

NEWS FROM
HOPE COLLEGE



“HOPE SUSTAINS”:
AFFINITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

“HOPE SUSTAINS”: AFFINITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The “Hope Sustains” affinity group established this summer provides a new way for alumni to connect with others committed to stewardship of creation and to make a difference at and via the college.

In addition to offering a community of alumni with similar interests, “Hope Sustains” presents abounding opportunities for alma mater impact. They run the gamut, from being literally hands-on as with the “One Big Weekend” tree planting in October, to serving as a resource for students interested in learning about careers in sustainability, to lending expertise to inform Hope’s stewardship initiatives, to helping fund the college’s sustainability-focused programs and research.

NEWS FROM
HOPE COLLEGE

appreciated what they saw at Hope, ranging from the work of the Office of Sustainability and the "Green Team" consisting of students, faculty and staff; to designing new buildings to meet LEED standards; to sustainable practices in groundskeeping; to academic programs in environmental science and environmental studies; to the environmental focus of numerous faculty-student research groups. Hope has received a variety of local, regional and national honors through the years for its sustainability efforts, including a STARS Silver rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. This fall, the college was named runner up for 2022 Sustainable Business of the Year recognition by the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum.

"There couldn't be a place with a better foundation for doing this," Rich said. "We're really just helping along what's here."

The couple had initially committed to funding three sustainability projects (retrofitting a cottage, a sustainable transportation station, and grants to faculty to expand sustainability into the curriculum and across the different academic divisions) in honor of Anne's mother, Anne DeBoer Deckard, who had also been a college-level educator. Knowing, though, that many among Hope's thousands of alumni are also interested in sustainability, they soon proposed "Hope Sustains" as a way for others to become engaged in enhancing the college's role as an example, community resource and training ground for future sustainability leaders.

"Hope has a great reputation in undergraduate experiential learning, and so this fits right in with Hope's reputation and strengths," Anne said. "We want to inspire other alumni to give back to their alma mater and keep Hope's great legacy in higher education going."

"Hope Sustains" is guided by a 12-member Board of Directors whose career paths and volunteer service span government, corporate, non-profit, education and faith-based institutions. Michelle Seppala Gibbs, who is director of the college's Office of Sustainability, noted that the group is a much-appreciated partner as Hope seeks to expand its already award-winning sustainability efforts.

"This is something that has been on our radar for a long time, and to have alumni say that they were interested in seeing this get started and help it get kicked off was huge," she said. "Hopefully it will encourage our alumni to help Hope do even better."

NEWS FROM
HOPE COLLEGE

hope.edu/sustainability

Everyone interested in supporting Hope’s sustainability efforts financially may do so at any time, but might want to watch in particular for the forthcoming annual Day of Giving. Scheduled for Feb. 23-24, the event includes opportunities to contribute to specific areas of the college — including Hope’s sustainability initiatives.

2022-23 “HOPE SUSTAINS” BOARD MEMBERS

Annie Deckard ’73 Hiskes

Co-Chair

Retired Grand Valley State University dean, Brooks College of Interdisciplinary Studies. Professor emerita of philosophy, the University of Connecticut

Kyle Funk ’18

Co-Chair

National League of Cities – transportation and infrastructure policy specialist

Kaila Robertson ’19 Bylsma

Secretary

Meijer – information technology

Richard Hiskes ’73

Outreach and Engagement

Professor emeritus, University of Connecticut, political science and human rights, and retired Grand Valley State University professor of political science and human rights

NEWS FROM
HOPE COLLEGE

Sarah Josuns '02 Kessler

City of Clearwater, Florida – lead environmental specialist

Junu Shrestha '01

World Bank – senior environmental specialist

David Beattie '73

Communications

b.comm creative, director, ESG branding/marketing

Jeffrey Vredenburg '11

City of Sarasota, Florida – sustainability manager; adjunct professor, Ringling College of Art and Design

Steven Bouma-Prediger '79

Ex Officio Faculty Liaison

Hope College – Leonard and Marjorie Maas Professor of Reformed Theology; chair, Department of Religion; chair, Green Team

Nicholas Duthler '09

Ex Officio Staff

Hope College – Physical Plant project manager

Michelle Seppala Gibbs

Ex Officio Staff Liaison

Hope College – director, Office of Sustainability

NEWS FROM
HOPE COLLEGE

by  Greg Olgers '87

WINTER 2022

[About News from Hope College](#)



Hope College | Public Affairs and Marketing

616.395.7860 | marketing@hope.edu