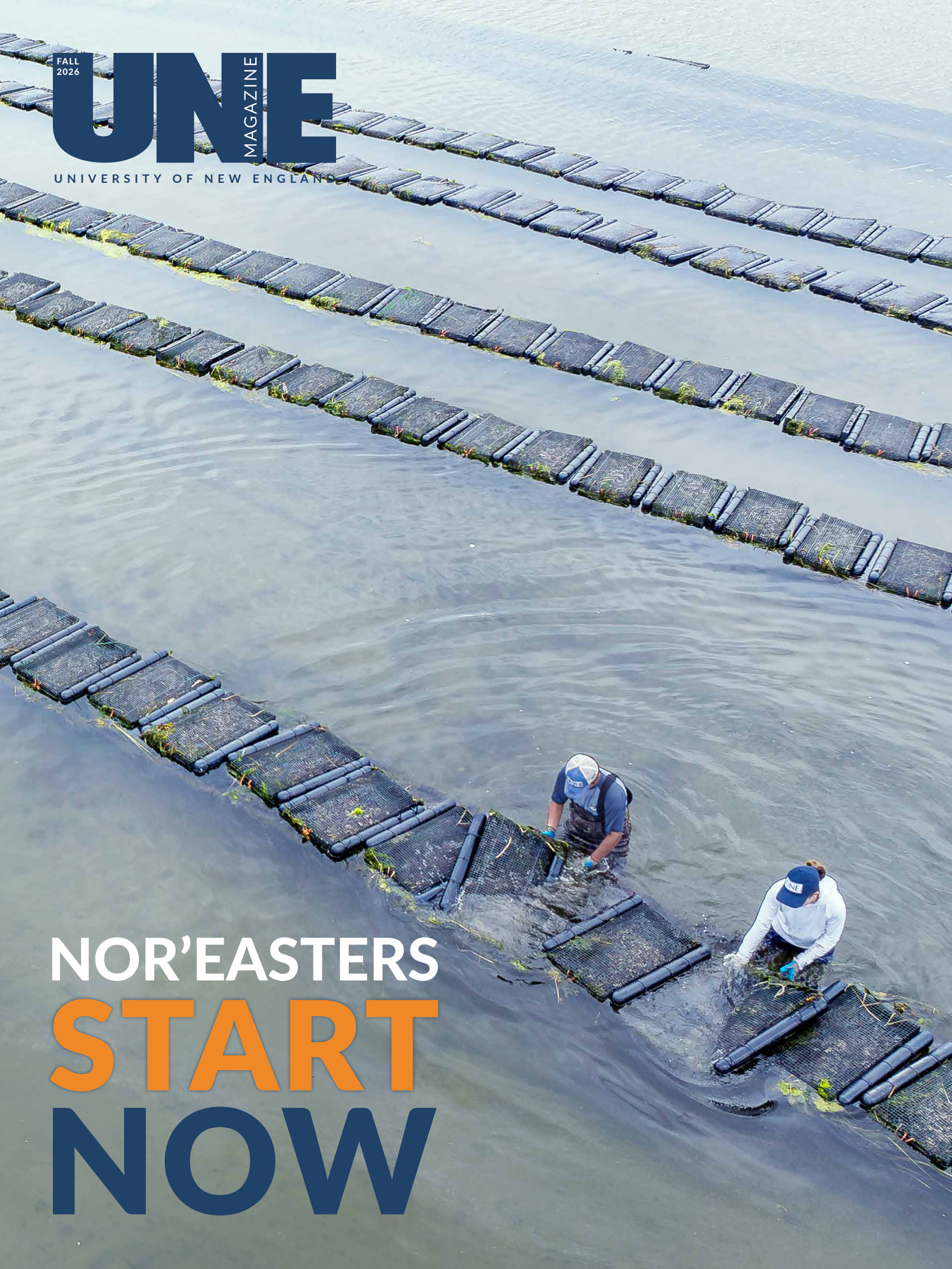
FALL
2026

# UNE MAGAZINE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND



# NOR'EASTERS START NOW



Dear Friends,

At the University of New England, a pattern shows up again and again, in disciplines as different as marine science and dental medicine, in classrooms and clinics and labs alike. Students are not waiting until graduation to become immersed in the fields they're pursuing. They are becoming professionals now, one internship, one clinical rotation, one research project at a time.

That is the story of this year's *UNE Magazine*: Nor'easters Start Now.

For a long time in higher education, we have talked about career readiness as something that happens at the end of a degree: a set of interview tips and resume workshops offered in the final semester before graduation. That idea no longer matches how the world actually works. Employers are not looking for a diploma to tell them a candidate is ready. They want to see their experience, whether in a dental clinic in rural Maine, on the road with an NHL team, in the newsrooms keeping our communities informed, or in a teaching kitchen turning unexpected ingredients into a product real customers will buy.

None of this happens by accident.

It takes the foundational knowledge and skills our faculty and professional staff have spent their careers accruing and are now passing on to the next generation. It takes the social and professional maturity that comes from practice, internships, research, fieldwork, athletics, study abroad, and other engagements that teach a student how to work alongside other people before a job ever requires it. And, increasingly, it takes fluency with new technology, including artificial intelligence — used responsibly and ethically — to enhance efficiency without replacing the thinking a person must do for themself.

It also takes relationships with mentors, alumni, and the employers and clinicians who welcome our students into their workplaces before they have finished being students. Those relationships carry real weight in a market where trusted advice and introductions open doors that a resume, automated screening, and flooded application pool do not. This fall, we formalized that idea with the launch of the Nor'easter Global Network, connecting students directly with alumni, professional friends, and employers across the world.

Our Office of Career Readiness and Workforce Development exists to deliberately build and sustain these initiatives, starting the day a student arrives on our Biddeford or Portland campuses.

In these pages, you will meet students and alumni who did not wait for graduation to begin their professional lives. A student finding her voice in journalism. Another student learning the work of sustainable aquaculture and oyster farming. A graduate who left UNE and continued in the career he had already been living for years. Their stories share a common thread: Each of these Nor'easters built attributes here at UNE that they carried with them into their professional lives — a skill set, a network, a sense of themselves as professionals — long before receiving their diploma.

I hope you will read this issue and come to see the students the way I see them: not as a preview of who they might one day become but as evidence of who they already are.

Happy reading,



JAMES D. HERBERT, Ph.D. | PRESIDENT











NOR'EASTERS START NOW

## A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS




NOR'EASTERS START NOW

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*UNE Magazine* is the flagship publication of the University of New England. Created for alumni, friends, and associates of UNE, *UNE Magazine* celebrates the achievements of the students, alumni, faculty, and professional staff of the University. Published annually by the Office of Communications, the magazine offers extended content online at une.edu/magazine.

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**ON THE COVER:** UNE students Javier Sanchez ('29) and Summer Giroaurd ('28) tend to oyster cages as interns with Nonesuch Oysters in Scarborough, Maine. Read more in this issue's cover story, ***Nor'easters Start Now*** (p. 11).



From left: *UNE President James Herbert, David Evans Shaw, and Jim Irwin, UNE senior vice president of Finance and Administration*

WHOLE-WORLD HEALTH

# $5 MILLION SHAW GIFT BUILDS CAPACITY FOR MAINE'S PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE

A $5 million gift from entrepreneur and philanthropist David Evans Shaw is advancing the University of New England's leadership at the intersection of human and environmental health through the newly named David Evans Shaw Institute for Public and Planetary Health.

The Shaw Institute leverages UNE's expertise in health sciences, medicine, public health, marine and environmental science, policy, and business to address interconnected challenges including climate change, coastal resilience, aging populations, and mental health.

"We are deeply grateful for David's extraordinary generosity and vision," said UNE President James Herbert. "His support ensures UNE can expand its leadership in research at the intersection of public and planetary health while equipping graduates with the skills and perspective to enter the workforce ready to lead across disciplines."

Shaw's investment, announced on Earth Day, will support interdisciplinary education, research, innovation, and workforce development in Maine and beyond.

Already, a new collaboration with the Maine Public Health Association (MPHA) is connecting students with MPHA's network of more than 80 organizations statewide for hands-on training, mentorship, and experience addressing public health challenges. UNE is also now MPHA's primary academic partner.

With the Shaw Institute's guidance, students will develop as systems-level thinkers prepared to lead in complex environments, in line with UNE's commitment to hands-on, team-based learning.

"I'm grateful to be partnering with the University of New England on this pioneering effort to address challenges at the intersection of public and planetary health," Shaw said. "By bringing together science, innovation, and multidisciplinary collaboration, we will catalyze high-impact solutions for people and the planet to shape a brighter future."













OUR MAINE COMMUNITY

# UNE STUDENTS FOSTER OUTDOOR ACCESS FOR LOCALS WITH DISABILITIES AT ADAPTIVE BICYCLE FITTING

University of New England students spanning occupational therapy, physical therapy, and other disciplines helped four Mainers with disabilities experience greater independence and access to outdoor recreation this spring by fitting them with adaptive tricycles through Maine Trykers, a nonprofit therapeutic bicycle program based at UNE.

Students participating in the Maine Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) program worked alongside faculty to assess each rider's needs and customize the tricycles for safety, comfort, and independence. For some recipients, the April event on UNE's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences marked their first opportunity to ride a bicycle independently.

Among them was Bela Harnden, 23, of Cape Elizabeth, who has Down syndrome and had stopped cycling after tipping over on a bicycle a year earlier. His new adaptive tricycle means he can return to an activity he enjoys and ride alongside his mother, Susannah.

"Bela's very active, and he really wants to be going places and doing things independently," Susannah said. "We live in a community where he can cycle around. So this is amazing."

Founded at UNE seven years ago, Maine Trykers has provided adaptive tricycles to nearly 20 children and adults with disabilities, helping remove financial and physical barriers to recreation while giving UNE students hands-on experience supporting people in their communities.

"This was an amazing experience," said Jared Benoit, B.S. '24, M.S.O.T. '26, who fitted Bela's bike. "When something's meaningful to a client, they really engage. It can be so magical to see."







FINANCIAL EXCELLENCE

## Forbes, Fitch Ratings Recognize UNE's Strong Financial Positioning, Leadership in Workforce Education

The University of New England again earned national recognition for its financial strength and long-term strategy in 2026, with independent assessments highlighting the University's fiscal stewardship alongside investments in workforce-aligned education.

*Forbes* awarded UNE an A- financial grade, placing Maine's largest independent university among the top 20% of institutions nationally for financial strength, stability, and sustainability. The recognition followed Fitch Ratings' upgrade of UNE's issuer default rating from A+ to AA-, denoting "very high" credit quality, with a stable outlook.

Both assessments come as UNE strategically invests in programs that respond to workforce and economic needs. The University recently expanded enrollment at Maine's medical school by 21%, allowing UNE to graduate an additional 35 physicians annually, while its College of Business celebrated its first graduating class in May.

UNE President James Herbert said the recognitions underscore how UNE's financial stability enables continued investment in students, academic innovation, and Maine's workforce.

"Continued distinction from independent organizations reflects years of thoughtful planning, disciplined stewardship, and sustained investment in our academic priorities," Herbert said. "In a period of demographic and economic pressures across higher education, we have remained focused on aligning resources with our mission, expanding student opportunity, and investing in programs that meet workforce needs. This recognition reflects that consistency and positions UNE well for the future."

SUSTAINABILITY

## UNE Earns Silver Award in First-Ever STARS Sustainability Assessment

The University of New England has earned a silver rating for its sustainability achievements from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) through its Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), marking the first time UNE participated in the internationally recognized assessment.

STARS helps colleges and universities measure and publicly report sustainability performance while encouraging sustainability in all aspects of higher education. With more than 1,300 participating institutions in 53 countries, STARS is widely regarded as the leading framework for assessing sustainability in higher education.

In its assessment, AASHE highlighted several of UNE's distinctive sustainability initiatives, including UNE's Interactive Sustainability Map and student-driven S.W.A.P. (Surplus With A Purpose) Shop, which promotes waste reduction and reuse by giving donated clothing, dorm supplies, and household goods a second life.

"A silver rating for our first time participating is a tremendous accomplishment," said Alethea Cariddi, M.S.Ed., director of UNE's Office of Sustainability. "This process helped us better understand our strengths, identify opportunities for improvement, and build stronger systems for tracking and advancing sustainability across the University."










MEDICINE

## Newly Graduated Physicians Reflect on Making a Difference Through Maine Residencies

Thirteen physicians who graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine in May are continuing their medical training in Maine, bringing newly trained doctors into hospitals and communities across the state.

The graduates matched into residency programs at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center in Portland and Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor, among other locations, where they will train in specialties including internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, and more.

For several graduates, remaining in Maine fulfills a long-held goal to serve the state's healthcare needs and address shortages in critically needed fields like primary care and family medicine.

Ravin Bussiere, B.S. '21, D.O. '26, grew up in Madison and matched into family medicine at Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center. Her experience traveling long distances for primary care inspired her to pursue a career in medicine.

"The access to family medicine just wasn't here," Bussiere said. "Now it's kind of come full circle for me because I can help alleviate the burden that is on family medicine right now in the state."












ARTS AND SCIENCES

## Science and Art 'Collide' at UNE, City of Biddeford Community Storytelling Event

Art, science, and community converged in downtown Biddeford in December 2025 as more than 100 residents gathered for "Science Collider: The Story of the Saco," a storytelling event exploring the river that has shaped the city's ecological, industrial, and cultural identity.

Developed by University of New England student Miranda Carrabba, B.A. '25 (Marine Affairs), and the Heart of Biddeford community organization, the event brought together local artists, musicians, poets, scientists, historians, and Indigenous community members to share different perspectives about the Saco River through research, photography, personal narratives, and works from 17 local creators.

The project grew from Carrabba's UNE Sustainability Fellowship, during which she collected more than 700 pieces of feedback about the scientific and environmental assets Biddeford residents value most. After the Saco River emerged as a defining theme, Carrabba used a Shaw Innovation Fellowship to turn that community input into public programming.

Her work demonstrates how UNE integrates community engagement into the student experience, giving students opportunities to apply their education while strengthening the University's connections with the places it calls home.

"This fellowship project gave me a better sense of place and belonging," Carrabba said.



COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

## UNE Community Gathers to Honor MLK's Vision of the 'Beloved Community'

University of New England alum Melissa Hue, B.S. '15, M.P.H. '20, returned to UNE in January to deliver the keynote address at the University's annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration, reflecting on the importance of human connection in advancing public health and strengthening communities.

Hue, director of Portland's Office of Economic Opportunity, spoke to more than 150 attendees on UNE's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences and livestream viewers in Biddeford. She connected King's vision of the "Beloved Community" with her own upbringing and career supporting underserved populations in Maine.

Hue encouraged attendees to view community-building as a shared responsibility rooted in compassion and connection.

"Every public health framework, every community development strategy, every system we design in the name of progress will fail if we forget that people and connection must come first," she said. "Community is not something that just happens. It's something you fight for. It's something built from light."

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## UNE Scientist Helps Create Artificial Joint Lining to Advance Arthritis Research and Treatment

A University of New England scientist has helped create a new laboratory model of the tissue that lines human joints, addressing a critical gap in researchers' ability to study osteoarthritis and identify potential treatments for the disease.

Scott Wood, Ph.D., UNE's director of biotech innovation and training and entrepreneur-in-residence in the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, co-authored the research published in *ACS Applied Bio Materials*. The team engineered a model of the synovial membrane, which produces lubricating fluid that helps protect joints and can contribute to degenerative joint diseases when it malfunctions.

The model uses human cells and is designed to more closely mimic how healthy joint tissue functions. Researchers hope it can provide a more accurate way to evaluate potential therapies before they advance to human trials, where osteoarthritis treatments have historically faced high failure rates.

"By using human cells in a system that mimics human tissue structures, we can get a predictive human response," Wood said.









RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## Maine Technology Institute Awards UNE Grant to Strengthen Maine's Biotechnology Workforce

The University of New England is expanding its capacity to support Maine's growing life sciences sector through a $357,374 grant from the Maine Technology Institute.

The funding will bring new mass spectrometry equipment to UNE's Bioanalytical Core at the Portland Laboratory for Biotechnology and Health Sciences. The technology will be shared with researchers, companies, and institutional collaborators across Maine and the region, expanding access to specialized research infrastructure that remains limited in northern New England.

The new equipment will support research in drug development, precision medicine, environmental health, and other fields while providing UNE students with hands-on experience using industry-standard technology.

"Access to this kind of technology is essential for advancing research, supporting industry, and training the next generation of scientists," said Karen L. Houseknecht, Ph.D., UNE's vice president of Research and Innovation.

The investment represents one of UNE's several targeted efforts to strengthen Maine's life sciences ecosystem by building the infrastructure, talent, and partnerships needed to support long-term growth and sustainability.

PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

## UNE Continues Course Offering in Applied Genomics With World-Renowned Jackson Laboratory

The University of New England is continuing its collaboration with the Jackson Laboratory (JAX) to prepare future health professionals for a rapidly evolving era of precision medicine.

Offered every semester through UNE's online Master of Biomedical Sciences program, the Applied Genomics course introduces students to how genomic science is increasingly informing clinical decisions. Developed by JAX's clinical education team, the course uses real-world cases in primary care, cardiology, oncology, and rare diseases to explore genetic testing, treatment decisions, and ethical considerations.

The collaboration helps address a workforce knowledge gap as advances in genomics increasingly shape patient care, but many clinicians enter practice without dedicated genetics training. The course provides UNE students with specialized knowledge they can carry into medical school, biomedical research, and other health professions.

"We designed this course for students who are standing at the gateway to medicine, giving them a genomic lens before they even start professional school," said Emily Edelman, director of clinical education at JAX.

The course will again be offered in the spring 2027 semester.

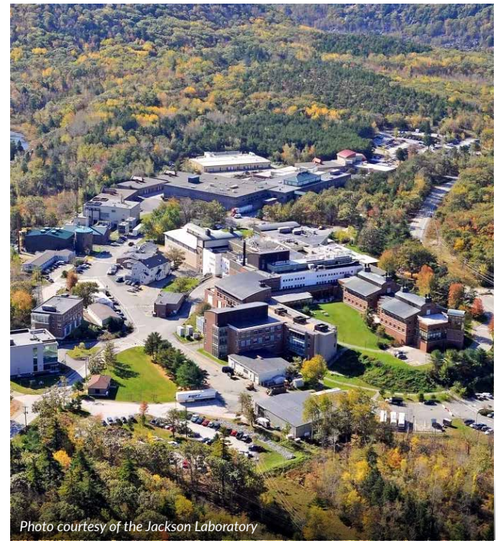


*Photo courtesy of the Jackson Laboratory*

PHARMACY

## UNE Awarded $1.6M Federal Grant to Launch Opioid Response Workforce Training Program

The University of New England has received a four-year, $1.6 million federal grant to strengthen Maine's behavioral health workforce and expand access to opioid use disorder treatment in rural communities across the state.

Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, the initiative will train hundreds of UNE health professions students and practicing healthcare providers in evidence-based approaches to medication-assisted treatment and recovery. Training will span medicine, pharmacy, nursing, physician assistant, and social work, preparing professionals across disciplines to respond to a critical statewide health need.

"By starting at the ground level with our students, we are building a pipeline of professionals trained to address and treat opioid use disorders and provide access to lifesaving care in the rural communities that need it most," said project director Devon Anne Sherwood, Pharm.D., associate professor at UNE's School of Pharmacy.

UNE will also work with rural hospitals, health centers, and other organizations to provide clinical training opportunities and help strengthen recruitment and retention in underserved areas, Sherwood said.





AMPLIFYING HEALTHCARE VOICES

## UNE's Fourth Health Care Story Slam Puts a Human Face on Chronic Illness

The University of New England's fourth annual Health Care Story Slam brought patients, providers, caregivers, students, and community members together in April for an evening of personal storytelling exploring illness, empathy, and the human experiences that shape healthcare.

Established in 2021, the Story Slam is becoming a signature UNE event, using first-person narratives to help future health professionals better understand perspectives that can be difficult to capture in clinical settings. This year's program, organized by current Shaw Innovation Fellow Caitlyne Bobsein (Medical Biology, '28) and recently graduated fellow Hailey Carr, B.A. '26 (Marine Affairs), centered on the theme of balance.

Among seven storytellers was UNE First Lady Lynn Brandsma, Ph.D., who spoke publicly for the first time about her yearslong search for answers after developing chronic nerve pain and later experiencing undiagnosed appendicitis. Brandsma reflected on navigating illness while continuing her work as a psychologist, educator, mother, and visible member of the UNE community.

"Balance isn't something you find and keep; it's something you return to again and again," Brandsma told the audience.

For Brandsma, participating offered an opportunity to turn a difficult experience into a lesson for UNE's future health professionals about seeing the person behind the symptoms.

"The theme — balance — felt like a sign that I should do this," she said.













ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

## UNE Researchers Advance Environmental Monitoring Across Forest, Coastal Ecosystems

University of New England researchers are expanding environmental monitoring across southern Maine, building a network of sensors that provides actionable data to help communities better understand and respond to environmental change.

A new weather station in UNE's 363-acre forest joins monitoring systems extending from inland ecosystems to Saco Bay, including an offshore research buoy, wave gauges near the Saco jetty, and a weather station on Ram Island. Together, the systems track conditions including temperature, rainfall, soil moisture, wind, waves, and ocean currents.

The network supports research into challenges ranging from drought and ecosystem change to coastal erosion and storm impacts while providing UNE students hands-on experience collecting and analyzing real-world environmental data.

The growing network strengthens UNE's stewardship of Maine's interconnected woods, waters, and coastline, said Will Kochtitzky, Ph.D., assistant professor in UNE's School of Marine and Environmental Programs.

"One of our goals is to provide data that's real-time and actionable (and) that allows us to make decisions to improve the health of our ecosystem," Kochtitzky said.

MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

## UNE President's Forums Convene Dialogue on Democracy, Higher Education

The University of New England hosted two President's Forum panels during the 2025-26 academic year, with some of the most consequential questions facing American institutions and civic life.

The fall forum on Oct. 6, 2025, explored the future of American democracy and presidential power, featuring scholars from Johns Hopkins University and Bowdoin College. On April 7, 2026, UNE faculty experts Andrew Rotondo, Ph.D., and John Waterman, Ph.D., examined the political pressures facing higher education and debated how universities can preserve open inquiry while navigating growing polarization.

The events brought together students, faculty, professional staff, and community members for thoughtful conversations led by expert panelists from UNE and respected institutions across the country.

Since 2018, the President's Forum has served as a signature expression of UNE's Marketplace of Ideas initiative, creating space for civil discourse on complex and sometimes divisive issues.

"At UNE, we proactively foster discourse on difficult topics from a perspective of intellectual humility, curiosity, and civility," President James Herbert said. "This kind of dialogue has never been more critical." ■









# NOR'EASTERS START NOW

BY EMME DEMMENDAAL

***UNE students aren't waiting for a diploma to begin their careers. They're building them one connection at a time.***

On a late wintry afternoon in Biddeford, Angelina Keizer, with a notebook in hand, was trying to ask the director of the community organization Heart of Biddeford a question for a story on downtown holiday lighting when another reporter arrived to cover the same event.

What might have been a routine interview quickly turned into three reporters jockeying for the same answers.

**"It felt so surreal and exciting to me that it really felt like what I was doing mattered,"** Keizer said. **"I was being very respectful to everyone who was also trying to get their interview, but I was also pushing a little bit, and it was really fun.**

**"It didn't feel like work or effort to be there,"** she said. **"I was there because I wanted to be there."**

Keizer (English, '28) was a sophomore at the time and had been on the job as a *Saco Bay News* intern for less than a semester.

Experiences like hers are becoming less the exception at the University of New England and more the expectation. Across campus, students are building professional identities years before they cross a graduation stage, guided by faculty, professional staff, and a growing network of employers who treat undergraduates less like interns and more like colleagues in training.

**"Employers need students who can function with deliberate speed and autonomy, who can make decisions, who can grow and develop on their own, and who can start to take the lead even if they're in an entry-level position,"** said Colin Pears, Ph.D., UNE's associate provost for Student Success and chief retention officer, noting that the old academic and career advising models have changed.

**"We are going to put students directly in touch with people in the workforce and teach them how to be a professional now,"** he said, adding that the career pathway looks different for every student. **"Like a mosaic, students get to choose which tiles to pick out and where to place them, arranging their experiences in a way that best represents who they are and where their careers are headed."**









## MORE THAN AN INTERNSHIP

Javier Sanchez ('29) spent his mornings over the summer working around the tide.

A rising sophomore from the landlocked state of Illinois, Sanchez chose UNE for its marine science programs and, within a year, had narrowed his focus to aquaculture.

That focus emerged last semester, when Sanchez completed UNE's Aquatic Animal Husbandry Badge program, confirming through hands-on lab work with live animals that aquaculture was the field he wanted to pursue before finding his summer internship.

**"Food security is important to me,"** Sanchez said. **"Aquaculture is a comparatively newer field than agriculture, and it has a lot of potential for what people can do sustainably. That's something I want to say I've had a hand in."**

Ashley Bigda, M.S.Ed., director of UNE's Office of Career Readiness and Workforce Development (OCR), said that kind of early certainty is possible because the University houses academic and career advising in a single office rather than splitting them as many universities do. **"In reality,"** she said, **"academics and careers are just two sides of the same coin of conversation."**

Bigda said Sanchez's early start into career exploration used to be the exception. Historically, students passed their classes for four years and then looked for a job and figured out the rest after graduation.

**"What we're doing now,"** she said, **"is introducing career guidance in the first year."**

Over the summer, Sanchez completed his internship at Nonesuch Oysters through the Aquaculture Pioneers Program, run by the nonprofit Educate Maine, which connects students on farms up and down the coast with additional industry training.

From the outside, Sanchez is sorting oysters by size, running boats, and learning seafaring knots he had never needed before. The work also counts toward a pre-apprenticeship credential he can carry into whatever aquaculture internship comes next.

Sanchez first heard about the internship at an information session OCR hosted on the Biddeford Campus in partnership with Educate Maine. He signed up before he'd even left the room and applied to nearly every nearby farm he could find, he said.

Grant funding tied to the program lets farms hire students with little to no background on the water, an entry point built for students like Sanchez, who didn't grow up around aquaculture, to break into the industry without needing prior experience.

For Sanchez, the payoff has already begun to take on a more concrete form than course credit. Sanchez said the experience has given him both hard and soft skills he didn't have previously. He learned to drive a boat and back a trailer into a launch, tasks he had never attempted before.

**"If you asked me in April, I would have said I didn't know how to do that,"** he said. He also sharpened his sense of time management, learning to move quickly without cutting corners.

Whatever comes next for him in aquaculture, Sanchez expects the fundamentals to carry over.

**"I've been there, and I've done it firsthand, and my future employers can look at me and my resume and see that,"** he said. **"It's very favorable."**

Whatever the next internship looks like, Sanchez added with a smile, **"The resume will be golden."**








## THE THIRD INTERNSHIP

When Keizer arrived at UNE, she didn't plan on becoming a journalist. She considered marine sciences, then psychology, before an introductory course with Jesse Miller, M.F.A., associate teaching professor of writing, redirected her toward writing.

**"When I write, something takes over me. I just can't stop, and something about it just feels right,"** Keizer said, reflecting on the decision to change her major. **"It's like a light bulb goes off in my head."**

A single class set off a chain of internships that Keizer credits to the connections of Miller and fellow professor Michael Cripps, Ph.D., director of the UNE School of Arts and Humanities.

Miller recommended Keizer for her first placement at *Saco Bay News*. From there, a co-editor invited her into a summer reporting course through Journalism New England, which led to her current work with the *Sanford Springvale News*. By June, she had a third internship lined up, a magazine copy-editing role, and Cripps was already introducing her to contacts at another news outlet for the semester after that.

**"If I did no internships at all or started internships very late into college, I wouldn't have advanced my skills enough or be as confident as I am going into another internship,"** she said. **"I take away something new every time."**

Bigda said that kind of chain reaction is common at UNE, not incidental. An introduction turns into a conversation, a conversation turns into an interview, an interview turns into an internship, and then, later, even a job offer.

She pointed to career immersion events, like one Keizer took part in, as an example of how OCR works with faculty to integrate workplace exposure directly into coursework. Cripps brought a group of his journalism students to WMTW News 8, the state's ABC affiliate, where employees walked them through the studio room by room, explaining how each role fits into the broadcast, before sitting the group down for a presentation on what it takes to work in the field.

**"It was eye-opening to see their impact firsthand and see how much really happens behind the scenes,"** Keizer said, noting that the studio surprised her. She said it was smaller in person than it looked on television and that the visit gave her a new appreciation for how much coordination goes into a single newscast.

For Keizer, the internships and workplace experiences have already reshaped how she carries herself in the classroom — with real skills comes confidence. Her supervisor teaches her what a story still needs and how to rearrange and attribute it, editing instruction that usually comes at the onset of a newsroom career. It has also meant learning to keep her composure when an interview turns difficult, a form of on-the-job training a classroom alone can't provide.

**"Walking into my classes, I already feel like a hundred times more confident just knowing that I'm already out in the field and doing things,"** she said. **"It makes me feel like I'm really on the right path."**

## COURTING HIS OWN SUCCESS

When Kimman Power, B.S. '26, arrived at UNE from Charlotte, North Carolina, he hadn't settled on a degree yet, and for a while, he didn't need to. Recruited to play basketball, he enrolled undeclared, one of the first students in UNE's Guided Undergraduate Studies program, known as GUST, built for students who need time to explore specialties before committing to a major.

**"I felt like I had a lot of interests that I wanted to explore,"** Power said, adding that each class applied somewhere academically, whether it was for his major or an elective. **"I didn't know necessarily which route I wanted to go; none of the classes I took while deciding went to waste."**











Power said faculty shaped his decision as much as the coursework did. A conversation after class with Aimee Vlachos, Ed.D., CPRP, associate teaching professor in the College of Business, turned into an introduction to UNE's Sport Leadership and Management program. That conversation settled it, Power said.

With this newfound academic clarity, Power turned his personal athletic experiences into professional opportunities. As a kid, Power played in tournaments through the Carolina Hoopfest youth basketball organization in his hometown. By his junior year of high school, he was regularly called upon by the organization's director to help train younger players.

So when it came time to seek an internship, Power didn't sit on the bench. He used his existing contacts to turn this former volunteer work into a self-directed, formal internship — for credit and with pay.

The internship put his major's coursework to direct use. Facility and venue management classes helped him run tournament sites, and sports marketing lessons guided his approach to retaining and recruiting new campers. Power additionally said his psychology minor helped him connect with the kids at his camps.

Power said he could draw up his own career playbook with the mentorship and resources afforded to him at UNE, including participation in the Presidential Ambassadors program, through which he worked alongside President James Herbert and his wife, Lynn Brandsma, to build leadership skills and relationships, ensuring lasting success in professional settings.

**"I could have gone anywhere academically,"** he said. **"Choosing to go to school so far from home, I wanted to get involved and make sure I'm making the best out of the experience."**

Power ultimately graduated in three years, moving directly into work he had built himself using a network he had started assembling early on with UNE's support.

Bigda said experiences like Power's are not unusual across the student body. **"Career readiness at UNE is not just multipronged,"** she said. **"It is highly individualized. We help students translate their unique interests and skills into professional strengths."**

## THE MOSAIC IN PRACTICE

Pears often returns to the mosaic metaphor to describe UNE's intentional approach to career readiness, inspiring students like Power, Sanchez, and Keizer to carve a layered path through internships, academics, and networking experiences.

**"Students get to take all of the things they do and assemble them into the unique pattern that is who they are, and they have control over that,"** he said. **"Our students can speak to what they've learned, not just list it on paper. That's exactly what employers are looking for."**

That kind of skill doesn't come from waiting until the last six months before a student graduates, he added. **"It has to be something that takes place consistently over time."**

For all three students, there are three different mosaics, and none of them have finished putting the design together.

**"UNE students aren't static,"** Pears said. **"They are lifelong learners who keep building on what they've done here."** ■

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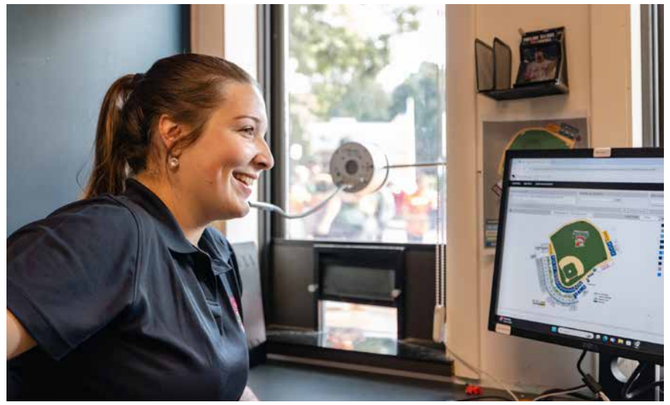






























# SERVICE LEARNING AT UNE

At the University of New England, service learning has proved to be as much a career preparation tool as a community benefit.

Through hands-on partnerships across Maine, students build the practical skills employers look for and the applied experience that matters, said Trisha Mason, M.A., director of the UNE Office of Service Learning, adding that students who participate in service learning regularly describe acquiring stronger communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills — the same qualities that are sought out in postings across industries.

"We provide a variety of experiences for students, working with individuals across different communities and different environments," Mason said. "I've seen students who were timid or quiet come out of these experiences and find their place, ready to step into their careers with real confidence."

Through service learning experiences, UNE students build career-ready competencies in communication, teamwork, adaptability, active listening, and working under pressure. They develop these skills by making sandwiches for residents in local recovery programs, designing health and wellness programming for local jails, coordinating food-security efforts through Meals for Maine, and building relationships with older adults through partnerships with local housing authorities.

Kristi Scamurra ('29), a UNE Doctor of Dental Medicine student, said serving learning experiences have prepared her for a future career in dentistry by taking her outside of the classroom and allowing her to develop critical interpersonal and interprofessional skills.

"While being academically proficient is extremely important, I believe what will truly set me apart and make me a successful provider is my ability to connect with patients from all different backgrounds and ensure that everyone feels comfortable in my chair," Scamurra said. "The volunteer experiences I have had through service learning have given me the opportunity to build those skills and have prepared me to provide compassionate, inclusive care to every patient."



















# A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

**SeaMade, a snack bar business run by UNE students, is transforming today's learners into tomorrow's business leaders.**

BY ALAN D. BENNETT



## ALMONDS. CRANBERRIES. PUMPKIN SEEDS. HONEY. COCONUT.

One by one, the ingredients are measured and mixed inside a commercial-grade kitchen, forming the basis of a snack bar under development at the University of New England.

Then comes the ingredient that ties everything together: kelp — and lots of it.

Ground into a fine green powder, the kelp looked very different just weeks earlier, when nearly 1,000 pounds of the thick, floppy ribbons of two varieties — sugar and winged kelp — were plucked from the cold waters of Saco Bay, where the University maintains its own kelp farm.

Once pressed into molds and sliced into neat rectangles, the ingredients comprise more than a snack. They are SeaMade, a student-led enterprise rooted in Maine's emerging blue economy, built around the sustainable use of ocean resources and one of the University's most ambitious experiments in experiential learning to date.

For Jayden Schoppee ('27), however, the bars themselves are only part of the overall recipe.

A nutrition major and athletic training master's student, Schoppee has spent the past two years helping lead SeaMade, overseeing everything from production and marketing to budgeting and long-term planning. On some days, that means helping prepare bars in the UNE Teaching Kitchen, a part of the bustling innovation ecosystem on the lower level of Decary Hall. On others, it means meeting with faculty mentors, coordinating student teams, speaking with community partners, spreading the word on podcasts, or thinking about where the business should go next.

"It's a lot of emails," she said with a laugh.

When Schoppee joined the project's inaugural student cohort, she expected a traditional classroom experience. But instead, she was handed responsibility, a distinction that has become one of SeaMade's defining characteristics.

## AN UNUSUAL GIFT

SeaMade arrived at UNE in 2024, when founders Tara Treichel and Mark Dvorozniak donated their seaweed nutrition bar company to the University. At first glance, the gift appeared straightforward: a sustainable snack made from Maine-grown kelp.

For Schoppee, SeaMade wasn't about producing a snack bar. It became a way to introduce people to kelp as a nutritious food source while highlighting Maine's blue economy.

"There really isn't anything else like it," Schoppee said. "People don't realize how nutritious kelp is or how many possibilities there are."

The project also reshaped her own perspective. Growing up as a competitive athlete, Schoppee always knew she wanted a career helping others improve their health and performance. She enrolled at UNE through the University's accelerated athletic training program before adding nutrition as a second major.

Leading a business was never part of the plan, she said, yet SeaMade unexpectedly connected those interests.

"I've spent my whole life eating granola bars and energy bars," she said. "When I saw there was a kelp bar business at UNE, I wanted to know what went into making something like that."



*UNE leaders gather with SeaMade founders on Aug. 21, 2024, to share in the first production of the bars at the University.*









Today, her responsibilities extend far beyond assembly. As student CEO, Schoppee coordinates students across production, sourcing, finance, marketing, and sales, while working with faculty mentors and community partners to set priorities for the business.

> **"I've gotten to meet professionals from all different backgrounds and learn from people I never would've crossed paths with otherwise."**
>
> JAYDEN SCHOPPEE

The role has required new skills, chief among them communication, Schoppee said, as SeaMade has evolved from an in-house project into something with real customers, community partners, and long-term ambitions.

"So many opportunities have come out of this that I never would've expected," Schoppee said. "I've gotten to meet professionals from all different backgrounds and learn from people I never would've crossed paths with otherwise."

Perhaps the biggest lesson has been learning to embrace uncertainty. Running a business, even one supported by a university, rarely follows a straight line.

"Not everything goes perfectly or according to plan," Schoppee said. "You have to be adaptable. If you don't expect to fail at some point, that's not realistic. If you succeed the first time, there are things you would've never learned."

## A SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR SUCCESS TO SPROUT

Viewing setbacks as opportunities, not failures, has become one of the most valuable lessons Schoppee expects to carry into her career.

It's exactly the transformation UNE hoped SeaMade would inspire when it launched the project as a part of the Shaw Innovation Fellowship program, overseen by the UNE Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, said the center's director, Lisa Herschbach, Ph.D.

Since its inception, SeaMade has united over a dozen students from across disciplines to tackle the challenges of running a business through collaborative, project-based learning. Rather than assigning students hypothetical classroom exercises, the project invites fellows to step into a venture that already exists, where success depends on curiosity, teamwork, and a willingness to adapt.

"Students are applying what they're learning in the classroom," Herschbach said. "They're learning how to do customer discovery, understand the market, collaborate effectively, and connect with an audience. Those aren't things you can fully replicate in a traditional classroom."

Unlike most coursework, there are no grades attached to SeaMade. That freedom is intentional, Herschbach said, offering students the sanctuary to test ideas, challenge assumptions, and learn by trial and error. Failure isn't necessarily a goal, but Herschbach said some of the most effective learning often occurs when outcomes aren't predetermined.

"The entrepreneurial habit of mind is really about being willing to take calculated risks," she said. "Even if your hypothesis proves wrong, you're still learning through trying."

Running a business centered on seaweed demanded expertise from across the University, said Cameron Wake, Ph.D., director of UNE North, the University's center for North Atlantic studies.

"When you think about running a business that's based on nature's products, you have to integrate a range of different disciplines," Wake said. "We're focused on the bar and then asking what disciplines we need to bring together to successfully source, manufacture, market, and sell it."

Just as importantly, students aren't learning in isolation. They are working across disciplines and academic majors to address all aspects of running a business, from conception to creation to consumer.

Nutrition majors collaborate with marine scientists. Business students work alongside sustainability scholars. Faculty become mentors rather than lecturers, while industry professionals provide guidance grounded in experience. Every conversation introduces another perspective, another discipline, and another way of approaching a problem.

> **"It's real life. They're dealing with the same kinds of decisions entrepreneurs face every day."**
>
> LISA HERSCHBACH

That environment, Herschbach said, helps students begin developing something that extends beyond technical knowledge: "A professional identity."

Rather than waiting until graduation to think about careers, students begin building them while still on campus, learning how to contribute, communicate, and lead along the way.

"It's real life," Herschbach said. "They're dealing with the same kinds of decisions entrepreneurs face every day."
















## FROM SEA TO STORE SHELVES

Each spring, students travel to UNE's sea farm just northeast of Ram Island, where the kelp that eventually becomes SeaMade bars has spent the winter months growing beneath the surface. Harvest day offers a glimpse into another side of the project, one defined less by recipes than by teamwork, adaptability, and the realities of working on Maine's capricious coast.

Matt Duddy, M.S., kelp farm manager in the UNE School of Marine and Environmental Programs, shared that the experience exposes students to far more than aquaculture.

"They're learning flexibility," Duddy said. "They're learning coordination. They're learning communication."

Weather changes. Equipment breaks. Plans shift. Even the 2026 harvest itself was delayed three times by inclement weather.

On the water, students solve problems while coordinating with researchers, vessel crews, faculty, and one another. They experience every stage of the process, from cultivating kelp, hauling it aboard a research vessel, and hanging it to dry to seeing it transformed into a finished product back on campus.

"It's a good synthesis of coordination and hands-on experience," Duddy said.

Brian Will, B.S. '23 (M.S. Marine Sciences, '28), credits experiences like the kelp harvest with helping bridge the gap between student and working professional.

"Hands-on field experiences taught me how unpredictable work can be," Will said. "Working in the field meant adapting to changing conditions, solving problems in real time, and learning to think on my feet."

He said experiences like kelp harvesting gave him "practical skills and confidence that simply can't be developed in a classroom alone."

That idea resonates throughout SeaMade, which aims not to teach students every answer before graduation but to help them ask the right questions and then seek solutions.

> **"When given the opportunity and the structure, our young people are extremely capable and can do incredible things."**
>
> CAMERON WAKE





That distinction matters, Wake said, because conversations about today's students often focus on what they lack rather than what they can accomplish.

SeaMade tells a different story, he said.

"There's a misconception about today's young people, and, being here at UNE, I just don't buy into that," Wake said. "Sure, we still have some research to do, but SeaMade is living proof that, when given the opportunity and the structure, our young people are extremely capable and can do incredible things."

In the end, that may be SeaMade's most important ingredient — not the honey, the oats, or even the kelp, but the recipe itself.

And for Schoppee, the proof is in the package.

"I never thought I'd be the CEO of a business," she said. "But UNE has helped me realize I'm capable of a lot more than I thought." ■

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une.edu/magazine

# FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH PAM MORGAN

*interview by* Alan D. Bennett

***For over 35 years at UNE, Professor Pam Morgan, Ph.D., inspired a Rachel Carson-esque sense of wonder in her students, encouraging them to leave their books behind in favor of pulling on worn waders, lathering on DEET, and getting outside, where she says true learning for budding environmental scientists takes place.***



***While fieldwork is not always glamorous — it rarely is, she said — Morgan's immersive ethos to environmental stewardship has guided students to careers at agencies including the U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and more, as well as land trusts, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations closer to home that safeguard the woods and waters of New England's natural ecosystems.***

***Having retired at the end of the 2025–26 academic year, Morgan reflected on her career as a dedicated scientist, educator, and conservationist — and the many lives she has touched along the way.***

### *What's your proudest moment preparing students for their careers?*

I am most proud of having contributed to a positive and meaningful college learning experience for my students. I have heard from so many alumni about how much they valued their experience in the environmental program at UNE. They talk about the sense of community we all shared; our common, deep connections to nature; how they learned to think differently about their place in the world; and how best to solve environmental problems, including that many perspectives are needed for this work. And how much fun we had!

### *What can't be taught inside a classroom?*

There is so much that students learn in the field outside the regular classroom walls: field skills, including how to identify and survey plants, animals, and soils, and how to navigate in the woods, observe closely, and collect accurate data. But just as importantly, they learn how to work as part of a team to get the accurate information needed for a project and how to stay safe in the field. Also, our fieldwork often involved communicating with local conservation organizations.

### *How has UNE's natural landscape on the Biddeford Campus impacted students' learning?*

We are so fortunate at UNE to be located in such a beautiful natural area, with the Saco River, 363 acres of forest, and the Atlantic Ocean all within a short walk. There are salt marshes, red maple swamps, vernal pools, oak-pine forests, rocky intertidal areas, sand dunes, and many other habitats. Students study these habitats, but they also enjoy simply spending time in nature with their friends, and that is something they will remember forever.

### *How does fieldwork shape students' futures?*

So many students have told me that what we do at UNE is not commonly done at other colleges. Our courses' significant field experiences give students a list of skills for their resumes and the confidence to apply them.

I see it firsthand. Many former students are using the skills and knowledge they learned in our campus habitats in their careers: surveying vernal pools, identifying marsh plant species and invasive species, analyzing field data, and conducting long-term monitoring studies. It is rewarding to hear about their success in finding that first job and to see them come back to visit the classroom, return to UNE as guest speakers, or join us on field trips.

### *What's the value of real environmental work over a classroom exercise?*

There is no shortage of "real" projects for environmental students to work on. Being an environmental major is hard. You quickly learn about the depth of humans' negative impacts on nature and how those impacts affect humans in turn. It can be very depressing.

But if students help mitigate these impacts or assist a community to be more resilient while restoring and protecting nature, they feel less hopeless. They realize they can make a positive difference, especially when working with others. Students also see how grateful people are for their help and expertise. That leaves them feeling empowered to keep contributing to positive change.

### *Is there a particular moment that captures what fieldwork can do for students?*

There are so many it is hard to choose. But I think of the seniors who'd tell me every job they applied for required one to two years of experience. I'd ask them about all the experience they had gained at UNE, including field-based data analysis and writing skills. I'd have them think about specific projects they worked on and encourage them to write about those projects in their cover letters.

Students often say they had never realized how much real experience they had! One student this past spring was thrilled to be offered a job right after graduation helping to restore Maine's rivers and streams.

### *What advice would you give students as they seek a career?*

The students I have taught in the environmental program have come to UNE with a love of nature and a desire to do something good in the world. The challenge is turning this passion into something they can do for the rest of their lives, ideally as part of their careers.

It's clear that getting good grades alone won't make them stand out when they are applying for jobs. They must add experience through specific coursework, internships and volunteering, research opportunities, or clubs and campus activities. They should also talk about their experience in cover letters and interviews.

But I'd also advise students to remember that, no matter where they are, nature is close by, and that spending time in nature is good for the soul. ■

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# A LEGACY OF COMPASSIONATE DENTAL CARE

BY DEIRDRE FLEMING STIRES

**How one all-UNE dental team is continuing the tradition of helping Maine's most vulnerable populations get the care they need.**









Natalie Nguyen, B.S. '23, can still recall how she calmed a nervous child, who only spoke English as a second language, before she showed them the tools used and guided them through what to expect during a dental cleaning visit.

What started off as an ordinary afternoon in the University of New England's Dental Hygiene Clinic was proof to Nguyen that she was learning to provide the kind of compassionate care she herself needed as a child but never had.

Before she emigrated from Vietnam to Maine with her family at age 13, Nguyen lacked routine dental care. Now a dental hygienist at Nasson Health Care in Springvale, Maine, she gives that care to others every day, and she credits UNE for teaching her how to do so from her very first week in the clinic.

"At UNE, in the hygiene center, we see patients from kids to seniors," Nguyen said. "I think they prepare us really well. You see one patient every three hours. The professor checks in probably five or six times."

Nguyen estimates she cleaned the teeth of nearly 60 members of the public while training in the clinic on UNE's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences, where patients without dental insurance can receive cleanings at highly discounted rates. That volume of hands-on practice, repeated across a student's time at UNE, is what the University's dental programs are built on: not a single capstone experience but a habit formed early and nurtured throughout their time at the University.

Nguyen isn't alone in carrying that habit into her career. All eight members of the Nasson Health Care team — four dentists and four dental hygienists — graduated from UNE's oral health programs: the Doctor of Dental Medicine offered through the College of Dental Medicine and the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene in the Westbrook College of Health Professions. Each learned to care for patients from every economic background, including people who are unhoused, in teaching clinics before ever reaching Nasson Health Care, a Maine community health center in Springvale that serves a large rural patient base from up to two hours away, including New Hampshire.

Benjamin Martin, D.M.D. '23, a dentist at the health center, points to the structure of UNE's curriculum itself.

"Dentistry is very hands-on. And the education we get at UNE is very hands-on," said Martin. "It's a very clinically focused education, which I like. You're practicing those skills for the whole time that you're at UNE, as opposed to just doing coursework in your first year."

It is a sentiment echoed by a colleague, Nasson Health Care Dental Director Tom Guerrette, D.M.D. '19, about how closely students in the College of Dental Medicine and the Dental Hygiene program train together, a practice that sets the stage for their work in Maine.

**"At UNE, in the hygiene center, we see patients from kids to seniors. I think they prepare us really well."**

NATALIE NGUYEN

"At UNE, the dental hygiene students would do the cleanings, and then dental (medicine) students would step in and do the doctor exams, just as it would happen in real life," Guerrette said, adding that the setup taught both sides how to communicate a handoff and trust another provider's work before they ever stepped off campus. "That's unique. Not every dental school has that."

The partnership across colleges is intentional, said Dianne Smallidge, RDH, Ed.D., the director of UNE's Dental Hygiene program. Dental hygiene faculty and students go to the Oral Health Center at the College of Dental Medicine to introduce the instruments used by dental hygienists and share their role in providing patient-centered care. They also work together on the annual "Give Kids A Smile" event, when nearly 100 elementary school students from coastal Maine come to the UNE Oral Health Center to receive free dental care worth dollar amounts in the tens of thousands.

> **"A lot of dental hygiene schools don't have dental medicine schools affiliated with them. So it's very easy to be in silos. We work at doing all the collaboration we can."**
>
> DIANNE SMALLIDGE





And in the final year of both programs, dental hygiene and dental medicine students together complete medical emergency training in UNE's Interprofessional Simulation and Innovation Center, a hands-on learning and research space for students across health disciplines to learn from, and with, each other to strengthen their clinical skills through team-based simulation experiences.

"A lot of dental hygiene schools don't have dental medicine schools affiliated with them. So it's very easy to be in silos. We work at doing all the collaboration we can," Smallidge said.

That close collaboration between students in the healthcare fields at UNE is a key reason Guerrette recruits UNE graduates. He said they can perform at a high level from their first day on the job, a boon for a small team serving a diverse and growing array of clients.

"Just because you've earned a degree to be a dentist doesn't mean you have the skill set to work with other providers," Guerrette said. "That is a huge component that sets up the UNE dental hygiene and dental students for success on a team that works collaboratively."

Guerrette credits UNE for preparing him to treat immigrant patients facing language barriers, a specific skill he built during an externship — a type of clinical training practicum — at Portland High School, where students hail from nearly 40 countries and speak over 25 languages, according to the most recent school data.

"That, in conjunction with the clinical hours at the UNE clinic, made me feel very prepared to step into the real world as a dentist," Guerrette said. "I felt very confident in my skill set, whether it was restorative (care) or oral surgery. I would say I had the cultural competence to treat a diverse population."

In fact, UNE intentionally exposes dental students to underserved communities. College of Dental Medicine students complete externships and outreach rotations at sites in both rural and urban settings, including the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program, a community-based externship site, and the MaineHealth Glickman Lauder Center of Excellence in Autism and Developmental Disorders in Portland, where all third-year UNE dental students learn to care for patients with autism and developmental differences.

"Our curriculum gives students meaningful outreach opportunities to engage with individuals with special dental care needs and those at risk for poor health outcomes," said Nicole Kimmes, D.D.S., dean of the College of Dental Medicine. "We seek partnerships that advance our mission and are deeply grateful to the community partners who welcome our students into their clinics and spaces."

Nasson Health Care is one of those partners. The center serves patients who are unhoused, who have a history of substance use, or who face food insecurity.

Fourth-year dental medicine student Heather Cabral ('27) already knew she wanted to work in public health when she started her externship at Nasson Health Care.

Even so, Cabral said the frontline care the center gives patients with limited prior access to dental care was eye opening. In her first eight weeks alone, she conducted diagnostic exams on more than 70 patients, noting such vast exposure significantly expanded her confidence and deepened her sense of compassion as a healthcare provider.

"I realized when I started here that (your) hand skills are going to just keep getting better and faster over time by simply doing more procedures, such as fillings, crowns, and root canals," Cabral said. "But what doesn't get better, unless you are working with and learning from other people, are the diagnoses and knowing exactly what your treatment plans need to be."

For Cabral, as for the UNE graduates working alongside her, an externship like Nasson Health Care isn't simply a line on a resume: It's the practice of a lifelong commitment to providing care for those in need, supported by the tangible skills and habits formed and nurtured through the early days of their education.

"I definitely feel way more prepared now," she said. "And it's the kind of work I want to do." ■

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# UNE LAUNCHES NOR'EASTER GLOBAL NETWORK

The University of New England has launched the Nor'easter Global Network, a new professional community connecting students with alumni, employers, mentors, and industry professionals to support career exploration and lifelong professional development.

Built around UNE CareerConnect, a digital hub for professional connections, mentorship, and career resources, the network is designed to help students build relationships that continue well beyond graduation. Hundreds of alumni, employer, and community partners have already signed up to participate.

"We know our alumni are eager to help current students. The Nor'easter Global Network marks UNE's commitment to nurture not only initial career success but long-term career mobility," said Ashley Bigda, M.S.Ed., director of UNE's Office of Career Readiness and Workforce Development.

The network officially launched during UNE's second annual Industry Exploration Day, held Oct. 14 at the Biddeford Campus during Homecoming Week. Nearly 60 employers from fields including healthcare, finance, technology, construction, hospitality, and media joined students for conversations about career paths, internships, and workforce opportunities.

Students also took part in resume and LinkedIn consultations, practiced interview skills, and got professional headshots taken by a fellow UNE student. The activities offered a firsthand example of the connections and practical support the new network aims to sustain throughout the year.

"This is what career readiness looks like in practice," said Bigda. "It's one good conversation, a connection, or moment of learning that a student can keep building on."

Scan the QR code to join the Nor'easter Global Network and start building your professional connections today.
















# MAKING CONNECTIONS IN MOROCCO

*by* Vian Nguyen (Marine Biology, '27)



Checking in from Tangier



Diving into the Souks



A Getaway in the "Blue City"




Practicing Darija at the Clinic

Hello, everyone. My name is Vian Nguyen. I am a senior at the University of New England, and I am majoring in marine biology. During the spring 2026 semester, I had the amazing opportunity to study abroad in Morocco on our Tangier Campus. Over the course of four months, I learned Darija in a veterinary clinic, shared mint tea with strangers who felt like family, and found a stillness in the Sahara I didn't know I needed. Even though I consider myself well-traveled, there was something so unique and special about my time overseas. Connection and curiosity carried me through every moment of the semester.

The first day, we dove in headfirst. We walked through the souks in Tangier for the first time. The noise and chaos were overwhelming: motorcycles weaving between people and through small alleyways, shopkeepers yelling, and people coming from every direction. After I took it all in, I looked closer, and I noticed how connected everyone was, how people were catching up with friends, and how shopkeepers were trying to find a way to connect with shoppers and teach them about their traditions and culture. Underneath the hustle and bustle of the Old City, there was a rhythm we could feel even as tourists, one that made Tangier feel a little less foreign with every visit.

About halfway through the semester, we traveled to Chefchaouen and lived with local families for the weekend. In class, we talked about the concept of Moroccan hospitality, and that is exactly what I experienced that weekend — a lesson I'd come to understand even more by the end of the semester. My host sister was kind and open; she was excited to share her life and customs with us, and we were all ears. After our homestay, we hiked through Talassemtane National Park. It was quiet and peaceful. It was a nice break from the busy city noise and was a side of Morocco I had never seen before.

I spent my service-learning interning at the veterinary clinic in Tangier, which was one of the most valuable experiences I had while abroad. As a marine biology major, I love working with animals, even if they aren't fish. It was a challenge, but it was well worth it. I was able to practice the Darija that I was learning in class with pet owners and clinic staff. I was forced to step outside of my comfort zone, ask questions, and overcome the barrier, whether that meant Darija, Spanish, or simply pointing. I learned so much about veterinary care, people, and communication.



Mint Tea at Café Hafa



Home Away From Home



Hospitality in the Atlas Mountains



Chasing Dunes in the Sahara

Being in a city like Tangier made it easy to explore and immerse ourselves in the culture. Café Hafa was a short walk from the souk, overlooking the ocean, and it was where all the UNE students ended up, sipping mint tea over conversation. It was always busy, but my friends and I found time to unwind and reflect on our experiences together and, some days, just with myself. We talked about what we'd been learning and things we were curious about and appreciated small, welcoming interactions with locals.

All UNE students lived on campus in Tangier. It made it easy to make Morocco feel like home away from home. A routine formed fast: getting lunch between classes, watching the sunset from our balconies, and meeting new people almost every day. I made so many new friends, and they felt like family. Our staff on campus and our professors guided our transition from life in the States to life in Morocco seamlessly. Our campus coordinators were truly like our older siblings.

On our trip to Marrakech, we drove out to the Atlas Mountains. It was beautiful; we visited a family's house and learned about traditional foods and how to make Moroccan mint tea. They told us how generations of their family had lived in that house and let us look around and help them make food. We were so grateful that they welcomed us into their home and gave us a glimpse into their family's heritage. That day, being welcomed into the home by generations of a family, I experienced a type of hospitality and warmth that went even deeper than what I'd experienced before.

Later in the semester, we took a trip to the Sahara Desert. It was completely and utterly surreal. We shared a 15-hour bus ride to Merzouga from Tangier, a bonding experience for sure. We rode camels into the dunes, rode ATVs through the desert, weathered a sandstorm, and sandboarded down the dunes. But in between all of the excitement, I was able to reflect on all of the amazing people I had met and the connections I had made. I heard so many different stories and learned about so many different ways of life, and I will always cherish those connections.






# FROM BLUE BOLT FIELD TO CENTER ICE WITH THE PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

*by* Morgan White, B.S. '25 (Sport Leadership and Management)

When I look up at the banners hanging from the rafters of PPG Paints Arena, I sometimes think about how long sports have guided the direction of my life.

Today, I am a marketing operations fellow with the Pittsburgh Penguins, but reaching this point was never part of a carefully mapped-out plan. It came through experiences that showed me what I enjoyed, what I was capable of, and where I could make an impact.

Before I understood marketing, fan experience, or game-day operations, I understood what it felt like to belong to a team. Sports gave me a community and challenged me to grow.

Having an older sister involved in the sport meant I was only a month old the first time my parents brought me to a hockey arena, but lacrosse became the sport that was truly mine. It gave me confidence, lifelong friendships, and the motivation to continue competing after high school.

Originally from Rochester, New Hampshire, my first time on UNE's Biddeford Campus came at 12 years old, cheering for my mother as she crossed the finish line of the Maine Coast Marathon. I found my way back through lacrosse, drawn by the possibility of competing with teammates who became family on Blue Bolt Field, before I learned what the University had to offer.





Lacrosse may have brought me to UNE, but the people, opportunities, and sense of community made it the place where I began discovering who I wanted to become, challenging me to grow beyond the identity I had always known best: being an athlete.

I arrived at UNE as an athletic training major, believing the best way to remain connected to sports was through sports medicine. As I learned more about the industry, however, I became interested in what happened beyond the field of play: how fans experienced an event, how organizations built relationships with their communities, and how game days came together behind the scenes.

Changing my major to sport and recreation management during my sophomore year showed me that an entire industry existed around the moments fans see, feel, and remember. My internship with the Portland Sea Dogs was the first time I experienced that industry firsthand, and it turned my general interest into a career path: marketing, fan engagement, and event operations.

Time and again, I saw that fan experience goes well beyond the bounds of a stadium, built from small moments that make a night unforgettable for someone in the stands. It was in these moments that fan experience stopped being a job description. It was clear the impact a local team can have on its community and that I had a real part to play.

The most formative part of my UNE experience came through the Center for the Business of Sport and Outdoors, where I moved from studying the sports industry to contributing to live projects for outside organizations, learning how to take an idea and turn it into something useful.

Working with the Maine Mariners was especially meaningful. I gained experience studying fan behavior and improving game-day experiences while thinking through the business challenges facing a professional sports organization, including an impact study of the team's contribution to the local economy. Those experiences gave me more than lines for my resume. They gave me confidence and professional polish.

After completing my undergraduate degree, I continued my studies at UNE through the online Master of Business Administration program and became a graduate assistant under Connor Blake, MBA, former director of the Center, and Norm O'Reilly, Ph.D., former dean of the College of Business. The role gave me more responsibility and specific work I could point to in job applications.

Those experiences helped me earn my current fellowship with the Pittsburgh Penguins. My supervisor, Natalie Immediato, previously worked with the Maine Mariners, a reminder that careers are built through relationships and reputation, not just individual achievements.

I once thought career readiness meant choosing the right major and completing an internship. I now understand that it is learning how to communicate, being dependable, asking better questions, and remaining composed when plans change. It is having people who challenge you, trust you with meaningful work, and help you recognize strengths you may not yet see in yourself.

My path from Rochester to UNE and now to Pittsburgh has changed as I have learned more about myself and the sports industry. Each experience helped me narrow my interests and build practical skills. The opportunities I had at UNE prepared me to take this next step with the Penguins, but I do not see Pittsburgh as the conclusion of my story.

In many ways, this is only the beginning. ■

For additional content, visit us online: **une.edu/magazine**.







# RURAL CLINICAL TRAINING ON MAINE'S SCENIC MIDCOAST

*by* Deirdre Fleming Stires; *photos by* Kevin Bennett, freelance photographer

Penobscot Bay stretches wide beneath the coastal backdrop of Belfast, Maine, a historic harbor town where forested shoreline meets the working waterfront. It's the kind of vibrant, close-knit place that first drew Jesse Vining (M.S.P.A., '27) to rural healthcare.

Vining enrolled at the University of New England wanting to make an impact by helping underserved populations. Working as a medical assistant at a community health center in Burlington, Vermont, he saw how physician assistants serve as frontline workers in rural areas facing barriers to patient care.

Belfast is similar to Vining's hometown, Newburyport, Massachusetts — both historic seaports with winding streets that brim with tourists in the summer — but far less urban. During his clinical rotation at the MaineHealth Primary Care office, he relished the deeply wooded coastline and its people.

"I like serving people and talking with people and understanding their specific challenges in life," Vining said. "My interest in working with underserved communities just stems from the level of impact you can have on a community."

In Belfast, Vining learned how serving a small community forges stronger patient relationships — like the day three generations of one family came through his exam room, or the day he treated residents of a remote island.

UNE alum Ainsley Price, M.S.P.A. '16, PA-C, Vining's clinical instructor in Belfast, said Vining instantly put patients at ease. "I can tell immediately that my patients are able to open up with Jesse and share their symptoms without shame or worry," Price said.

Since starting the UNE Physician Assistant program a year ago, Vining said he is already fully equipped to complete a patient evaluation and devise a treatment plan.

"I now feel confident walking into a patient's room and taking a medical history, doing an examination, and coming up with an assessment," Vining said. "This whole experience has made me feel prepared to take care of patients after graduation — that feels great." ■

For additional content, visit: **une.edu/magazine**.

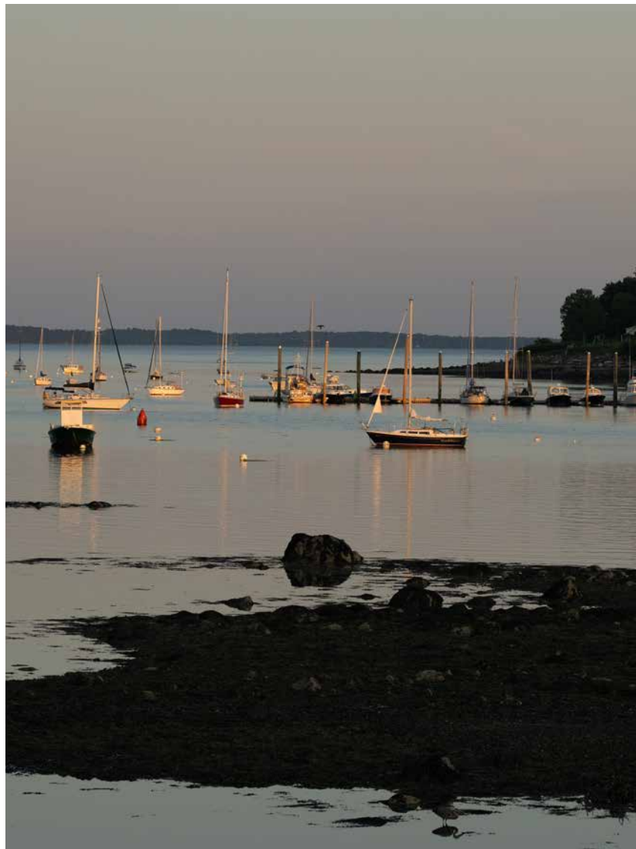


OH! NEW ENGLAND









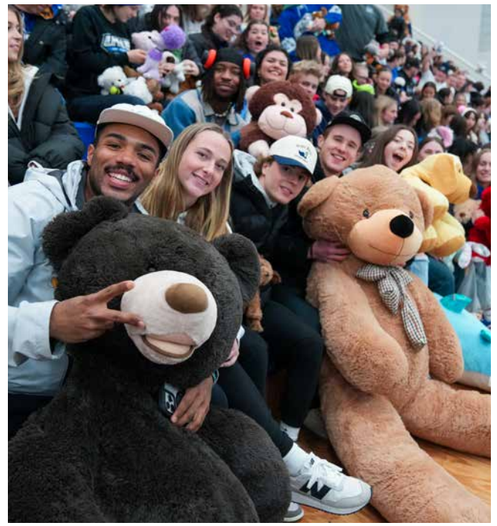












# MORE THAN A GOAL: 10 YEARS OF THE TEDDY BEAR TOSS

*by* Kyle Relf

The Teddy Bear Toss marked its 10th anniversary this year as one of UNE's premier winter traditions in Biddeford, annually drawing some of the Harold Alfond Forum's largest crowds.

During a designated men's and women's hockey weekend each season, fans throw stuffed animals that cascade over the glass following UNE's first goal. The plush toys are then collected and donated to a local medical center for children to enjoy, an act of charity that creates one of the season's most memorable atmospheres.

Behind the spectacle is the work of the Harold Alfond Forum Student Building Manager program, led by DJ Whitten, director of auxiliary operations, and Cynthia Furber, executive assistant to the vice president of Human Resources/chief Human Resources officer and the vice president of Legal Affairs.

Since its inception, the Teddy Bear Toss has generated more than 23,000 stuffed animal donations for MaineHealth Maine Medical Center in Sanford and more than $25,000 for Make-A-Wish Maine.

"What began as a small community event has grown into one of UNE's most cherished traditions," Whitten said.

"In many ways, the event reflects Harold Alfond's philanthropic legacy — bringing people together to support children, families, and communities in need through simple acts of generosity," Whitten added.

The Nor'easters also wear specialty jerseys that are auctioned off annually, raising additional funds for charity.

For Furber, the event's success reflects the dedication of UNE students.

"The annual Teddy Bear Toss wouldn't be possible without the leadership of the Forum Student Building Managers," she said, adding that students transform a campus tradition into a meaningful act of community service.

"Their work begins months before puck drop, collaborating with community partners, developing the event theme, and creating social media content that builds excitement across campus and beyond. When the weekend arrives, the students are at the heart of the action."





# NOR'EASTER NEWS



## Ice Hockey Captain Wins
### 2026 Maroon Award

Former UNE women's ice hockey captain Jamie DuPont, B.S. '26 (Applied Exercise Science), received the Westbrook College of Health Professions Maroon Award during the college's graduation ceremony on May 15. DuPont joined Elizabeth Goodrich, B.S. '25, of the women's rugby program as the second consecutive student-athlete to receive the college's highest honor, presented annually for academic achievement and service to one student on each of UNE's Maine campuses.

"Winning the Maroon Award was both a surprise and an incredible honor," DuPont said. "It means so much to know that I have made a positive impact on my classmates and teammates, and I am proud to represent the women's ice hockey team."

Maroon Award recipients are recognized for academic excellence, leadership, and collaboration, qualities exemplified by DuPont, who was president of the Applied Exercise Science Club in addition to being captain of the ice hockey team.

DuPont, from Beverly, Massachusetts, was named the Conference of New England's Scholar-Athlete of the Year following her senior season, during which she posted a career-best 13 points (eight goals, five assists). She also excelled as a gross anatomy teaching assistant and student manager of the Harold Alfond Forum. ■





# NOR'EASTER NEWS

## Dance, Cheer Teams Represent
### UNE on National Stage

An April weekend in Florida was well spent for the UNE cheer and dance teams, who both returned with additions to their trophy cases.

The cheer team, coached by Alison Bromski and Cady Toussaint, competed at the National Cheerleaders Association's Collegiate National Championship and topped the Small Coed Division, becoming the first Maine team to earn consecutive titles at the annual event in Daytona Beach after winning the All-Girl Division in 2025.

"We are proud to be Maine's first team to win back-to-back and coed national titles, and, above all else, we are proud to be UNE," Bromski said. "This team has proven there is no limit to what Nor'easters can achieve."





The dance team won the Division III Jazz Dance Team Union Championship at The College Classic in Orlando, reclaiming a title it previously earned in 2023 after runner-up finishes in 2024 and 2025. The group was coached by Courtney Joy, B.S. '21 (Nursing); Victoria Powers, B.S. '22 (Applied Exercise Science), D.P.T. '25; and Hannah Hawkins, B.S. '25 (Medical Biology).

"Claiming a second national title is an incredible honor, and it reflects the hard work and dedication of this team," Joy said. "This is the result of months of intense preparation, teamwork, and refusal to settle for anything less than the best." ■







# READY FOR ANY ROLE

## *Alex Yeaton (Business Administration, '27) has found versatility on and off the field through his internship with the Sanford Mainers.*

*by* Kyle Relf

When Alex Yeaton (Business Administration, '27) arrived at Goodall Park on a summer afternoon, the baseball game was still hours away.

There were plenty of details to manage before the first pitch: promotional items to organize, merchandise displays to assemble, and volunteers to coordinate. Once the game began, it was time to help deliver the moments that make young fans fall in love with sports, the same way Yeaton, a senior on the UNE football team, did as a child.

"As an athlete, I've always experienced sports from a player's perspective or as a fan," he said. "To be part of it in a different way that helps make those events possible for players, fans, and the community is really special."

Yeaton spent the summer as the game-day operations intern with the Sanford Mainers, a member of the New England Collegiate Baseball League (NECBL). College baseball players from around the country spend their summers in the NECBL or similar leagues, showcasing their abilities to major league scouts. Since 2003, more than 80 former Sanford Mainers have gone on to play professional baseball.

UNE's Office of Career Readiness and Workforce Development helped connect Yeaton with the internship, matching him with an opportunity aligned with his interests in sport and business.

Yeaton's responsibilities ranged from coordinating promotions and theme nights to managing merchandise sales and assisting with the ticket booth, plus a variety of other duties. The experience allowed him to apply lessons from his management and marketing courses, particularly his understanding of how promotions and special events can create value for an organization.

"Every day is a little different," Yeaton said. "We're relied on to be versatile and fill many roles throughout the ballpark."

Office and Sales Manager Andrea Knight helped Yeaton and the Mainers' other interns explore different areas of the organization, providing experience beyond their primary responsibilities. Her mentorship gave the interns a broader perspective of what success looks like in their individual roles.

Versatility, Yeaton said, is one of the biggest lessons he has taken away from this internship — a skill that mirrors his journey on the football field.

Arriving to UNE's Blue Bolt Field as a wide receiver, Yeaton spent his first season adapting to the college game before switching to tight end as a sophomore. A preseason injury made it difficult to establish a consistent role, but he remained focused on development, he said.

With guidance from coaches and veteran teammates, like standout tight end Jon Terry, B.S. '26 (Business Administration), Yeaton went to work with his sights set on a breakout junior campaign.

He emerged in 2025, when UNE put together a program-best 8-2 record. Yeaton caught the first touchdown of his career in the Nor'easters' first-ever win over Western New England University, one of the season's marquee victories. UNE's fast-paced offense was second nationally in yards per game and put up four 50-point performances.

"Alex has been one of the most versatile players we have had in our brief history," said head football coach Mike Lichten. "He has changed positions, learned new skills, and improved his strengths and has always found a role as a leader within our program. His development as a student, athlete, and young man speaks to his willingness to try new things (and) take direction and advice (with a) selfless attitude."

The same qualities that helped Yeaton climb the depth chart have carried over to his professional experiences.

Whether preparing Goodall Park hours before the opening pitch or stepping into unfamiliar in-game roles, Yeaton knows the value of dependability and the willingness to do whatever the situation requires.

"Alex has been the ultimate team player," said Jacob Ouellette, chairman of the Sanford Mainers' board of directors. "Right from day one, he's been willing to step up into numerous roles, especially those he's not familiar with. His ability to adapt and take charge is something that has made him such a reliable asset to the Mainers organization."

The internship also gave Yeaton a different perspective on the sports industry. Working with a small-market summer collegiate team in Maine, he experienced an operation where staff members wear many hats and interact directly with the community they serve, and he built a greater appreciation for the behind-the-scenes work that creates positive experiences for fans.

> "Alex has been the ultimate team player. Right from day one, he's been willing to step up into numerous roles, especially those he's not familiar with. His ability to adapt and take charge is something that has made him such a reliable asset."
>
> — *Jacob Ouellette*




"I remember being in their shoes, looking up to athletes, attending games, and falling in love with sports," he said. "Knowing I'm able to help make those experiences possible is really rewarding."

Yeaton said that while he enjoyed his sports internship, he plans to consider multiple career fields his senior year and pursue further internships to explore interests in finance and project management. In February, Yeaton will have the rare, class-based opportunity to travel to Los Angeles for the Super Bowl, where select UNE students have the chance to do paid, behind-the-scenes work for the NFL at one of the world's premier sporting events.

Yeaton said football had already taught him the value of resilience and adaptability, but his internship reinforced those lessons in a professional setting, where versatility still leads to opportunities. And whether he's catching passes on fall Saturdays or contributing to signature summer evenings at Goodall Park, Yeaton's philosophy remains the same: Be prepared, be adaptable, and be ready to contribute wherever needed.

"Work ethic is the biggest thing," he reflected. "You've got to show up every day, give it your all, and do it for your teammates." ■



# CLOSING THE GAP

## *How a stipend helps UNE health professions students access hands-on rural healthcare education.*

*by* Amy Haile

"You can't get there from here."

It's an old Maine saying, half joke and half warning to visitors trying to find a place that's as close as next door but that can feel a world away as you traverse the region's back roads. Increasingly, the same line applies to healthcare: In much of rural Maine, the nearest healthcare provider can feel just as hard to reach.

In fact, rural areas across the country are grappling with the same forces: federal funding gaps that shutter regional hospitals and a pipeline of new healthcare providers that isn't keeping pace with the rate of retirement.

Maine is no exception.

"A critical part of addressing shortages in rural healthcare is getting students in the health professions to experience what it's like to work and live in those areas," said Zoe Hull, M.P.H., director of the Maine Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Network, housed within the University of New England Center for Public Health Practice.

> "I want to continue supporting rural communities and help close the healthcare gaps that persist across our state." — *Ethan Gagnon*





The barrier, Hull said, is usually financial. Covering a second housing arrangement on top of travel costs can put a rural rotation out of reach for many students who are already stretched thin.

To help remove that barrier, UNE has partnered with M&T Bank, which committed $125,000 to award stipends to UNE students pursuing clinical rotations in rural areas of Maine in fields such as medicine, dentistry, physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, pharmacy, and nursing through the Maine AHEC Network.

"M&T Bank is proud to support UNE's rural clinical rotation stipends," said Phil Cohen, M&T Bank's regional president in Maine. "By helping to ease the financial burden on our future medical professionals, this funding allows them to focus on their training and service at a time when healthcare providers are needed more than ever. It also helps bring critical care to our neighbors who might otherwise face barriers to accessing healthcare."

With M&T's support, 20 UNE health professions students since 2024 have received housing and transportation support during their rural clinical experiences, and the partnership will help an additional 20 students over the next two years. For many, the rotation is where their identity as a rural healthcare provider first takes shape.

For Ethan Gagnon '26, a recent Doctor of Pharmacy graduate from Bath, Maine, growing up in a rural area informed his career as well as his commitment to practicing in one.

"We often had to travel long distances for basic services, and wait times for appointments were high. These experiences sparked my interest in pharmacy as a frontline, accessible form of care," he said.

With the stipend, Gagnon was able to spend a rotation in Bar Harbor and experienced rural healthcare as a provider.

"These moments have built a foundation of respect and compassion for underserved populations," Gagnon said. "Whether it's helping someone manage a chronic condition or providing education about a new prescription, even a quick conversation at the counter can lead to better outcomes. I want to continue supporting rural communities and help close the healthcare gaps that persist across our state."

Mia Hatfield ('27), who is pursuing her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree at UNE, grew up in an urban part of Massachusetts and is currently on rotation in Farmington, Maine. The M&T stipend allowed her to be fully invested in the community she is serving while bringing her experiences back to the classroom.

"Renting in Portland and then going somewhere else on your clinical rotation means paying double rent, which is very challenging," she said, adding that she would not have had this experience without the financial support. "The stipend allowed me to focus more on the actual clinical experience rather than the financial barriers that are associated with moving myself up to Farmington."

Hatfield said this experience has broadened her perspective as a care provider in unexpected ways and has helped convince her that she could thrive as a rural healthcare provider.

Many of Hatfield's patients are farmers, self-described as stubborn. Early in the clinical rotation, she found it frustrating when a patient didn't stick to a home exercise program or kept re-aggravating their injury. Over time, she came to understand their chores can't wait for a shoulder to heal.

"I have learned to listen and be mindful of what they're going through and being able to work around the ebbs and flows that come with a rural community," she said.

Hatfield has shifted her approach toward functional outcomes over clinical benchmarks, prioritizing what a patient can do in daily life over the specifics of a prescribed exercise, whether that's getting down on the ground to play with their grandkids or climbing into a tractor.

"I want that to be my focus with PT," she said. "This rotation has been such a wonderful experience. It's only strengthened my desire to work up here and with this community." ■

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# class Notes

Please email your news and photos to alumni@une.edu, post them on UNE Connect at www.alumni.une.edu, or mail them to the UNE Office of Alumni Advancement, 716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103. College of Osteopathic Medicine news should be emailed to RSAS@une.edu.

Please limit submissions to 75 words or less. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.



## 2025

**Callie Huppe** writes: I graduated with my psychology degree with a mental health rehabilitation minor! With the help of professors, fieldwork, and support, I was able to get a job through Waypoint at the Fraser Ford Child Development Center, a special-purpose private school for children with disabilities and extra support needs!

## 2023

**Dave Norman, M.S.W.**, writes: Since graduating from UNE's School of Social Work in 2023, I've earned my LCSW and worked diligently to develop my niche in clinical social work. I'm proud to celebrate with you the pending release of my latest book, the novel *Hash 207*.

**Kathleen Jenkins-Brown, MBA**, writes: In December 2025, I earned an MBA in data analytics from Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

## 2022

**Erica Dimmick** writes: In August 2025, I became an apprentice trainer at NEADS Service Dogs. Being a service dog trainer is something I have dreamed about for almost a decade. I finally made it!

**Jaqueline (Auger) Harbeck** writes: I finished my HRSA NHSC scholarship requirement in June, which helped pay for dental school. Reduced school loans paired with valuable experience working in public health made it well worth it. I highly encourage anyone pursuing a graduate degree to research the program.

**Emily Williams** recently graduated with a Master of Science from the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University. During her studies, she completed coursework abroad in Switzerland, engaging with workers at the United Nations, International Labor Organization, Council of Europe, and International Court of Human Rights. Emily continues to work for Mindbridge, a Maine-based nonprofit applying neuropsychological insights to empower human rights defenders.

## 2021

**Jenna Pannone** writes: I graduated from Le Moyne College's Physician Assistant Program and became certified in fall 2025. I'm so excited to be practicing as a physician assistant in 2026 and beyond!

**Jamie Felton, M.S.W.**, writes: Since graduating from UNE's online Advanced Standing Master of Social Work program in 2021, I've found deep fulfillment in my career, recently wrapping up my fifth year as a high school social worker and earning my LSW, with my LCSW coming this fall. A highlight has been personally handing diplomas to six graduating students. I got married last year, and I credit my UNE education with opening doors to this rewarding profession.

## 2020

**Ryan Bloom, M.D.**, is currently a resident physician at MedStar Health's Georgetown University National Rehabilitation Hospital, specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation. They plan to further sub-specialize in pain medicine. Reflecting on their time at UNE, they value the strong mentorship and lasting friendships formed during their studies and stay connected by following the hockey team.

**Reghan Lipinski** writes: Going on year two of running an entire brook trout farm by myself in southern New Hampshire.

## 2018

**Kayla Burgess**, now in her second year teaching sixth grade math and science in Somerville, Massachusetts, brings a passion for hands-on learning shaped by her earlier work in outdoor and environmental education. She credits her time at UNE, especially as a member of the swim team and a participant in marine science research, with instilling leadership, discipline, and scientific curiosity that continue to guide her in the classroom.

**Kristen Falcinelli** writes: In May 2025, I graduated from the University of Washington with my master's in physical oceanography. My thesis was titled "Introducing a Nonstationary Modeling Procedure to Improve Biogeochemical Mapping in the Southern Ocean."

**Alina (Basilon) Kukla and Tyler Kukla '19** married on Oct. 25, 2025, in Strafford, New Hampshire.


Dave Norman


Emily Williams


Jamie Felton

## 2017

**Sierra Alley** writes: I accepted a charge nurse role in the memory care unit at Pinnacle Health and Rehab of South Portland. I am currently working on a dual M.S.N. in executive leadership and family nurse practitioner — just a few clinical rotations away from graduation! I also attended the 2026 Maine Geriatrics Conference in Bar Harbor where professional networking was expanded and enjoyed.

**Deqa Dhalac, M.S.W.**, writes: Since graduating from the University of New England, I've had the privilege of serving on the South Portland City Council, as mayor of South Portland, and in the Maine Legislature. As a member of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, I helped develop and pass Maine's state budget. I'm grateful for the education I received at UNE, which taught me to think critically and approach problems with compassion and integrity.

## 2016

**Alyssa Cole Mixon, D.O.**, is a board-certified physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, fellowship trained in cancer rehabilitation. After five years at the University of Virginia, Mixon has accepted a new position at Stanford University, where she will pioneer its cancer rehabilitation program. Outside the clinic, she enjoys content creation, sharing work-life balance and health literacy while helping prevent misinformation. She recently published a guidebook: *Dr. Cole's Codes: Navigating Social Media as a Healthcare Professional*.

## 2015

**Shirley Moore, M.S.W.**, writes: I know this is a time in your life when you're excited to start working in your field of study. Enjoy this journey! Don't give up. It will go by fast, so enjoy where you are in your life.

## 2014

**Kimberly (Mulcahy) Burns, Pharm.D.**, was recently recognized as the Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year from the University at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. After graduating from UNE's pre-doctorate and Doctor of Pharmacy programs, Burns completed a PGY1 and PGY2 pharmacy practice residency with the New York State Office of Mental Health Buffalo Psychiatric Center.

## 2011

**John Connell** was chosen as the 2026 Rhode Island Association of School Principals Assistant Principal of the Year. As assistant principal, he also oversees the English, special education, world language, social studies, and school counseling departments and co-chairs the district attendance team. Connell is the first Westerly High School assistant principal to receive the honor since 1997 and has been with Westerly Public Schools since 2016.

## 2007

**Anton Ascanio** and his wife, Cassidy, welcomed their third baby boy this past November. Despite being born with a congenital heart defect, the outstanding pediatric cardiac surgery team at Maine Medical Center got him fixed up and home in no time so that he could meet his two older brothers.

## 2006

**Matthew McManus** is vice president at Acadia Insurance, a regional commercial insurance company headquartered in Westbrook, Maine. Over the past 18 years, he has held a variety of roles within the company. He lives in Scarborough with his wife, Amy Beeman McManus '05, D.P.T. '09, and their two sons, Braedon and Brooks. Matt and Amy are active in local youth sports, each coaching multiple teams.

**Kate Gilbert** is currently working for American Ancestors, a genealogical research company in Boston, and was recently promoted to senior researcher.

## 2005

**Maura Buglione** credits UNE with the chance to thrive as a student and an athlete, competing in field hockey and lacrosse. After earning her degrees in 2005 and 2006, Maura found her passion in early intervention and leads development at Thom Child and Family Services, overseeing grant writing and continuing education for 10 programs. "What I learned at UNE about teamwork, discipline, and connection carries through every part of my life," she said.

## 2004

**Tamara O'Neil, MBA** recently published her first book, *Who Holds the Leader?*, exploring how organizations can support leaders experiencing grief, crisis, or major personal disruption while maintaining performance and resilience. A leadership strategist, author, speaker, and educator, Tamara is also the creator of the O'Neil CARE Model© and was named one of *Influential Women's* 2026 "Most Influential Women Leading Change." She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership at Columbia International University and credits her UNE education as a key foundation for a career centered on leadership, developing people, and creating meaningful organizational impact.

## 2003

**Mark Montgomery, M.S.Ed.**, writes: In the summer of 2025, I was promoted to the interim vice-president of student affairs and DEIB at SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Utica, New York.

**Amy Capoocia, D.O.**, writes: Quick 23-year update: Still married to Gary, and we have five kids. I opened a direct primary care practice, Ludwig's Village Family Medicine, at the end of 2022; we just celebrated our third anniversary, and the business is doing well. I've done some speaking engagements and still love medicine. This year, I'm focusing on women's health and perimenopause and menopause support.






Deqa Dhalac


Iris Sadowsky


Tamara O'Neil

**Paul Pinette, M.S.W.**, recently published the book *Old Brain in a New World.* The book is focused on stress, the nervous system, and finding a more grounded way of living.

**Kimberly Sampson** and John Van Vranken are delighted to announce their engagement. John proposed in April 2025 at the Medici Fountain in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris. The couple plans a September 2027 wedding in Bar Harbor, Maine. Kimberly graduated from UNE in 2003 with a degree in dental hygiene and is global chief privacy officer at Hogan Lovells. John is chief technology officer at the Maine-based startup MPC.

## 2000

**Nikki (Satovsky) Melet, PA**, writes: Class of 2000 here! I recently received my 25-year pin for practicing as a physician assistant and currently work at Schweiger Dermatology in San Francisco. I also launched my clothing company, Heart and Stitch (heartandstitch.com); a portion of the proceeds supports a breast cancer foundation. UNE provided the perfect foundation for my career, and I'm grateful for the experience and education that shaped my path.

## 1999

**Becky Allmon, D.O.**, writes: I'm pretty much retired, doing some medical mission work in Ukraine, Turkey, and Greece. I'm also working part time with SouthernCare Hospice.

**Iris Sadowsky, D.O.**, writes: I recently completed a two-year fellowship in integrative medicine from the University of Arizona College of Medicine Andrew Weil Center for Integrative Medicine.

## 1998

**Janice Chick** writes: Since retiring from the Newburyport, Massachusetts, school system in 2008, I've had more time to enjoy life's pleasures. I've lived in Harpswell, Maine, since 1997. My husband and I enjoy cruising the Maine coast and traveling the world, often with Viking Cruises. Highlights include Norway's Sami reindeer herders and the Falkland Islands, South America, Europe, and Australia. We both hold U.S. Coast Guard licenses.

## 1995

**April Bechard Bosse** writes: Hi everyone. I can't remember the last time I sent in a class note! My husband, twin boys, and I live in Fort Fairfield, Maine. I celebrated 30 years as a dental hygienist, the last 10 at Academy Dental in Presque Isle. My boys are juniors in high school; Logan got his license, and William plays basketball, volleyball, and golf. My husband, Ronni, is a strength and conditioning coach.

**Leah Perocchi Gordon** writes: I relocated to Farmington, Maine, in 2023 to be closer to my parents and take over my mother's herbal skin care business. After 20 years in clinical and executive leadership, I've taken a staff nurse role as a quality assurance specialist for hospice, working from home. I have a stepson in travel soccer, so I'm on the road often. My two adult children live in Orlando and work for Disney.

## 1994

**Marcia Klein-Chast, D.O.**, writes: I just celebrated the 25th anniversary of my practice, We Care Pediatrics!

**Bobbi Miller, M.S.W.**, fully retired in 2025 after a 44-year career in medical social work. She and her wife, Becky, reside in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

## 1992

**Wayne Tamaska, D.O., FACOI, FACOEP, ACPA-C**, is the medical director of medical management in the Jefferson Health East Region.

**Sharon Dorman, D.O.**, writes: I completed my master's in medical management with an incredible cohort from all over the world at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2014.

## 1989

**Ralph Messo, D.O.**, authored the book *The Doctor Is Out: Justice vs. Injustice in America*.

**Wendy Gulin Huff** writes: Hey friends! Hard to believe it's been 36 years since my graduation! I'd love to hear from old friends! I have many on Facebook, but there might be more of y'all out there. My daughter's getting married this fall.

## 1988

**Mark Henschke, D.O., Pharm.D.**, published a case series in the European Society of Medicine *Medical Research Archives*, Volume 13, Issue 2.

## 1987

**Roland Chalifoux, D.O.**, writes: I completed my neurological surgery residency at Horizon Health in Michigan from 1990 to 1995. I became AOA board certified in neurological surgery in April 1998 and became board certified in interventional pain medicine by the American Board of Interventional Pain Physicians in 2012.

## 1986

**Dean Johnson** writes: In August, I completed my 35th year at NCAA II Caldwell University, New Jersey, serving as associate director of athletics. I spent 29 years as head softball coach, resigning that position in 2023, and am entering my fourth year as head men's basketball coach.

**Rob Poissant** writes: I'm approaching 38 years of employment at Bath Iron Works and enjoy being a leader and friend for the next generation of shipbuilders. I attained a master's certificate in pastoral ministry. I volunteer with the elderly and veterans on the weekends.

**Greg Nye, D.O.**, writes: I retired in 2025 and am enjoying not working. I've read a lot of books, am exercising more, started swimming again, and plan to travel for a few years. I look forward to our 40-year reunion. We had a great class; it'd be nice to see people again.

## 1985

**David Riggs, D.O.**, writes: Still working for the Air Force for another six months, and then I plan on retiring 100%. Hope to travel and visit friends and family. It's been a good ride!

**Stephen Flannery** writes: Finally retired after over 30 years with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Living by the Scarborough River on the opposite side of Saco Bay.

## 1984

**Jeffrey Glassheim, D.O.**, writes: I moved back to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in August 2024, the first time in 11 states of residence that I've lived somewhere twice, to make memories with my only grandchild, Rory Joseph, now 3 1/2 and someone who makes me laugh out loud every time we're together. I couldn't be prouder of my family and have enjoyed living near one daughter or the other over the past decade.

**Lisa Forrest Mathews** writes: My husband, Steve, and I are still living in Portland. I'm a dental office manager at Deering Center Dental, Portland, after doing dental hygiene for 36 years. We have four adult children.

## 1982

**Thomas Bartell** writes: I am so honored to be recognized by the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce with the Frank Koenig Business Person of the Year Award. Frank Koenig was an unabashed supporter of our local businesses and a champion for Windham, the Sebago Lakes Region, and the Chamber of Commerce.

## 1981

**Kim (Noble) Hubbard** writes: I'm still working for the same school district I've been with for 25 years. I still coach Special Olympics ski, track, and unified basketball, though I'm thinking it's time to retire. Both of our children are married and live near us, and we have one grandchild, with more on the way. Barb (Allen) Griggs '81 moved back north last winter, less than an hour from me.

**Diane (Collins) Field** writes: My husband, Sumner, and I now live in Topsham, Maine. We're busy with family and grandchildren, occasional travel, and some beginner's golf once the snow is gone. We continue our connections with UNE and encourage all past Westbrook College students to visit campus and see the changes. I love seeing the old buildings saved and improved for current student use; Westbrook College lives on in so many ways.

**Rick Dellaporta** writes: I'm recently retired after 40 years at PepsiCo as the global vegetable oil expert. Still playing soccer.

## 1980

**Jeff Barret** was inducted into the Maine Tennis Hall of Fame. This honor reflects his exceptional contributions to the sport of tennis, his outstanding achievements on and off the court, and the lasting impact that he has had on the tennis community in Maine.

## 1979

**Kathryn Spallone** writes: Since graduation, I earned my bachelor's degree in mathematics and master's degree in education. I taught middle school math for a while and now substitute part time so I can enjoy life with my partner, Lee, at Woodridge Lake in Goshen, Connecticut. I've stayed in touch with my former roommate, Diane Pizzanello-Carabillo '79, and we've spent time together snow skiing, boating, kayaking, and hiking with our families.

## 1977

**Teri (Tombarelli) Blouin** writes: I retired in June 2021 from a state government position in the New Hampshire governor's budget department, and I have pinched myself every day since. Retirement is pure bliss! I'm blessed with two adult children and three grandchildren. Glenn has been by my side for 48 years. Pickleball keeps me young, and I enjoy hiking, traveling, and boating on Lake Winnipesaukee, where we have a summer home.





## 1976

**Joni Hardwick Maliszewski** writes: To all of my classmates, it's our 50th reunion! I hope we as a class rejoice in the time we had together and remember those we've lost. As I fight lung cancer, now going on four years, I cherish the life I've had with my husband, daughters, and grandchildren, which all began at Westbrook College. I am forever grateful, especially for Dean Bond. The spirit of Westbrook will never die!

**John Hychko** writes: Hello everyone. It's amazing that our Class of 1976 is coming up on its 50-year reunion this Oct. 16-18. Half a century has gone by since we first showed up on campus figuring out life and where our classrooms were; it was the most treasured time of my life. I'm planning to attend and hope you'll join. A few of us are talking about renting a house for the week.

**Susan McKeough** writes: Dear St. Francis grads, Class of 1976, this year is our 50th reunion. It seems like yesterday we were in class, playing sports, and studying in the library. I cherish the friendships and outstanding education St. Francis gave us, especially the professors who built the experimental education program that let us work in classrooms before student teaching. I felt prepared for any classroom. Thank you, St. Francis, for a sound education.

## 1975

**Joanne Curley Harrison** writes: Retired registered nurse of 50 years! Still working as a caregiver part time. Married, two sons, and three grandchildren, whom I care for four days a week.

**Bob Marotto** writes: Still enjoying retirement in central North Carolina (the Piedmont, as the area's known here). Our oldest son will be a senior at Marquette this fall, and our youngest will be starting his second year at Appalachian State University. I had hoped to fish a lot this year, but water is wickedly scarce due to the drought.

## 1974

**Elizabeth Cyr Legrain** writes: I cherish memories from the Westbrook days. I later obtained a bachelor's and an MBA, yet my nursing degree opened doors to a career as coordinator of a domestic violence prevention program in the Health Directorate at the World Bank Group in Washington, D.C. Husband and I are retirees and live between Normandy, France, and Quebec, Canada, with our two-retirement vizslas and enjoy visiting our three children and grandson.


Bob Marotto


Elizabeth Cyr Legrain


Larry Godbout

## 1973

**Jean McNamara** writes: Can't believe I retired from teaching 10 years ago in June! I loved my career but am grateful for more time now with my four children and eight grandchildren. I attended Innovation Night in the spring, and those student projects were remarkable. UNE, you should be proud of your students and the impact they're making in Maine communities.


Greg Nye


Lisa Forrest Mathews


Rick Dellaporta


Teri (Tombarelli) Blouin

**Larry Godbout** writes: The annual old-time St. Francis hockey team get-together happened at the Lake Placid ECAC Championship.

**Jane Nebb Kearney** writes: I retired from AT&T in 2023 after 40 years as an IT systems analyst and program manager. I've been divorced for a while and still live in New Jersey but recently moved closer to the ocean and my family. I stay in touch with my Westbrook College best friend, Kathy Harper. I've been back to the Westbrook campus and dorm a few times but not yet for a reunion.

## 1971

**Michel Scott Susina** writes: Dan and I cruised around South America last year.

**James Mullins** writes: Grandson number one is now a third-year midshipman at Annapolis. Number two is in his first year at Penn State School of Engineering. Number three is a middle schooler in Greenwich. I spend my time volunteering for Toys for Tots, Meals on Wheels, and Nathaniel Witherell Nursing Home. Still go to Yankees games.

**George Kudlacik** writes: We played in the annual UNE Vaughn Twaddel Golf Classic on May 29. It was a great outing to support the Varsity Club. Looking forward to Homecoming in October.

**Tina Segalla Grant** writes: Each year, my husband and I winter at our Venice, Florida, home, November through April, happy to escape New England's snow and cold. It was gratifying to be snowbirds, as our daughter bought her first home in North Port, a half hour away. I volunteer at Danbury's Congregational Church thrift store two days a week, and I work with our town's registrar of voters office, assisting with elections.

**Sharon Goodell Anderson** and **Sheri Higgins** had a great week in Washington in September, seeing most of their must-see list in great weather and getting adept at using Uber. They then took a road trip from Charleston, South Carolina, to Savannah, Georgia, in April, learning the complexities of parking meters. Every day was a learning experience for two technophobes.

**Holly Bishop Howland** writes: Mark and I celebrated our 53rd anniversary in August. We're fortunate our children live close by in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and we spend time with our grandchildren often. Our summers are on Damariscotta Lake in Jefferson, Maine, where we rent our cottage to visitors from across the U.S. I'll host classmates for a get-together in August.

**Linda (Foster) Blomquist** writes: Still singing! I sing in three local choruses and church choir. Love being Grammie to Evan (10) and Lydia (7). They live just down the hill, so we are really a part of their everyday lives. Looking forward to seeing fellow Brookies at Holly's for our annual visit to her wonderful spot on Damariscotta Lake. Life is still good in Bristol, Maine.

## 1968

**Joe Valenza, Ph.D.**, writes: Members of the St. Francis College Class of '68 gathered for our mini reunion, held annually on campus for more than a decade. College of Arts and Sciences Dean Wes Renfro toured us through the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center, and Athletics Director Heather Davis spoke about UNE Athletics. We marveled at gathering nearly 60 years after graduation and are grateful for the hospitality UNE has shown us as part of the family.

## 1967

**Sherry Poluchov Hils** writes: My husband and I have lived in Norman, Oklahoma, for 10 years, adjusting to hot summers and tornado risk. Norman is a lovely college town; I have season tickets to the women's and men's basketball games and women's gymnastics and follow softball, baseball, and football on TV. Our son is a University of Oklahoma professor teaching contemporary sculpture. I do miss the mountains, ocean, and fresh seafood in Maine.

**Jone Gibson Aeseltine** and her husband, Rick, recently celebrated their 48th anniversary. Joan had a wonderful surprise visit in June from her sister, Suzanne Gibson Cort '67. On Memorial Day, Joan and Rick moved into their renovated New London, New Hampshire, home and are excited to be settled on Messer Pond. They're looking forward to an August 2026 visit from their two sons, in North Carolina and Utah, and four grandsons.

## 1966

**James Martel** writes: I am retired from active ministry and am a happy retired priest at age 81.

**Jacqueline Gribbon** writes: I can't believe it's been 60 years since we graduated. I'm enjoying retirement and traveling when I can. Last year, I traveled to Ireland for 14 days. Amazing country! I still love Maine and spend a great deal of time there during the year.

**Linda Aharonian Zavalick** writes: Hello to all! I look forward to seeing many of you back on campus for our 60th reunion. I'm enjoying retirement from banking after more than 40 years. My husband and I moved to Massachusetts almost 20 years ago, closer to our three granddaughters, now 21, 19, and 10. I still exercise six days a week and race, and I'm looking forward to turning 80 in July 2026.

**Brendan Healy** writes: In February, I was inducted into the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association Hall of Fame.

## 1965

**Donna Rawson Woods** writes: I am still working as coordinator of operations for the Collier County School District in Naples, Florida, a role I've held since 1978. My son retired as assistant superintendent of schools at 50. I remain grateful for enduring friendships with classmates Martha Bagnell '65, Margot Gatchell '65, and Muriel Hobson Sorka-Pizzi '65. My years at Westbrook remain close to my heart.

## 1964

**Susan Dury** writes: After 60 years of working, I am finally retired. Westbrook opened many doors for me after graduation. In nursing, I achieved my Bachelor of Science in Nursing and my master's degrees. My journey from nursing led me to ordination to the Sacred Order of Deacons in the Episcopal Church for 29 years as director of pastoral care.

**Phyllis Green McClelland** writes: I have lived in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, for 13 years. My daughter, Mandy; her husband, Joe; and their children, Anna, 19, Grace, 17, Maddie, 14, and Mac, 6, are a busy, active family. My son, Ted, lives three streets away. I volunteer at my church with community meals and our tearoom and still work 15 hours a week at Target to stay busy.





## 1963

**Barabara Lothrop Labbe** writes: Hello fellow Brookies! I hope the start of 2026 finds you all in good health. It's been a challenging year; I had to place my husband of 59 years in nursing home care, where he's getting excellent care. I stay close with friends and family and recently joined a senior group in my city. My granddaughter is a high school senior looking at colleges for next year.

**Elizabeth Milburn Stevens** writes: I graduated from Westbrook College in 1963, ending up there by default, but it was a godsend: small and personal, and I thrived, with great teachers and friends, including Susan Jessop Moody '63. I later enrolled at Harvard Extension School to finish my degree, and Westbrook came to my rescue, accepting my credits from UNH and Harvard. In May 1983, I graduated with a B.S. in psychology. Thank you, Westbrook!

## 1962

**Madeline Frustaci Coppinger** writes: Greetings from Vermont! Three of my children joined me with four grandchildren and three great-grands. In March, my daughter and I will scrapbook on the New Hampshire seacoast. Since my 18-year volunteer program transporting seniors ended, I've been volunteering at a food pantry. I'm visiting my son in New Orleans in April.

## 1960

**Donna Allen** writes: I am hanging in, but at a much slower pace. It's my 10th year volunteering at the South Portland Historical Society at Bug Light.

**Cynthia Janis Northgraves** writes: Doing fine after a disastrous "sports injury." While playing kickball with my 3-year-old great-granddaughter, I kicked the ball into myself, fell, and fractured my fibula and shattered my ankle; I now have plates in both. I'm recovering well at my lake



Joe Valenza

house in Casco, Maine, where I keep busy with mah-jongg, a card group, two book clubs, and an active church women's group. I have three great-grandchildren.

## 1959

**Barbara Troubh Epstein** writes: Sixty-seven years ago, we gathered around the Circle to celebrate our graduation from Westbrook Junior College. Tears, hugs, and promises to at least stay in touch were abundant that day. Years passed. We lost contact. Some continued their education; others began their careers. More years passed.

## 1957

**Trilby Gifford Fry** writes: At 88 years old, I am able to be active and involved with people and groups. I have cats and one dog. I have traveled to many places, and my hobby is quilting.

**Anne Haley Rudolph** writes: My husband passed away in August 2023, and I have since moved to Orange Beach, Alabama. I spend my time at the beach. I still knit and crochet and do a lot of reading. I live with my son and daughter-in-law, and they take very good care of me. I am so lucky!

## 1955

**Ann Houghton Hunt** writes: I am still alive but not kicking too much, as my 91st birthday is getting close. I am on a waitlist for a continuing care place here in Williamsburg, Virginia. I know we have lost many of our dear classmates, so I hope to hear from those who are still here. I would love to hear from anyone in our class.



Cynthia Janis Northgraves

## 1954

**Helen Rancouret Hilton** writes: I am 93 years young and have lived alone in my own home since my husband, George, died 10 years ago — thankful for my good health. I stayed close with classmates Kitty Bonney Mathews '54, Mal Kidder Shurtleff '54, and Gwen Leighton Grant '54, all of whom have since passed. I have 16 great-grandchildren, ages 3 to 21.

## 1952

**Barbara Brown Emroe** writes: I lived in Maine for 38 years, and now I'm in northern Georgia. My husband died in 1990. We had five children.

## 1951

**Beverly Finney Aker** writes: I have moved into an assisted living facility, mainly because of the stairs, but I remain in good health this season. I keep going by reading, knitting hats and scarves for my church's program, crocheting blankets, and exercising my brain with sudoku and crossword puzzles.

## 1943

**Elizabeth Standley Wallis**
Westbrook Junior College
December 30, 2021

## 1946

**Alice Hanson Foster Camp**
Westbrook Junior College
July 7, 2025

**Elizabeth Archer Frost**
Westbrook Junior College
2013

**Mary Swasey Nutter**
Westbrook Junior College
April 9, 2017

## 1948

**Joan F. Anderson**
Westbrook Junior College
November 25, 2025

**Priscilla Powers Goff**
Westbrook Junior College
March 16, 2026

**Anne LaMontagne Hull**
Westbrook Junior College
December 27, 2024

## 1949

**Helen Gonyea Shannon**
Westbrook Junior College
January 27, 2025

**Van Durham Wentworth**
Westbrook Junior College
April 24, 2025

## 1950

**Janet Rankin Currier**
Westbrook Junior College
October 8, 2020

**Nancy Jackson Fox Elder**
Westbrook Junior College
August 17, 2025

## 1951

**Ruth Mears Mott**
Westbrook Junior College
September 19, 2025

**Jadine Raynes O'Brien**
Westbrook Junior College
March 29, 2026

## 1952

**Nancy Pearson Kodan**
Westbrook Junior College
January 11, 2026

**Janet Lyda Stover**
Westbrook Junior College
February 21, 2024

## 1955

**Harriet Sturtevant Laverdiere**
Westbrook Junior College
April 23, 2026

**Sabra Harriman Smith**
Westbrook Junior College
May 7, 2025

## 1956

**Gladys "Joanne" Batson**
Westbrook Junior College
September 23, 2011

**Margaret Reardon Blackwell**
Westbrook Junior College
July 8, 2016

**Ruth Mackin Good**
Westbrook Junior College
March 8, 2008

**Sally R. McFarlin**
Westbrook Junior College
December 20, 2025

**Harriett Gamage Moroney**
Westbrook Junior College
May 18, 2026

**Peggy Bridges Smith**
Westbrook Junior College
February 9, 2026

## 1957

**Jane Redonnett Ransome**
Westbrook Junior College
November 16, 2024

## 1958

**Dianne A. "Kim" Kimball Gerstel**
Westbrook Junior College
January 26, 2025

**Barbara Fraser Thompson**
Westbrook Junior College
June 10, 2025

## 1959

**Marilyn Brown Langley**
Westbrook Junior College
December 15, 2023

**A. Lorraine Embon Letourneau**
Westbrook Junior College
April 10, 2026

**Nancy Livingstone Nichols**
Westbrook Junior College
November 2, 2025

## 1960

**Jeanne Mank Austin**
Westbrook Junior College
November 4, 2025

**Doris Houle Cook**
Westbrook Junior College
October 13, 2023

**Carol A. Fredriksen**
Westbrook Junior College
September 15, 2025

**Patricia Rudokas Lampe**
Westbrook Junior College
December 20, 2025

## 1961

**Wendy Lahey**
Westbrook Junior College
April 30, 2025

## 1962

**Lynda Palmer Conner**
Westbrook Junior College
January 10, 2026

## 1963

**Judith Parenteau Clark**
Westbrook Junior College
October 15, 2025

**Paul E. Duchemin Sr.**
St. Francis College
October 13, 2025

## 1964

**Eleanor Koppang Batchelder**
Westbrook Junior College
April 16, 2025

**Judith Ann White Hill**
Westbrook Junior College
March 30, 2025

**Roger R. Johnson**
St. Francis College
July 9, 2024

**Joseph E. McCarthy, Ph.D.**
St. Francis College
October 21, 2022

**Timothy J. O'Leary**
St. Francis College
January 30, 2026

**Norman R. Taylor**
St. Francis College
November 13, 2025





## 1965

**John Allen Golday**
St. Francis College
June 16, 2024

**Pamela Gore Meeker**
Westbrook Junior College
January 25, 2026

**Judith Grant Young**
Westbrook Junior College
January 18, 2025

## 1966

**Michael P. Donahue**
St. Francis College
November 11, 2025

**Mark B. Ducharme**
St. Francis College
December 27, 2024

**Judith Lord Johnston**
Westbrook Junior College
April 27, 2024

**Joseph F. Privizzino Sr.**
St. Francis College
May 10, 2018

**Jacquin "Jack" Savona**
St. Francis College
January 3, 2026

## 1967

**Thomas A. Dudek**
St. Francis College
July 24, 2025

**Paul E. Dumont**
St. Francis College
September 8, 2025

## 1969

**James M. Barry**
St. Francis College
March 1, 2026

## 1970

**Anita Gervais Cartier**
St. Francis College
November 24, 2022

## 1971

**James L. "Jim" Corrigan**
St. Francis College
December 4, 2025

**Maureen Maheu Parrott**
St. Francis College
December 23, 2025

## 1972

**Bernard "Bernie" Matherson**
St. Francis College
February 9, 2021

**Deborah Henderson O'Brien**
Westbrook College
May 11, 2026

**Laurence F. Swim**
St. Francis College
August 6, 2022

## 1975

**Cynthia Ann Billings**
Westbrook College
May 11, 2026

**Robert D. Dunn**
St. Francis College
2024

## 1977

**Col. John F. Lorentz, M.D.**
Westbrook College
October 31, 2025

## 1981

**Carolyn E. Ferguson**
Westbrook College
October 12, 2024

## 1984

**Jeffrey P. Kovacs, D.O.**
University of New England
October 1, 2025

## 1985

**Amy L. Wyatt, D.O.**
University of New England
January 17, 2026

## 1988

**Richard Covington, D.O.**
University of New England
December 22, 2019

## 1993

**Forrest Foreman**
University of New England
March 18, 2025

## 1996

**William J. Garrity, D.O.**
University of New England
October 29, 2025

## 1998

**Daniel W. Gaiser Jr., M.S.W.**
University of New England
April 19, 2026

## 2008

**Heather Jean Northrup, M.S.W.**
University of New England
February 3, 2026

## 2014

**Kristin Kathleen O'Hara**
University of New England
May 17, 2026

## FRIENDS

**Susan A. Bemis**
May 22, 2025

**Dorothy Conforti**
April 28, 2026

**Charles P. Harriman**
February 19, 2026

**John Y. Keffer**
October 22, 2025

**Mary Lou Kiley**
November 21, 2025

**Richard J. LaRue, D.P.E.**
April 15, 2026

**Madeleine T. Poissant**
November 29, 2020

**Gilbert Samuel, Ph.D., HA '15**
October 27, 2025

**Melinda Yowell Small, Ph.D.**
October 25, 2025

**The Honorable Gerald E. Talbot**
May 9, 2026


Richard J. LaRue, at center

# REMEMBERING

*by* Amy Haile

## RICHARD J. LARUE, D.P.E.

Richard J. LaRue, D.P.E., or Dr. Rick, as he was affectionately known to students, colleagues, and alumni, passed away on April 15, 2026. He retired in 2018 as professor emeritus of sport and recreation management after teaching at the University of New England for 20 years. He earned his master's in movement sciences and a doctoral degree in physical education from Springfield College in Massachusetts. Before arriving at UNE, LaRue had been an associate professor at Bradford College and Colby-Sawyer College. During his career, he received professional honors from organizations such as the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation, which presented him with the Pathfinder Award, the association's highest honor, and the Council on Facilities and Equipment, which presented him with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Those who knew him have said that LaRue had two main passions in life: the outdoors and his students. He was one of the first 100 people to thru-hike the Appalachian Trail and summited many mountains over the years. He was beloved by students, faculty, and professional staff alike and remained a champion of his students long after they left campus.

"When I was working with the Athletics department as a student, Dr. Rick took my special interests to heart," said UNE Director of Sports Information Tristan Durgin, B.S. '07, M.S.Ed. "He encouraged me to use those real-life examples as a focus of my studies. He remained a great resource deep into my career."

Tim St. John, B.S. '07, M.S., dean of students and chief student affairs officer at Fitchburg State University, said LaRue was the reason he chose UNE.

"After I spent an hour chatting in his office on my first visit to UNE, I knew I was home and wanted to learn from him," St. John said. "He was a mentor in every sense of the word. He was witty (and) a storyteller and taught with tremendous care and passion for both his students and for what he was teaching us.

"Dr. Rick was the kind of faculty mentor you invite to your wedding — and who shows up with a big smile and a camera," added St. John. "I aspire to be the type of educator, mentor, and person for my students as he was for so many students like me." ■





## GERALD E. TALBOT

Former UNE Trustee and prominent eighth-generation Mainer Gerald E. Talbot passed away on May 9, 2026. As a civil rights leader in Maine, Talbot participated in the March on Washington in 1963 and was present at Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech. He served as president of the state's branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and, in 1972, he became Maine's first Black legislator. During his three terms in the Maine House of Representatives, he successfully sponsored the Maine Human Rights Act. He also served as the first chairman of the Maine Human Rights Commission.

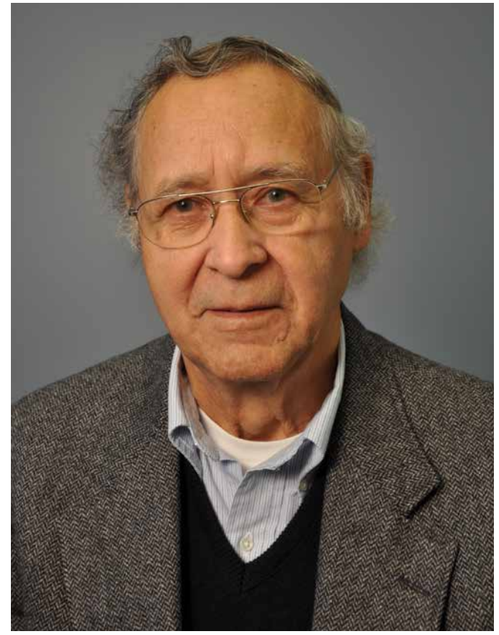
A former legislative colleague noted in Talbot's obituary that he was the conscience of the House: "When Gerald spoke, people listened because they knew he was speaking from a place of deep integrity."

Talbot brought this same integrity when he served on UNE's Board of Trustees from 2007 to 2016. His service was marked by his student-centric focus. In Academic and Student Affairs Committee meetings, he would always remind his colleagues of the impact that issues or decisions have on students. After his time on the board ended, Talbot and his wife, Anita, remained active supporters of UNE.

UNE President James Herbert reflected on a friendship with Talbot that outlasted his years on the UNE board.

"Lynn and I were honored to know Jerry and his wife, Anita," Herbert said. "Before their health challenges precluded it, they were both frequent visitors to campus, always coming together. I first met Jerry on the day of my inauguration, and we stayed in touch over the ensuing years."

John Tumiel, M.A., OTR/L, vice president of Board Relations and senior advisor to the president, recalled that Talbot was a wonderful person to work with.



"Although I interacted with Jerry during the later years of his historic and accomplished public service, each time we crossed paths, he greeted me as if we had been lifelong friends," Tumiel said. "I always looked forward to seeing him. Jerry was a kind, gentle, and yet forceful man. He made a lasting impression on me that I try to emulate in my daily interactions." ■





*Anna Illsley '26, at left, with mentor Hope Andreychak Dobbs '18*

# MENTORING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS

*by* Jen A. Miller, freelance writer

Hope Andreychak Dobbs, B.S. '18, always knew she wanted to be a teacher. When she was a little kid, she'd play pretend teacher, and while studying at community college, she worked as a teacher assistant at a local daycare.

After two years at a community college, she knew she wanted to go on to earn a four-year teaching degree. She'd spent every summer in Kennebunkport, Maine, so transferring to the University of New England, just a few miles up the road, seemed like a no-brainer.

While a student, she was placed in a third grade classroom at the Biddeford Primary School (BPS) and spent her entire senior year teaching there. That experience led to a job interview, which led to her now helming a second grade classroom. Andreychak Dobbs said she wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

"I just love the people and the kids and the Biddeford community," she said. "We're a really awesome school, and I feel like we do a lot for the kids. We try to make learning fun. I love my time here, and every year, it just gets better."

Andreychak Dobbs is one in a long line of UNE education students who have honed their skills at Biddeford Schools — and supplemented the teaching power of the district — which serves about 2,400 students from pre-K to 12th grade. In the past five years, over 60 education students have been placed into regional student-teaching positions, with nearly half placed in Biddeford Schools.

As part of the UNE teaching curriculum, students spend the last semester of college working in a local school, just like they would if they were already employed.

"They're in a classroom 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day," said Lane Clarke, Ed.D., director of the UNE School of Education.

In the classroom, education students work with a teacher who has agreed to partner with them for the school year. Through this apprenticeship model, student teachers start by observing and gradually take over different parts of the day until they are running the whole class themselves with the support of their mentor teacher.





> Our future teachers can hit the ground running after graduation.
> — *Lane Clarke*

The partnership also created a strong connection between UNE and Biddeford. Not only do education students provide valuable teaching help to the community and support to students, but the partnership has also created a strong pipeline of student teachers who become alumni and then, in turn, work with students coming into the field and train them to become teachers.

"Our future teachers can hit the ground running after graduation," Clarke said, adding that they have built strong relationships with mentors beyond that final semester. "A lot of our graduates end up right back here as mentor teachers themselves, so the connection to UNE keeps going long after they've left campus."

This kind of mentorship mirrors what UNE is building on a larger scale through the Nor'easter Global Network, launched this fall to connect current students with alumni across industries for career advice, insights, and support. For students like Anna Illsley '26, who graduated from UNE in May with a Bachelor of Science in elementary-middle education, that mentorship meant access to people like Andreychak Dobbs, alumni who remember exactly what it's like to be starting out and want to help the next Nor'easter find their footing while in school and long after graduation.

Andreychak Dobbs saw that firsthand last year when she welcomed Illsley as a student teacher at BPS.

UNE education students do fieldwork throughout all four years of their academic careers, and Illsley was in her first year when she came to BPS as a substitute teacher. Fieldwork "opened my eyes to how much is happening in a school every day besides general education in the classroom," Illsley said.

When it came time to find her senior-year student teaching placement, Illsley immediately thought of Andreychak Dobbs, whom she had met and worked with while doing fieldwork and substitute teaching at BPS. "I asked her if she was willing to take on a student teacher, and she said absolutely," Illsley said.

While Andreychak Dobbs was mentoring Illsley, she said she also learned from her mentee.

"Anna gave me a bit of fresh air and different perspectives," she said. "It was awesome to collaborate all year and try different things and to just have someone in the room. When you need another set of hands, now you have them."

And while Illsley is excited to be teaching as a fourth grade teacher in Hartford, Vermont, she was sad to leave Andreychak Dobbs and her classroom behind.

"I haven't just gained a mentor. I've also gained a lifelong friend," Illsley said, adding that the two have stayed in touch.

As Andreychak Dobbs watches Illsley take the next step in her career, she reflected on how UNE prepared her for her own transition from student to teacher, and said she knows Illsley landed well in Vermont.

"UNE really laid the groundwork with my courses and my professors. That first year is always so hard, and Anna is going to learn so much," Andreychak Dobbs said, crediting her time at UNE for bringing her to a school she considers her home.

"It's a fun, tight-knit, and close community, and without them, who knows where I might have ended up," she said. ■



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