

University of Delaware Graduate Student Government
FOR THE RETENTION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE SUSTAINABILITY
MANAGER AND RENEWED PLEDGE TO SUSTAINABILITY
SR-2021-01

Sponsors: Senator Thomas Benson (Political Science and International Relations, GSG Sustainability Committee Chair), Senator William Vincett (Earth Sciences).

WHEREAS: The Graduate Student Government passed SR-1819-06 in support of "A Resolution in Favor of a UD Office of Sustainability" in 2019; and

WHEREAS: In 2017, President Assanis joined 3,800 leaders from America's city halls, state houses, boardrooms, and 411 college campuses to pledge their support for sustainability efforts, reduce our carbon footprint, and fight against climate change. Building on that pledge, in 2019, the Provost's and Executive Vice President's Offices initiated a new University of Delaware Sustainability Council to improve the University's sustainability commitment; and

WHEREAS: By promoting greater sustainability at the University of Delaware we are: 1) already saving countless dollars each year through a 20% reduction in energy efficiency since the 2008 UD Climate Action Plan; 2) improving recruitment of the next generation of faculty, undergraduate and graduate students who overwhelmingly support environmental protection; 3) improving our graduates' education and dedication to environmental health and justice; 4) enhancing mental well-being and acknowledgement of the intrinsic value of essential ecosystem services and the natural environment; and 5) providing avenues for corporate investment in infrastructure and research collaborations; however

WHEREAS: On Tuesday, October 27th, as part of the University of Delaware's budget cuts, our Sustainability Manager, Ms. Michelle Bennett, was terminated thus 1) reversing the University's support, and messaging that sustainability and addressing climate change is not a priority for our present and future, and 2) hindering the immediate and long-term campus wellbeing and reducing our competitiveness against comparator institutions that are far ahead in their sustainability efforts and programs; and

WHEREAS: Ms. Bennett is the one person at the University of Delaware who has the most comprehensive and holistic knowledge of sustainability topics in education, outreach, and campus operations, and her proficiency in such matters are well-respected even amongst the Sustainability Council's faculty experts, and

WHEREAS: Ms. Bennett has fostered a strong relationship with student organizations and her engagement in student life was exceptional and renewed student faith in the University of Delaware's path towards a more sustainable future; be it therefore

RESOLVED: While we recognize that the university is facing unprecedented financial hardships, we, the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus community at the University of Delaware, urge the campus leadership to reconsider and reverse the decision to terminate the Sustainability Manager and reaffirm the President's and Provost's supported pledges to holistically promote sustainability as a priority for the

University of Delaware. Indeed, as of the time of this resolution's submission, more than 1,200 students, alumni, faculty, and staff have signed a petition urging this reversal! Even in the most difficult and dire times, we need to ask ourselves what our core values are and not abandon our pledge to create a more holistic sustainable future for its students, faculty, and staff as well as the State of Delaware and the planet.