



# UNH Sustainability Institute

## **Sustainability Fellowship** **Campus Zero Waste Planning: Cost-Benefit Assessment** Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN) Dover, NH

### **About the Sustainability Fellows Program:**

UNH Sustainability Fellowships pair exceptional students from across the U.S. with municipal, educational, corporate, and non-profit partners in New England to work on transformative sustainability initiatives each summer. Sustainability Fellows undertake challenging projects that are designed to create an immediate impact, offer a quality learning experience, and foster meaningful collaboration. Fellows work on-site with their mentors at partner organizations for 10 weeks, supported by a network of Fellows, partners, alumni, and the UNH Team. Graduate students, exceptional undergraduate students, and recent graduates from any accredited college or university are eligible to apply.

A detailed description of one Fellowship follows. To learn more about the other Fellowships offered this year, and for application instructions, see:

[www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows](http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows).

### **About the Fellowship:**

The Campus Zero Waste Fellow will support the advancement of Zero Waste Infrastructure and Policy at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) campus; the research and analysis involved in this effort will also result in case studies and templates to benefit other campuses pursuing zero waste goals. The fellow will be advised by the [Post-Landfill Action Network](#) (PLAN), a nonprofit organization that advises college campuses on the strategic development of Zero Waste infrastructure. PLAN grew out of a student-led initiative on the UNH campus, and it now boasts a network of more than 250 member campuses, hundreds of student sustainability leaders trained and cultivated across the US, and a well-established leadership presence within the world of higher education sustainability.

UNH is likewise a recognized leader in campus sustainability, and has been pursuing varied zero waste initiatives very actively since its Zero Waste Task Force was established in 2016. But it, like many campuses, is still struggling to move toward integrated, strategic campus-wide zero waste systems and policies. PLAN just completed a Stage 1 “[Zero Waste Atlas](#)” Audit of UNH’s Zero Waste Policy and Infrastructure; in order to move forward with the recommendations outlined in that audit, UNH needs help assessing the costs, benefits, and “return on investment” (ROI)—both financial and social

(i.e. achievement of campus sustainability goals, more collaborative campus culture, etc.)—that would result from significant investment in Zero Waste infrastructure and systems.

Over the summer, the Fellow will identify at least one major infrastructure project outlined in UNH's Atlas Stage 1 Recommendation Report (*e.g.*, campus-wide composting capacity; a comprehensive surplus-management system; etc.) and develop a robust cost-benefit proposal for said project/s that includes timelines and goals, management protocol/s, staff and equipment needs, costs and revenues, and ROI analysis. This should include not only tangible financial costs and benefits, but also intangible social ones. To develop this proposal, the Fellow will gather data and insight from staff on the UNH campus, as well as conduct interviews and utilize program data about similar investments at other college campuses around the country with whom PLAN works.

**Outcomes:**

The Campus Zero Waste Fellow's work will result in the following products and deliverables.

- Data and analysis regarding the projected life-cycle costs and benefits for UNH—financial and social—for one or more of the needed investments identified in UNH's Atlas Stage 1 Recommendation Report:
  - Campus-wide compost expansion
  - Surplus management
  - Standardized campus waste stations (i.e. bins and signage)
- Synthesis of the analysis results in the form of a written report, infographics, Storymap, or other product that can be shared with key stakeholders, including the Zero Waste Task Force and Sustainability Task Force
- Case studies (including cost-benefit and ROI data) of best-in-class examples of such systems located on other campuses across the US
- Presentation of findings to UNH Zero Waste Task Force

**Impact:**

PLAN's Fellow will get the opportunity to work on the world's first audit toolkit developed for assessing the Zero Waste infrastructure of a closed-loop campus system, while also testing new models at one of the world's leading sustainable universities - UNH. The Fellow will gain skills in: conducting interviews; understanding campus-wide Zero Waste infrastructure systems and project development strategies; developing economic cost-benefit analyses; data interpretation; ability to develop strategic project proposals; and “outside of the box” problem-solving skills.

This project will catalyze long-term substantial waste reduction at UNH by creating a framework with clear, actionable goals and timelines for campus Zero Waste infrastructure. On a national level, the creation of the case studies and cost-benefit analysis for UNH will be used by PLAN as a model for how campuses nationwide can adopt similar frameworks.

**Desired Qualifications:**

- A passion and a demonstrated understanding of sustainability and waste issues, as well as intersectionality and social, environmental, and economic justice

- Strong personal and team task management skills, including effective organization and communication around timelines and needs
- Demonstrated ability to generate equations and analysis from a given data set
- Demonstrated understanding of basic business and budgeting concepts (e.g. return on investment, cost-benefit analysis), with some experience and/or an academic background in such modeling strongly preferred
- Familiarity and comfort working in Microsoft Excel
- Self-motivated and eager to learn
- Creativity balanced with pragmatism and professionalism
- Experience and/or interest in working in complex, decentralized organizations (such as a research university) extremely helpful

**Work Location:**

Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN), 1 Washington Street Suite 320 Dover, NH **AND** UNH Sustainability Institute at UNH, 107 Nesmith Hall, Durham, NH

**Mentors:**

Alex Freid, Founder and Co-Director, PLAN

Meghann Cranford, Atlas Strategist and Campus Coordinator, PLAN

Jennifer Andrews, Project Director, UNH Sustainability Institute

**Compensation:** \$6500 summer stipend

(taxable and paid on a two-week payroll cycle over the course of the fellowship term)

**Expectations:**

Fellows are expected to be primarily dedicated to their assigned projects throughout the summer, and also participate in a variety of networking activities, professional development opportunities, and presentations coordinated by UNHSI. Specifically, Fellows are expected to:

- Attend a mandatory orientation at UNH prior to the start of the fellowship term, **May 28-30, 2019**. (Travel scholarships may be available for students traveling from outside New England.)
- Work full-time on-site at the partner organization for 10 weeks, for a total of 400 hours, **June 3 - August 16, 2019** (an eleven-week period, allowing for one week off, as mutually agreed upon with supervisor).
- Complete a fellowship project according to the work plan (with adjustments as necessary).
- Participate in weekly webinars or advisory group meetings.
- Present work at mid-term and final poster sessions at UNH on **July 12** and **August 9**. (Travel support available.)
- Engage in additional professional development, networking, and advisory activities as offered.
- Provide and receive feedback at the end of the fellowship.

**Apply by February 7** at [www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows](http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu/sustainability-fellows).

**Questions** may be addressed to [megan.carney@unh.edu](mailto:megan.carney@unh.edu).