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# SUNSETTING THE PATH FORWARD

## THE PATH FORWARD ORIGINATION

In May 2019, following a thorough and collaborative review process, the University's Board of Trustees formally adopted a new strategic framework designed to guide Unity's development over the next five years. This plan was the culmination of a comprehensive evaluation of the institution's needs, priorities, and opportunities, aligning Unity's long-term vision with the ever-evolving higher education landscape. The strategic framework set forth key objectives aimed at enhancing the University's mission-driven education while responding to external pressures and positioning Unity for continued success.

Building on the success of previous initiatives, particularly the 2014-2019 "Building a Beacon" plan, the new strategy reinforced Unity's commitment to its core values. The "Building a Beacon" initiative laid a strong foundation by promoting academic excellence, fostering innovation, and enhancing student support systems. The 2019 plan aimed to further these efforts while adapting to new challenges in the areas of financial sustainability, enrollment management, and the rapidly changing demands of the job market.

The adoption of the 2019 plan marked a pivotal moment for the University. In the face of increasing financial pressures and shifting market trends in higher education, it was essential to chart a course that balanced academic rigor with fiscal responsibility. The strategic framework addressed these concerns by implementing initiatives designed to diversify revenue streams, optimize operational efficiency, and expand access to high-demand programs, all while staying true to Unity's mission of providing an exceptional, mission-focused educational experience.

As we approach the conclusion of this strategic period, it is important to reflect on the accomplishments achieved under this framework and the lessons learned. The University has demonstrated resilience and adaptability, successfully navigating the challenges posed by the external environment. The Board of Trustees' leadership in adopting this forward-thinking plan has ensured that Unity remains well-positioned for future growth and innovation, while continuing to serve as a beacon of mission-driven education.

## THE PATH FORWARD IMPLEMENTATION

The Path Forward strategic implementation plan centered on three key goals designed to propel the University toward sustainable growth and increased visibility. These goals emphasized a deeper understanding of the audience for the University's products and services, the development of a strong supporting infrastructure, and the effective communication of both successes and challenges to a broader

network. This plan provided a roadmap for aligning resources and efforts to achieve these objectives while enhancing the University's impact and reach.

#### GOAL 1: SERVE AUDIENCES THROUGH ENGAGEMENT WITH UNITY COLLEGE AND ITS MISSION

In implementing The Path Forward, we explored seven distinctive approaches designed to attract and engage various audiences, each of which catered to different demographic needs and interests. These approaches were developed to respond to evolving educational demands, build flexible and scalable infrastructures, and address national trends. While some efforts succeeded in reaching their intended audiences, others did not yield the anticipated results. This reflection highlights both our accomplishments and areas for improvement as we move forward.

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##### ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE APPROACH

This approach primarily targeted place-bound learners seeking baccalaureate degrees through distance education. Since 2019, this method has seen continuous enrollment increases, attributed to several factors such as expanded program offerings, increased brand recognition, growing consumer demand for online education, and the high quality of Unity's programs and support services. Over this period, we launched 26 new undergraduate programs, of which 10 have been sunset. These included innovative degrees like the BS in Environmental Geospatial Technologies and BS in Environmental Justice and Social Change. The ability to add majors was granted in 2020 when the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) awarded the University general approval to offer distance education program within the scope of our mission. Additionally, we streamlined business processes, enabling us to develop and launch new programs within 12 weeks. Press releases and online media have played a crucial role in communicating the value of these programs (see Goal 3). For graduate learners, we launched 31 new graduate programs, sunsetting 15, and received approval from NECHE to offer Master of Science degrees alongside our existing Master of Professional Science degrees. At this time, we also received general approval to offer new Masters level programming based on Unity's analysis of market demand and without additional permission from NECHE. We also saw organic growth in our military-affiliated student population, expanding from 58 veterans and dependents in 2019 to 788 annually due to the flexibility and affordability of our programs.

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##### TRADITIONAL RESIDENTIAL APPROACH

At the start of this strategic planning period, we made the difficult decision to sunset the Flagship residential program. Students in this program were given the option to complete their Flagship degrees through tailored completion plans and finish their degrees by December 2020 or May 2021. Those with fewer earned credits were transitioned to Hybrid Learning with individualized academic plans. While the Flagship model was phased out, we ensured that students had the opportunity to complete double majors and minors where feasible. As of December 2024, the final remaining Flagship student will graduate, officially marking the conclusion of this once-significant program.

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#### ACCELERATED HYBRID APPROACH

The Hybrid Learning approach was designed for baccalaureate learners seeking the flexibility of online learning coupled with immersive residential experiences, structured around a year-round academic calendar. Located at the Unity residential campus, this program offered face-to-face courses supplemented by robust online equivalents. However, despite an initial enrollment of 493 students, primarily former Flagship students, Hybrid Learning failed to maintain viability on a 224 acre campus with multiple residence halls, classroom and office buildings, dining commons, theater venue, and athletic facilities. Ultimately, enrollment declined to fewer than 200 students in 2024. The program struggled to attract new audiences and was therefore closed, with remaining students given the option to complete their Hybrid Learning degrees or transfer to Distance Education or In-Person Education. It remains unclear whether the program's decline was due to a lack of audience or negative perceptions surrounding the model.

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#### LOCATION-BASED APPROACH

This model centers on in-person education co-located within existing ecosystems, leveraging local economies while delivering services absent from the system, such as higher education. Unity Environmental University is the exclusive provider of higher education at the Pineland Farm Campus in New Gloucester. Here Unity offers in-person programs with hands-on experiences and collaborative learning environments, with options for online learning. The approach aims to serve flexible learners, rural residents, and those with incomplete degrees from other institutions. Requirement of 15 in-person credit hours per year and mandatory internships or capstone projects ensure a career-ready educational experience with an emphasis on soft skill development. Currently the program primarily enrolls 18-22-year-olds and is working to attract adult learners, which remains an area for further development.

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#### SKILL BUILDER APPROACH

This approach targeted pre-baccalaureate learners seeking career-ready skills through Associate degrees and microcredentials. While these programs, like the Associate of Applied Science in Veterinary Technology and Data Analytics, were approved by NECHE for competency-based education, they have been banked for future consideration due to challenges in launching new technical programs. Efforts in this area have been paused while the University focuses on other priorities.

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#### BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS APPROACH

This approach focuses on non-credit and workforce development opportunities to provide third party verified credentials for specialized training modules. During this strategic plan period, we developed a limited number of digital badges in collaboration with partner organizations. Although this initiative has yet to reach its full potential, it represents a promising area for growth in the next strategic plan as we continue to explore new business partnership models.

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## SUSTAINABLE VENTURES APPROACH

This final approach involved launching businesses targeting non-educational consumers, including operations like Sky Lodge, McKay Farm & Research Center, and the Unity Store. These ventures have faced challenges, particularly in recovering from the pandemic and managing staffing issues. Despite these setbacks, they continue to offer products, services, and experiences that align with Unity's mission of promoting financial, social, and environmental sustainability, and we intend to carry these efforts forward into future strategic planning phases.

## GOAL 2: ESTABLISH UNITY COLLEGE AS AN ENTERPRISE APPROACH ORGANIZATION

To support Unity's strategic initiatives, we have built centralized enterprise services that address the critical areas of organizational structure, governance, policy, personnel, and technology. We also redefined and confirmed the nomenclature as well as functional areas and unit structures. This work was predicated on Unity's commitment to the executive model, one in which a leadership decision-making approach is employed in place of a community approach to decision-making. To further establish the executive model, a new University-wide Task Group structure was instituted to collect feedback to inform decisions and endow Task Group Chairs with decision making authority within their scope. This approach eliminates the need for voting as feedback is collected and decisions are made by the recognized decision maker. This methodology was further solidified by the creation of Role, Scope, and Authority documents delineating the responsibilities of the functional area heads and Strategic Educational Business Units (SEBU) heads with respect to key decision points. RSA's for six of the ten functional areas have been completed.

Throughout this period, we adopted new procedures for policy formation, review, and management, which strengthened the clarity and consistency of our governance. Foundational documents were developed for each SEBU describing their summary parameters and guiding principles. New budgeting, general ledger, and operational processes were introduced. This provided for further differentiation among SEBUs such as distinct tuition based on characteristics such as SEBU affiliation and course modality.

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## ACCREDITATION AND COMPLIANCE

Throughout our enrollment growth, Unity has consistently met or exceeded regulatory requirements during various compliance reviews and accreditation visits, demonstrating our commitment to operational excellence and growth. These successful evaluations underscore the university's ability to adapt to expanding student needs, while maintaining the highest standards in education, governance, and financial practices.

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## TIMELINE OF COMPLIANCE AND ACCREDITATION EVENTS:

Late 2019: Maine State Approving Agency conducts a location visit to New Gloucester to evaluate the potential for establishing a distinct satellite/branch location. Establishment of new branch location was approved.

2021: Year-long Department of Defense Compliance Survey is conducted. Four items were identified for a corrective action plan and all four were addressed with supporting evidence.

June 2021: Regular Department of Veterans Affairs Compliance Survey is completed. Compliance standards were met.

July 2022: Regular Department of Veterans Affairs Compliance Survey is completed. Compliance standards were met.

October 2022: NECHE completes a 10-year accreditation visit. Unity was provided with continued accreditation as it was found to not only meet but, in some cases, exceed the standards of accreditation. An interim report is to be submitted by August 15, 2027, with the next comprehensive evaluation scheduled for Fall 2032.

April 2023: Department of Veterans Affairs and Maine State Approving Agency conduct a risk-based survey, prompted by a significant increase in beneficiaries and change in location. Minor findings were found regarding process timing, and all were addressed by the University.

June 2023: Department of Homeland Security conducts a site visit prompted by Unity's name and location change. All DHS requirements were met.

August 2023: Department of Education conducts a program review, driven by overall growth in enrollment and funding. Two minor findings were identified regarding separation of duties and Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) reporting. Both findings were addressed and accepted by the DOE.

August 2023: Bangor Savings Bank performs a review, prompted by private communications with the bank's governing board. No findings were discovered and the reviewers were complementary about our business practices.

May 2024: Department of Veterans Affairs completes a compliance survey, following Unity's growth and changes in name and location. Minor findings regarding certification and withdrawal notification were discovered and addressed.

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## EVOLUTION AS A UNIVERSITY

In 2021, NECHE approved our request to designate Pineland Farms in New Gloucester, Maine, as Unity's main campus, transitioning the Unity, Maine campus to an instructional location. This strategic move

involved the relocation of our headquarters, including comprehensive relocation incentives for employees to ensure operational continuity. As part of this transition, we placed the Unity, Maine campus on the market and no students remain on that campus. Furthermore, Unity was reclassified in 2022 by the Carnegie Classification System, transitioning from a Baccalaureate College to a Master’s College & University. Our Size and Setting classification was also updated, recognizing our growing population of distance education students with the designation of “primarily nonresidential.”

In recognition of our growth as an institution, we officially changed our name to Unity Environmental University in 2023. This new designation was officially recognized by key compliance authorities, including the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), the U.S. Department of Education, and the Maine Department of Education. The name change reflects the institution's evolving mission and commitment to environmental education, ensuring alignment with its strategic goals and regulatory requirements.

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**INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

To enhance teaching, learning, and administrative functions, we completed a series of key infrastructure improvements. Notable renovations include remodeling our headquarters at Pineland Farms including Yarmouth Hall, Raymond Hall, and Freeport Hall. Each project was designed to improve educational spaces and accommodate growing needs while maintaining state of the art ergonomic conditions. Hyflex learning capabilities were also expanded, with every classroom at Pineland Farms and Sky Lodge now equipped to support flexible learning models.

Table 1. Summary of Key Renovation Projects

Year Start	Year End	Project	Square Footage	Cost
2019	2019	Founders Hall South Renovation	3,200	\$253,501
2022	2022	Yarmouth Hall Renovation	9,377	\$559,162
2022	2023	Raymond Hall Additional Suite Renovations	6,863	\$408,339
2022	2023	Freeport Hall Renovation	33,326	\$3,294,592
2023	2024	Sky Lodge Structural Improvements	17,000	\$617,971
2024	2024	Freeport Hall Media Room	734	55,629
2021	2025	Hyflex Technologies in 10 classrooms and 2 laboratories	7,672	\$683,927
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>78,172</b>	<b>\$5,464,782</b>

In addition to physical infrastructure improvements, we implemented Stratus, a state-of-the-art information system designed to manage constituent data and support Unity’s digital transformation. This initiative leverages advanced technology to enhance the experiences of our students, partners, and clients, both now and in the future. Students can now apply through an application portal that transitions into a student information portal upon their first class registration. SEBU-specific employees use Stratus to nurture and admit students, while Enterprise employees manage student records, communications,

financial aid, and billing processes. Stratus integrates with key systems like PowerFAIDS for financial aid and Canvas for instruction, streamlining the student life cycle from application to graduation and beyond.

The launch of Stratus presented several challenges. Built on the Education Cloud, a brand-new product for our implementation partners, the implementation required significant adaptation. Our employees had to learn and operate within this new system simultaneously, which added to the complexity. Additionally, we encountered numerous bugs in the initial build that required prompt resolution. Despite these hurdles, the transition has ultimately positioned us to better serve our students, partners, and clients.

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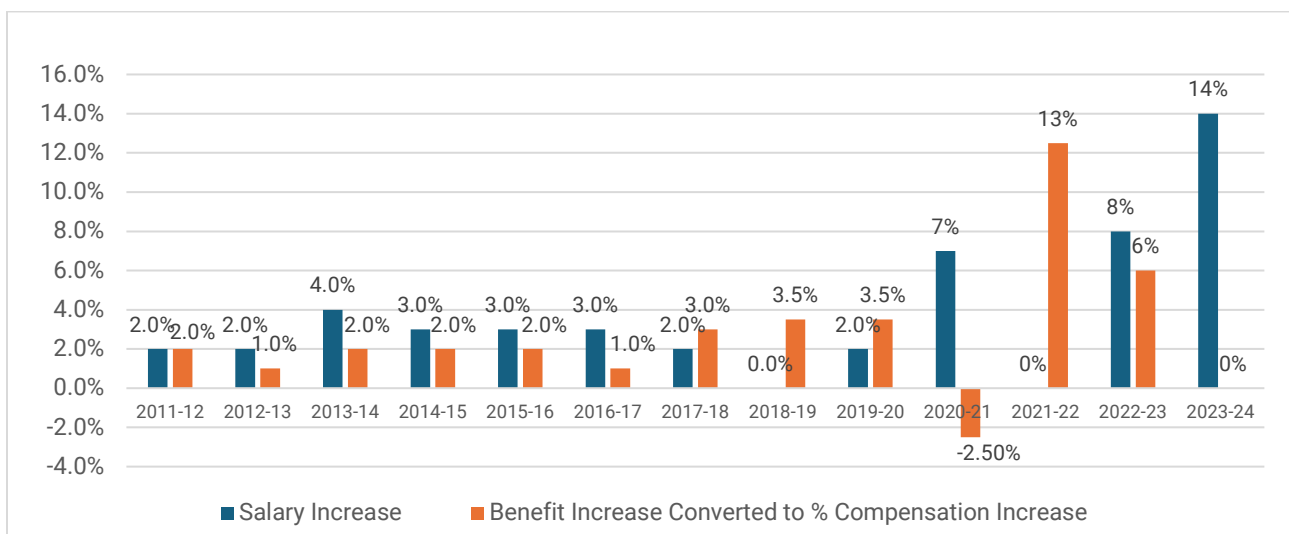
## HUMAN TALENT

To further our digital transformation, in 2021, we launched Paycom, a comprehensive Human Resource Information System (HRIS) aligned with our Enterprise Model, enabling seamless integration with financial and benefit systems across all 50 states. This allowed us to automate employee enrollment, streamline tax processes, and improve reporting capabilities.

Our efforts to enhance recruitment efficiency resulted in a 33% reduction in time-to-hire for full-time positions. Our investment in LinkedIn Recruiter allowed us to adopt a sales-driven approach, reaching passive candidates more effectively. We also implemented innovative solutions like cohort-based hiring for temporary staff, allowing us to assess potential candidates.

The University has made sustained efforts to increase compensation packages for all employees. Despite rising healthcare costs, this institution continues to increase investment in employee salaries and benefits (Figure 1). In 2022 we completed a salary benchmarking analysis using data from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). This work revealed that the majority of our staff and faculty positions met or exceeded CUPA values. We adjusted salaries of the few employees that were found to be below the median

Figure 1. Employee Salary and Benefits Over Time



In our holistic approach to improving overall compensation over the last decade, we have also consistently raised our maximum employer match on the 403(b) plan, most recently in 2022 by 2% (from 6% to 8% match). In addition to these initiatives, we have awarded all benefits-eligible employees with bonuses between the annual salary increases, offered employee relocation stipends, and absorbed most of the cost increases to our benefits packages (Table 1, AY 19-20 is not reported due to its anomaly as there were no changes during the initial pandemic year).

Table 1. Changes to Employee Benefits Over a Three-Year Period

AY 20-21	Medical	3% percent increase in premiums. Unity College did not increase the percentage that the employee pays
	PTO	Decreased PTO by 5 days during COVID-19
	Retirement	No change
	Compensation	We provided an average bonus of \$1,500 during a planned deficit year
AY 21-22	Medical	6.5% increase in premiums. Unity College did not increase the percentage that the employee pays. We also increased the benefits contribution for our auxiliary staff
	PTO	Restored 5 days of PTO. Added a 3-day Sustainability Break
	Retirement	We increased the retirement match for our auxiliary staff
	Compensation	We provided an average of \$5,000 in bonuses
AY 22-23	Medical	We received a 4% reduction from a new provider, and we passed that savings on to the employee
	PTO	We increased the number of holidays for our auxiliary staff
	Retirement	Added 2% increase to maximum match
	Compensation	We completed a compensation study through recent CUPA HR data and found that our salary ranges were at the median or higher for institutions our size and larger. For the few positions that were outside of that range, we made salary adjustments. We also did salary increases based on our growth, and we provided an average of an 8.12% increase for our employees. We took an equitable approach where the salaries that were at the lower range, were given a higher percentage, and the highly compensated positions were provided at least a 3% increase.
AY 23-24	Medical	While we faced a 6.95% increase in costs, we absorbed the entire increase, ensuring that there were no changes to the benefits offered to our employees.
	PTO	We awarded 3 additional sustainability days, as a way to recognize the additional work that put in for the Stratus launch.
	Retirement	There was no change to retirement benefits
	PTO	We awarded 4 additional sustainability days, as a way to recognize the additional work that put in for the Stratus launch.

Additionally, we made significant progress in increasing diversity across the organization, with full-time employee diversity rising by 319% and adjunct faculty diversity by 314%, alongside improvements in the representation of veterans, individuals with disabilities, and gender diversity. While these percentage gains are impressive, we recognize that there is still significant work to be done in bringing more racial diversity to Maine. Additionally, we have made notable strides in increasing representation of individuals with disabilities, veterans, and gender diversity, reflecting our commitment to weaving Diversity & Inclusion into every aspect of our HR practices.

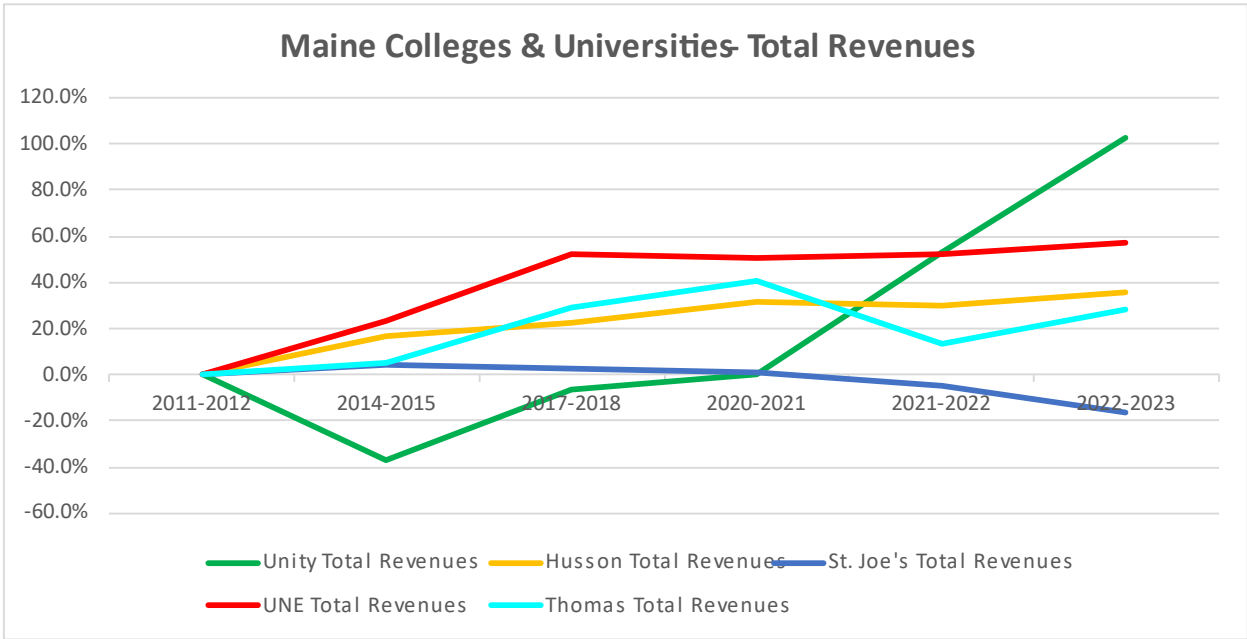


Unity Environmental University's faculty model differs from traditional institutions by disaggregating faculty roles into six specialized positions: Knowledge Brokers, Subject Matter Experts, Instructors, Academic Deans, Advisors, and Instructional Designers. Rather than having faculty manage all aspects of teaching, advising, curriculum development, and research, Unity distributes these responsibilities across distinct roles. This allows each faculty member to focus on their area of expertise, improving efficiency, enhancing student support, and ensuring high-quality, intentionally designed learning experiences. This specialized model not only enhances the ability to meet students' needs but also increases advising accuracy, reduces costs for students, and ensures that career goals are met in a timely manner. Furthermore, it allows Unity to intentionally design learning experiences that emphasize accessibility and knowledge generation. The disaggregated roles create a system where authority and responsibility are clearly defined, which improves responsiveness and allows faculty to leverage their strengths in a more targeted way than the traditional faculty model.

**GOAL 3: SHARE THE STORY OF UNITY COLLEGE THROUGH POWERFUL STORYTELLING AND INSPIRING THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP**

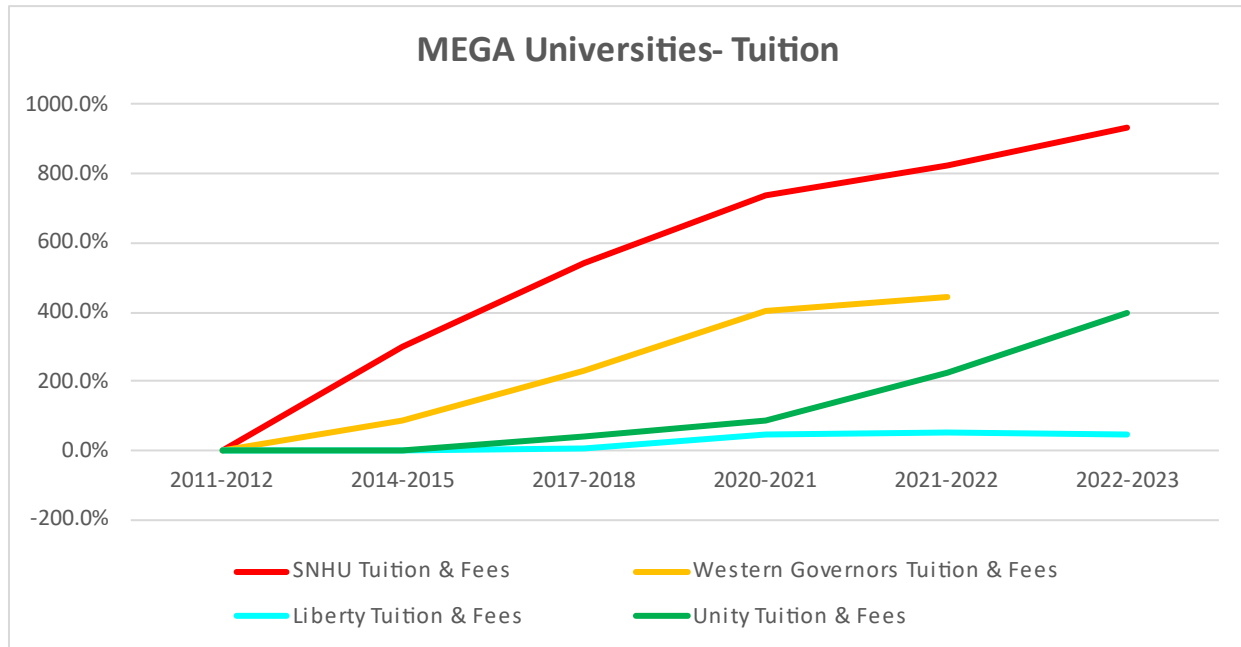
Through press releases, online media, and thought-leadership initiatives, Unity conveyed its story of continued growth amidst challenges faced by many institutions of higher education. Unity’s ability to offer flexible, affordable programs allowed it to expand its student base while reinforcing its position as a leader in environmental and sustainability education. The narrative of Unity College into Unity Environmental University, especially in contrast to the struggles faced by other universities, is compelling. While many institutions are experiencing stagnation or decline, our enrollments continue to rise as students recognize the value of our flexible and affordable programs (Figure 2).

Figure 2. A revenue comparison among Maine College and Universities



In fact, our growth trajectory resembles that of the large, online universities (Figure 3). Further evidence that we are reaching new audiences and enhancing brand awareness.

Figure 3. A revenue comparison among large online universities




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## AWARENESS AND OUTREACH

The strategic plan focused on building Unity’s brand and public presence by sharing the university’s mission of sustainability and resilience. As part of our NECHE comprehensive evaluation, Unity updated its mission and vision statements to better reflect our commitment to sustainability science and the evolving purpose of our institution to consider the learners beyond the traditional college demographic profile.

**Mission:** We are dedicated to delivering quality education and experiences that produce outstanding environmentally competent professionals and inspire individuals from all walks of life to steward sustainable ecosystems.

**Vision:** A multifaceted organization recognized as the thought leader in global ecological, economic, and societal solutions.

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## BRAND AND COMMUNICATION

In conjunction with our new name, the Branding Guidelines were updated with new logos reflecting our SEBU structure and evolution as a University. During this time period, we also conducted an extensive assessment, analysis, and summary report on Unity’s brand equity. The analysis revealed that our unique programs are attracting attention more than the Unity brand name itself.

Most recently the institution has garnered significant attention for initiatives promoting affordability and accessibility in higher education. The press has recognized our efforts to serve as a model for other institutions of higher learning and here are some key articles of note that highlight these efforts.

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#### NATIONAL NEWS STORIES

Inside Higher Ed reported on the story of Unity Environmental University with a focus on Distance Education. It uses experts to help tell our story in the full context of the current state of higher education. This story typically ranks number one overall in the Google search news section, making it a great beacon for people looking to learn more about us through the media.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/tech-innovation/teaching-learning/2024/07/08/unity-environmentals-online-pivot-continues-pay>

Another Inside Higher Ed article describes how Unity’s environmentally focused programs are accessible to students nationwide and the institution has capitalized on the growing demand for such fields, attracting a diverse student body. It recognizes that while online education is a competitive market, Unity has found success by focusing on its unique environmental niche and adapting to the evolving needs of students.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/tech-innovation/digital-teaching-learning/2023/06/16/online-pivot-pays-unity-environmental>

PBS flew a crew to Maine to cover the changes happening at Unity at a critical time in the institution’s transformation. This aired on PBS throughout the country reaching tens-of-millions on-air, and online.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/record-enrollment-at-maine-college-offering-diverse-learning-options-post-pandemic>

This one-on-one interview with Dr. Khoury helped tell his story and the University’s story through one of the top national educational media outlets.

<https://universitybusiness.com/why-an-environmental-college-is-branching-out-exploring-online>

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#### LOCAL NEWS STORIES

The Bangor Daily News continues to report one-sided news stories about the University. The story linked below is a good example as it started as a story where Unity was asked to “react” to the recent change.org petition calling for an investigation into the university after the reporter got a “tip” from our alumni. Through University efforts to educate the reporter and editor, the published story was fair and accurate.

<https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/07/09/midcoast/unity-environmental-university-online-pivot>

This is one of the many articles that appeared in the weeks following Unity’s name augmentation. This is another example of the importance of ensuring reporters were educated on where Unity stands within the context of higher education today. The final report was a fair and accurate picture of the University.

<https://www.centralmaine.com/2023/02/28/unity-college-continues-transformation-with-name-augmentation>

This was one of the first articles to come from a Maine-based media company that truly told the Unity story. <https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/unity-college-slashes-tuition-sets-enrollment-record>

When Unity announced it was keeping DE tuition flat and raising the minimum wage it made it into several media outlets including WMTW ABC 8, Maine Biz and this story from WGME where a reporter came to Pineland for an in-person television interview with Dr. Khoury.

<https://wgme.com/news/local/unity-environmental-university-announces-50000-minimum-wage-full-time-employees-online-maine-college-janitor-admissions>

Maine Public featured Dr. Khoury as a top panelist alongside the President of UMaine.

<https://www.mainepublic.org/show/maine-calling/2022-05-11/maine-colleges-and-universities-find-innovative-approaches-to-higher-education>

The announcement of Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson as the 2025 commencement speaker generated lots of media coverage.

<https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/famed-astronomer-tyson-will-visit-portland-to-deliver-unity-commencement-speech>

## THE PATH FORWARD BY THE NUMBERS

### GEOGRAPHIC REACH

The university significantly expanded its geographic reach during this period. The total number of states represented by the student body increased from 35 to 52, while the number of countries represented rose from 1 to 22. This highlights the success of the university's efforts to attract a more diverse and geographically dispersed student population through its online and hybrid learning programs.

Geographic Date	2012-13	2019-2020	2023-2024
<b>Total Institution Count of Represented States</b>	35	51	52
<b>Flagship Count of Represented States</b>	35	32	N/A
<b>Distance Education Count of Represented States</b>	N/A	51	52
<b>Hybrid Learning Count of Represented States</b>	N/A	N/A	36
<b>Total Institution Count of Represented Countries</b>	1	8	22
<b>Flagship Count of Represented Countries</b>	1	2	N/A
<b>Distance Education Count of Represented Countries</b>	N/A	6	22
<b>Hybrid Learning Count of Represented Countries</b>	N/A	N/A	1

### STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Unity Environmental University experienced substantial growth in student enrollment. Total unduplicated headcount climbed from 1,456 in 2019-2020 to 9,106 in 2023-2024, indicating the successful implementation of new programs and approaches to reach broader audiences.

	2012-13	2019-2020	2023-2024
<b>Flagship</b>	559	699	N/A
<b>Distance Education Baccalaureate</b>		534	7980
<b>Distance Education Graduate</b>		225	977
<b>Hybrid Learning</b>		-	197
<b>Technical Institute</b>		-	0
<b>Total Institution</b>	559	1456	9106

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

The average age of students increased from 25 in 2019-2020 to 29 in 2023-2024, reflecting a greater proportion of non-traditional students seeking undergraduate and graduate degrees.

Baccalaureate Age Ranges	2012-13	2019-2020	2023-2024
<b>&lt;20</b>	286	285	360
<b>20-30</b>	259	818	5225
<b>31-40</b>	8	89	1783
<b>41-50</b>	5	26	586
<b>&gt;50</b>	0	10	151
<b>Unknown</b>	1	2	24
Graduate Age Ranges	2012-13	2019-2020	2023-2024
<b>&lt;20</b>	N/A	1	0
<b>20-30</b>	N/A	138	533
<b>31-40</b>	N/A	44	259
<b>41-50</b>	N/A	27	111
<b>&gt;50</b>	N/A	6	51
<b>Unknown</b>	N/A	6	23
Average Age	2012-13	2019-2020	2023-2024
<b>Distance Education Baccalaureate</b>	N/A	27	29
<b>Distance Education Graduate</b>	N/A	31	32
<b>Hybrid Learning</b>	N/A	N/A	24
<b>Flagship</b>	21	21	N/A
<b>Total Institution</b>	21	25	29

The percentage of first-generation students increased to 31% in 2023-2024, demonstrating the university's commitment to providing access to higher education for students from underrepresented backgrounds.

First Generation Students	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>Total Institution - Students</b>	195	189	2,565
<b>Total Institution - Percent</b>	35%	16%	31%

## FINANCIAL AID AND AFFORDABILITY

Loan default rates decreased and student eligibility for Alt/Plus Loans declined over the last 5 years.

Loan Default Rate	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>% of Students in Default</b>	8.9	2.6	N/A

% of Aid Eligible Students with Alt/Plus Loans	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>% of Students</b>	11%	11%	2%
<b># of Students</b>	104	238	203

The percentage of students with a zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC) rose to 53% in 2023-24, further highlighting the university's focus on serving students from lower-income backgrounds.

% of Students with \$0 EFC	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>% of Students</b>	27%	32%	53%
<b># of Students</b>	286	386	6,308

## TUITION AND FINANCES

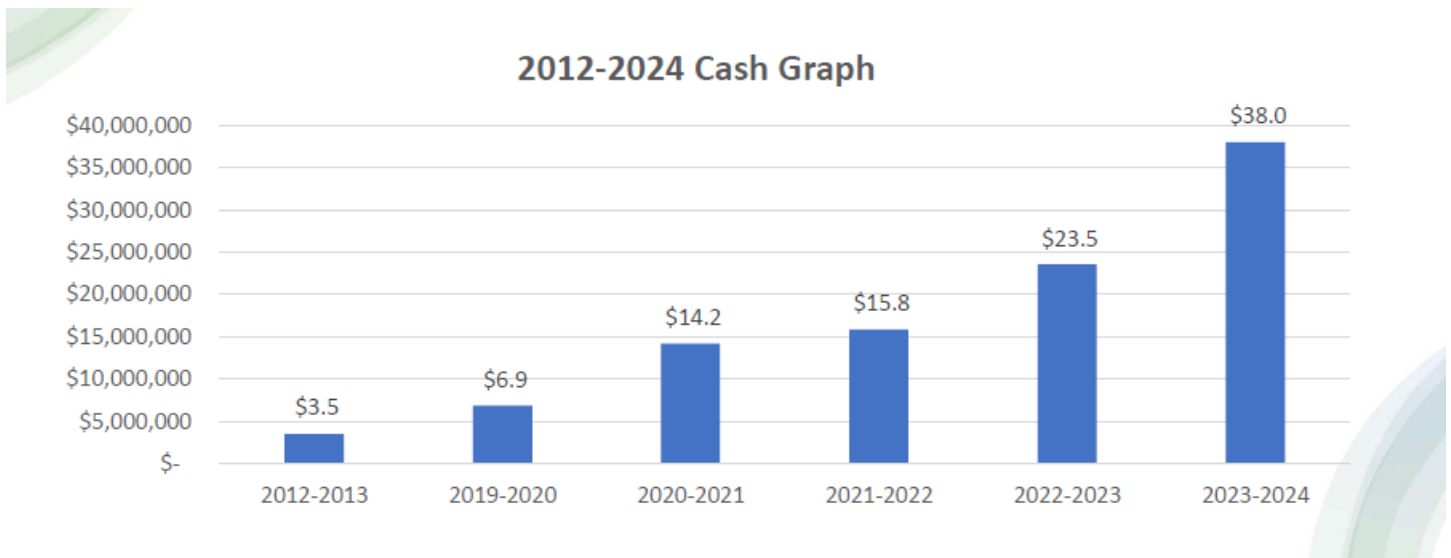
The university maintained affordable tuition rates for its programs.

Average Annual Tuition	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>Flagship, Baccalaureate</b>	\$23,000	\$28,800	N/A
<b>Distance Education, Baccalaureate</b>	N/A	\$11,280	\$11,280
<b>Distance Education, Baccalaureate, Military</b>	N/A	\$10,152	\$10,152
<b>Distance Education, Graduate</b>	N/A	\$13,050	\$9,750
<b>Distance Education, Graduate, Military</b>	N/A	\$11,745	\$8,775
<b>Hybrid Learning, Baccalaureate (in-person)</b>	N/A	N/A	\$13,200
<b>Hybrid Learning, Baccalaureate (online)</b>	N/A	N/A	\$11,280

The institution's total assets increased significantly, from \$52,974,562 in 2019-20 to \$88,176,195 in 2023-24. Annual operating revenue saw considerable growth, reaching \$61,511,876 in 2023-24, compared to \$24,997,085 in 2019-20. This positive financial trend reflects the success of the university's distance education initiative.

Institutional Finances	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24**
Total Assets	\$32,206,978	\$52,974,562	\$88,176,195
Annual Operating Audited Revenue	\$14,218,342	\$22,789,265	\$61,511,876
Annual Operating Audited Expenses	\$12,720,059	\$22,619,206	\$52,401,157
Institutional Endowment	\$14,085,286	\$15,297,089	\$16,587,514
Debt to Asset Ratio	8.30%	31.49%	13.00%
CFI	3.0	2.4	3
* Does not include FASB Lease liability amount.			
** FY2023-24 are estimated/unaudited numbers. Audited numbers will be available after Oct '24			

Year-end cash has increased every year since 2012.



### ACADEMIC PROGRAM GROWTH

The university saw substantial growth in the number of credits generated, rising from 25,311 in 2019-2020 to 119,480 in 2023-2024, a testament to the expansion of its academic program offerings and the increasing student demand for these programs.

Annual Credits Generated	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
Flagship	15,060	18,589	-
Distance Education Baccalaureate	-	4,358	104,062
Distance Education Graduate	-	2,364	11,859
Hybrid Learning	-	-	3,559
<b>Total Institution</b>	<b>15,060</b>	<b>25,311</b>	<b>119,480</b>

The number of credentials awarded annually also increased significantly, reaching 756 in 2023-2024, up from 219 in 2019-2020, highlighting the university's commitment to meeting the educational and career goals of its students.

Credentials Awarded	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
Flagship - Associate's	2	1	N/A
Flagship - Bachelor's	115	159	N/A
Distance Education - Bachelor's	N/A	3	293
Distance Education - Master's	N/A	56	381
Distance Education - Undergraduate Certificate	N/A	0	5
Distance Education - Graduate Certificate	N/A	0	1
Hybrid Learning - Associate's	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hybrid Learning - Bachelor's	N/A	N/A	24
<b>Total</b>	117	219	704

#### STUDENT CAREER DATA

Students are consistently finding employment upon graduation.

Student Career Data	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
# Graduates	117	218	574
# Respondents	32	118	553
% Reporting Employment	25.64%	72.48%	90.30%
% Reporting Continuing Education	0%	0.92%	0.58%
<b>Total Employed + Continuing Education</b>	25.64%	72.48%	90.89%

#### AUXILIARY REVENUES

Auxiliary revenues in most areas declined significantly over the reporting period with the exception of the Unity Store, which experienced a slight increase.

Auxiliary Revenues	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
Sky Lodge	N/A	\$286,103	\$81,810
McKay Farm and Research Station	N/A	\$69,973	\$21,201
Dining	N/A	\$1,555,526	\$223,236
Catering	N/A	\$31,923	N/A
Unity Store	N/A	\$80,158	\$91,711



## REVIEW OF DONATIONS AND GRANTS

All donation types have declined over time.

Donor Type	2012-13	2019-20	2023-24
<b>TRUSTEE - Cash</b>	\$62,919.00	\$9,100.00	\$26,617.00
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>			
<b>EMPLOYEE- Cash</b>	\$14,288.00	\$10,548.00	\$5,061.00
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>			
<b>ALUMNI - Cash</b>	\$8,900.00	\$6,158.00	\$2,352.00
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>			
<b>FOUNDATION - Cash</b>	\$259,637.00	\$357,521.00	\$117,929.00
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>			
<b>OTHER - Cash</b>	\$205,968.00	\$531,011.00	\$40,359.00
<b>Gifts in Kind</b>			
<b>Sub Total of Fundraising</b>	\$551,712.00	\$914,338.00	\$192,318.00

## THE PATH FORWARD LESSONS LEARNED

The completion of the “Path Forward” Strategic Plan marks a significant milestone for Unity Environmental University. We are proud of the progress made and the foundation laid for future growth and success. This plan has enabled us to advance our mission of providing resilient, sustainable education to our diverse audiences. As we reflect on our achievements, it is clear that our strategic positioning has been crucial in gaining a competitive advantage by focusing on the quality of our offerings and the needs of our online learners. The strategic plan "The Path Forward" was successful overall, but with notable areas for improvement.

Key Successes:

1. **Enrollment Growth:** Unity Environmental University experienced a massive increase in enrollment, from 1,456 students in 2019-2020 to 9,106 students in 2023-2024, driven largely by the Asynchronous Online Approach. The expansion of online programs, especially the addition of 26 new undergraduate and 31 new graduate programs, was a key driver of this success.
2. **Geographic Reach:** The university expanded its geographic presence from 35 to 52 U.S. states and from 1 to 22 countries. This is a significant indicator of the institution’s success in broadening its appeal and reaching new, diverse audiences through online learning programs.
3. **Financial Stability:** The institution’s total assets grew from \$52.97 million to \$88.17 million between 2019-2020 and 2023-2024, and annual revenue nearly tripled to \$61.51 million. This financial growth shows that the strategy of shifting to online learning was a strong revenue driver.

4. **Foundation of Enterprise Services:** The establishment of a centralized, executive-driven organizational structure has positioned the University for future successes. This model enhanced decision-making efficiency by empowering key roles with decision authority, thereby streamlining processes across the university, and eliminating the need for traditional community voting systems. This structuring laid a strong foundation for Unity's ability to support its expanding product offerings and student base.
5. **Infrastructure and Digital Transformation:** The implementation of Stratus, a new information system, supported a digital transformation that helped manage the university's expanded student base and to continue scaling with demand. The university also invested significantly in physical infrastructure, including the renovation of its campuses and the expansion of Hyflex learning technologies.
6. **Mission Alignment and Brand Building:** The transition to Unity Environmental University and a refocused mission on sustainability education has resonated with both students and the media. National and local news coverage helped solidify the university's reputation as a leader in flexible, mission-driven education.

#### Key Challenges:

1. **Program Viability:** Not all new approaches were successful. For example, the Accelerated Hybrid Approach saw a significant enrollment decline and was ultimately discontinued. Similarly, the Skill Builder Approach (targeting pre-baccalaureate learners) faced delays and was banked for future consideration.
2. **Decline in Auxiliary Revenues:** Revenues from non-educational ventures like Sky Lodge and McKay Farm saw significant declines, likely due to pandemic-related disruptions and staffing challenges.
3. **Donations and Grants:** While the university saw impressive financial growth overall, donations and grants decreased across most categories, indicating a need for stronger engagement with alumni, trustees, and other potential donors.

Unity's strategic plan can be deemed a success, especially in terms of expanding its online presence, increasing enrollment, and strengthening its financial standing. However, the institution faced challenges with some program models and auxiliary ventures, signaling areas that will require adjustments in future strategic plans. The ability to adapt to shifting higher education trends, particularly by emphasizing flexibility, was a key factor in its achievements.

As we transition from the Path Forward 2025 Strategic Plan to the ideation phase of Strategic Plan 2030 - The Art of the Possible, we recognize the need for continued innovation in tuition-driven higher education. The next decade promises radical transformations, and we must be prepared to adapt. Our focus will be on scaling our Units and Functions, realigning the Enterprise to better support our audiences and subsidiaries, prioritizing investments in our people and infrastructure, and accelerating the development of relevant products to stay ahead of the competition. This proactive approach will

ensure Unity remains a leader in evidence-based, affordable, accessible, and flexible environmental science and sustainability education.

Looking ahead, we anticipate several key trends that will shape the future of higher education by 2030. AI-driven learning will personalize education, tailoring curricula to individual student needs and redefining the classroom experience. The traditional degree model will give way to stackable credentials and micro-certifications, offering more flexible and relevant pathways for learners. The globalization of education will continue, with virtual classrooms breaking down geographical barriers and creating global institutions accessible to students worldwide.

Lifelong learning will become the norm, with continuous education essential for career longevity, positioning higher education as a lifelong partner. Hybrid and remote learning models will dominate, providing the flexibility that modern students demand. Additionally, extended reality (XR) technologies, including augmented, virtual, and mixed reality, will transform education by creating immersive, interactive experiences that enhance learning through virtual labs and real-time simulations. These shifts demand agility and foresight from institutions to remain relevant, and Unity Environmental University is well-positioned to lead these adaptations.