

Hope College Alumni Sustainability Affinity Group News

Hope Sustains

The New “Hope Sustains” Alumni Affinity Group Speaks to our Lifelong Relationship with our Alma Mater

In a world where the value of our lives is increasingly determined by the notion of how we are *living* our lives in a manner that honors the Creation, our Alma Mater has taken a number of steps over the past few years to ensure that the Hope community honors and demonstrates that commitment to God’s call to care for our world through our faith as well as through our actions.

In response, Hope’s new Alumni Affinity group grew out of a desire to support and promote sustainability on Hope’s campus and beyond. “Hope Sustains,” aims to channel the dedication and resources of its alumni to enhance the focus on Creation Care within the mission of Hope College.

“Hope Sustains” to Present its Vision and Mission at Reunion ‘23

This April’s Alumni Weekend — which foreshadows the passage of another class entering our “sage” ranks — features the emergence of the Hope Alumni Sustainability Affinity Group with an Earth Month presentation on the kinds of environmental activities that have taken place on campus the past few years, by students as well as well as by faculty and staff.

We also seek to highlight the work of grads who are actively engaged through chosen careers or volunteer activity in honoring how the spirit and gift of our shared Hope experience has informed, guided, and “sustained” us over these years.



A Greener Walk through the Pine Grove
Looking southeast toward the Bultman Center from the middle of Hope College’s original and iconic “greenspace.”

with a minor in Gender and Women’s Studies. Devin, in his junior year, studies Biology with a Political Science Minor.

As student members of the Campus “Green Team,” both take environmental and student leadership seriously. Devin is co-president of **Hope Advocates for Sustainability** and plans a career in environmental law. Anna is co-president of **Green Hope** and plans to take some time to figure out exactly where her sustainability and social justice beliefs will lead her. Like many other students, Anna and Devin are deeply involved with campus governance at a school that clearly welcomes student participation in college decision making.

In addition, Anna’s goal as a member of **Hope Forward** — President Scogin’s planning body for Hope’s future — is to make divestment from fossil fuels part of Hope’s investment in the world that incoming students will inherit. Devin is a member of Student Congress and is seeking to move the body toward passing resolutions furthering sustainable energy projects. Both plan to push for heightened administrative recognition and attention to Hope’s commitment to creation care.

(Continued)



A Green Meet-up at the Hayworth
Green Campus leaders Devin White and Anna Whittle, flanked by Hope Sustains Board Members Anne Deckard ‘73 Hiskes (co-chair), Rich Hiskes ‘73, on left, with David Beattie ‘73 and Kyle Funk ‘18 (co-chair), on right.

Our On-Campus Sustainability Partners

As our Group establishes itself as a resource for connecting with Hope’s Creation Care values, ensuring a liveable world for all, our outreach on campus takes us to a coalition of students, faculty, and staff known as the **Green Team**.

Hope’s campus is alive with students engaged in sustainability projects, classes, and programs. Two leaders of campus organizations aimed at growing and harnessing all that positive green energy are sophomore **Anna Whittle** and junior **Devin White**. Anna majors in Environmental Studies



Plugging in at one of Hope’s on-campus charging stations.



Find your inner Ent and a tree to hug at Hope’s Tree Sap App on iOS or Android



Campus Green Place
Hope's Marie & Jim Bultman Student Center
is one of Hope's newest Leed Certified Buildings on Campus

The smart alumni money (ex. contributions) is on Anna and Devin achieving their goals for Hope and in their chosen life paths when they move on from Hope and find lives that sustain their Hope-inspired futures.

Between the students, faculty (and alumni) that we will continue to profile, a spirit of sustainable leadership has given rise to well-attended student events that are fun, informative and green. They begin with trash pickup, recycling and composting services for students in dorms and cottages off-campus and continue with field service on lake, river, and stream clean-ups.

Leading the Charge for a Sustainable Hope, Holland, and West Michigan: Michelle Seppala Gibbs

At Hope, sustainable creation-care is led by the **Green Team**, which brings together a diverse group of Hope students, faculty and staff to meet the challenge of introducing and exchanging a wide range of environmentally viable ideas as well as the application of sustainable practices.

Michelle Seppala Gibbs, as the Director of Hope's Office of Sustainability, coordinates the activities of this campus group of plus twenty five highly engaged individuals all dedicated to shrinking Hope's carbon footprint and growing its appeal to environmentally-minded prospective students. Gibbs first joined Hope in 2014 and served as the first director for

- <https://hope.edu/sustainability/>
- <https://hope.edu/offices/sustainability/hope-sustains.html>



the **Holland-Hope College Sustainability Institute**, directing a partnership between **Hope College**, the **City of Holland** and the **Holland Board of Public Works**.

In August 2018, Michelle became the first director for **Hope College's Office of Sustainability**, coordinating the aforementioned strategic planning, implementation, and communication initiatives with faculty, staff, students and alumni.



With a B.A. in Zoology with a specialization in Environmental Studies from MSU and a M.S. in Sustainable Management from University of Wisconsin, one of the most rewarding parts of her role at Hope is leading an engaged team of student interns, **Hope Advocates for Sustainability (HAS)**. Hope now maintains a "very robust" number of students involved with campus environmental projects.

Michelle's C.V. includes work as an environmental scientist for an environmental consulting firm as well as for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

She has been recognized for her work as Chair of the *Living Sustainably Along the*

Lakeshore Planning Team, which won the 2016 Top Project of the Year award from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Neighborhood Environmental Partners Program. She was also awarded the 2014 Volunteer of the Year with the *Macatawa Area Coordinating Council's* (MACC) Watershed Project.

Gibbs believes sustainability is a multifaceted topic that will take all of us using our unique talents and working together to create a more just and sustainable world for all people.



A Green Roof emerges Mid-April
Looking southwest from DeWitt, a green rooftop gives way to a broader sweep of greenspace on Hope's campus

She loves working with students on all aspects of sustainability and helping them discover areas they are passionate about, then finding how they can have an impact on our campus, in our local community, and around our world.

Michelle, husband Travis, their two children and Golden Retriever Molly, love spending time together with her family and friends (especially outdoors!), and enjoys being on the water or hiking and snowshoeing our beautiful Michigan trails.

Earth Day

Chapel with Dr. Steven Bouma-Prediger

Exploring Psalm 104
"God's Care for All Creation."

FRIDAY, APRIL 21
10:30-11:00AM

Chapel can also be viewed live online at hope.edu/live

