

**BOWDOIN COLLEGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

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To Whom It May Concern:

Bowdoin College was a proud partner of the Maine Innovation Challenge, an initiative aimed at encouraging the sharing of ideas on how to significantly enhance current local food models, such as farmers' markets, fish markets, CSAs, pick-your-own and farm-stands, or create new models that adapt to local and regional needs, utilize technology and adopt creative business structures such as cooperatives and L3Cs.

The event was kicked off at Bowdoin College with a keynote address by Michael Rozyne '78 titled "Sustainable Food – Healthy, Green, Fair, Affordable: Can We Have It All and Scale It Up?" Rozyne spoke about the current local and sustainable food movement in the U.S., and the issues, challenges and obstacles that must be overcome to scale up this movement. He also touched on how innovation, technology, and collaboration might come into play. Mr. Rozyne is executive director of Red Tomato, a nonprofit that connects farmers to consumers, relying on wholesale distribution to deliver farm products to local grocery stores. Previously, Rozyne co-founded Equal Exchange, a cooperative business that trades food in a way that he says empowers both farmers and consumers.

The keynote address was followed by a three day event at Bowdoin College where thirty-six participants, representing 10 teams, participated in the Maine Innovation Challenge. Over the course of the weekend several resource people were available to advise teams and two short workshops were provided on the Business Model Canvas and Creating a Pitch. Culminating the weekend were presentations by each team, delivering their proposals to a team of five judges.

The organizers of The Challenge wanted teams to demonstrate bold and big ideas pushed by people who want to challenge each other and the status quo. They encouraged solutions that either significantly enhance current local food models or create new models that adapt to local and regional needs, utilize technology and adopt creative business structures such as cooperatives and L3Cs. They asked participants to think about processes along the entire distribution chain including aggregating, processing, distributing or marketing.

[Maine Farm & Sea Cooperative](#) and [Forq Food Lab](#) were the winners of the Challenge. Both teams received \$5,000 plus 6 hours of legal services. The New Beet Market and Frinklepod Farm tied for second place and each received \$1,750 plus 8 hours of consulting services. Two student teams, AgriGatr, from Hampshire College and the Darling Sea Farm, from the Darling Center, received Honorable Mention.

Bowdoin's Environmental Studies Program was honored to be a partner and host of the event, and see events like this as an opportunity to help initiate a more sustainable future. Bowdoin's faculty, staff and students participating on the advisory committee are already looking forward to hosting the event again next year.

Sincerely,



Eileen Sylvan Johnson, PhD  
Lecturer and Program Manager