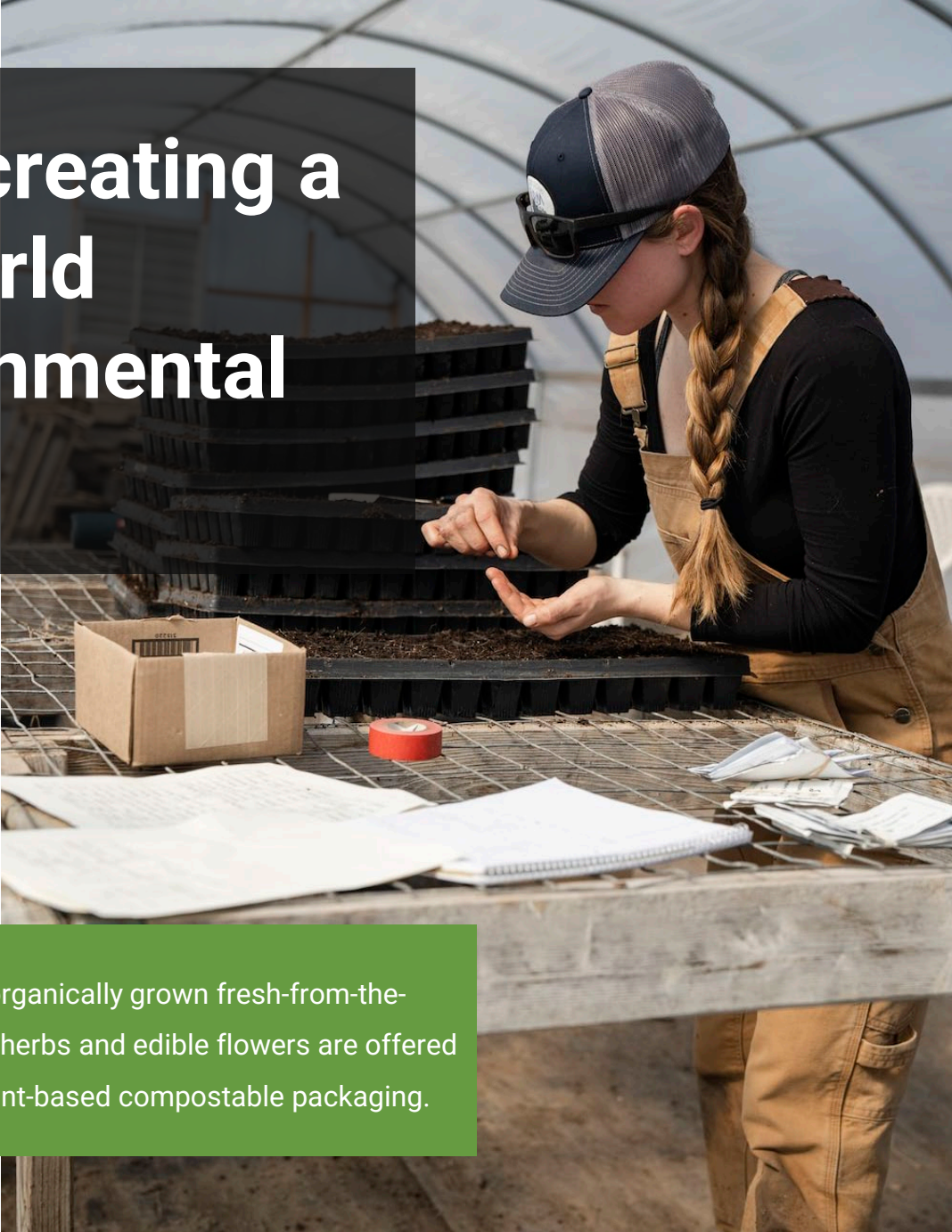
I want to assure you that Unity Environmental University's commitment to McKay Farm and Research station remains steadfast. During the last fiscal year, we invested over \$12,800.00 in maintenance as part of our \$275,600.00 financial contribution to the McKay Farm and Research Station budget. This year we will be focusing on a successful USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program Audit which will help increase market access and our new state of Maine certified apprenticeship program.

With Pride,



Dr. Melik Peter Khoury  
President/CEO, Unity Environmental University



A woman with a long braid, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, tan overalls, a grey baseball cap, and sunglasses, is working in a greenhouse. She is focused on a black seedling tray filled with soil, using her hands to carefully place or adjust the seedlings. The greenhouse structure is visible in the background, with its curved metal frame and translucent covering. On the wooden workbench in front of her, there is a cardboard box, a roll of red tape, and some papers.

**Committed to creating a  
sustainable world  
through environmental  
stewardship**

## **McKay Farm and Research Station**

Gifted to Unity in 2013 from Isabel McKay and Rick Thompson, the farm is the University's greenhouse and field facility in Thorndike, Maine. Certified by Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), the five greenhouses and multi-acre production field showcase the next generation of sustainable agriculture. In addition to offering value-added services including contract growing and rental space in its greenhouses and fields, it is a working production farm whose herbs and produce are sold in local grocery stores

Our organically grown fresh-from-the-farm herbs and edible flowers are offered in plant-based compostable packaging.

# Year in Review

## 3 Partnerships

Collaborative partnerships developed to offer our herbs and produce to new audiences.

## 2,380 Pounds

Non-profit Veggies for All gleaned tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers for distribution in local food pantries.

## 30 Renters

Supporting farmers with year-round greenhouse and field space rentals.





# NOW SOLD IN STORES

## FRESH ORGANIC CULINARY HERBS & EDIBLE FLOWERS



Peppermint

Sage

Chives

Spearmint

Salad Burnet

Chervil

Oregano

Garlic Chives

Summer Cilantro

Leaf Celery

Dill

Marjoram

Genovese Basil

Culinary Lavender

Roselle

Cilantro

French Tarragon

Red Shiso

Lemongrass

Spicy Flowers

Rosemary

Thyme

Savory

Lovage

Mild Flowers

# Creating an Impact

The greenhouses at McKay Farm and Research Station allow Maine farmers an early start on their crops through the farm's rental services, a few shared their thoughts...

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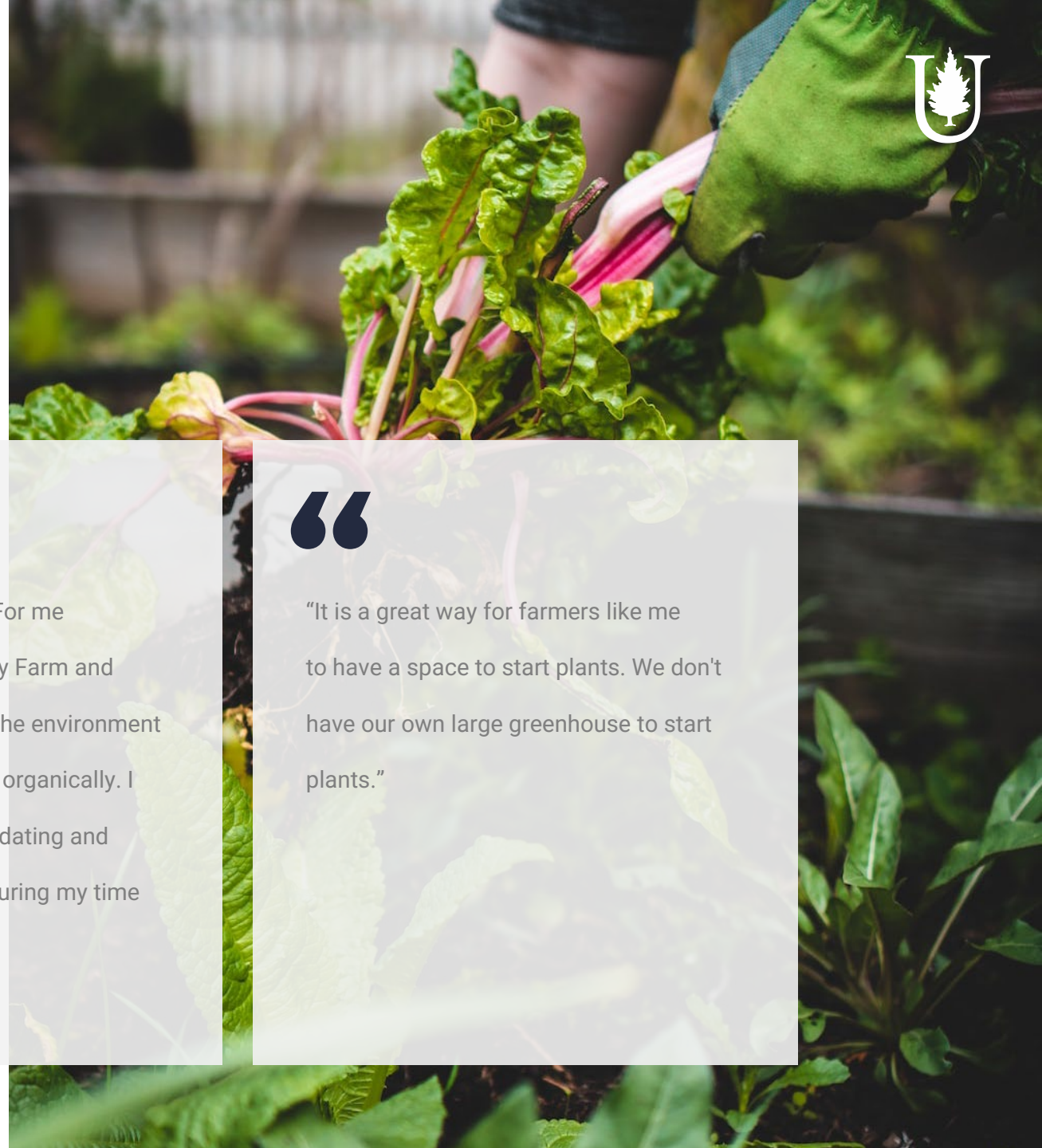
“McKay Farm and Research Station is a vital community resource. Many young farmers use it as their greenhouse space to start their season. Many community members who garden only for themselves use it to start their season.”

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“It's a wonderful resource. For me personally, renting at McKay Farm and Research Station gave me the environment I needed to grow my plants organically. I appreciated how accommodating and responsive the staff were during my time at the greenhouses.”

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“It is a great way for farmers like me to have a space to start plants. We don't have our own large greenhouse to start plants.”





# Partner Highlight: *Cultivating Community*

“Cultivating Community’s New American Sustainable Agriculture Project greatly benefited from our partnership. We were short staffed earlier this season and were unable to manage a good portion of our seedlings production as we have done in past years. Jeffrey and the farm was wonderful to work with. Farmers in our program were very pleased with the quality of the seedlings, and little steps like applying fish fertilizer helped ensure a healthy seedling crop. The weekly updates and very clear and organized recordkeeping also aided in developing a strong and trusting relationship with McKay Farm and Research Station.”

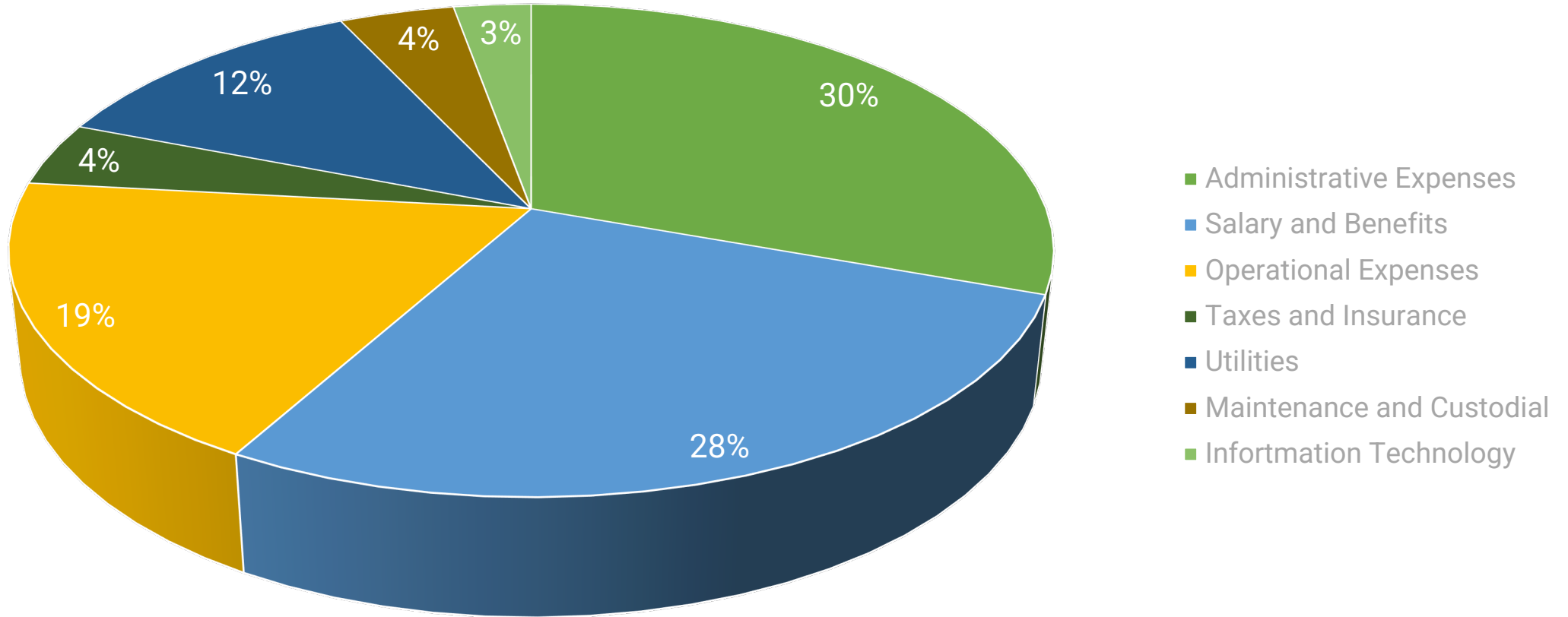
Sandy Alles

Cultivating Community, Director of the Food Hub



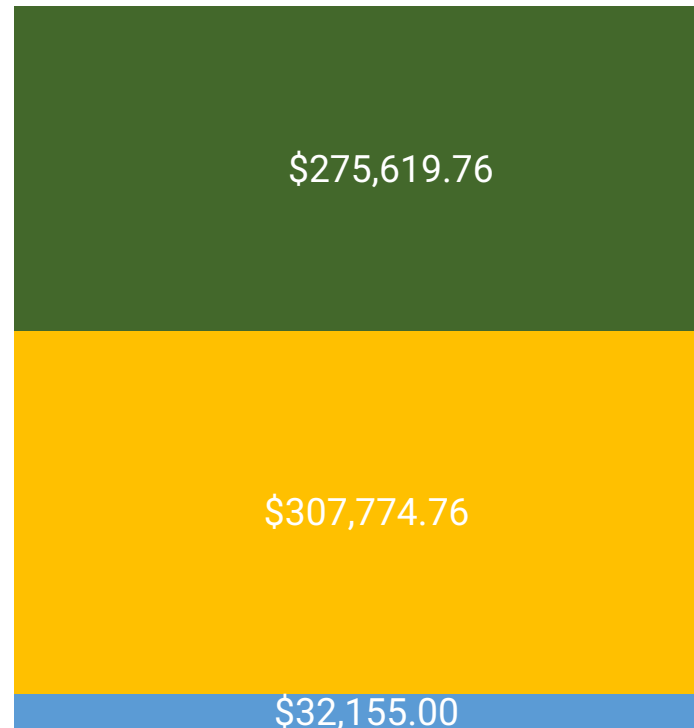


# 2022- 2023 Expense Allocations



# 2022 – 2023 Revenue, Expense & the University's Financial Commitment

■ Revenue   ■ Expenses   ■ University's Financial Commitment





# 2023-2024

## The Year Ahead



### **GAP AUDIT**

USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program will increase market access and verify use of sound agricultural and food safety practices.



### **MARKET EXPANSION**

Increase growing operations and expand wholesale operations beyond the distributor model through direct to market methods.



### **APPRENTICESHIPS**

The only approved Farmer Apprenticeship in the state, certified by the Maine Apprenticeship Program (MAP). This formal, industry-led, nationally-recognized, workforce training program to be launched Fall 2023, combining Unity education courses with on-the-job agricultural training.

A photograph showing two students working in a greenhouse. One student in a blue shirt and black pants is using a long-handled tool to work in a raised garden bed. Another student in a green shirt and blue pants is also working nearby. The greenhouse has a high, arched metal frame with translucent panels. The ground is covered with soil and small green plants.

# PREPARING STUDENTS FOR A SUCCESFULL FUTURE

The new Vice President of Hybrid Learning and Sustainable Ventures is leaning into the Farm as a living learning lab for our students with the first course Plant Identification occurring this September. There is also an abundance of interest in student work to learn more about sustainable agriculture practices.

Courses and student work  
return to McKay Farm and  
Research Station in 2023-2024





