

Innovative Practices

An Interdisciplinary Approach to Environmental Research

Dr. Verna DeLauer, assistant professor of environmental studies, is interested in how people value and perceive the benefits they gain from ecosystems.

Research funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in conjunction with the University of New Hampshire and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS), allowed her to study what residents in York County, Maine, value about rivers and streams, and their beliefs about water quality.

“Because waterfront property is so coveted in Maine, it’s hard sometimes for residents to abide by the regulations,” she said. “Residents often want to be right up against the water because that’s where it’s most exciting to be, but sometimes they don’t think about the repercussions [on the ecosystem].”

Working as part of an interdisciplinary team of scientists, multiple perspectives were used to understand how landowners would better understand and comply with the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act. Economists

looked at the monetary value residents placed on clean water, whereas DeLauer’s research consisted of studying regulators interactions with landowners.

“If you want to get a broader picture of an environmental issue, it’s nice to be able to have researchers from multiple disciplines working together to approach the issue from different perspectives,” she said.

DeLauer and colleagues from her department, Professors Rhine Singleton and Catherine Koning, are using the same approach with a grant from the University to engage undergraduates in research on the College at Rindge campus.

Three student researchers are working with faculty to better understand how human use of natural resources on campus, such as energy and water, support and/or conflict with ecological health.

“I find that when students feel like they are part of something greater, they have more ownership and interest in it,” DeLauer says.

The student researchers presented their work at the Academic Showcase in April. — *Alyssa Borelli '15*



Running for State Rep

MAKING A STATEMENT

Bianca Acebron Peco '14 recalls the day she stood outside in the freshman area courtyard handing out candy while enthusiastically waving signs, “Bianca Acebron Peco for SGA president.”

Last fall, the political science alumna was on a different campaign trail, running for one of two seats for New Hampshire’s 38th district, representing the towns of Antrim, Bennington, Francestown, Greenville, Greenfield, Hancock, Hillsborough, Lynedeborough, Wilton and Windsor.

At the forefront of her campaign was capturing young voters, focusing on issues like college debt reform, job creation and equal pay for equal work.

“People tend to overlook a young female like me,” she says. Competing with other candidates whose median age is 65, she certainly stirred up the pot of candidates for the state house.

“New Hampshire has the third-largest House of Representatives,” she says, “and there’s no millennial voice being heard.”

This campaign was more of a statement for the 23-year-old.

While knocking door-to-door talking with voters with incumbent Richard McNamara, area residents were astonished to learn Acebron Peco was not McNamara’s daughter, but that the two were running for state rep in their district.

Endorsed by the Women under 40 Political Action Committee, New Hampshire Young Democrats and the American Federation of Teachers, NH, Acebron Peco was confident she’d win on Election Day. She didn’t.

The election, she says, “was a great start for everyone my age.”

This is not the last campaign stop for Acebron Peco — look for her name on the presidential ballot in 2036. “That’s my year,” she says. — *Alyssa Borelli '15*

