FALL
2025

UNE MAGAZINE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

If you've spent any time on our campuses, you know that these stories aren't unusual at UNE. Building bridges across silos is deeply ingrained in our culture. This is the theme of the 2025 edition of the *UNE Magazine*, where we explore a topic as timely as it is vital: the transformative power of interdisciplinary collaboration.

At UNE, the most impactful discoveries and innovations — whether in health care, scientific research, business, education, the humanities, or public policy — emerge from spaces where disciplines intersect. Many of you have likely experienced this in your own careers: those breakthrough moments when someone from a different field shares a perspective that changes everything. I know I have, both in my days as a professor and subsequently as a university administrator. And given the rapidly changing and complex world we live in, such collaboration across boundaries has never been more essential to addressing the world's most pressing challenges.

UNE students learn to generate creative solutions that would have been impossible without the insights and skills of collaborators from other disciplines. This isn't just an educational philosophy for UNE; it's become our competitive advantage and a part of our institutional DNA.

Because traditional academic structures tend to reinforce disciplinary silos, breaking through them requires intentionality, persistence, and a shared vision. Realizing true interdisciplinarity is just one way that UNE stands apart from its peers. It is also one of many ways our vibrant University cultivates an ethic of holistic, future-forward thinking and critical, boundary-breaking habits of mind within our students as they set out to make their marks on the world.

In these pages, you'll see how we're turning this vision into reality. From implementing cross-disciplinary curricular initiatives to creating hands-on, shared learning spaces on our campuses to providing diverse experiential learning opportunities where students work alongside professionals from various fields, we are fostering a culture in which cross-disciplinary collaborative thinking is not merely encouraged, it is expected.

The future of work will be more interconnected than ever, and UNE students will be ready.

Thank you for being part of our community and for joining us in realizing our mission of preparing students for our ever-evolving world. I hope you find this issue as inspiring as I have, and I invite you to take a stroll, as I often do, across our beautiful campuses to take joy in the wonder of what our students and faculty are building for the future.

Happy reading!

Dear Friends,

Walking across our campuses this fall, I've been struck by moments that capture something truly admirable about who we are as a community.

In our classrooms, in our labs, in the P.D. Merrill Makerspace, and in the Interprofessional Simulation and Innovation Center, I've seen students and faculty from various academic backgrounds and programs working together.

In the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center, there is a marine biology student working with mathematics faculty to deploy data from buoys and develop numerical models that predict how our coastal waters and shorelines will change in the coming years. Across campus in Decary Hall, the SeaMade Bar project tells its own story: Students and faculty experts from disciplines as diverse as nutrition, marine science, and business are turning campus-grown kelp into a sustainable nutrition bar that could transform how we think about ocean-to-table food systems.

And up the coastline in Portland, on what is the first-of-its-kind campus in New England dedicated to interprofessional health care education, there's something powerful about seeing our students learning vital signs and clinical assessment side by side, building the collaborative instincts they'll need long before they step into their first clinical rotations.

JAMES D. HERBERT, Ph.D. | PRESIDENT

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CAREER SUCCESS

CARNEGIE NAMES UNE AMONG BEST IN NEW ENGLAND FOR GRADUATE EARNING POTENTIAL

The University of New England is recognized among New England's top institutions for student earning potential in the 2025 Student Access and Earnings Classification, released in April, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education.

This new classification — developed to evaluate how effectively colleges create pathways to economic mobility, places UNE in the "Lower Access, Higher Earnings" category, reflecting the University's strong record of preparing graduates for well-paying careers while acknowledging opportunities for expanding access to underserved student populations.

> This classification affirms the value of a UNE degree in the marketplace as well as the impact of our graduates across Maine, New England, and beyond.
>
> — *James Herbert*

According to the Carnegie Foundation, graduates of Maine's largest independent University can expect to earn nearly $20,000 more annually in the eight years after starting their degrees than peers in their regions who did not attend college. And based on student survey data, 95% of UNE undergraduates are employed or pursuing further education within one year of graduation.

"This recognition by the Carnegie Foundation underscores our core mission: to empower students to transform their lives and, in doing so, improve the health and well-being of the communities they serve," remarked UNE President James Herbert. "This classification affirms the value of a UNE degree in the marketplace as well as the impact of our graduates across Maine, New England, and beyond."

MISSION IN ACTION

UNE COMMUNITY SCIENCE CAFÉS BRING SCIENCE TO PUBLIC FOREFRONT

To engage its home communities in the broad world of scientific research and inform the public of its own groundbreaking initiatives, the Center for Excellence in the Neurosciences (CEN) at the University of New England has spearheaded a new series of Science Café events, held at local venues, to engage curious minds and promote scientific literacy.

The initiative has enabled UNE researchers and faculty to present a diverse array of topics geared toward nonscientists followed by robust community discussion, with the first two events drawing an average of 60 attendees to venues in both Portland and Biddeford.

Michael Burman, Ph.D., a professor of psychology and CEN researcher, said the cafés allow CEN and UNE to increase public awareness of the important work that UNE scientists are engaging in, from neuroscience, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical development to marine biology, environmental monitoring, human behavior, and more.

"Science is sometimes complicated, and we want to make it available to people of all backgrounds," Burman said. "At UNE, we're committed to educating the public on the wonders of science and to translating complex research into knowledge that improves people's lives."

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>
> — *Michael Burman*

ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNE, Gulf of Maine Research Institute Launch Collaborative Research Accelerator

The University of New England and the Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI) have established a new research partnership aimed at addressing pressing climate, ocean, and planetary health challenges through joint faculty research projects.

The systems-level investigative initiative, called the UNE-GMRI Research Accelerator, provides mini-grants to support collaborative pilot studies between faculty and researchers at both institutions. The program is designed to seed research that aligns with both partners' expertise in marine science, environmental systems, and data-driven ecological analysis, supporting projects that advance knowledge and action in the Gulf of Maine, which is one of the world's fastest-warming bodies of water.

In its inaugural round, four teams of researchers from UNE and GMRI have been selected to receive nearly $40,000 in funding to complete interdisciplinary projects spanning sustainable aquaculture, climate resilience, and environmental DNA detection methodologies.

UNE is home to the region's most robust marine science degree programs, with undergraduate and graduate research, innovation, and entrepreneurship embedded across its School of Marine and Environmental Programs, while Portland-based GMRI develops and delivers collaborative solutions to global ocean challenges, with a regional focus on ensuring that the ecosystem, economy, and communities of the Gulf of Maine region thrive amid rapid change.

MEDICINE

UNE Celebrates First Residency Match Day on Portland Campus for the Health Sciences

Nearly 170 graduating doctors from the University of New England gathered on the University's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences on Friday, March 21, to learn where they will begin their medical residencies next year.

This year's Match Day, as the event is known, was particularly significant as the first such event held on UNE's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences, a milestone in the relocation of Maine's only medical school from Biddeford to Portland, completed just months later with the opening of the Harold and Bibby Alfond Center for Health Sciences in June.

Match Day is a defining moment for medical students nationwide, and students in UNE's College of Osteopathic Medicine boasted match rates far outranking national figures: 98% of UNE doctors successfully matched to residencies, surpassing rates for both allopathic (93.5%) and osteopathic (92.6%) medical schools.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine is one of the country's top medical schools for student residency placements, and it prepares doctors for immediate practice using a holistic, interprofessional approach to medical education.

Doctors from UNE's Class of 2025 will continue making an impact locally: 52% of graduates are completing residencies in New England, and a total of 25 are doing so in Maine.

PLANETARY HEALTH

UNE Launches School of Public and Planetary Health

From rising sea levels that threaten coastal livelihoods to aging populations and fragile global supply chains, the world faces mounting challenges to both environmental and human health. To help address these challenges, the University of New England recently announced the formation of a new School of Public and Planetary Health.

The school unites experts from across the University in interdisciplinary collaboration, highlighting several of UNE's core strengths, including marine and environmental sciences, public health and policy, health professions education, and business.

"By combining public health, environmental science, aging, and policy studies under one umbrella, we are creating a powerful platform for research and innovation at the intersection of environmental and human health," said Gwendolyn Mahon, M.Sc., Ph.D., UNE provost and senior vice president of Academic Affairs.

The school's formation has also established two new academic centers: the Center for Public Health Practice and the Center for Healthy Aging.

"The formation of the School of Public and Planetary Health represents UNE's growth and leadership across diverse disciplines and highlights UNE's commitment to preparing workforce-ready students who are equipped to lead change in their communities," Mahon said.

DENTAL MEDICINE

UNE Students Increase Dental Care Access for Area School System

Dozens of student providers from the University of New England's doctoral dental medicine and undergraduate dental hygiene degree programs provided over $13,000 in free dental care to nearly 100 students from area schools this past winter.

The students, from both the College of Dental Medicine and Department of Dental Hygiene, performed the no-cost dental screening examinations, oral hygiene education, cleanings, fluoride varnishes, and sealants to a record 93 students from schools in Old Orchard Beach, Maine (RSU 23), at the University's Oral Health Center in Portland on Friday, Feb. 7.

The partnership with RSU 23, now in its fourth year, was part of national "Give Kids a Smile" celebrations held across the country each year, in which thousands of dentists nationwide provide underserved children with much-needed dental care.

Nicole Kimmes, D.D.S., dean of the College of Dental Medicine, said the event's goals align perfectly with the mission of UNE's dental school, the sole educator of qualified dentists in Northern New England: to shape the future of dentistry while improving the health of rural and underserved areas and populations.

"I hope that we will see even more of the students from Old Orchard Beach next year," Kimmes said.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

UNE Optimizes Its Research and Innovation Enterprise

As rapid advances in technology, emerging planetary health concerns, and shifting economic needs reshape Maine, New England, and the world, the University of New England is responding to these challenges by unifying its research and innovation enterprises to foster practical, forward-looking solutions to global challenges through strategic collaboration.

The University's restructured Office of Research and Innovation continues its mission to connect faculty research with student scholarship, now with an enhanced focus on expanding entrepreneurial initiatives.

The change reflects UNE's strategic priority to integrate innovation into all facets of its research operations, from discovering new ways to address unmet medical and societal needs to patenting scientific breakthroughs and commercializing scholarly advancements to improve global health.

The office now houses UNE's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, formerly the Office of Innovation, to support discovery, collaboration, and external partnerships across disciplines.

"By bringing our research and innovation efforts under one umbrella, UNE is strengthening a full continuum of creative work," said UNE Provost Gwendolyn Mahon, M.Sc., Ph.D. "This structure will allow us to better … foster the kind of interdisciplinary problem-solving that benefits both Maine and the world beyond."

COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

UNE Dining Services Earns National Recognition for Food Safety Leadership

The University of New England's Portland and Biddeford campuses have both achieved the FARECheck Silver Status administered by the Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) nonprofit, making UNE the only college or university in Maine and one of only a handful in New England to achieve the status, which recognizes excellence in food and allergen safety practices.

FARE recognition means that, on UNE's two Maine campuses, more than 90% of food service staff members have completed FARE's accredited food-allergy safety training. In the past year, all 75 full-time, year-round employees of Parkhurst Dining, UNE's food service vendor, have been FARE trained.

What the certification means to students with food allergies goes beyond peace of mind, said Emme Perry (Cellular and Molecular Biology, '27), who became a catalyst for UNE's improved food-safe culture after she arrived at UNE with six food allergies and who is now educating her peers about allergen-free cooking.

"UNE is truly a gem for allergy inclusion and allergen safety. I trust them with my life," Perry said. "It makes you feel at home because I know at home, I'm safe. And I know at UNE I'm safe."

INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

UNE Accepted Into Global Entrepreneurship Network

The University of New England has been accepted into the Babson Collaborative for Entrepreneurship Education, a global network of higher education institutions committed to advancing entrepreneurship teaching and practice.

Administered by Babson Academy at Babson College, one of the world's leading institutions for entrepreneurship education, the collaborative connects more than 40 member universities across 30 countries to share best practices, research, and programming.

UNE's membership underscores the University's growing commitment to entrepreneurship as a tool for economic development, workforce growth, and student success, particularly in Maine and throughout New England.

Through expanded partnerships, immersive academic programming, integration with UNE's Office of Research and Innovation, and access to global teaching tools, UNE's membership helps shape an entrepreneurial ecosystem that reaches far beyond its campus borders, said Norm O'Reilly, Ph.D., dean of the UNE College of Business.

"This is a significant step forward in our mission to grow a robust culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that benefits our students, the state of Maine, and New England as a whole," O'Reilly said. "At UNE, entrepreneurship is not just a program — it's a mindset we instill in students across all areas of study."

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

College of Business Forges Career Development Partnerships in Top Maine Sectors

A series of new industry partnerships has allowed the University of New England College of Business to strengthen its role in providing immersive, professional experiences to students while addressing evolving regional economic needs.

The workforce-ready partnerships in sports leadership and hospitality management, two of Maine's leading industries, reflect the University's commitment to bolster New England's workforce in high-demand areas.

Through a collaboration with the Maine Mariners hockey team, students in UNE's Center for Sport and Business Innovation are engaging in applied research that builds skills in data analytics, project management, and operations while optimizing the fan experience.

In a parallel initiative, UNE has partnered with Maine-based Atlantic Hospitality to create internship placements and industry-informed learning experiences that connect students across all business majors with one of Maine's most dynamic economic sectors.

"At UNE, we help students chart their own course — not just toward a job, but toward meaningful, lasting careers," said Norm O'Reilly, Ph.D., dean of the College of Business. "These partnerships are a prime example of how we align student ambition with the needs of industries that are vital to New England's economy and identity."

MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

President's Forum Series Takes Home Top Award from State Public Relations Association

UNE's signature President's Forum series was honored with a first-place award at the Maine Public Relations Council's 2025 Golden Arrow Award ceremony and reception, held at UNE on June 17.

Judged by a panel of external communications professionals, the Golden Arrow Awards annually recognize the best public relations and marketing projects across Maine, and highlight the local creativity, strategy, and results that define the field.

Representing top awardees in the "Integrated Communications Campaign" category, UNE was recognized for its efforts to promote the President's Forum through impactful media placements, social media content, photography, advertising, and internal communications.

Since its inception in 2018, UNE's President's Forum has served to uphold academia's critical role as the ultimate marketplace of ideas. Hosted by UNE President James Herbert, the forum provides a venue for diverse perspectives on pressing societal issues, allowing these conversations to unfold with civility and respect for differing opinions.

"At a time when higher education is often caught in the crosscurrents of division, it is especially meaningful to see our commitment to free expression and civil dialogue acknowledged," Herbert remarked. "This recognition reinforces the importance of providing a space where thoughtful conversations around difficult or controversial topics can unfold with respect and intellectual curiosity."

PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

UNE Launches Two Online Master's Programs to Boost Professional Leadership Skills

The University of New England continues to expand continuing education opportunities for working professionals with the recent launch of two new graduate degree programs.

Delivered through UNE's College of Professional Studies (UNE Online), the master's programs are designed to meet workforce demands while empowering students to be leaders in the areas of health care, business, and environmental leadership.

The new Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, offered through UNE's College of Business, provides flexible, affordable pathways for professionals and recent graduates to advance their careers. Students may also pursue concentrations in health care administration, supply chain management, or sports leadership and management.

Housed in UNE's recently launched School of Public and Planetary Health, a new Master of Science in Climate Change Leadership prepares solutions-driven leaders from diverse backgrounds to address rising planetary health challenges through three concentrations in marine science, public health, and sustainable business. ■

UNE MAGAZINE SURVEY

Dear Readers,

The *UNE Magazine* has always been dedicated to showcasing the remarkable people who make the University of New England extraordinary. Our writers, photographers, and designers are passionate about telling the stories of our outstanding students, dedicated faculty and professional staff, innovative research, cherished campus traditions, and the diverse breadth of academic and extracurricular programs that define UNE.

We work to share stories that keep you connected to your University while celebrating the achievements, aspirations, and spirit that make UNE special. Everyone who contributes to *UNE Magazine* is committed to ensuring that it remains engaging and relevant, and now, we're asking for your help to guide us into the future.

I invite you to participate in our reader survey. Your feedback will help us learn more about you and discover which topics resonate most deeply. Through this process, we hope to inspire fresh ideas and even more meaningful stories, ensuring that this flagship publication will continue to be one you are proud to receive and excited to share.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Emme Demmendaal
Editor-in-Chief

Take the readership survey by visiting **www.une.edu/magazine/survey** or scanning the QR code.

COMMENCEMENT 2025

The University of New England awarded nearly 1,300 bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees at its 190th Commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 17, at the Cross Insurance Arena in Portland. The University welcomed retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Michelle Johnson to deliver the Commencement address, in which she encouraged graduates to lead with integrity, embrace imperfection, and show up for life's unexpected moments.

"I'm delighted to know that you have the knowledge and learning tools from UNE to follow your own paths, cultivate rich experiences, and continue to learn everywhere," Johnson said.

She further encouraged graduates to expect to encounter the unexpected, keep open minds, learn from their experiences, try new endeavors, and embrace moments of failure with a sense of calm.

"I hope that you will take time to reflect, remember who you are, and show up," said Johnson.

A trailblazer throughout her 36-year military and post-service career Johnson was the first woman to serve as superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy and the first female Air Force Academy graduate to earn a Rhodes Scholarship. She went on to serve as senior vice president and head of referee operations for the NBA.

During the Commencement ceremony, UNE President James Herbert praised the ambition and perseverance of the Class of 2025, recognizing their readiness to address pressing challenges across communities, industries, and the natural world.

"Find a way to connect your expertise with a career that will make the world a better place," Herbert urged. "If you do, your work will be far more personally meaningful than if you just show up each day for a paycheck."

Johnson and David L. Anderson, Ph.D., a former chair of UNE's Board of Trustees and supporter of student innovation, were awarded the honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.

Herbert concluded by encouraging graduates to dream big dreams and to believe in their capacity for greatness.

"Like every superhero, you have an origin story," he said. "Wherever your story began, you've worked hard to get here. Now it's your time to lead."

BUILT FOR CONNECTION. MADE FOR DISCOVERY.

BY DEIRDRE FLEMING STIRES

Collaboration across branches of knowledge comes naturally at the P.D. Merrill Makerspace, where students from all corners of UNE meet and explore new ideas — with more innovative results.

The fall day when Milo Lypps, B.S. ’25, found himself elbow-deep in a bin full of equipment in the P.D. Merrill Makerspace, he had no idea he was about to stumble into his next adventure.

The marine science major was doing what seemed like a mundane task for his work-study job as a Makerspace technician, sorting through 3D-printed skullcaps and wires for an electroencephalogram (EEG), a device that detects electrical signals in the brain.

But when his casual observations caught the attention of Jessica Howard, B.S. ’25, a neuroscience major working nearby, that ordinary inventory became the spark for an extraordinary collaboration.

“I heard Milo in the back room say, ‘Oh, these are neuroscience-related.’ And I said: ‘Neuroscience? Did someone say my magic word?’” Howard recalled.

In the moment the two students connected, Lypps and Howard were pursuing different majors in different UNE schools, unlikely to ever work together on a research project. They were practically strangers. But when they bonded in the Makerspace over a pile of cords and software, they found themselves on the same team. And they picked up that ball and ran with it.

Together, they developed an exhibit that taught children and adults how the brain works, using skullcaps they manufactured in-house and electrical activity sensor software they mastered together, and presented it at the UNE Brain, Body, and Wellness Fair the following spring. The two students had little experience in community education, yet Lypps and Howard were able to make science fun and accessible for those as young as 8 and as old as 90.

And, both said, they couldn’t have done it alone.

“I was someone who had experience in 3D printing and understanding technology, and Jess had experience in neuroscience. So together, we made a technology that did neuroscience,” Lypps said. “It was a learning opportunity that I wouldn’t have had otherwise. It was a way to stretch other muscles. The Makerspace created that opportunity.”

After their fair booth drew hundreds of members of the public in 2024, they returned to the fair in 2025 with more advanced exercises for attendees, all aimed at celebrating the wonders of the brain — and inspiring children to explore the mysteries of science. That joint project wasn’t for class credit or for faculty research. Lypps and Howard made time for the project, they said, because it brought them joy.

“It was such a huge hit. Everybody loved it,” Howard said.

As Howard deepened her understanding of EEG through her coursework, she shared this knowledge with Lypps and Sophia

Crockett-Current, M.S., Makerspace coordinator. Together, the three brainstormed innovative applications for the brain-monitoring device.

"My favorite thing that we did was to have people at the Brain Fair hold their partner's hand, because you could really see a change in what was showing in the brain. We did not expect that," Howard said.

Named in memory of prominent Portland businessman and former chair of the UNE Board of Trustees P.D. Merrill, the Makerspace — first established in the fall of 2016 and reimagined through a significant expansion in 2022 — was designed with this kind of cross-pollination in mind.

"Many projects have fits and starts, and students have to begin again," Herschbach said. "But if you talk to scientists, they'll tell you that's the nature of science. If you talk to writers, they'll tell you that's the nature of artistic work. One of the real values of Makerspace pedagogy is that it teaches students resilience, persistence, and how to think outside the box."

The P.D. Merrill Makerspace is made up of three rooms: the fabrication lab and the adjoining workshop, which contains tools and technology, like a laser cutter, 3D printer, and sewing machine, and across the hall, the design lab, in which flexible huddle spaces around computers allow work by four teams of various sizes.

"One of the real values of Makerspace pedagogy is that it teaches students resilience, persistence, and how to think outside the box."

LISA HERSCHBACH

Crockett-Current, who manages the Makerspace, works with faculty members in all three spaces to help introduce technology in classes where it may not typically be found, helping meld science with the humanities and vice versa.

Students wander in during their free time to tap into their creativity, ingenuity, and imagination. On any given day, students from different majors, different disciplines, and different world views stop in the collaborative, shared space where the sparks of invention fly — and frequently catch fire.

The center does more than produce innovative projects for class assignments or grant-funded research, although it does that, too. The creative space in the lower level of 75-year-old Decary Hall welcomes everyone and exudes an unshakeable optimism that, Lypps said, altered his outlook on his future, coloring it with a can-do spirit he plans to carry forward.

"By having a place that is entirely dedicated to expanding your knowledge, no matter if you come in with an idea or not, it completely changed the trajectory of my time at UNE," Lypps said. "I got more out of the experience of being a student here than I would have otherwise, because I would have very much stayed in my lane. Instead, it opened the door to letting me get over things, like the fear of failure."

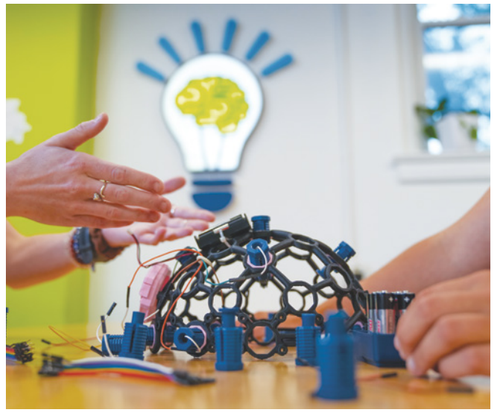
When students pursuing different majors in different academic disciplines engage in coursework grounded in different colleges and schools, it's easy for them to become siloed and never cross paths, said Lisa Herschbach, Ph.D., director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, which oversees the Makerspace and other innovation centers and fellowships at UNE.

The P.D. Merrill Makerspace and other innovative gathering spaces at UNE toss that traditional academic framework out the window, because these creative spaces are intentionally designed to encourage cross-disciplinary curiosity, said Herschbach, who is also assistant dean for innovation and entrepreneurship in the UNE College of Business.

The prevailing ethos in these centers, Herschbach said, is clear: Try, fail, and embrace the lessons, ideally in partnership with others.

Undergraduate and graduate students come to 3D-print or laser-print, to learn to code, or pound at the workbench, building a bird feeder or drama set. Increasingly, faculty also are using the space to expand and enrich their classroom lessons.

Last year, Crockett-Current assisted Jonathan DeCoster, Ph.D., an associate teaching professor in the School of Arts and Humanities, in using the laser cutter to make devices used by scientists for night navigation in the Middle Ages, called astrolabes. The devices demonstrated the ingenuity of ancient astronomers and mariners



who sought to determine time, calculate the altitude of stars, and find latitude.

"As modern scientists, we're used to seeing information about the natural world in certain ways," Herschbach said. "We might presume that that's always been how people have viewed and understood our planet. Professor DeCoster's activity gave students sight lines, literally, into how people acquired knowledge about the natural world before the Scientific Revolution."

Sometimes, Crockett-Current leads classes and skills workshops in the Makerspace for professors' classes. Other times, students come to the Makerspace to improve or develop a professor's research instrument.

That's what brought Lillian Westerberg (Marine Science and Applied Mathematics, '27) to the Makerspace in August 2024 when she began work on a research project for Tricia Thibodeau, Ph.D., and Will Kochtitzky, Ph.D., both assistant professors in the School of Marine and Environmental Programs.

Westerberg's research project was to design and build a device that measured the ocean's conductivity, temperature, and depth — an instrument called a CTD sensor. If successful, her iteration of the sensor, built using open-source websites and materials funded through a Maine Space Grant, would save Thibodeau and Kochtitzky thousands of dollars, allowing them to use multiple homemade CTDs to better explain changes in the ocean due to a warming climate.

After a year of soldering, programming, and applying epoxy, Westerberg tested her Makerspace-made device in the ocean and compared it to the pricey, store-bought CTDs. The result: Her homemade CTD sensor was an overwhelming success.

"I've been taking a lot of ocean classes and a lot of math classes, but this project is the first time I was able to make them both merge," said Westerberg, noting that working with her math and oceanography mentors allowed her to bridge two areas of interest and that Crockett-Current helped guide her through the CTD-building process.

"With basically no real knowledge of how circuits work, I learned about circuits and coding, and how to solder, to adhere pieces of metal wire together, which is a lot of fun," she said.

While Westerberg is done with the summer research project, she isn't done with the Makerspace.

"Even though I'm no longer building the CTD, I've roped a lot of my friends into going to the Makerspace because it offers a good chance to get hands-on experience building things," she said.

Westerberg's Makerspace experience is but one example of a student who found a home in the creative, eclectic space. Crockett-Current can rattle off dozens of stories of student-driven and grant-funded devices and instruments built in the center.

Students in UNE's College of Osteopathic Medicine, which is Maine's only medical school, have routinely used the space to enhance their

studies. A medical student created a 3D human thigh with nerves and blood vessels to teach their peers about the injection methods that are commonly used for ultrasound, and in her spare time, another student printed a 3D pelvis model with ligaments to augment what she was learning in her classes.

Such elaborate projects are common. But students often stop into the Makerspace to pursue one-off projects, including members of student groups like the UNE Players theater club, who frequently use the laser cutter and workshop to build stage sets for their productions. Through her thoughtful oversight, Crockett-Current provides a low-stakes environment focused on authenticity, kindness, and exploration.

"Students will just come in here, do homework, and just spend time here," she said.

The P.D. Merrill Makerspace has made a powerful interdisciplinary hub in Decary Hall, but it's not alone, Herschbach noted.

Just down the hall, the Nor'easter Production Studio, launched in 2024, hones the skills of those studying the media arts and budding journalists crafting news stories. Through the nearby glass doors around the corner lies the UNE Teaching Kitchen, a multidisciplinary incubator where a team of students from several academic departments will soon mass-produce, market, and sell the University's new seaweed nutrition bar.

"We've started calling the lower level of Decary the 'Maker-Neighborhood,'" Herschbach said. "We want these to be complementary spaces that people move between, depending on what stages they are at in their projects or what their particular projects are about."

Such cross-discipline projects are common at UNE, such as in the Harold and Bibby Alfond Center for Health Sciences in Portland, where students pursuing different health care professions work in teams in intentionally designed collaborative spaces, and the Sustainable Innovation Center in the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center that opened in April on the Biddeford Campus. There, with vast, bird-safe picture windows overlooking the Maine coast, different UNE schools and colleges join forces with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship to create innovative outcomes that will benefit and engage the public.

Recently, a project called NOAA Voices at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which houses nearly 3,000 oral history recordings of the human experience of climate change, inspired a new fellowship at UNE run out of the Sustainable Innovation Center.

Through the Shaw Innovation Fellowship, students will work with local oral historians and environmental science faculty to build a similar archive at the University. They'll collect local photos and videos documenting the human impacts of the January 2024 storms in Saco and Biddeford, Maine.

Herschbach said the project will take UNE's ocean sciences research in new directions by integrating people's experiences with scientific data on coastal transformations.

"By bringing together data sets and GIS maps showing damage to coastal environments with stories from local residents and historical photos, we can offer an interdisciplinary picture of how both natural changes and human activities are being affected by climate change," Herschbach said.

The information will be presented digitally and made accessible to scholars and students worldwide.

Herschbach and Crockett-Current are extending the reach of the Makerspace. Last year, Crockett-Current rolled out a pilot project that taught professional staff members to make 3D-printed UNE-blue planters, a program that drew UNE community members to the space. Now, she's scaling up these classes to inform more people about the Makerspace, offering workshops on skills such as prototyping, 3D modeling, advanced fabrication, and animation in a new program, dubbed Maker University.

"The idea is to build out people's toolkit for crafting and building while getting more people comfortable with using this space, lowering that barrier for entry," Crockett-Current said. "If you think this is a cool space, and you want to interact with this space, and you don't have a project, here's a way. Just show up."

Reflecting on his Makerspace experience, Lypps said the center taught him to embrace uncertainty, because when you do, he said, the results are sometimes better than you could have ever imagined.

"Sometimes, you feel very much in your own major. But through the Makerspace, we were able to bridge that gap and learn more about things we both didn't know about," Lypps said, adding that working with Howard taught him to "be a better student."

"I would wholly suggest, if people wanted to expand their horizons, go to the Makerspace. Just spend time there," Lypps said. "You don't need to have an idea. For me, the collaboration was really what made it, because I wouldn't have been able to do those things without Jess."

Howard first came to the Makerspace to help UNE's Histology and Imaging Core, which provides investigators from UNE's two Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) with specialized instruments to process, section, and stain tissues.

She came to work on grant-funded research for her adviser, Tamara King, Ph.D., a professor of biomedical sciences in the College of Osteopathic Medicine and an investigator with the Center for Pain Research, one of the COBREs.

When she heard Peter Caradonna, B.S. '13, the imaging core manager, lament how the mount plates used to hold tissue samples for the lab's new microscope held only one sample at a time, Howard thought she could find a better way.

She went to the P.D. Merrill Makerspace, 3D-printed a prototype that would hold up to 10 samples at once, and consulted with Caradonna about the best material to use for a mount plate, since not every material would withstand the chemicals needed for the slides that went under the powerful microscope, an area where Caradonna's expertise proved crucial.

"Jess took it to that next step," Caradonna said. "I have a background in anatomy, biochemistry, and chemistry. She took the chemical concerns about dissolving plastics and applied her research background and problem-solving approach to create a tool we wouldn't have otherwise."

“UNE really gave me the opportunities with research. But the Makerspace, I think, was what made me stand out.”

JESSICA HOWARD

Howard produced a final slide holder made of resin, an invention that now saves UNE researchers time, material, and money. It was a display of collaborative innovation that Crockett-Current called a “biomedical engineering extravaganza.”

All of it whetted Howard’s appetite for a future in biomedical engineering.

Since graduating from UNE, Howard is pursuing a Ph.D. in biomedical science at the University of Maine. She started her doctoral work with a lab rotation at The Jackson Laboratory on Mount Desert Island this fall, and she will later return to her alma mater to do a different rotation.

Howard said the Makerspace set her on a path to success in a field she’s passionate about, so that she can, as she likes to say, pursue the UNE motto.

“I want to continue ‘innovating for a healthier planet’ throughout my rotations, and — hopefully — once I’m running my own lab,” Howard said.

Howard said she wants to increase laboratory sustainability to make a real difference in the scientific community. And the Makerspace helped show her how.

“UNE really gave me the opportunities with research. But the Makerspace, I think, was what made me stand out,” Howard said of her doctoral applications. “It was all those mini projects in the Makerspace to help professors and to work interdisciplinarily with other people, to hear their ideas and work together to solve problems.”

Crockett-Current said the center supports an unwritten culture of exploring and helping others, and spontaneous, cross-disciplinary innovation isn’t a lofty goal for the Makerspace’s future — it’s what’s happening there now.

“I see a lot of peer mentoring: older students helping younger students navigate classes, research, and exploratory projects,” she said. “This space has an amazing interdisciplinary component. On a daily basis, learning happens organically here.” ■

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FIFTEEN MINUTES WITH GOLSHAN MADRAKI

Interview by Josh Pahigian

As director of UNE's Supply Chain Management program and associate professor in the College of Business, Golshan Madraki, Ph.D., embodies the collaborative spirit that drives innovation on campus. She connects undergraduate business students with peers in computer science, data analytics, and beyond and graduate students in UNE's online MBA program with industry-wide business professionals, creating learning experiences that mirror the cross-functional teamwork today's employers demand.

She recently sat down with* UNE Magazine *to discuss how breaking down silos leads to breakthrough thinking.

What makes your supply chain course truly interdisciplinary?

I have students from multiple majors, and they learn from each other in ways I could never teach alone. These interactions create innovation because students with different soft skills and technical skills are sitting next to each other.

I offer a big final project where students come up with their own topics. Coming from different backgrounds, they think creatively and solve interesting problems. Recently, students applied queuing theory to optimize our dining hall lines and minimize wait times. It's wonderful when they apply learning to daily campus life.

How does the College of Business foster a collaborative culture?

"Startup energy" is probably the best way to describe what's happening. We have so many initiatives, new majors, new faculty joining us, and professional staff members. Everyone's chipping in. We offer unique interdisciplinary majors like sport management and leadership, outdoor business and innovation, and marine entrepreneurship, which provide opportunities for students looking for majors that meet market needs. Because UNE is one of the very few institutions across the nation offering these majors, it creates unique opportunities for students thinking about these programs.

Tell us about the NextWave Pre-College Experience you direct.

NextWave is a weeklong residential program for high school students that prepares them for college life while giving them hands-on experience with projects. It's one of the most impactful ways to prepare students for college life, because we all know college can be challenging and uncertain, especially for 17- and 18-year-olds coming to campus for the first time away from their families.

This past summer, 17 students worked on designing a sustainable and feasible food truck business venture. We had faculty from accounting, marketing, communication, psychology, and supply chain (management) all contributing their expertise. Students get academic sessions from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., working on challenges, and, at the end of the week, they present to their family members. Based on the feedback we received, students loved it.

How does your research bridge different academic fields?

It started at a conference in 2019, when I heard speakers talking about political polarization. I was shocked because our area is supply chain, operations, mathematical modeling, and manufacturing, but I realized I had tools and techniques from operations and supply chain that could apply to modeling polarized networks on social media. I realized I have knowledge I can apply beyond just products and manufacturing.

Now, I collaborate with colleagues from political science, computer science, data analytics, and economics. We're quantifying polarization levels of individuals on social media based on their following and followers' connections and comparing their social media behavior with their actual behavior when they're voting. It shows how knowledge from one field can solve problems in completely different areas, and that's exciting research for me.

What other UNE projects showcase this integrated approach?

The SeaMade Bars are a perfect example of interdisciplinary, hands-on experiences at UNE. A small business was donated to the University, and what makes it unique is that one of the main ingredients is seaweed, which is super-nutritious. We source ingredients locally, including blueberries and seaweed from UNE's own sea farm on campus.

Students work in four different groups: supply chain, marketing, product design and nutrition, and process development. I advise the supply chain group, but they all have to work together, because you can't create a successful product without understanding every aspect. It's an ongoing project where students are training their successors, and we're excited about it because it gives students business experience with something that could actually go to market.

What role do alumni play in this cross-functional model?

Alumni are our best allies for this interdisciplinary work. They know the quality of our students, and they understand how different fields need to work together in the real world. Having them on board is a win-win for UNE, for themselves, for their institutions, and for current students, because they can come back and hire our graduates while networking with current students and professors.

Networking is crucial in higher education. These alumni can show students how the interdisciplinary skills they're learning here actually play out in industry. My message for them is: We have great resources and would love to welcome you back, and work with you.

Why is collaboration across disciplines crucial for today's students?

The future belongs to people who can think across different areas simultaneously. Supply chain management is a perfect example of an interdisciplinary major. It connects everything from political science and social science to mathematics, data analytics, and operations research.

When you can bring together different perspectives and students from different backgrounds can work together, that's when innovation happens. These interdisciplinary majors provide exactly what the market needs right now. ■

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‘WHAT MEDICINE IS MEANT TO BE’

BY EMME DEMMENDAAL

How an interprofessional simulation prepares health care students for team-based care that today’s patients need.

Meet “Michael.”

He’s a 74-year-old rural Mainer who has made it to the clinic with several health concerns.

But don’t expect to run into him on Main Street in a small town like Saint Agatha, Maine.

Instead, Michael is a case study brought to life by a trained patient actor at the University of New England’s Interprofessional Simulation and Innovation Center (ISIC) on the Portland Campus for the Health Sciences.

With a distinct Maine accent and several realistic health issues, Michael represents the kind of patient UNE students will one day serve and is the centerpiece of interprofessional learning cases for future health care workers.

Students on the state’s only integrated health education campus work together in interprofessional teams — a form of interdisciplinary collaboration specific to health care education and practice where students learn from, with, and about each other across disciplines — to assess Michael’s complex health needs and create comprehensive treatment approaches that draw on each profession’s expertise and perspective.

In the center, students develop their collaboration and teamwork skills before entering clinical settings, said Ashley Buckingham, M.S.N., R.N., senior director of ISIC.

“Students get the chance to practice what they’re learning in the classroom and apply those skills in a safe environment, being able to make mistakes and deeply reflect on things they can improve upon when they enter clinical practice,” said Buckingham, who is a certified health care simulation educator.

With older adults being the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population and Maine being the oldest state by median age, the Michael Case represents the reality that more than a quarter-million Mainers over 65 will need comprehensive, coordinated care — the kinds of complex cases that require multiple professional perspectives.

“The evidence is clear,” said John Vitale, Ph.D., UNE associate provost for Interprofessional Education and dean of the Westbrook College of Health Professions, noting that recent studies show positive impacts of an interdisciplinary team-based approach on everything from patient satisfaction to mortality rates. “Effective interprofessional education improves health outcomes, and here in Maine, where patients often travel long distances for complex care, we have a responsibility to ensure our graduates can collaborate seamlessly from day one.”

This is a fact that Alexa Lanteri ’26, a student in Maine’s first yearlong accelerated nursing program, found important as she went through the Michael Case in July.

“Details woven into the case reflect the person behind the health concerns,” said Lanteri. “Michael was very hardworking and independent, so we had to ask ourselves: Is this care plan realistic for someone with his personality?”

The case, launched in 2019, was developed by a committee of faculty representing UNE’s 14 different health professions, and it is now offered multiple times a year.

“It reflects the expertise of clinical content experts across all of our health professions here at UNE,” Buckingham said, adding that the case study is continuously refined to challenge students.

Betsy Cyr, D.P.T., an assistant clinical professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, who helped develop and facilitate the case, explained that the University takes a systematic approach to crafting realistic health care scenarios.

“There is intention and design in how it’s created, so that we can really address those interprofessional collaboration and communication competencies,” she said. “The authenticity is really valuable, so students get hands-on experience that readies them to appreciate what health care looks like in the real world.”

And most importantly, each health profession has a key role in the Michael Case.

"Effective interprofessional education improves health outcomes, and here in Maine, where patients often travel long distances for complex care, we have a responsibility to ensure our graduates can collaborate seamlessly from day one."

JOHN VITALE

Unlike other case studies that are developed for students in a single profession to practice discipline-specific skills, the Michael Case brings together different groupings of students from multiple health professions who must collaborate to address complex patient needs that no single discipline can solve alone.

The interprofessional case creates unique dynamics based on the student participants, Buckingham explained. "Each time we've run this, it's always a little bit unique and different based on the students who are in front of you," she said.

For example, one group might include students in occupational therapy, nursing, pharmacy, and osteopathic medicine, Buckingham noted, while another grouping may include students in UNE's dental medicine, physical therapy, and physician assistant programs.

Cyr said the small group sizes and the variety of professions each time the simulation is run are assets to the learning experience.

"Health care isn't done in a cookie-cutter fashion, but we can address interprofessional priorities through case studies like Michael's, which is really valuable," she said.

Varun Kota '29, a first-year medical student in UNE's College of Osteopathic Medicine, the only medical school in Maine, said he learned that other disciplines knew much more beyond their narrow specialties.

"It surprised me," said Kota, who is from Virginia, noting that a fourth-year Doctor of Dental Medicine student knew drug reactions and pointed out potential nutritional concerns for Michael. "There is a lot more that different professions can do than what appears on the surface."

For students like Kota, it's their first time working on an interprofessional team in an academic setting.

"We were all working together, making sure that we were covering each other's bases and doing our best to take care of Michael," he said.

Students enter the case with very little information, Cyr explained, and it's expected that they will pull out key information from the standardized patient as a team.

The case follows a structured cycle that mirrors real clinical practice. Teams of three to five students interview the patient and then debrief together with faculty facilitators to analyze the findings and plan their next steps. They return for focused follow-up interactions to gather additional information and develop comprehensive care plans.

"Michael's case is complex and holistic, and we have to keep it patient-centered," Cyr said. "No one role can manage Michael's needs alone."

The iterative process teaches students that effective health care requires continuous assessment, team consultation, and adaptive planning, she said.

The skills learned in the Michael Case translate directly to better patient care, fundamentally changing how Jasmin Gil '26, a UNE accelerated nursing student from Florida, approaches her clinical rotations and patient interactions.

With the student team, Gil found herself in discussions about the patient's lifestyle habits that revealed unexpected layers of complexity. The interprofessional dialogue helped the team understand how different health behaviors can serve multiple purposes, some beneficial, others potentially harmful.

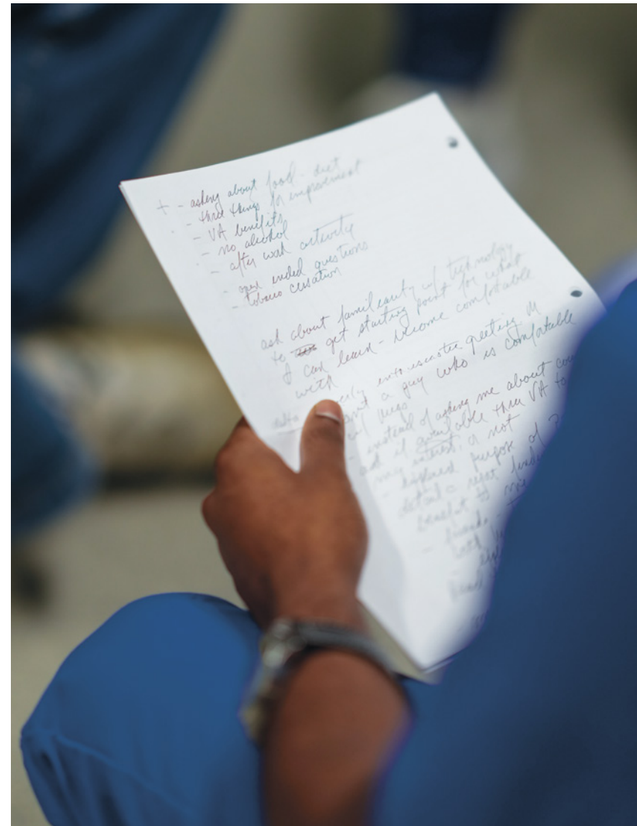
"We were able to talk about it on a professional level, come to an agreement, go back and ask Michael more questions, almost like we were playing detectives," Gil reflected.

During the patient interview process, one of the students asked Michael to identify three personal goals for seeking care that day — what Michael hoped to achieve from his visit rather than what the health care providers assumed he needed.

It was a question that shifted the entire team's perspective, Gil said. It demonstrated an understanding of the patient's priorities and motivations before developing a treatment plan. The approach exemplified a core principle of effective health care: meeting the patient where they are, she said.

"It just broadened my perspective and mindset when it comes to a patient," Gil noted, adding that she used the same question the very next day in the clinic. "It helped me see the patient as a whole, from different areas of health care, rather than just my area of focus."

Research supports what UNE students experience firsthand. In fact, a recent study led by UNE's own Center to Advance Interprofessional Education and Practice (CAIEP) found that 81% of interprofessional education graduates work on such teams after



graduation, and 80% report that their IPE experiences significantly impacted their practices in positive ways.

Health care collaborations that emphasize care coordination show the highest proportion of significant effects on clinical and patient-related outcomes, said CAIEP Director Kris Hall, M.F.A.

“Better relationships improve everyone’s experience of health care,” Hall remarked. “Interprofessionalism both supports the development of teamwork skills employers seek and prepares students for success in diverse professional environments. The Michael Case represents just one example of interprofessional education in action at UNE.”

Because of the case’s popularity, the committee is expanding its offerings to include “Lucy,” a younger female patient with a different set of health care challenges. The Lucy Case is currently in development and is scheduled to be rolled out this academic year.

Additionally, in each of UNE’s health professions programs, interprofessional education, or IPE, is built into the curriculum rather than offered as an elective.

For example, each spring semester, a pediatric interprofessional simulation is offered that has grown in recent years from 70 students and two health professions to 130 students and three health professions.

The full-day, intensive experience includes students in physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing, working with children, ages 6-12, and faculty members playing parents in realistic hospital scenarios.

The simulation is so authentic that nursing students receive clinical credit for their participation, Cyr said.

Beyond formal simulations in the ISIC, interprofessional learning happens through peer-to-peer teaching opportunities. In one initiative, College of Dental Medicine students teach physician assistant students about oral health screenings and fluoride varnish application, sharing expertise that PA students might not otherwise encounter in their traditional curriculum.

Essie Love, a fourth-year dental student from Pennsylvania, participated in both the Michael Case and this teaching initiative. For Love, who has earned an honors distinction in interprofessional work, these collaborative learning opportunities have shaped her entire approach to health care.

“Prior to coming to UNE, I never realized how beneficial it could be for other professions to collaborate together,” she said. “It’s really shaped a new goal for me as a provider; one day, I’d love to have an interprofessional event in my own community.”

BREAKING BOUNDARIES: ‘WHAT MEDICINE IS MEANT TO BE’

“Interprofessionalism both supports the development of teamwork skills employers seek and prepares students for success in diverse professional environments.”

KRIS HALL

UNE’s approach draws strength from something most universities cannot replicate: all health professions co-located together on one campus. “I think it helps me as a student because (UNE) prioritizes interprofessional collaboration and care throughout all of the programs,” added Lanteri. “They really help you build those skills to work well with others.”

This advantage has positioned UNE as a leader in interprofessional education, an approach that research has shown to produce measurable improvements in patient outcomes. Studies demonstrate that 96.7% of patients appreciate collaborative atmospheres when health care teams work together effectively, while 89% of research studies show statistically significant improvements in attitudes toward team-based patient care.

As health care becomes increasingly complex and team-based, UNE’s approach to interprofessional education — anchored by cases like Michael’s — prepares graduates who can collaborate effectively from the start. In Maine, where rural populations face significant challenges in accessing quality health care, these skills represent essential tools for improving community health outcomes.

Michael may not be real, but the collaborative care skills he helps students develop certainly are. For the patients these graduates will eventually serve, that will make all the difference, Kota reflected.

“I’m working with these different professions because we all have a shared understanding of medicine from different perspectives,” he said. “This was what medicine is meant to be.” ■

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ONE SHELL OF A GOOD TEAM

by Deirdre Fleming Stires with Kristin Burkholder and Carrie Byron

Kristin Burkholder, Ph.D., professor in the UNE School of Biological Sciences, and Carrie Byron, Ph.D., professor in the UNE School of Marine and Environmental Programs, may both be scientists, but their work is grounded in different disciplines.

At first glance, they may appear an unlikely research team.

Yet, six years ago, the two collaborated on their first Maine Sea Grant research project after Burkholder learned Byron wanted to explore the existence of pathogens on seaweed, an emerging food source. And pathogens are Burkholder's business.

Since then, the two have mentored student researchers, published three peer-reviewed articles, and landed another Maine Sea Grant to study whether microplastics that pollute ocean waters can increase the likelihood of bacterial contamination of shellfish, such as oysters.

To dive deeper, we brought the two UNE researchers out of the lab and off the water to talk about their research, and how it is making waves in human and planetary health.

> We bring different skill sets to the table: I'm a bench scientist, I am a lab rat, I do laboratory-based microbiology work. Carrie, in addition to being a fantastic scientist, is just tremendous in making connections with people in the aquaculture industry and ensuring that our work addresses industry needs. — *Kristin Burkholder*

KRISTIN: Years ago, I was on an internal panel reviewing faculty mini-grant applications, and I was reviewing Carrie's application to study potential pathogens on edible seaweed. As a microbiologist, I study bacterial pathogens, including those associated with making us sick, and I thought, "Oh, that would be cool." So, I reached out to Carrie.

Over the last several years, Carrie and I have learned that we make a good team. We share a strong work ethic and have similar levels of intellectual curiosity. But we bring different skill sets to the table: I'm a bench scientist, I am a lab rat, I do laboratory-based microbiology work. Carrie, in addition to being a fantastic scientist, is just tremendous in making connections with people in the aquaculture industry and ensuring that our work addresses industry needs. She found our oyster-farmer partner for this microplastic project. She's fearless when it comes to that. I've never been that person. Between the two of us, we make a balanced team.

CARRIE: I don't have the patience to sit over a bench and count colonies. (Laughs)

I've learned a lot from Kristin, and she's brought me in directions I had no idea I was interested in, but they have been very engaging. She does high-quality work. Ask anybody at UNE who has read her proposals: It's always, "This is the gold-star standard."

Our seaweed research began with our interest in looking at pathogens that might contaminate edible seaweed. That motivated us to write our first Maine Sea Grant. That was groundbreaking at the time because seaweed was such a new crop, and there was no guidance on how to manage this new food safely.

KRISTIN: When the seaweed food safety project was wrapping up, Carrie sent me a paper about microplastics contaminated with pathogens in the ocean. I remember there was one line in the email that said, "This is our next project." Although microplastic work was new to me, we ran with it, and that formed the basis for our next Maine Sea Grant proposal. While we've taken turns serving as principal investigators on these grants, we've both played lead roles in all our projects together.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

> The Maine Sea Grant program saw the value in what we want to learn and how it could help the industry. We are going to do everything in our power to inform and enable the industry to make positive changes. I think it's smart to get ahead of issues that people recognize but are too afraid to speak about. — *Carrie Byron*

This microplastic project has been fascinating. Most people know that microplastics are a huge pollution problem. Scientists know that aquatic organisms we eat, like fish and shellfish, can ingest plastics and retain the plastics in their tissues. Since recent studies show that microbes, including pathogens, can bind to the microplastic surface, we asked: Does microplastic pollution increase the likelihood of seafood product contamination with microbes?

There's always a risk that seafood could be contaminated with pathogens, because microbes live in the ocean. But if plastic particles become coated with pathogens, does that make it easier for our food to get contaminated with microbes that cause food poisoning?

CARRIE: The Maine Sea Grant program saw the value in what we want to learn and how it could help the industry. We are going to do everything in our power to inform and enable the industry to make positive changes. I think it's smart to get ahead of issues that people recognize but are too afraid to speak about.

We do not yet know whether plastic farming gear impacts bacterial loading in farmed oysters. But if that's the case, we can inform farmers about their choices and suggest alternative cultivation gear.

KRISTIN: We can safely say that, from the data that we've generated so far, it is becoming clear that, when oysters are fed microplastics and bacteria in a lab, microplastics enhance bacterial entry into the oyster tissue.

We're also exploring mitigation strategies and seeing promise in easy methods that farmers might use to reduce plastics and bacteria in the oysters. Our work can shed light on the rates at which oysters might be retaining bacteria and whether there are any risks and solutions farmers might use. ■

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FINDING COMMON GROUND

BY ALAN BENNETT

How a campus archaeological dig became the poster child for unearthing new professional pathways.

It started with a photograph on the wall.

A framed aerial shot of the University of New England's Biddeford Campus, taken in 1954, was hanging idly in an office in Decary Hall.

The picture went largely unnoticed until UNE faculty members Arthur Anderson, Ph.D., and Eric G. E. Zuelow, Ph.D., spotted it, a recognizable, yet curious scene: a pond where a parking lot now resides, and a house, long gone, perched near where Decary now stands.

That house, they came to learn, was called The Wayside, and archival documents revealed it once operated as a shore dining hall during Maine's early tourism boom. Later purchased by the Franciscans in 1948 for use by St. Francis College, it was razed in 1963 to make way for a growing campus that would eventually become the UNE we know today.

The site, Zuelow mused, was virtually crying out for study.

This one photo would drive Zuelow and Anderson to collaborate across their respective areas of expertise in cultural history and archaeology to offer a jointly taught course seeking to uncover The Wayside's story — literally, figuratively, and across disciplines — and construct a living archive of this piece of UNE's past.

Uniting the skill sets of students from the University's programs in archaeology, history, business, environmental and marine sciences, and psychology, the course was built around the belief that we better understand where we're going — personally, professionally, and societally — by examining where we've been.

And, guided by the vision that no single discipline could accurately or completely tell The Wayside's story, students uncovered more than just relics of former lives. In the soil beneath their feet and through the spirit of collaboration across academic aisles, they took home lessons that shaped their own lives as well.

TIME TEAM NEW ENGLAND

On a warm September afternoon in 2024, a group of students knelt in the grass outside Decary Hall, carefully moving down through layers of soil, millimeter by millimeter. With trowels and sifters, they uncovered bits of brick, fragments of glass, and weathered nails: small, tangible pieces of the building that once stood on this spot.

The group had spent weeks preparing for this moment, but the dig itself wasn't the sole focus of the class, which the professors dubbed "Time Team New England." Rather, Anderson said, it was the means through which students could learn from each other rather than alongside each other in approaching a shared question from multiple angles.

"We weren't simply after artifacts," said Anderson, an associate teaching professor in the College of Arts and Sciences. "We were after understanding, to see how different perspectives, different kinds of expertise, could shape the questions we asked and the answers we found."

ALLIED LEARNING, APPLIED OUTCOMES

Following historical maps and guided by utility scans, the students carefully marked 50-by-50-centimeter test pits and then began digging, layer by layer.

Early finds — window glass, brick fragments, clam shells, and rusted screws — may have looked unremarkable to those passing by. But to the students, these were artifacts that told a deeper story: Some items suggested phases of domestic life; others taught lessons that went beyond physical limits.

Indeed, the course illuminated UNE's institutional journey from a cluster of buildings to a modern university, intentionally leveraging its rich history as a community hub to foster connections and collaboration across students from all academic walks of life.

In his teachings, Anderson said, this diversity isn't incidental; it is essential and purposeful.

"Archaeology is the ultimate interdisciplinary experience," he remarked. "It's not just about digging. It's about interpreting, and that's where every student's lens adds value."

That value was evident even before the dig began.

As Zuelow's history students sank into the archives, others from UNE's majors in marine and environmental studies used their expertise in remote sensing, scanning the ground with drones and other tools to identify the most promising plots to till.

Throughout the semester, students from UNE's communications and media arts program employed their journalistic skills, breaking out boom microphones and using their phones to record digital field notes and document the team's discoveries.

The group's individual outputs converged in one collective final project: a multidisciplinary archive of The Wayside — complete with photographs, spatial maps, and a series of student-produced podcasts — entitled "Falling By The Wayside." Their data will feed into a permanent record of the site for future students to expand through their own interdisciplinary explorations.

This model of learning across boundaries, solving problems in teams, and engaging with real-world questions is at the core of UNE's educational philosophy, wherein students discover new academic interests and career trajectories they might not have considered without opportunities for such collaborative learning experiences.

"With interdisciplinary learning, there's a decentralization of power and letting students take the lead," Anderson said. "Neither Eric nor I could have tackled this problem alone by working in our own silos. We needed student help, and, in turn, our students became attuned to understanding the limitations of their own individual approaches and the strengths of their peers'.

"Everyone's presence and input were vital to this project working," he added.

GROUNDED IN INTEGRATED LEARNING

Courses that challenge conventional pedagogies by prioritizing innovation across academic specialties are increasingly common at UNE.

In late 2024, as Anderson's and Zuelow's students shifted their focus from the dirt to their desktops, two professors from UNE's political science and philosophy programs led a class of students analyzing the rhetoric, ethics, and progress of the U.S. presidential election in real time, including through election night.

These are not one-off projects, said Amy Keirstead, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Interdisciplinary experiences at UNE are deliberately designed to ignite curiosity and carve professional pathways for students, including internships and peer-reviewed research.

"Whether they go into archaeology, business, health care, or any other field, the ability to collaborate, to listen, to integrate different viewpoints, that's what will make them successful."

ARTHUR ANDERSON

"By intentionally connecting students with faculty and colleagues outside their own fields, our students emerge from their undergraduate programs well equipped for postgraduate work or to enter the workforce directly, having already worked in interdisciplinary teams, and able to approach complex problems from multiple lenses," Keirstead said.

For Anderson, this is the heart of the work.

"Whether they go into archaeology, business, health care, or any other field, the ability to collaborate, to listen, to integrate different viewpoints, that's what will make them successful," he said.

A FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Whether excavating a historical site, evaluating policy in an election year, or launching a new product, these collaborative experiences endow students with more than just basic knowledge. Students also are learning to work together to manage uncertainty and adapt to new challenges, skills Zuelow said are essential to working in a rapidly evolving world.

"If you're going to succeed in the workplace and in life, you have to learn how to solve problems with people who see the world differently than you do," he said. "That's what this class was about."

Meredith Bailey (Psychology, '26) enrolled in the course to better understand human relationships in preparation for her career as a future clinical psychologist.

Bailey said the insights gained from interacting with her peers with majors from history to hard science to health care gave her the skills necessary to navigate the myriad interactions she is already facing in her young professional life, providing a blueprint for her work as a mental health technician at Parkland Medical Center in Derry, New Hampshire.

"My classmates and I had different backgrounds and focuses within our studies, and having the skills to work with multiple disciplines at once reflects those same social dynamics and will be useful once we graduate," said the senior from Hampstead, New Hampshire.

Bailey's working environment, being surrounded by and collaborating closely with physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and other clinicians — as well as patients from all walks of life — serves as a living, breathing representation of those classroom experiences.

"Working at the hospital, I interact with patients of diverse backgrounds and can see how working in the psychology field does not include only psychology — it is inherently interdisciplinary," Bailey said.

She said that, for her and her peers, the course was the first time they felt that academic learning directly translated into real-life work, equipping them with meaningful interdisciplinary experiences that will shape their professional pathways upon graduation.

"This course taught me more about taking charge in my learning and my future career," Bailey said. "This was not just a regular course. We were making a difference."

Zuelow said that, through bridging disciplines and combining their expertise, Bailey and her peers ultimately uncovered his and Anderson's true purpose for designing the course in the manner they did.

"History and archaeology are founded on different principles, but when they come together, the two disciplines create an idea of belonging in a place and a sense of being part of it," Zuelow said, noting that UNE is now carrying forward the legacy of its precursor institutions.

"Students may not necessarily be conscious of that at first, but if they really feel like they're part of something bigger, I think that matters," he added. "If we, as instructors, can create a sense of belonging for our students and continue that legacy, the more powerful the story becomes." ■

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GAINING GLOBAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES IN GHANA

by Kristiane Smith, M.P.H. '26, with Joel Soloway

LEARNING ACROSS FIELDS OF HEALTH CARE IN GHANA

A COLLABORATIVE, INTERNATIONAL TEAM!

Hello, everyone! My name is Kristiane Smith. I am a Master of Public Health student at the University of New England. As part of my degree, I completed an applied practice experience that took me to Sekondi, Ghana, in June 2025. During this opportunity, I worked with fellow public health students, nurses, social workers, and pharmacists in a transdisciplinary approach to health care. I am excited to be taking you through the journey of this amazing trip.

Working closely with the medical team in Ghana and my student team, we provided a range of medical services to over 400 patients. Here, you can see our skilled team standing together for a group photo while, we were visiting one of the many markets in Ghana. I loved being able to get immersed in the culture, because it is so colorful and vibrant!

EXPLORING THE VIBRANT CULTURE & CRAFTSMANSHIP!

DELIVERING STUDENT-LED INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE

We were able to visit many stalls in the markets in Ghana. Exploring the markets was not just about the shopping — it was also an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the culture, traditions, and daily life of people in West Africa. As we wandered through different markets, we saw stalls overflowing with beautifully crafted fabrics, clothing, accessories, and jewelry. We were also able to see a variety of fresh foods, fruits, and vegetables, as well as a variety of spices. For me, the markets were one of the highlights of the experience, offering a window into the creativity, skilled craftsmanship, and rich traditions of the local community.

On a typical clinic day, we worked with patient intake, conducted health screenings, provided patients with needed care, and prescribed medication through our partnership with the Ghanaian doctors. Health issues ranged from common ailments to chronic conditions. We worked with Ghanaian community health workers to translate and discuss important health concerns. By listening and asking questions, we better understood the patients' needs and made appropriate care plans. It was a valuable cultural exchange that helped us better understand community health and how to approach patient care.

TRAVELOGUE

CONDUCTING COMMUNITY HEALTH RESEARCH

Education was a fundamental component of our outreach in Ghana. We listened to patients and surveyed communities to understand their needs. Public health students conducted various surveys on different health concerns, such as tuberculosis, mental health, and cardiovascular disease. My intervention focused on diabetes management and prevention. I explored how medication adherence protocols, knowledge, and attitudes related to Ghanaians living with diabetes. I developed a survey that focuses specifically on adherence to prescribed medications and dietary recommendations. Results will identify challenges and areas needing support. Community health workers were important members of our team, helping us understand community needs.

HEALTH + WELLNESS EDUCATION WITH GHANA SCHOOLKIDS

As a public health student, I worked within the Ghanaian community to help with outreach and education. In this picture, you can see me with girls from a local high school. We visited several schools in the region, where we assembled and distributed menstrual hygiene packs for girls. These included supplies for menstrual cycles and educational pamphlets. We gathered materials and made 200 packets for the community. Answering questions and addressing concerns was a highlight of the experience. Overall, it was a fulfilling opportunity that strengthened my commitment to working within communities to promote health and wellness.

ASSISTING WITH CHILD + MATERNAL HEALTH CARE

Helping kids is a passion of mine. One of the most meaningful experiences I had in Ghana was visiting a women's health clinic, where I had the opportunity to support midwives and physicians in their work. I observed the care and compassion that went into every well-woman visit, assisted with baby checkups, and learned how providers carefully monitored developmental growth. Witnessing the dedication of these professionals deepened my understanding of holistic care and strengthened my commitment to supporting the health and well-being of children and families.

AN ADVENTUROUS TRANSPORTATION EXPERIENCE!

One of the most unforgettable moments of this trip was our public health outreach. We worked with Merley, a dedicated Ghanaian public health worker, visited many of her patients, and observed how she assessed their needs. One way that we got around between the towns was through these small cars, called "pragia." Riding in these doorless cars, speeding through the bumpy village roads while holding on tightly, turned itself into an adventure. ■

LOCAL SOLUTIONS. LASTING RESULTS.

BY JEN A. MILLER, FREELANCE WRITER

Through a broad spectrum of community alliances, University of New England Summer Sustainability Fellows are creating tangible impacts while building more resilient communities.

The path toward a more sustainable world will not come from just one direction. Academia can't do it alone, nor can private companies, nonprofits, or governments at any level.

Instead, collaboration is required, with people across different types of organizations and disciplines working together to create sustainable solutions for real-world challenges.

That's the basis of the UNE Summer Sustainability Fellowship program, which partners UNE students and recent graduates from majors across the University — environmental and marine sciences, health professions, business, the humanities, and others — with community members who have tangible sustainability-related goals and ambitions.

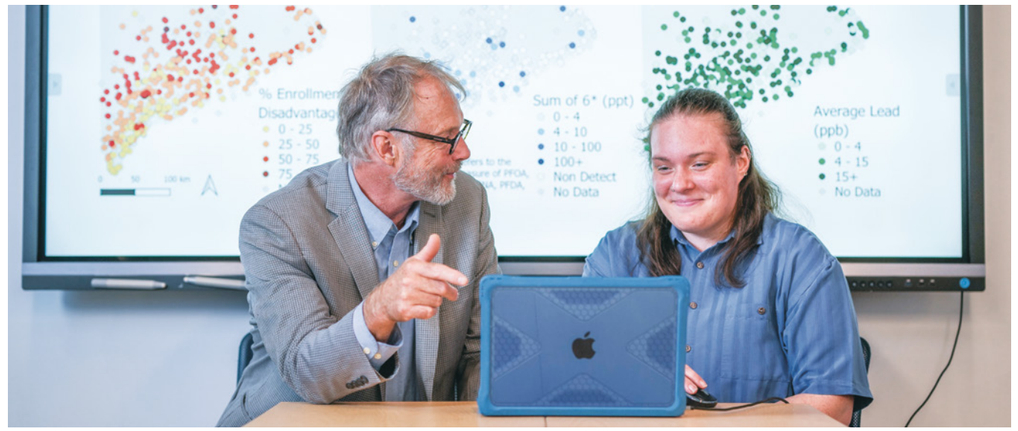
In its first year, the program had six fellows over 10 weeks; in 2025, that number has grown to 16.

For local communities, the UNE Sustainability Fellows help organizations address projects that may have been on the back burner, whether because they hadn't had the budget to address them or they couldn't find the right person with the right skills to tackle the job.

"It's really difficult to be able to balance economic well-being, social well-being, and environmental health on any project. To go out and practice this in the real world is a really humbling experience," said Cameron Wake, Ph.D., director of UNE North, the University's Center for North Atlantic studies, which examines the Arctic and North Atlantic regions through an integrated, planetary approach encompassing environmental, economic, and health-focused perspectives.

But at the same time, Wake said, that experience is an important one. For UNE students, the fellowship is a way to take classroom lessons out into the real world and work with professionals from other fields on solutions that would not have been possible without diverse knowledge and expertise.

"When you do it as part of an effort that is well supported and well scaffolded, it really helps the student understand that they can make a difference," he said, noting that each project is designed to build connective tissue between different areas of expertise. "I am beyond convinced that, in order to address really big challenges … (this work) has to be done in an interdisciplinary way."



KEEPING A LIGHTHOUSE ALIGHT

The impact UNE Sustainability Fellows are making extends from the inner city to the salty sea and from the state's largest community into the Gulf of Maine.

The Goat Island Light Station is a local institution. The lighthouse, completed in 1835, sits on an island about a mile offshore of Kennebunkport's Cape Porpoise Harbor and was designed to help mariners find their way through dangerous rocks, a job it's still doing today.

But it's not cheap or easy to run a lighthouse, especially one that has living quarters for lighthouse keepers and can be accessed only by boat and kayak (and even then, only on days when the weather cooperates).

With the Gulf of Maine warming faster than the majority of the world's oceans, climate change threatens Goat Island, too, as rising sea levels and intensifying storms put everything there, including the lighthouse, at risk.

In her fellowship, Annika Doeppers (Marine Biology, '25) brought her understanding of marine ecosystems to work with facility managers to develop a new operational and marketing plan for the lighthouse, maintained by the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust.

The trust has preserved 3,000 acres of land so far, but the Goat Island Light Station is unique because of where it is. The trust has management plans for most of its inland properties, for which Doeppers began work on her management plan, and then adapted it for an island.

A typical management plan, Doeppers said, focuses on forest space, so she's changing it to beach space, where it's "less about trees and more about sea creatures." She identified coastal environment vulnerabilities such as non-native grass growing on the island, while trust staff provided insights on building management practices to preserve the station.

The plan also addresses the unique challenges of a property that is about a mile offshore and is also being taken care of by people who live there. "It's a way of making sure there's a solid plan for communication between the keepers and the trust," she said.

Ensuring that the lighthouse continues to operate has both functional and morale purposes.

"This lighthouse is a pillar to its community," she said, not just because it's a critical piece of safety infrastructure for Cape Porpoise Harbor, which is an active fishing community. It's also a symbol of the surrounding area, she said, and an important historical touchstone.

"It's important that it stays out there for as long as possible, guiding people through the harbor," she said.

GETTING GRANULAR ON POLLUTION SOURCES

Big data can be a powerful thing, providing insights that can make differences in people's lives. But big data only works if it's put to good use, meaning that it's formatted and incorporated in a way that it can be analyzed and visualized to provide helpful and accurate results.

That's especially true when it comes to public health, said Ruth Ellis '25, who is using her studies as an environmental science major to inform community health outcomes related to pollution.

In her fellowship, Ellis is working with data experts at Apriqot, a two-year-old, Portland-based startup, on a computer analytics framework that uses her background in environmental studies to enable pollution-related data to be incorporated into the company's models so its data sets can provide quality, localized demographic and health metric data.

"Since they're a startup, they don't really have environmental context for their models yet," said Ellis, who will graduate in December.

Apriqot's data analytics solution already uses information from public health agencies, health systems, foundations, and community organizers. Ellis worked on expanding those sources, with a focus on water pollutants, including data from lead tests at 700 Maine schools and tests for PFAS — so-called "forever chemicals" known to increase cancer risk, cause fertility issues, and have other detrimental impacts on human health — done at 100 Maine schools.

But Ellis didn't just build up data sets and leave it at that. Instead, she's built a system that is purposely not pollutant-specific. That way, Apriqot can add more environmental data as it becomes available, to address local health concerns better and in a timelier manner.

"The company will be able to partner with people who work in the realm of PFAS or lead, or whatever environmental data they want to use, and incorporate it," Ellis said, adding that "this is the beginning for them, so that they can partner with organizations to understand where these pollutants are and who is being impacted by them the most."

CREATING A BLUEPRINT FOR BETTER URBAN GARDENING

Cultivating Community is a long-running Portland nonprofit that focuses on food justice through programs that prioritize people who may not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. One prong of its work is running community gardens across the city, including the Boyd Street Urban Farm, which includes a "pick-as-needed" orchard that grows apples, pears, peaches, cherries, and raspberries.

One persistent issue, though, has been the health of the trees, which don't produce as much fruit as they should.

In his fellowship, Luke Jenkins (Biology, '26) has been tasked with practical horticulture duties, including orchard care and composting, for Boyd Street, as the farm is familiarly known.

"This is one of the few green spaces (in Portland) that is a safe haven for everyone and for people to come and spend their day," said Jenkins, who calls himself "a big plant guy."

"When it comes to the garden, it's a good opportunity for people to have food," he said. "It doesn't matter who you are. If you need the food, take as much as you need."

To create a more fruitful orchard, he spent his fellowship collaborating with ReTreeUs, a nonprofit that helps plant trees and promote education, along with arborists and orchard owners in the area, to compare what they're seeing in terms of invasive species and horticultural diseases and get ideas on how to increase fruit yield at Boyd Street.

From there, Jenkins created an action plan — translating the expertise he's gained from in-class lessons into impactful, hands-on work — that can realistically be implemented at the garden.

One problem, for example, has been burdock, a pesky weed with burs so sticky that they inspired Velcro. Jenkins couldn't simply order gardeners to remove these plants, but he could work with Cultivating Community to educate gardeners as to why this weed is a problem and what steps they can take to prevent its spread.

He also worked on a composting system that will be more efficient for the garden, with better signage about what can be put into each container while also stressing the importance of respecting the space.

Jenkins hopes that his plans at Boyd Street can be replicated across Cultivating Community's other sites, for the sake of both the health of the gardens and the community.

"If you're hungry and you can't find food or can't afford food, you can come to our orchard and pick that peach or pick that apple," Jenkins said. "If you need it and you have (access to) it, that's a kind of security, knowing it's there."

He added that integrating his plant science knowledge with insights from arborists, orchard managers, and community educators to create a practical action plan for the orchard has been an important part of the experience.

"It's pushed me to become more thoughtful about how I communicate, how I adjust to different priorities, and how I make sure the work aligns with the needs and values of the communities it's meant to support," he said.

MOVING THE NEEDLE FORWARD

As the last traces of summer fade on Maine's coast, the impact of UNE's Summer Sustainability Fellowship ripples far beyond campus. The fellowships show what's possible when students step beyond the classroom and work beyond their academic boundaries to help solve local sustainability challenges, said Wake.

"In the fellowships, our students shift from theory to tackling sustainability head-on," he said. "They are discovering how to address a complicated problem by working with people who have knowledge in different fields and integrating those approaches. It's a skill they will take with them into their careers."

The local impact is tangible.

Silvan Shawe, Cultivating Community's executive director, said she was excited to see Jenkins' project come to fruition because it will have a lasting effect.

"It will serve as a template we can use and adapt across our entire program moving forward and build a more resilient community," she said.

By working across aisles of expertise to address local sustainability challenges, UNE and its students are providing tools and building relationships that Mainers can rely on to build resilience long after the fellowship ends.

"What we're doing is helping to nurture and grow community," Wake said. "Not traditionally a role that a university plays. And yet, if you asked me what UNE North is, that's it." ■

See more
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"What we're doing is helping to nurture and grow community. Not traditionally a role that a university plays. And yet, if you asked me what UNE North is, that's it."

CAMERON WAKE

A TRANSFORMATIVE MOMENT FOR MAINE HEALTH CARE

The University of New England officially opened the Harold and Bibby Alfond Center for Health Sciences in Portland on June 3. The building, situated on UNE's Portland Campus for the Health Sciences, marks a pivotal shift in how Maine prepares its future health care workforce by completing the relocation of the UNE College of Osteopathic Medicine to the heart of the state's largest health care ecosystem.

"Over the past two-plus decades, UNE has emerged as a unique institution essential to the health of our home state," UNE President James Herbert said during the ribbon-cutting ceremony. "The impact of this facility will reach far beyond Portland to the entire state of Maine, increasing the number of doctors we can graduate each year when their expertise is desperately needed."

The 110,000-square-foot center enables a 21% increase in enrollment from 165 to 200 medical students per class while creating Maine's only fully integrated health professions campus. The facility brings together UNE's programs in medicine, dentistry, physician assistant, pharmacy, nursing, and allied health, fostering unprecedented collaboration across disciplines.

"Health care is a team sport," said College of Osteopathic Medicine Dean Jane Carreiro, D.O. '88, who is also vice president of Health Affairs at UNE. "The more complicated your patients are, the bigger the team and the more people you have to communicate with."

The building's design intentionally breaks down traditional academic boundaries through shared clinical skills spaces, simulation labs, and donor labs that serve multiple programs. This collaborative approach prepares students for the realities of modern health care practice.

UNE has established itself as Maine's largest educator of health professionals, awarding over 16,000 health sciences degrees since 1995. With 35 additional doctors graduating annually, Maine's critical physician shortage will be addressed through interprofessional collaboration from day one of students' academic journey.

The transformational project was made possible through a $30 million gift from the Harold Alfond Foundation, a $5 million federal appropriation championed by Sen. Susan Collins, and private donations.

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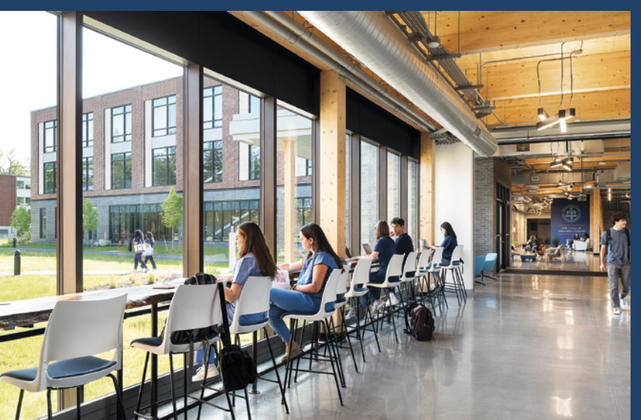

Students develop practical skills through food preparation and nutritional science application in the UNE Teaching Kitchen, a hands-on learning space in Decary Hall. The facility supports interdisciplinary collaboration.

Students develop computational research skills through interdisciplinary projects in the Sustainable Innovation Center, a reimagined space for data-driven innovation. The facility supports collaborative work across programs, including research that applies data analytics to marine science and environmental studies.

Students use the state-of-the-art video, lighting, and audio equipment in the new Nor'easter Production Studio, located in the lower level of Decary Hall on the Biddeford Campus, to create content that can support interdisciplinary storytelling across the University's communications, media arts, health professions, marine science, and business programs.

STUDENTS' FUTURES TAKE SHAPE

Walking across UNE's campuses today, visitors can hear transformation taking place: the rhythmic hammering, the hum of machinery, and the voices of workers calling out to one another as they create and update the University's learning spaces.

Both the Portland and Biddeford campuses are being redesigned to redefine how learning happens. Thanks to collaboration, innovation, and the seamless blending of different fields of study, these are more than renovations — they are reimagined environments where the UNE community will come together to develop the skills and knowledge to meet tomorrow's challenges.

In Portland, historic buildings like the Ludcke Auditorium are being restored while gaining modern functionality as group study rooms for learning and collaboration, a campus store, a grab-and-go café, and flexible study and gathering areas. The infrastructure honors the legacy of education while creating vibrant spaces for connection and community.

With the College of Osteopathic Medicine's move to Portland completed, the Biddeford Campus is experiencing its own renaissance as spaces are transformed to support new kinds of discovery and creativity. Cutting-edge facilities are taking shape that will house everything from advanced research labs to adaptive learning spaces designed for the interdisciplinary work that defines 21st-century education.

Ongoing upgrades to the Alfond Center for Arts and Sciences, formerly the Alfond Center for Health Sciences, will comprehensively reimagine the facility through 2027. In this transformation, lecture halls will become tiered classrooms for collaborative learning, spaces will transform into biomedical research and neuroscience labs, and new art studios and nursing skills labs will join upgraded chemistry and biology facilities.

Each space is being designed with the future in mind, anticipating how students will learn, collaborate, and contribute to their communities. Whether it's a teaching kitchen where culinary arts meets nutrition science and business incubation or a sustainability center where environmental studies connects with entrepreneurial innovation, these spaces embody UNE's belief that the future belongs to those who can work across disciplines.

Today, the future of education — and UNE — is under construction for tomorrow's leaders and innovators. ■

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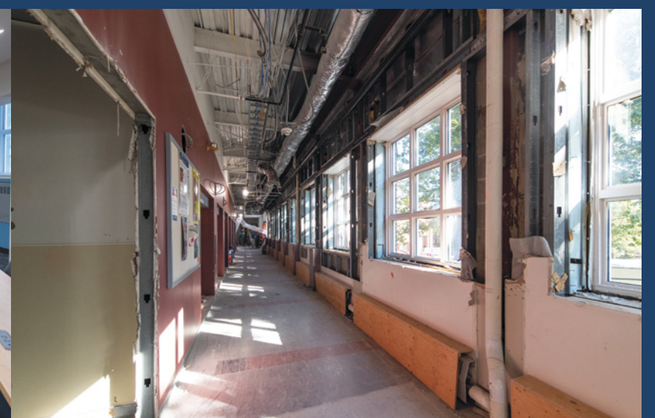

THE ART OF ASKING ‘WHAT IF?’

How the philosophy and investment of a donor are shaping the next generation of leaders.

by Emme Demmendaal

When entrepreneur and explorer David Evans Shaw, HON ’22, first traversed the wilds of Rwanda to observe mountain gorillas, the experience was transformational.

Despite careful planning and years of imagining the encounter, Shaw wasn’t prepared for the profound impact of meeting Santo, a 350-pound silverback. The experience taught him something deeper about respect, curiosity, and navigating the unknown: True discovery happens when you allow yourself to be changed by what you find.

The same philosophy of transformation through experience shapes the Shaw Innovation Fellows initiative at the University of New England.

While UNE students may not be navigating the African wilderness, the fellowship program, run by UNE’s Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, seeks to transform students, not just through what they study, but also by who they become in the process.

It’s one of Shaw’s entrepreneurial philosophies brought to life.

“I knew who I wanted us to be more than knowing what I wanted us to do,” Shaw said of the mindset that drove him to build IDEXX Laboratories into a global leader in veterinary diagnostics.

And who does he hope each Shaw Innovation Fellow will become? A lifetime learner who challenges convention and isn’t afraid to ask, “What if?”

Launched in 2021, the UNE Shaw Innovation Fellowship offers different initiatives with campus and community partners to inspire student innovation. The projects range from developing marketable products using campus resources to addressing planetary and human health challenges in Maine and beyond.

Shaw, the program’s namesake, was born and raised in Nashua, New Hampshire, and worked as a strategy consultant, which gave him insight into emerging changes in molecular biology, software engineering, and biotechnology. Currently residing in Scarborough, Maine, Shaw started IDEXX in the early 1980s and went on to revolutionize veterinary diagnostics using technology proven effective in human medicine.

But, as Shaw said, “Much progress in society is made by challenging conventional wisdom and doing something different.”

In the fellowship, students step outside their comfort zones to work with peers from other fields. In doing so, they don’t just produce better solutions; they also become better problem-solvers, said Lisa Herschbach, Ph.D., director of the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, who coordinates the fellowship program.

“We don’t just develop skills X, Y, and Z. We ask: Are you creative? Are you motivated? Are you an out-of-the-box thinker?” she said. “These are the qualities we seek to inspire in young people.”

David Shaw with the inaugural class of Shaw Innovation Fellows after a team building workshop.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

> Much progress in society is made by challenging conventional wisdom and doing something different. — *David Evans Shaw*

The fellowship program’s structure allows students to experience a complete innovation cycle within one year, from initial concept through team-building to results. It has become a catalyst for interdisciplinary thinking, creating what Shaw calls “escape velocity” from conventional academic boundaries.

Shaw’s journey from a mill town in New England to founding a multibillion-dollar company and leading global conservation efforts exemplifies how success doesn’t always come from following a prescribed path.

The program deliberately brings together “various — and not always obvious — disciplines” to develop solutions that wouldn’t be possible without interdisciplinary collaboration, Herschbach observed.

“Fellows learn to be more effective communicators and collaborators,” she said. “The cross-pollination of knowledge creates graduates who are uniquely prepared for a world that doesn’t operate according to departmental silos.”

Recently, students working on an earthquake monitoring project on UNE’s Ram Island realized that waves hitting the island also make the ground shake, leading them to use a seismograph to study wave activity, not just earthquakes.

“That’s emblematic of the kinds of habits of mind that David is really trying to promote,” Herschbach said.

Shaw said that truly innovative outcomes are often the results of experiencing work as play, where people start belonging to “a group of committed team members fully engaged in great achievement.”

In practice, Shaw’s purpose-driven community is the bedrock of how UNE’s Shaw Innovation Fellowship program is designed. Students join cohorts united not by their majors, but by project category and topic. Fellows collaborate with peers and external partners to solve problems that matter to real people and communities.

“It fosters a shared mission and collective purpose,” said Shaw, who serves as a visiting senior fellow at UNE. “One that drives true innovation.”

This philosophy shapes how Shaw Fellows approach challenges. Rather than seeking predetermined answers, they navigate uncertainty and risk, build teams with unfamiliar collaborators, and tackle problems without knowing what the outcomes will be.

“Learning through risk-taking and making mistakes is arguably a more profound experience than going through the motions and doing the things that you think society wants you to do,” Herschbach explained.

And, most importantly — stay curious and ask, “What if?”

Learning to ask the right questions teaches the fellows not just about innovation, but also about themselves — their capabilities, their thinking processes, and their potential as leaders, Shaw said.

And the fellows don’t just complete their projects and move on.

“(The fellowship) has lifetime value,” he said. “It creates a mindset and set of approaches that will be of great value for the rest of their lives.”

Herschbach agreed.

“Fellows develop confidence. They develop skills of collaboration. They are willing to take risks,” she observed. In many instances, following a fellowship, students move into new internships, leadership roles, and original research earlier than they would have otherwise. Fellows also try new career pathways, including starting their own businesses.

“By investing in students who work at the crossroads of ideas, David is helping UNE prepare leaders who don’t just adapt to change. They create it,” Herschbach said. ■

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AN ATHLETE'S JOURNEY TO INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE

by Vashti Etienne (D.P.T., '27)

My journey started on the soccer field.

As an undergraduate student-athlete, I was surrounded by teammates from different academic backgrounds — nursing, psychology, pre-med, and athletic training. We came together not only to win games, but also to build trust, adapt to one another's strengths and weaknesses, and solve problems as a unit.

While our focus was athletic performance, we were constantly learning from each other. Each student brought a different way of thinking to the team, and we often shared perspectives on injury prevention, stress management, and nutrition.

I was experiencing the importance of communication and shared goals firsthand. It was early exposure to teamwork that planted the seeds: success was rarely the product of individual effort, whether on the field or in life.

This early lesson on the soccer field laid the groundwork for my appreciation of interprofessional work in a health care setting.

From my very first semester of graduate school at UNE, I was introduced to interprofessional services, and I began working alongside students in dentistry, pharmacy, occupational therapy, medicine, and nursing.

One of the most eye-opening experiences was participating in a tour of a Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) correctional facility and engaging in discussions with incarcerated residents. This service-learning opportunity exposed me to the structural and systemic barriers that many face when seeking health care.

The residents shared their experiences about interacting with interprofessional health care providers and emphasized the importance of future providers working together to meet patient needs and develop cohesive treatment plans. Their thoughts and insights gave me a strong foundation for understanding what patients value in their care.

As part of an interprofessional group, we were encouraged to reflect on our own biases, discuss the roles we each play in these systems, and brainstorm how collaborative care can be extended to marginalized communities. While we weren't collaborating to win a soccer match, we were working across health profession fields to learn how to serve patients and communities with comprehensive, compassionate, and coordinated care. It validated to me that working as a team is essential for achieving meaningful outcomes.

As a Black woman in the health care profession, it is especially important to me that my future patients, particularly those of color, feel supported, seen, and confident that their care is in capable and compassionate hands. I will advocate for shared goal-setting and integrated care plans to ensure that every patient's voice is heard and respected.

This commitment ties into my interest in pursuing a career in neurological care. I am particularly drawn to this field because patients with neurological conditions often feel ostracized, and it is our responsibility to make them feel comfortable and supported as they adapt to daily life. Their care typically requires ongoing management, interdisciplinary coordination, and patient education, which are areas where I believe interprofessional collaboration is especially crucial.

Another powerful interprofessional experience was the "Make It Take It" project, where UNE students across health professions assembled sandwiches and wrote notes to local, underserved communities. This hands-on project brought students together for a common cause. While it may seem like a simple task, the impact was found in the conversations and planning behind the scenes. This event opened our eyes to various systemic barriers, such as those experienced by residents at MDOC, and highlighted our opportunity to help those in need.

The "Make It Take It" project emphasized the importance of shared leadership and responsibility. It also showcased how different professional perspectives complement one another.

We learned more about each profession's role during the Interprofessional Collaboration Across Campus Participation. This experience was a requirement for our clinical education course and was designed to broaden our understanding of each profession's role. For instance, pharmacy students helped determine what over-the-counter items would be most effective and safe. In contrast, occupational therapy students shared ideas about accessibility and function, and we, as student physical therapists, contributed our knowledge of movement education and management strategies.

This experience helped all of us gain a deeper understanding of one another's scope of practice, which is critical knowledge for delivering cohesive patient care in the future.

Looking ahead, I plan to carry this collaborative spirit into my future clinical practice. Whether I'm part of an inpatient rehabilitation team or working in an outpatient neurological clinic, I want to ensure that interprofessional collaboration remains central to my approach to patient care, as it plays a vital role in achieving positive patient outcomes. Most importantly, I'll continue to reflect on the values I've learned as a student: communication, respect, adaptability, and teamwork. My journey through interprofessional work has ultimately been rich and transformative.

From the soccer field to the classroom, and through real-world service learning, I have come to deeply appreciate the power of working across disciplines. These experiences have taught me that interprofessional work is not just a box to check in school, but also a mindset and a lifelong practice. It has also shaped me into a more thoughtful, inclusive, and practical future physical therapist.

I am excited to continue growing within interprofessional teams and to help build a health care system where collaboration is not the exception but the norm. ■

PRESIDENT'S FORUM

When fundamental questions about power and democracy demand exploration, the University of New England, as an institution of higher learning, embraces its responsibility to encourage open, civil conversations for rigorous examination.

Through thoughtful dialogue that bridges ideological divides, the President's Forum continues to demonstrate how respectful engagement with complex issues can deepen understanding. This semester's installment of President James Herbert's signature series brought together leading scholars to examine executive authority and democratic resilience in contemporary America.

In October, the President's Forum invited two national experts to present "Is Trump a Strongman President, and Can Our Democracy Endure?" The event drew more than 300 attendees to the Harold Alfond Forum on UNE's Biddeford Campus to consider whether Donald Trump's presidency represents a lasting break from American democratic tradition and explore the implications of the so-called "strongman presidency" for the future of democratic governance.

Panelists included William G. Howell, dean of the School of Government and Policy at Johns Hopkins University and co-author of *Trajectory of Power: The Rise of the Strongman Presidency*, and Andrew Rudalevige, Thomas Brackett Reed Professor of Government at Bowdoin College and author of *By Executive Order: Bureaucratic Management and the Limits of Presidential Power*. The event was moderated by Jeanne A.K. Hey, UNE dean emerita and CEO of Hey University.

Underscoring the Academy's role as the ultimate marketplace of ideas, the forum allowed for open and robust discourse, presenting diverse perspectives on executive power and democratic institutions in a respectful way.

"I'm grateful for conversations like this because structured, constructive, intellectual discourse about a topic that is grounded in evidence and reason is essential in a healthy community," said Shannon Zlotkowski, M.S., assistant provost for Community and Belonging at UNE. "We all need reminders about how to confidently and humbly engage in difficult topics like the health of our democracy, even when the topic feels tenuous and/or risky."

Zlotkowski was one of three recipients of UNE's 2025 Award for Constructive Discourse for her efforts to foster inclusivity in all its forms across the University. Faculty recipients of the award were Kenneth Courtney, Ph.D., from the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and John Waterman, Ph.D., from the School of Arts and Humanities, who jointly developed and taught a course for students from across the University's undergraduate majors analyzing the 2024 U.S. presidential election.

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

UNE CHEER BRINGS HOME FIRST NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

by Kyle Relf

The University of New England Cheer team reached historic heights this April, securing its first national title at the National Cheerleaders Association College National Championship in Daytona Beach, Florida, earning a final event score of 96.32 to top a field of 15 teams in the Intermediate All-Girl Division III category.

UNE's score was the best ever by any Maine school at the annual championship event.

Alison Bromski, assisted by Cady Toussaint, has served as the team's head coach since 2021.

> UNE Cheer has demonstrated that excellence can be achieved anywhere through gritty dedication to a goal, an unbendable sense of unity, and a strong network of support. — *Alison Bromski*

"This victory proves that young athletes do not need to leave Maine or New England to achieve the highest level of success in our sport," Bromski said. "UNE Cheer has demonstrated that excellence can be achieved anywhere through gritty dedication to a goal, an unbendable sense of unity, and a strong network of support."

Head captain Ari Howe (Medical Biology and Nutrition, '26) said that, leading up to the victory, the team was focused on being the best version of themselves while competing.

"When we were traveling, we all just promised each other that we would do our best for each other," Howe said. "No matter what that was going to look like, we would be proud. Going in with the attitude that we had nothing to lose is ultimately what led us to win, because our performance was fueled by our love for each other rather than pressure to win."

After returning from the championship, the team gathered for a celebratory dinner at the home of UNE President James Herbert.

"We feel deeply grateful to be supported by President James Herbert and Lynn Brandsma, who engaged with us at every opportunity long before we became national champions," Bromski said. "We love to see our UNE community learn about and celebrate the enormity of our accomplishments, as making the University proud is always our No. 1 goal." ■

UNE women's lacrosse plays its season opener against the University of Southern Maine at Blue Bolt Field on Feb. 25, 2025.

FROM ROOKIE TO **ROLE MODEL**

Elizabeth Goodrich, B.S. '25, (D.P.T., '29) brings people together on and off the pitch.

by Kyle Relf

As a high schooler at North Yarmouth Academy, Elizabeth Goodrich had her sights set on playing ice hockey at the University of New England until she gave rugby a try at the recommendation of her school's athletic trainer, a Nor'easter rugby alum. She connected with UNE head rugby coach Ashley Potvin, who encouraged her to try out.

"The rest is history," said Goodrich, B.S. '25 (Applied Exercise Science), D.P.T. '29, whose four years of rugby not only saw her recognized as one of Division III's top players, but also led her down a path of leadership and service at UNE.

Goodrich, who is from Cumberland, Maine, stepped onto the field — a promising athlete, but with little experience — in the fall of 2021.

"Elizabeth was incredibly raw athletically, with a lot of power right out of the gate," Potvin recalled, adding that, with experience, she developed better field vision, a crucial skill on the pitch. "Once those pieces clicked, we saw an absolutely phenomenal rugby player."

By the time she graduated this spring, Goodrich had earned two Division III All-National Intercollegiate Rugby Association selections. In 2021 and 2022, she helped lead the Nor'easters to NIRA Division III Championship appearances and served as a team captain during her senior year.

Despite her athletic success, it's what Goodrich did off the pitch that truly cemented her legacy at UNE.

At the 2025 Westbrook College of Health Professions graduation ceremony, Goodrich received the college's highest honor, the Maroon Award, which annually recognizes a student on each of UNE's two Maine campuses for high academic achievement, leadership, collaboration, and service to improve the quality of life for others.

> "We built a community for female athletes, and this year, we really extended it beyond just female-identifying athletes."
>
> *— Elizabeth Goodrich*

Goodrich was the third UNE student-athlete to earn a Maroon Award and the first since 2020.

"I had good role models early on, with teammates, like Katie Berger, who were really involved," Goodrich said of her classmate, a 2022 graduate of the Applied Exercise Science program. "If they could do it, then I could do it, too, and they put in a good word for me."

Even with the demands of playing a collegiate sport and learning it on the fly, Goodrich felt a strong desire to give back to the campus that welcomed her as a first-year student.

As a student ambassador, Goodrich welcomed a variety of people to campus, paying it forward to those who helped her make Biddeford feel like home. That theme continued during her work as a first-year experience peer teacher for a required health science class, bringing comfort and acting as a positive role model for UNE's newcomers.

Goodrich also became a leader in UNE's Female Athlete Alliance (FAA), which promotes gender equity in sports, becoming the group's president and following in the footsteps of former teammate Berger, the group's founding president.

"We built a community for female athletes, and this year, we really extended it beyond just female-identifying athletes," she said. "We talked about all kinds of different issues that impact athletes here at UNE and beyond."

For Goodrich, a leader with a love for sports, coaching felt like a natural path, and she added a coaching a minor to complement her studies. After completing an internship with the Biddeford High School girl's hockey team, she was asked to stay as an assistant coach for two more years.

"The groups (Elizabeth) works with benefit from having her involved," said Potvin. "She wants to share that positive experience and bring people in who she knows will have a great impact."

Goodrich's love for mentorship through athletics extends to her continuous work with UNE's Girls Got Game Camp, an annual event run by Potvin, which promotes fitness and athletic skills for girls in kindergarten through seventh grade.

Goodrich's willingness to step up will continue to serve her well, Potvin said.

"I have no doubt that whatever she touches will turn to gold because of her dedication and her willingness to bring people together," Potvin said.

Now a first-year Doctor of Physical Therapy student at UNE, Goodrich has turned her attention to becoming a sports therapist.

"I have an overwhelming sense of gratitude for UNE," she said. "I'm thankful rugby helped me build my confidence and get to the point where I was able to lead other people." ■

JORDAN-WHITTER READY TO BRING UNE TENNIS VISIONS TO LIFE

by Kyle Relf

The University of New England announced the addition of men's and women's tennis as its 20th and 21st varsity sports in the spring of 2024. By the end of that summer, Jovan Jordan-Whitter was hired as the head coach of both programs.

Since then, Jordan-Whitter has been tasked with building rosters from scratch, while UNE has revamped its tennis courts. The Blue Cyclone Complex, the Nor'easters' state-of-the-art outdoor tennis facility, equipped with six courts, a full press box, and bleacher seating, is located on Biddeford's Old Pool Road.

Jordan-Whitter came to UNE after leading both the men's and women's teams at the University of Massachusetts–Boston, where he was named the Little East Conference (LEC) Coach of the Year in the fall of 2023, having guided the women to an 11-2 overall record, a perfect 8-0 conference mark, and an LEC title.

Hailing from Bermuda, Jordan-Whitter never saw himself becoming a Mainer but was drawn to the challenge of building the new programs UNE presented.

"I have never had the opportunity to build a program from nothing," he said. "The idea of it being my own vision is something that really spoke to me."

The path to fulfilling that vision has begun in 2025-26, where success is defined less by wins and losses and more by the visibility of the programs. Jordan-Whitter looks forward to seeing the UNE community supporting the newly minted teams in their first year of varsity action, and he identifies that as the first step in bringing home a Conference of New England title in the future.

"I would like for my teams and the University to be known as up-and-comers who everyone knows are going to be really good in a few years because of the amount of support as well as the amount of work that's being put in," he shared. "That's how you start laying the foundation for becoming a nationally recognized program."

For now, Jordan-Whitter looks to begin building a championship culture in the early days of UNE tennis, and it starts with forming the right habits.

"Everything matters," he said. "The day-to-day stuff: going to class on time, doing your homework, keeping your grades up, and showing up to practice early.

"If you have extraordinary habits, you will have extraordinary results. I want to recruit players in that vision, laying out the expectations and giving them the autonomy to go out and do it themselves." ■

> "Everything matters. The day-to-day stuff ... If you have extraordinary habits, you will have extraordinary results."
>
> *— Jovan Jordan-Whitter*

UNE HOMECOMING 2025

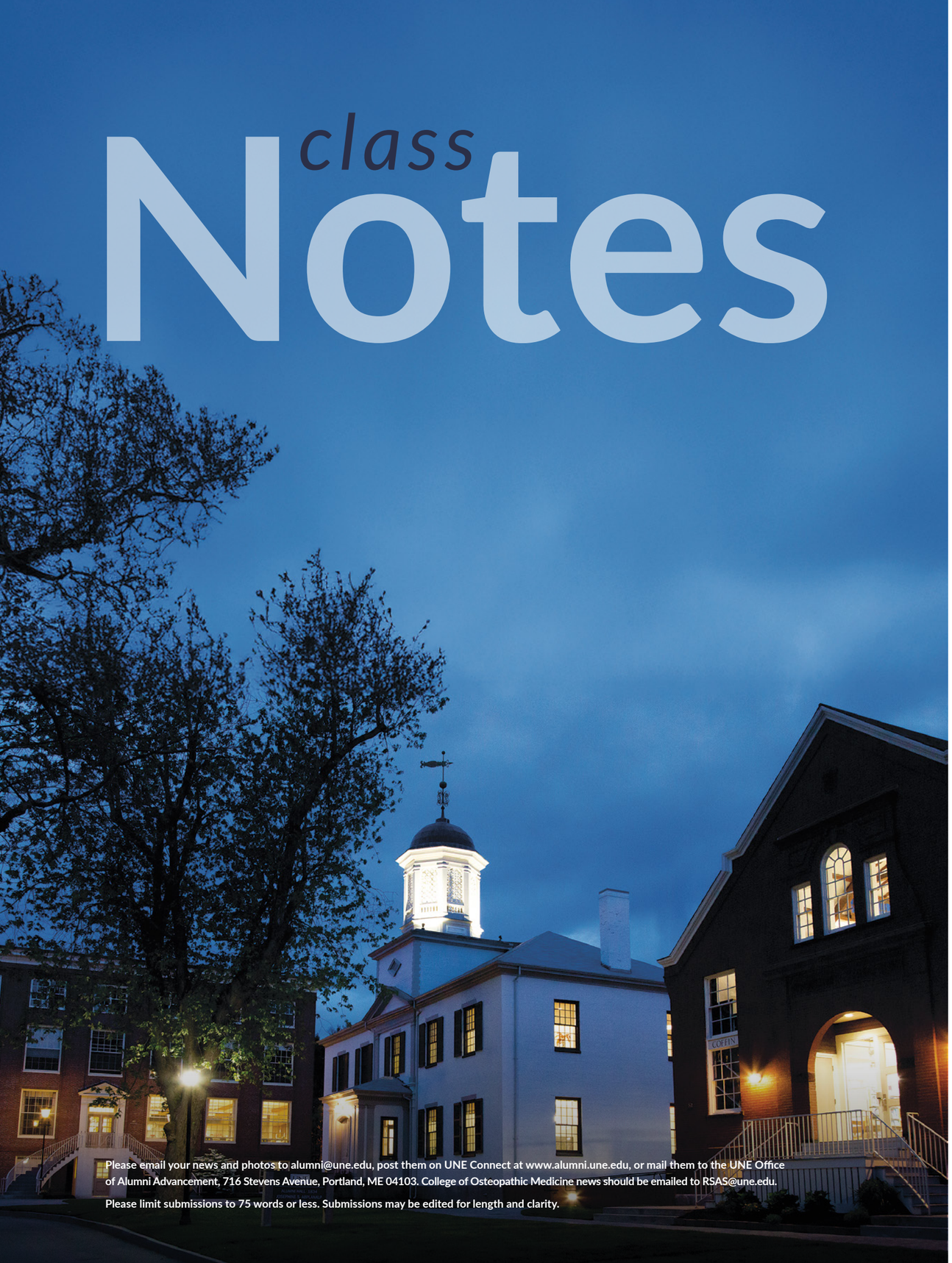
The University of New England's Biddeford Campus buzzed with energy as more than 3,000 alumni, families, and friends converged for Homecoming and Family Weekend in late October. The event showcased the spirit and prowess of UNE's athletic and academic community, weaving together the past and present of the Nor'easters.

Fans rallied behind UNE's athletes, celebrating the football team's thrilling 38-28 victory over Husson University in the fifth annual Lobster Trap Game. During halftime, the UNE dance team welcomed alumni who joined them in a special performance. Alumni from men's and women's lacrosse, softball, and men's basketball proved their enduring skills in spirited games played against one another across UNE's sports fields, a tradition that forged connections between generations of Nor'easter athletes.

The Fall Research Symposium spotlighted student scholars, demonstrating UNE's commitment to fostering intellectual curiosity. Guided Saco River boat tours offered by the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center staff highlighted the University's connection to its coastal environment, and tours of the P.D. Merrill Makerspace and new Sustainable Innovation Center showcased UNE's dedication to hands-on learning and environmental stewardship.

The weekend also honored alumni, celebrating their academic excellence, athletic achievement, and successes, which underscored UNE's role in shaping future leaders and innovators while reinforcing the University's commitment to holistic education and community engagement.

Four former student-athletes were inducted into the UNE Varsity Club Athletics Hall of Fame: Ryan Bloom '20 (men's ice hockey), Kayla Burgess '18 (women's swimming), Matthew McManus '06 (men's basketball), and Vonde Saunders '18 (field hockey). Three distinguished alumni received recognition for their achievements and contributions to the UNE community: Gary Locarno '70 received the Alumni Service Award; Louis Piccola '71 was recognized with the Alumni Achievement Award; and Sarah Hoover '16 was celebrated with the Young Alumni Award.



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.

1947

Liz Winslow Johnson writes: I see **Beverle Maxim Aceto** often for lunch and dinner, and I talk to **Norma Wakely Cowan**, our Winter Carnival Queen, about twice a year. We are all in various stages of "failing," but capable of walking, talking, and taking nourishment, social and otherwise. We can't be the only ones, and we would love to hear from others to learn how you are making the most of this penultimate time of our lives.

1960

Jaqueline Cheney writes: Happy to report good health for myself and my husband. We are happily retired and spend six months in sunny Florida each year. We were so pleased and excited to welcome our first great-grandson in February 2024.

1964

Bette O'Connor writes: Still living the good life aboard my home on the waters of Boston Harbor. For the past 20 years, my feline and I have lived and traveled along the east coast on Plan B, a 44-foot motor yacht. It has been a great adventure, and I believe it continues to contribute to my good health. I am taking a risk on a dry run by living on land for the winter months. I might be spoiled with all of these modern conveniences. I keep busy by helping friends, playing competitive cribbage, and swimming, and I soon will start refurbishing the mother ship in the months ahead. Looking forward to making it to a class reunion!

1965

Margot Hoyt Gatchell writes: What 10 more years does … We have moved from Cape Elizabeth to OceanView Retirement Community in Falmouth, Maine. Great neighbors from everywhere. The fitness program is amazing. The staff is the best, and there's so much to do. Living on the other side of Portland, we drive by the Portland (Westbrook) campus often. It is a fascinating campus. So much is going on all the time. The UNE Biddeford Campus is also beautiful, with a river on one side and the ocean on the other. We have enjoyed many talks at both campuses.

Leonard Letendre (SFC) writes: I am finally retired after 38 years as a practicing veterinarian. I am enjoying the news of my grandchildren, who are attending various colleges and universities. I am especially proud of my granddaughter, Ava, who is attending UNE as a freshman. Best wishes to all my classmates.

Cynthia Leach Weeks writes: After graduating from WJC in 1965, I worked at Portland Pipeline Corp. I met and married my husband of 58 years, who, at the time, was a U.S. Marine. During his 25 years in service, his duties took us to several places in the U.S. and to Okinawa, Japan. Together, we raised two daughters, who have given us four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. We currently reside in Pinehurst, North Carolina.

1970

Janet MacKimmie Jones writes: Hi, all you classmates from long ago! I hope you are all doing well! I am currently living in Berwick, Maine, and am employed part-time at the Home Depot in Somersworth, New Hampshire. Life has been challenging as a single mom. My youngest of four children, Matthew, has finally left the nest. My oldest daughter, Melissa, lives with her husband, Walter, in Lakeland, Florida. My second daughter, Rebecca, and I were able to visit Melissa to celebrate her 50th birthday. My two grandsons were also there. Young Walter is married to his wife, Andie, and lives in Maryland. Mason and his girlfriend, Renee, live in Florida. Rebecca is a financial adviser now, which is something new after having run her father's seafood restaurant for years. She and her fiancé, Ellis, also live in Berwick. One son, Nathan, lives in Newmarket, New Hampshire, and loves his job at Sig Sauer. I have 2 1/2 dogs (Bradley really belongs to my son Matt). I make my own dog food and spoil my fur babies any way I can. My friend Gregg and I have been doing some excursions. We took a trip to the Isle of Shoals, took in the Highland Games at Loon Mountain, New Hampshire, went to the Deerfield Fair, and went out to eat for Thanksgiving. My life is full, and I am blessed. I hope to attend our 55th Reunion coming up. Anyone out there with me? Here's hoping.

1971

George Kudlacik writes: It was a great day at the UNE Vaughn Twaddel Golf Classic on May 30 at Dunegrass Golf Club. It's an annual event we participate in, and I recommend it to all alumni. It's a great way to visit and stay connected.


Janet Jones


George Kudlacik

1973

Gene Parr writes: Our classmate, Frank Svatek, passed away. Frank lived in Biddeford for the last 30 years and enjoyed photographing the New England he fell in love with as a college student. Frank created the Toy Theater Company, an acting troupe, and the Art of Transportation Car Show. He, John Cackowski, William "Whale" Thornton, and I were housemates in Unit T, a part of a housing complex that is now a parking lot near the Girard Marine Science Center.

1975

Susan Anderson writes: My husband and I are retired from the dental practice that we owned for almost 40 years. I am now on a new adventure of writing children's books and have had my first book, *Choose Joy at the Beach*, published. It is available online at Amazon, and Barnes and Noble. We are parents to three and grandparents to seven. We spend half the year on Hilton Head, South Carolina, and half the year on Cape Cod.

Michael Graham writes: I started college in the fall of 1971. I finished St. Francis College in December of 1974 (3 1/2 years of fun) with a bachelor's in history and sociology, and a minor in education. This experience allowed me to gain further study in programs at Southern Connecticut State University, Yale University, and Rice University. I look back and realize that it is likely that the recent graduates of UNE and my class share the same kinds of dreams and hopes. Over the years ahead, you will handle dreams and hopes like wet clay in your amateur hands. As corny as it sounds, you do have conscious and unconscious ideas that get shaped in every way as you move on. Sen. Muskie spoke at our graduation in front of Ketchum Library. I was fortunate afterwards to chat with him. He asked, "How will you give back to those who have given you so much opportunity?" Caught up in the thrill of graduation, I had no idea what the answer was at the time. SFC became the University of New England under the guiding hands of leaders with that wet clay. You, like the school itself, will change lives over time. I look now at your class, and I realize the very same clay is passed to you. Over time, you, too, will mold every aspect of your life, influence others, and give back to the future UNE community and those who helped you. Congratulations on the hard-earned success of your work. Your future begins now. Please shape it with wet clay all along the way.

Janice Breslow Klein writes: After graduating from Westbrook College, I attended the University of Bridgeport and earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1978. After graduation, I worked in general hospitals in Hartford, Connecticut, on medical, surgical, and rehabilitation units. My high school boyfriend, David Klein, and I were married in 1979. I went to the University of Connecticut and graduated with a master's in nursing in 1985. Then, we moved to Maryland and had two children, Sarah (1987) and Sam (1990). I worked part-time on Good Samaritan Hospital's Rehabilitation Unit and as a nurse liaison for Mount Sinai Hospital's Rehabilitation Unit in Baltimore. In 1997, my family and I moved to New Jersey. I have been working at the Community Visiting Nurse Association since then. Since 2003, my focus has been on chronic disease self-management with seniors and adults. I have five grandchildren, ages 5 months to 7 years old, with whom I love spending time. My hobby is taking photographs of flower gardens, landscapes, and my grandchildren. I enjoy traveling with my husband in the United States, Europe, and Israel. This summer, we are planning to go to Glacier, Yellowstone, and Grand Teton national parks.

Linda Lohmeyer writes: Hello, all! I retired from teaching grades 4-8 in New Britain, Connecticut, in 2017, after 16 years. After living in Connecticut for most of our lives, we moved to the Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, area in 2020. I love the weather, the proximity to the beach, and the wildlife. My husband plays golf, and I volunteer, get together with friends, and exercise! Our four children have families of their own (including the furry kind), and we love our visits with them and our seven grandchildren.

Cathleen Murphey writes: It is hard to believe it has been 50 years! Where does the time go? I practiced dental hygiene for 35 years. I have two wonderful children, a son and daughter, and an adorable 11-year-old granddaughter. My husband and I have retired to a nice retirement community in Scarborough. We spend our winters in Florida. Living the good life! I'm so looking forward to seeing my 1975 classmates!

1982

James Dolan, D.O., writes: I am a member of the first "forgotten class" of 1982.

1988

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

1989

Michael Dorcik, D.O., writes: I continue to be the lead physician over the Ryan White Program at Coastal Family Health Center, seeing over 550 active HIV/AIDS patients. I still have my Irish wolfhounds, as I did at UNE COM. And I'm still racing my GTR down the quarter-mile track, doing 180 mph in 7.8 seconds (my hobby). All good.

1995

Amy Wilson writes: I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with my family and our many pets. We moved here in 2009, but we come back home frequently to New England (mostly Massachusetts and Connecticut) to see family, hit the North Shore area, and see the Red Sox. I have come to learn a lot about the complex history and stories of people from counties and tribes through various positions that have taken me to all corners of New Mexico. I have had the honor of getting to know people through partnerships around chronic disease management, substance use disorder, policy development, and creating sustainable operational infrastructure for health care delivery in urban and rural areas. I have been the chief nurse in public health for New Mexico, held operational and clinical leadership


Amy Wilson

Todd Cesca

roles at Presbyterian's regional hospitals and clinics, and am now the executive director of clinician group operations for Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center. As a leader, I have had to adjust and grow differently with each new role and setting, and I can't say enough about the value of building trust and learning from your team. My greatest joys are my family and friends, especially my husband, Keith, and daughter, Lucy Rose. I love spending lots of time on local trails and hanging out in downtown Santa Fe. Look me up if you are ever here! Happy to show you some of our local history and share knowledge about the area.


Anthony Pastore

1996

Todd Cesca writes: In June, UNE men's lacrosse was well represented among the Maine State high school boys' Class A and B lacrosse playoffs coaching staffs. South Portland coach Sam MacKenzie '20, Kennebunk coach Phil Young '17, former UNE lacrosse coach Chris Richards, and I (also a Kennebunk coach) coordinated a joint practice to prepare our teams for our respective games.

2008

Jamie Bourque, M.P.H., was appointed the first director of Maine's new Office of Injury and Violence Prevention in December 2024.

2009

Kayla Boyd Caron, M.P.H. '17, writes: I received two awards this year — the Lowell Distinguished Young Professionals Award and the League for Innovation in the Community College Innovation of the Year Award — as part of my research in Middlesex Community College Student Belonging. I was a first-generation Pell Grant recipient who graduated in 2009 from UNE with a B.S. in psychobiology. I later earned my M.P.H. in 2017.

2010

Michael Campinell is an associate at Beveridge & Diamond PC and was named to the 2023 Pro Bono High Honor Roll by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. The High Honor Roll is a list published to recognize lawyers, law students, and legal organizations that provided more than 100 hours of pro bono legal services in 2023.

Ashley Peppin Harmon '10, M.S.O.T. '11, writes: I moved back to Maine about six years ago and have been working for a nonprofit home health care agency providing home occupational therapy services in the greater Lewiston/Auburn area for the last 5+ years. The grad program at UNE prepared me well, and I've been working for 12 years as an OT. I love home health and giving back to the clients in the community. There is a group of OT grads from 2011 that have stayed in touch and are close friends — the "OT crew." We are all working in various fields of OT, and it's been a great bond to have while we navigate life's ups/downs. Thank you to all of our past UNE OT professors, especially those who have retired!

Mike Nicholas recently started working as the new director of marketing and membership at the Greater Portland Board of Realtors.

2015

Kristen Cooley, M.P.H., writes: I received the North Carolina Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology Practitioner of the Year award for my dedication and service in the field of infection prevention.

2016

Marshall Archer, M.S.W., was recently elected to serve in Maine's 132nd Legislature as a member of the House of Representatives. In December, he stepped down as the councilor and deputy mayor of Saco after seven years of dedicated service to the city. A workforce development professional, Archer now serves on the Joint Committee on Labor. Additionally, he was selected to serve on a civility committee focused on fostering relationship development and collaboration between political parties, aligning with his long-standing commitment to "community through collaboration." Marshall credits the M.S.W. program at the University of New England with playing a vital role in shaping his understanding of community needs, fostering collaboration, and enhancing his expertise in organizational management.

Ainsley Price, PA-C, was selected as the 2024 Maine PA of the Year through the Maine Academy of Physician Associates. This award is presented each year to a Maine physician assistant in recognition of their dedicated service to the community, with an emphasis on their ability to inspire others to become involved with serving their communities as well.

2018

Anthony Pastore, D.O., Northern Light Home Care and Hospice, a member of Northern Light Health, promoted Anthony Pastore to senior physician executive and vice president. Pastore will oversee clinical programs and provide medical care to patients in addition to his administrative duties.

2019

Brittany Grant, M.P.H., was awarded the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs scholarship for the Comprehensive Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training Program offered by Duke University.

Jennifer Laferriere spent seven weeks in England playing for Richmond Women's Rugby Club. She played a total of three games, and while there, she got to meet players from the Great Britain Rugby Sevens and Canadian Rugby Sevens Olympic teams. As part of her experience, Laferriere got to play and practice with some Premiership Women's Rugby players in preparation for the new Women's Elite Rugby season.

Justin Richards, Pharm.D., was selected as the Maine Pharmacy Association's 2024 Distinguished Young Pharmacist.

Blaze Valdez, Ed.D., had his debut novel, *Relapse*, released in October 2024.

James Welch was recently promoted to senior field conservationist at Zoo New England. Welch is currently heading the Blanding's turtle and hognose snake projects.

2020

Hannah Christian is in Charlotte, North Carolina, and putting all her research skills to use as a market research analyst at McAfee, TrueCar, and Digital Research Inc.

Becca Kryceski recently graduated with a Master of Science in Nursing in Healthcare Organizational Leadership from Johns Hopkins University. Kryceski completed a three-part practicum, totaling 500 hours, shadowing nursing leadership at Johns Hopkins Hospital, including more than half of the hours with the chief nursing officer. Earlier this year, Kryceski also earned her Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification. She continues to be an RN3 in surgical oncology at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Lynne Schmidt, M.S.W., was selected for the 2025 Maine Artist Fellowship, which recognizes artistic excellence in the overall career of a Maine artist. Schmidt will travel across the nation in October and November for state branches of NASW and NAMI to present "There's Been An Active Shooter Event — Now What?" — which aims to better prepare agencies for what to do following a crisis event — "How Reading and Writing Poetry Makes Better Clinicians," and "Addressing the Canine in the Room."

2021

Sam Murray, vice president of sales and strategy for the Maine Mariners, has been recognized as the Young Professional of the Year through the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce and PROPEL Portland.

2022

Bella Crugnale, M.S.O.T. '24, presented her work with the Maine Trykers Chapter of AMBUCS at the 2024 Maine OT Association conference with Betsy Cyr, physical therapy faculty and Maine Tryker vice president, and Kathryn Loukas, occupational therapy professor emerita and Maine Tryker president. As an OT trainee with the Maine Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND), Crugnale's elective project included supporting children with neurodevelopmental disabilities in wheeled mobility through customized bicycles with the AMBUCS program. Crugnale wrote a grant that brought the Maine Trykers $8,000 through the Narragansett Number One Foundation. As part of her elective leadership project, she also hosted two bike days and awarded two Amtrykes (adapted bicycles) to local children and their families. Crugnale conducted a literature review to gather evidence supporting the use of wheeled mobility devices for play and community participation, ultimately aiming to improve functional mobility. She is presently working in an outpatient program for children and families in Massachusetts.

Tessa Rock and **Taylor Gibson** met up at the U.S. Symposium on Harmful Algae in Portland, Maine. This year's symposium theme, "ONE BLOOM," sought to identify and highlight commonalities across diverse study systems and disciplines within harmful algal bloom research.

Fiona Thomas started playing rugby in her first semester at UNE. She currently resides in Georgia and recently started playing rugby with the Atlanta Harlequins.

2024

Lauren Emblad, D.M.D., published her first children's book, *When Do Bunnies Brush Their Teeth?* in 2024.

Parker Nelson published the book, *Nutrition Nonsense: How Social and Psychological Biases Sabotage Our Eating Habits*, in 2024.

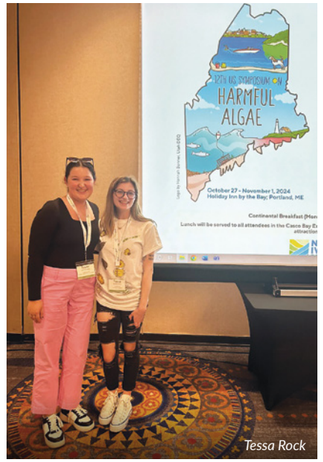
2025

Dylan Schuett and **Joey Stanizzi** were named the first-place winners of "Greenlight Maine" College Edition, besting their college peers in the statewide pitch competition and taking home $10,000 to support their growing athletic performance product enterprise. The prize money will go toward supporting their business, Underdog Performance, which they expanded with support from faculty in UNE's College of Business as transfer students to the University.

Morgan White, who is in the inaugural cohort of UNE's Master of Business Administration program, Class of 2027, was one of 200 student-athletes nationwide who were selected to attend the National Collegiate Athletic Association Careers in Sports Forum. The experience included a visit to the NCAA National Office in Indianapolis to learn about professional opportunities in sports and explore valuable career development strategies.

Parker Nelson

Bella Crugnale



Tessa Rock

Morgan White

1941

Louise Hanson Austin
Westbrook Junior College
November 6, 2019

1942

Patricia Dole Livesay
Westbrook Junior College
May 1, 2025

Mildred Ashmead Schlesinger
Westbrook Junior College
March 27, 2025

Maxine Schellinger Smith
Westbrook Junior College
May 29, 2018

1943

Dorothy Chynoweth McGrath
Westbrook Junior College
August 25, 2008

Helena Duff Miskill
Westbrook Junior College
February 23, 2022

Charlotte R. Root Morse
Westbrook Junior College
April 6, 2025

Louise Woodbury Wallace
Westbrook Junior College
May 9, 2018

1945

Josephine Sloboda Abplanalp
Westbrook Junior College
August 25, 2023

Dorothy Pullen Gallagher
Westbrook Junior College
April 6, 2021

1946

Hilda Hall Clark
Westbrook Junior College
December 25, 2020

Mildred Kaplan Drees
Westbrook Junior College
September 2, 2021

Shirley Getchell Dresser
Westbrook Junior College
May 4, 2024

Louise Veazie Knowlton
Westbrook Junior College
October 27, 2022

Inez Horton Stoddard
Westbrook Junior College
February 27, 2021

Lois Wanecek Thomas
Westbrook Junior College
October 6, 2018

1947

Maida Shaw Horovitz
Westbrook Junior College
March 18, 2022

Judith Crooker Murray
Westbrook Junior College
September 14, 2024

Dorothy Bennett Nickerson
Westbrook Junior College
March 26, 2025

1948

Gracia Reynolds Benoit
Westbrook Junior College
June 26, 2020

Patricia Briscall Hennie
Westbrook Junior College
January 3, 2010

Joan Huntley Rugani
Westbrook Junior College
December 16, 2024

Joan Lembree Thomas
Westbrook Junior College
May 1, 2023

1949

Beverly Young Brisson
Westbrook Junior College
August 15, 2024

Elaine Brown Downs
Westbrook Junior College
September 21, 2024

Carol M. Evans Jaffee
Westbrook Junior College
June 9, 2022

Irene Nanos Notis
Westbrook Junior College
August 5, 2020

Vivian Sohn Slosberg
Westbrook Junior College
February 4, 2018

1950

Dorothy Dodsworth Arnold
Westbrook Junior College
July 6, 2019

Lucy E. Day Boothby
Westbrook Junior College
July 25, 2008

Photine C. Chaltas Collias
Westbrook Junior College
December 15, 2020

Christine Crosby Davis
Westbrook Junior College
July 2, 2006

Norma Johnson Dore
Westbrook Junior College
December 6, 2022

Joyce Cole Dow
Westbrook Junior College
June 20, 2020

Muriel Tarlow Freedman
Westbrook Junior College
May 22, 1988

Cynthia Baird Gallion
Westbrook Junior College
October 15, 2001

Doris Taylor Glass
Westbrook Junior College
May 10, 2021

Betty Nielsen Hart
Westbrook Junior College
April 11, 2018

Betsy Dodds Lane
Westbrook Junior College
November 25, 2020

Dorothy Carvalho Noble
Westbrook Junior College
August 29, 2024

Jean Cloutier Pratt
Westbrook Junior College
August 27, 2020

Carolyn C. Crawford Reis
Westbrook Junior College
April 23, 2015

Mary H. Fernald Sanborn
Westbrook Junior College
March 4, 2007

Faith Bourne Summers
Westbrook Junior College
September 8, 2017

Judith Brooks Wiley
Westbrook Junior College
September 2, 2020

Jane Adams Wilson
Westbrook Junior College
June 19, 2023

Barbara Wolff Wobrock
Westbrook Junior College
January 19, 2019

1952

Nancy Marshall Richter
Westbrook Junior College
April 26, 2019

Sally Haskins Spooner
Westbrook Junior College
August 11, 2024

Marjorie Haskell Thompson
Westbrook Junior College
March 5, 2024

1953

Margaret "Marnie" McGrail Morgan
Westbrook Junior College
September 10, 2024

1954

Janice Hawkes Boucher
Westbrook Junior College
September 1, 2024

Suzanne Flier Grossbarth
Westbrook Junior College
May 12, 2025

Joanne Minott Hayward
Westbrook Junior College
May 14, 2025

Barbara Fochler Hobbs
Westbrook Junior College
October 18, 2018

Judith Nott Marinetti
Westbrook Junior College
September 1, 2022

Marilyn Mudgett Wiggin
Westbrook Junior College
February 27, 2023

Judith Gates Wood
Westbrook Junior College
August 10, 2024

1955

Barbara Bengtson Brenske
Westbrook Junior College
June 21, 2024

Barbara Sohn Jolovitz
Westbrook Junior College
May 30, 2023

Priscilla Draper Larochelle
Westbrook Junior College
May 6, 2020

Valerie Scheufele Lyons
Westbrook Junior College
October 23, 2023

Rosanne Flaherty Shaffer
Westbrook Junior College
February 18, 2024

Carol Anderson Unger
Westbrook Junior College
February 4, 2019

1956

Shirley L. Mayberry Connor
Westbrook Junior College
July 31, 2024

Suzanne Whittemore Davis
Westbrook Junior College
December 15, 2020

Jane Auth Sampson
Westbrook Junior College
March 10, 2025

Mary Ann Tarbox Shannon
Westbrook Junior College
March 18, 2025

1958

Bonnie McLauchlan Cone
Westbrook Junior College
February 9, 2025

Janice Stevenson Crockett
Westbrook Junior College
January 15, 2022

Barbara McDonnell Gessner
Westbrook Junior College
July 14, 1905

Dorothy Lawrence Goodwin
Westbrook Junior College
May 20, 2020

Natalie Wilson Harwood
Westbrook Junior College
September 27, 2023

1959

Patricia Ostaski Corcoran
Westbrook Junior College
January 22, 2023

1960

Beverly Lang Larimore
Westbrook Junior College
March 1, 2023

Nancy Pray Malvesta
Westbrook Junior College
April 18, 2024

1961

Mary Louise Balsis
Westbrook Junior College
December 15, 2023

Betsy Ward Hatfield
Westbrook Junior College
January 27, 2024

Fulton J. Ryan
St. Francis College
May 7, 2024

1963

Paul J. Bednarz
St. Francis College
February 16, 2025

Marilyn Foote Masi
Westbrook Junior College
July 18, 2024

Betsy Marshall Sargent
Westbrook Junior College
January 12, 2025

Kathleen Walker Tuveson
Westbrook Junior College
November 28, 2024

1964

William E. McCormack
St. Francis College
March 29, 2025

1965

Sandra Bemis Eastman
Westbrook Junior College
December 6, 2022

Kevin P. Finnerty
St. Francis College
November 22, 2024

Pauline Tetzlaff Hinman
Westbrook Junior College
February 23, 2023

Elaine Hasson Thornton
Westbrook Junior College
February 14, 2021

Karen H. Thiel
Westbrook Junior College
April 14, 2022

1966

Joseph Austin
St. Francis College
October 7, 2024

George Rost
St. Francis College
May 23, 2023

1967

Thomas J. Cardwell
St. Francis College
January 2, 2025

Sheryl A. Gaudette DeFilipp
Westbrook Junior College
January 29, 2024

Judith Zaffini Fiske
Westbrook Junior College
May 24, 2024

Karen Jensen Noschese
Westbrook Junior College
March 3, 2024

1968

Richard G. Courville
St. Francis College
October 28, 2024

1969

Ronald P. Cartier
St. Francis College
February 2, 2025

James J. Flanagan
St. Francis College
July 26, 2023

Marguerite Clark Steady
Westbrook Junior College
April 7, 2025

1970

Stephen McCaffree
St. Francis College
August 17, 2022

1971

Stephanie L. Epps Maher
St. Francis College
May 20, 2025

1972

Anne Wegener Brunner
Westbrook College
February 2, 2025

Amy Kennett Jenkins
Westbrook College
December 17, 2024

1973

Peter Joseph Conforti
St. Francis College
May 13, 2025

1977

Jeffery E. Cessario
Westbrook College
May 8, 2021

1979

Teresa M. Reynolds Tolin
Westbrook College
August 22, 2021

1980

Robert D. Wilson
Westbrook College
May 27, 2018

1982

Joseph A. Anders
University of New England
November 28, 2022

1983

Lisa A. Badolato
Westbrook College
March 14, 2022

1984

Nancy H. Wilburn
Westbrook College
November 27, 2023

1987

Janet M. Salis
University of New England
June 22, 2025

1994

Rebecca Kraeutler
Westbrook College
May 15, 2025

2000

Adam P. Lauer
University of New England
October 29, 2024

2002

Dawn Frasier
University of New England
July 31, 2018

Leona Michaud
University of New England
July 18, 2020

Glenn W. Selwood
University of New England
September 27, 2022

2003

Steven Rose
University of New England
January 26, 2024

2006

Jennifer L. Frost
University of New England
February 17, 2025

2008

Catherine S. Donlin-Adana
University of New England
August 18, 2024

2009

Shawn W. Metayer
University of New England
February 11, 2020

FRIENDS

Joseph A. Ackil
October 18, 2024

Ruth S. Foster
June 2, 2025

Barbara M. Goodbody
January 13, 2025

Leonard A. Lauder
June 14, 2025

Richard D. Lewis
July 22, 2024

Joseph W. Mahoney
September 4, 2024

Millicent S. Sprague Monks
August 24, 2023

J. Chase Rand
January 5, 2025

REMEMBERING: LEONARD A. LAUDER

by Amy Haile

A handwritten note seems like such a simple thing: a few words of praise on paper, maybe a quick “well done” or “thank you.” But Leonard A. Lauder, who passed away on June 14, 2025, understood its lasting power.

The philanthropist and founder of the Estée Lauder cosmetics company made it a practice to send personal notes, not just to employees who had done exceptional work, but also to their supervisors, ensuring that recognition reached every level.

It’s a small gesture that speaks to something larger about the man and his belief that meaningful impact often comes through personal connection and genuine appreciation for others’ efforts, said UNE President James Herbert.

That philosophy guided Lauder’s partnership with the University of New England, where he and his wife, Judy Glickman Lauder, championed initiatives that will touch the lives of UNE students for decades to come.

In 2016, the Lauders made a generous gift to the UNE Art Gallery, celebrating their shared passion for photography and Glickman Lauder’s longtime connection with the institution. The Stephen K. Halpert Photographic Collection at UNE, named for the late Professor Emeritus Stephen Halpert, in celebration of his many contributions to the gallery and to the arts in Portland, funds an endowment to preserve and grow UNE’s photography collection. Another portion of the gift was allocated to support renovation efforts aimed at expanding accessibility within the gallery. The endowment will provide long-term access to photographic art for students and the broader community.

More recently, a $2 million gift from the Lauders in 2023 will support educational programs that bolster the state’s behavioral health workforce.

“The mental health crisis in our country far surpasses our capacity to provide meaningful care for those in need,” Glickman Lauder said in the donation’s announcement. “Meeting these needs begins with investing in well-trained and compassionate health care professionals. We are pleased to support the University of New England’s commitment to bringing more mental health professionals into the field.

“Our family hopes others will join us in this crucial mission,” she added.

“As Maine’s largest provider of health professionals, UNE has a specific responsibility to address pervasive health issues in our own backyard,” said Herbert, a renowned clinical psychologist.

But Lauder’s legacy at UNE extends beyond the programs he funded, Herbert said.

Judy Glickman Lauder and Leonard A. Lauder. Photo by Joe Schildhorn/BFA.com

“He was someone who very much cared deeply about using his position to make the world a better place,” he said, noting that Lauder had left impressions not just on his family, but also on the UNE community.

“We will miss him very much.” ■

BREAKING DOWN SILOS IN HEALTH CARE

by Jen A. Miller, freelance writer

Olivia Franceschelli, M.S.O.T. '19, first saw the value in occupational therapy when her younger brother, Joseph, was diagnosed with brain cancer at two-and-a-half years old.

"He was receiving physical and occupational therapy at home, and I remember thinking at the time, 'Oh, that's cool; these adults are coming over to just play games with kids,'" she said. "I didn't yet understand the deeper purpose behind it all."

She was only seven years old at the time, but that feeling stuck with her, even after her brother passed away about a year after his diagnosis.

"I've seen how medicine not only helped him, but also my family," she said. "It's not always about the person going through it. It's also about how it is affecting everybody."

It might have happened when she was a child, but that feeling of comfort and care has infused her practice still today.

"It's my North Star in a way," she said. "It's what led me here."

Franceschelli initially wanted to be a doctor or nurse, but after earning a biology degree and working as a clinical research coordinator at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, she found herself inspired by the occupational therapists she had met as a child. She reconnected with an OT from her brother's treatment team, who told her it was a wonderful field.

Franceschelli agreed.

After earning her Master of Science in Occupational Therapy (M.S.O.T.) from UNE, she's now an occupational therapist in the functional restoration program at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC), New Hampshire's largest hospital, where she works with a cross-disciplinary team to help people work through chronic pain to restore function to their daily lives.

But working collaboratively across disciplines is not new for Franceschelli.

While a student in the OT program in UNE's Westbrook College of Health Professions, she was part of a supervised interprofessional student pain clinic at what is now the Northern Light Mercy Pain Center in Portland, which was offered through what is now the Center to Advance Interprofessional Education and Practice. The clinic included two students from each of UNE's Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree programs; one student from each of the Doctor of Physical Therapy and Doctor of Pharmacy programs; and a social work clinician from UNE.

Together, they read through a patient's case, added their individual professions' perspectives, and worked as a team to create a treatment plan. Working with people across health care fields, Franceschelli learned how to meld different specialties for improved patient care.

"I started to learn how to interact with different professions. We all have different skill sets," she said, explaining that, while a physician recommends a new medication and an OT considers its effects on occupational and daily routines, the team decides together how to proceed.

Through interprofessional education at UNE, she became "more confident in knowing how to approach more challenging conversations," she said. "I'm also making sure I'm seeing everybody through their own lens, and where they're coming from."

After graduating, Franceschelli started her career in long-term acute care, where she collaborated most often with physical therapists and speech therapists. But Franceschelli knew she wanted to work with patients who had chronic pain, which led her to DHMC. There, Franceschelli sees patients with chronic neck and low-back pain in her own occupational therapy clinic.

She's also part of the hospital's functional restoration program, which brings together a team of occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, a pain psychologist, and nurse practitioners for a more intensive approach to chronic pain.

The patients, who are mostly retirees with chronic pain and people who were injured at work, come to the clinic to focus on building body awareness, learning strategies to improve function, and reducing pain. They work on the physical aspect of pain, but they also address the mental consequences pain can bring; even after their injuries have healed, many patients may be afraid of pain and adapt their movements to avoid potentially injuring themselves again.

"A common thing that we do in our day-to-day life is bending forward to reach for an object," Franceschelli said. "For a lot of patients who have low-back pain, that is a movement they tend to avoid."

Helping a patient bend and lift combines movement training with pain neuroscience education and cognitive strategies to reduce fear and build confidence in movement.

The program's interprofessional format means that Franceschelli and her colleagues can see real change in as few as four weeks.

"It's pretty cool to watch somebody who was afraid to lift 10 pounds in a crate go to lifting 40 to 50 pounds without even thinking about it," she said.

The approach is effective not just because of how many people are working with each patient, but also in the way that the patient can also see the process as it works. Team members consult with the program's nurse practitioners and meet with patients directly to provide care and support rather than just offering input from a distance.

"We're (all) in the gym together and make it a very collaborative experience," she said.

Franceschelli's UNE experience not only led her to want to work on an interprofessional team, she said, but it also has been a reminder of — despite how many professionals from across how many fields come together to collaborate on a patient's treatment — who the star player is.

"The patient is the most important person on that team," she said. "They're doing exercises guided by our team, but each patient is also working toward personal goals they've set themselves."

And when they're back in the world, returning to activities for the benefit of themselves and their families, Franceschelli will have played a part in that success, while bringing the next group of patients to the table — or gym — to get them there.

She said her time at UNE was foundational to her work.

"It's never going to be just one profession that makes everything better," she said. "It's a team effort." ■

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET

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