

# UB SUSTAINABILITY



# NOTE TO THE READER

Yo UB,

For the past few years, UB has celebrated Earth Day with an update on its progress with the Climate Action Plan. In April 2024, the university celebrated its radical pragmatic idealism, and showed that we are ready and prepared to lead in a totally tubular way. Whether we're facing a pandemic, climate induced extreme weather, the rise of artificial intelligence, democracy under threat, or conflicts across the globe, we're not just chillin like villains, but making the necessary changes and building the world we seek every day. This exceptional work in advancing climate action, building resiliency, and making the world a more just and equitable place was shown through sharing student art, knowledge and optimism. The work of our staff and faculty towards decarbonization was also displayed, and you can learn more by watching this rad video [here](#) or visiting [www.buffalo.edu/climate-action](http://www.buffalo.edu/climate-action).

Catch you on the Flip Side,  
UB CAPtains

# 90's



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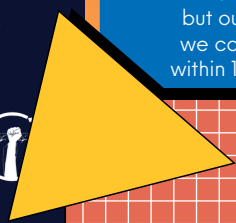
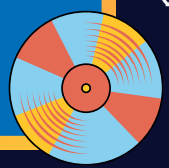
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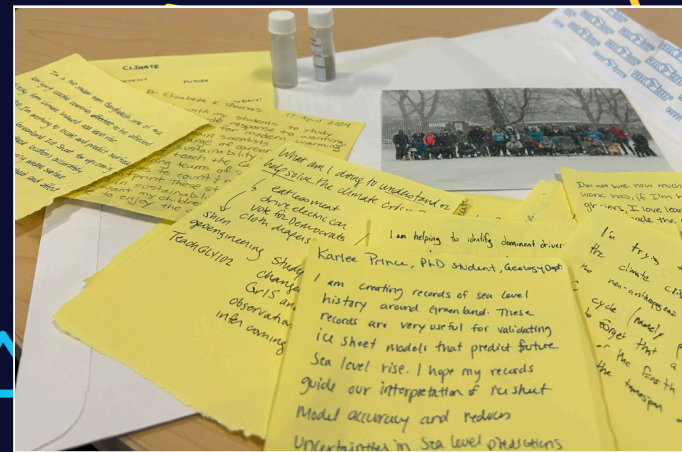
# SUSTAINABILITY POEM NATASHA ACEVEDO

Every winter is getting warmer  
 the snow disintegrates into a fractured memory  
 mother nature's storms  
 erupt for a day or two to reveal her fury  
 and slowly Die. down.  
 the seasons begin to meld into  
 one another,  
 once winter turned Endless summer  
 and i feel powerless to stop  
 that everything has changed.  
 every year i m getting older  
 with my slow crawl towards adulthood  
 my voice begins to take its form.  
 my hands, my words, become weapons for change  
 but everyday waste becomes a conscious exchange  
 (I m sorry earth for not recycling my moes bowl that one time,  
 i was too lazy to wash the plastic)  
 It feels my efforts anyways, are spastic  
 sometimes it feels the world  
 Is bound for decay  
 Too many oil spills  
 innovation gone array.  
 Too many cars, our lives moving too fast  
 But Still, something tells me if we push against carbon emissions, and  
 waste  
 We can last.  
 Something tells me we don t have to let our home  
 turn to a Wasteland  
 something tells me we can slow the crawl towards degradation  
 Hand in hand.  
 It starts with a solar panel, it starts with a plan, a change in policy,  
 A course of action,  
 A conversation with a friend.  
 Be wary of yourself, this is sacred stolen ground  
 I mean no discomfort but I think conscious change is profound.  
 Every year the summer stalls, and we don t get any younger,  
 but our future is still brighter than any of us will ever remember.  
 we can t stop what s occurred but we can choose what we do,  
 within 10 years, with the right action, we can be neutral with Co2.  
 everyday we are getting closer  
 the years of melting ice caps, rising tides  
 turn to a fractured memory  
 mother nature and i in harmony  
 and slowly we begin to heal.



# TIME CAPSULE PHOTOS

Each department, unit or school contributed one item to our climate action time capsule. These items represent how their unit made a commitment or have taken an action for a sustainable future. It will be sealed and preserved as a testament to our collective dedication.



LITTLE IMPACT IS STILL IMPACT

RECYCLE

CLEAN PLANET

ASK QUESTIONS!

WHAT YOU DO MATTERS!

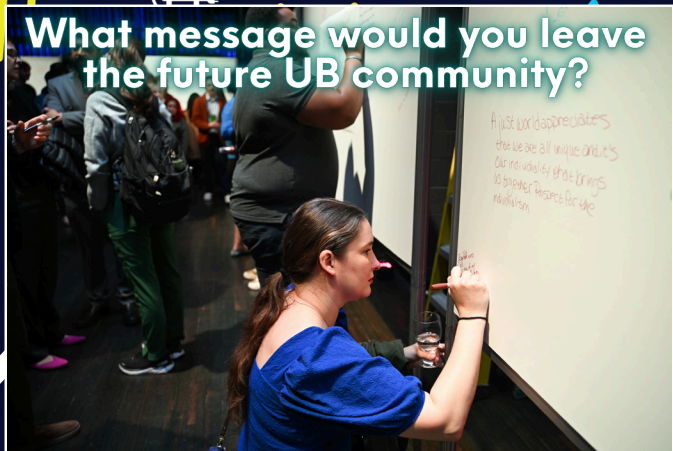
WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE YOUR DESCENDANTS?

MORE!

SORRY WE DIDN'T ACT SOONER

On boards around the main stage, the UB community was asked to answer a collection of four prompts. They could respond with a word, a sentence, a quote, a drawing- however they wanted to express themselves. It is a way to send a message to the future as a source of inspiration and hope.

What message would you leave the future UB community?



What makes you hopeful in our present world?



What does your vision for a "just" world look like?



USE LESS

ERASE COMPLACENCY

CONSTANTLY INNOVATE!

GROW YOUR MIND & YOUR HEART!

VOTE!

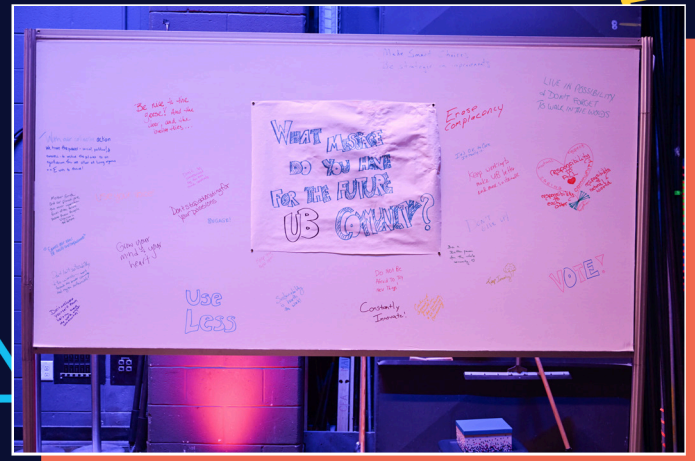
DON'T GIVE UP!



DON'T STOP ADVOCATING FOR YOUR PASSIONS.

IT'S OK TO CARE IT REALLY IS.

BE NICE TO THE GEESSE! AND THE DEER, AND THE BUTTERFLIES...



FREEDOM FOR EVERYONE TO FEEL SAFE BEING WHO THEY ARE!

A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE FEELS HEARD

UOTE!

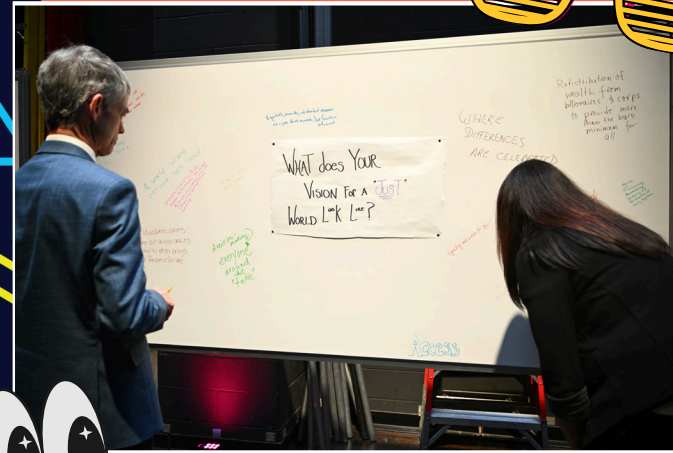
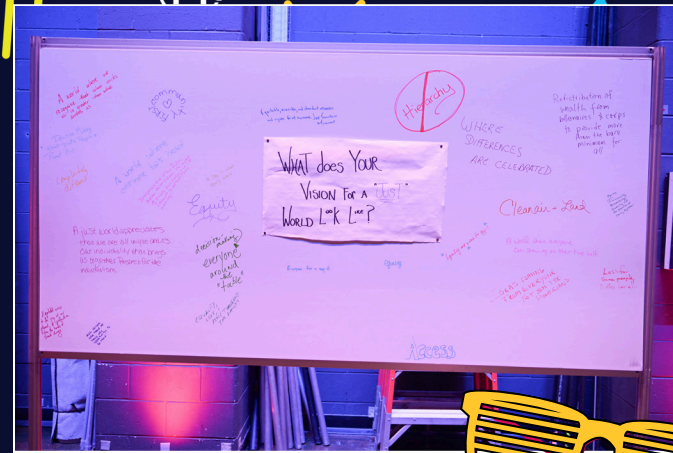
ACCESS

WHAT DOES YOUR VISION FOR A 'JUST' WORLD LOOK LIKE?

REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH FROM BILLIONAIRES & CORPS TO PROVIDE MORE THEN THE BARE MINIMUM FOR ALL.

WHERE DIFFERENCES ARE CELEBRATED.

EQUALITY AND A VOICE FOR ALL!



THE PASSIONS OF OUR STUDENTS

MOVING FORWARD

PEOPLE CARE

PEOPLE WHO LISTEN

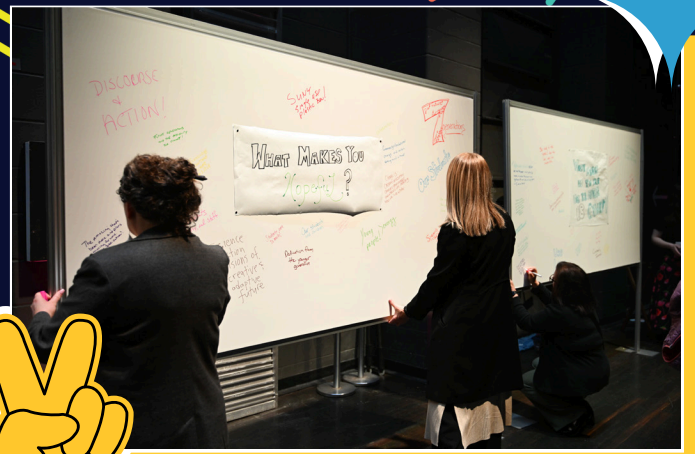
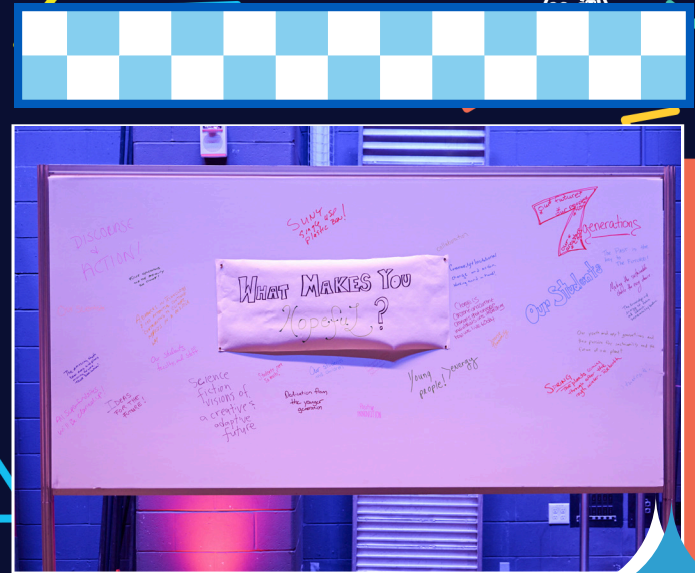
OUR STUDENTS

WHAT MAKES YOU HOPEFUL?

ADVANCEMENTS IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY!

THE PROGRESS WE ARE MAKING!

OUR NEXT GENERATION.





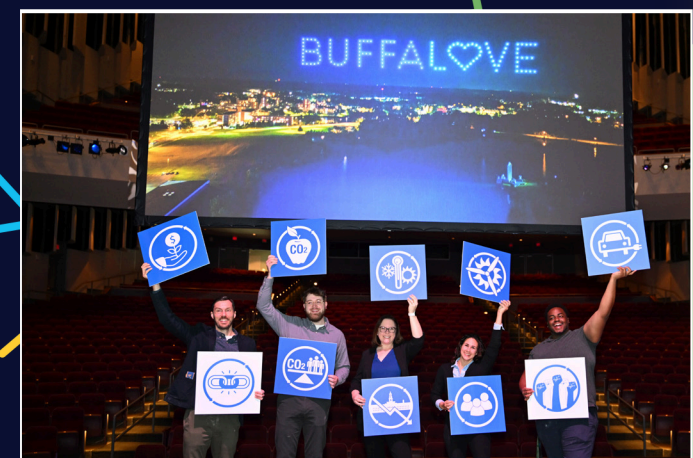
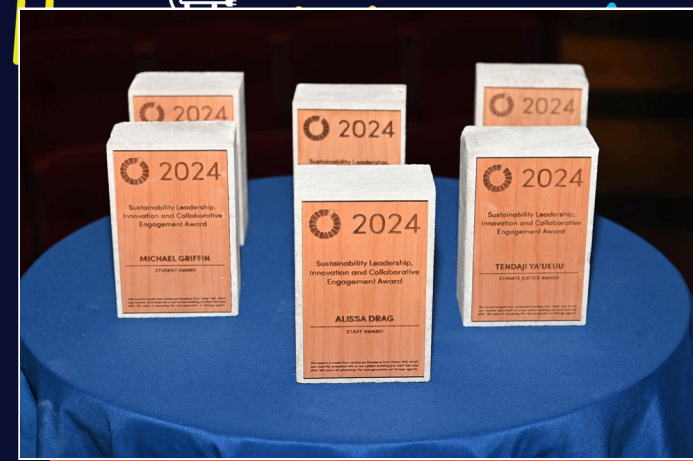
# Sustainability, Leadership, Innovation, Collaboration and Engagement

## SLICE 2024 WINNERS



Staff Award - Alissa Drag  
 Student Award - Michael Griffin  
 Faculty Award - John Atkinson  
 Team Award - One Region Forward  
 Climate Justice Award - Tendaji Ya'Ukuu  
 Alumni Award - Jessica Otney Mahar

The University at Buffalo recognizes outstanding individuals and departments who exhibit a sincere commitment to transforming our campuses into a holistically sustainable community through the kinds of leadership, innovation, and collaboration that demonstrates environmental stewardship, enhances social progress, or promotes responsible economic systems and growth through SLICE awards honored in April.



# SLICE



**Alissa Drag, Assistant Director of Employer Relations and External Engagement at the Career Design Center.**

Alissa has worked over the last five years building deeper connections between sustainability and career readiness for our students. Through her work, she has fostered many great relationships with external employers that are eager to hire students with skills in sustainability and sustainable resource management. Her work catalyzes our graduates and inspires them to infuse sustainability, environmentalism and social justice in their personal and professional lives, and across all majors and disciplines. Alissa also worked to organize the "How I Got Started in Sustainability" panel which invites speakers from the public and private sectors, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups and government agencies to network with our students, giving them valuable insight on how these organizations are moving forward sustainability initiatives in their respective roles.

STAFF -  
ALISSA DRAG



**Sustainability Operations Coordinator Kayla Owen handing Michael Griffin his SLICE Student Award for Sustainability Leadership.**

Michael's academic case study "Collegiate Academic Participation Driving Clean Energy Solutions" will serve as a model for future sustainability students seeking to develop pedagogical tools for sustainability education. He also manages the Student Sustainability Impact Team, a group of 20 students who work to fulfill sustainability requests across our UB community. Michael consistently works to collaborate, empower and engage those he works with, always going above and beyond to show his commitment to UB's sustainability efforts. Michael's work with UB Sustainability's website, social media and newsletter curation have taken our communications to the next level connecting and engaging with other students, campus departments, student groups and community organizations.

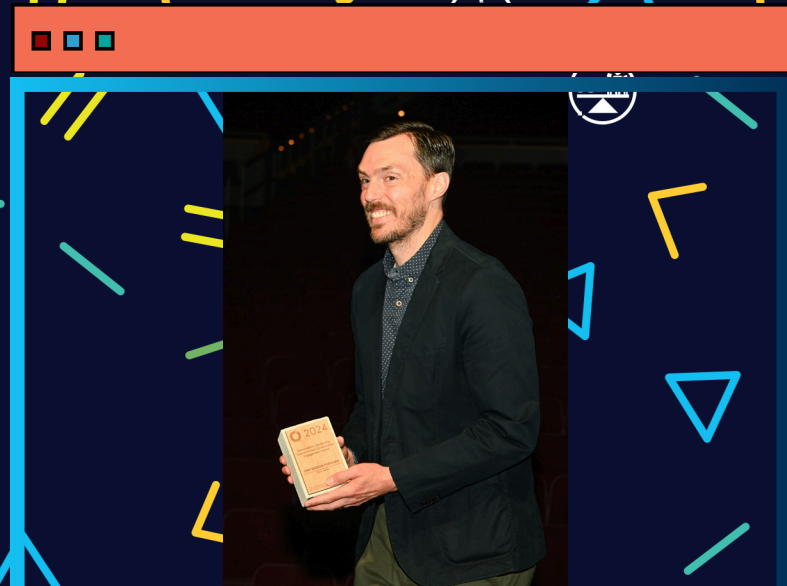
STUDENT -  
MICHAEL GRIFFIN



### **Dr. John Atkinson, Scott and Coleen Stevens Chair in Engineering Sustainability.**

John leverages experiential teaching methods in the classroom and continues to spread knowledge through the Sustainability Master's Program, nurturing the development of our students' potential to not only recognize our planet's needs but also allows them to understand the role they can play in creating the future we seek. He has created innovative and life-altering learning opportunities through his work in advancing the Costa Rica Sustainability trip. In addition to his academic and research success, John not only teaches the importance of sustainability but models it everyday by advancing a low carbon lifestyle.

**FACULTY - DR.  
JOHN ATKINSON**



### **Joshua McClain, Sustainability & Resiliency Planner for the UB Regional Institutes, accepts the SLICE Award for Sustainability Excellence by a Department or Team on behalf of One Region Forward.**

Founded in 1997, the Regional Institute is being recognized for their continued commitment to sustainability in Western New York. Through their innovative work with the One Region Forward for Sustainable Development plan published in 2014, their Citizen Planning School initiative, and its current One Region Forward for Climate Action Plan, they have a proven track record of bringing together our communities to fight climate change. The One Region Forward for Climate Action Plan advances key issues and priorities to ensure regional climate action addresses the needs of disadvantaged and underrepresented communities, and identifies priority measures the region can take between now and 2030.

**TEAM - ONE REGION  
FORWARD**

**VP Hubbard with Tendaji Ya'Ukuvu, UB Student and Ecological Justice Coordinator for Open Buffalo.**

Tendaji is the Ecological Justice Coordinator with Open Buffalo and current Environmental Design student at UB. Tendaji leads clean mobility projects that aim to create equitable neighborhood adoptions of regenerative and cooperative economies, generating innovative and sustainable solutions that improve the conditions of our community. They have a passion for collective improvement and are committed to developing collaborative and multifunctional spaces for communities that prioritize human flourishing and economic prosperity. Tendaji continues to consistently advocate for sustainability and power building in marginalized groups.

CLIMATE JUSTICE -  
TENDAJI YA'UKUVU

**VP Hubbard handing Jessica Ottney Mahar her SLICE Alumni Award for Sustainability Excellence.**

Jessica is currently the New York Director of Policy and Strategy at the Nature Conservancy - the largest environmental organization in the world - and works to advance climate and environmental policy and conservation efforts. She recently quarterbacked the Clean Water and Jobs Coalition Bond Act - the largest environmental bond measure in NYS history - securing a \$4.2 billion dollar investment for the environment and climate action. Jess played a key leadership role developing New York's climate action strategy and has worked to advance conservation efforts at the national level as well. She is a UB graduate from the College of Arts and Sciences, Class of 2000.

ALUMINI - JESSICA  
OTTNEY MAHAR



Osiyo, My name is Delaney McNulty. I am a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and a graduate student in the Philosophy department. I want to thank the Office of Sustainability for inviting me to speak to you and celebrate Earth Day with all of you. Wado to your team. I am originally from the beautiful and strange state of Utah, where I grew up in what my nation refers to as at large. Like most of the Mountain West, Utah is a desert; water is a precious resource. As we say in Indigenous circles, water is life. I had only known living in a drought until I came to Buffalo. I always tell people the amount of water here has been my biggest culture shock. Growing up in the desert during a drought, I remember carefully filling watering cans with my mom to water her garden but not taking more than what we needed. I remember watching the mountain that I took to be guarding my home catch fire one summer. I remember evacuating with my family, including my grandmother, who was 90 years old at the time and watching the fire consume the mountain I loved so well. For years, that mountain bore the scars of that fire; it was black, charred, and dangerous. Yet, the mountain recovered from what seemed like total devastation; she slowly turned green again, and I remember feeling so hopeful that first spring when wildflowers appeared on the ridges again.

**DELANEY MCNULTY  
SPEECH**

We are not just at a pivotal moment in the history of this earth; we are at a critical juncture. We face the very real threat of total devastation, but there is hope. We can engage in stewardship to create green spaces and wildflowers, like the wildflower patch in front of Deifendorf Hall. The time for action is now. We must take the leap and sew the seeds of sustainability in our everyday lives.

Here in Seneca Territory, in the embrace of the Haundaousee confederacy, I challenge each of you to start thinking not only of your everyday life but also of the everyday life of the next seven generations. Chief Seattle echoed the Haundaousee principle of thinking of the next seven generations when he said, "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children." It is up to all of us to care for the earth and the inhabitants we share it with and care for each other throughout the process. As we move towards a sustainable future, we must not forget the people who have been leading the charge and protecting the earth.

Indigenous people have been at the forefront of climate action and justice long before we had terms like climate action and justice. Indigenous science has proven itself effective in fighting the effects of climate change time and time again.

In 2022, New York State gave back roughly 1,000 acres of Onondaga Land, and earlier this year, in 2024, The Environmental Protection Agency announced \$23 million to clean up Onondaga Lake. This inspiring LANDBACK initiative is exciting, but it does not go far enough. The Onondaga Nation has been critical of the EPA plans because their plans do not require that the lake be fishable or swimmable. I want to echo the Onondaga and call for stewardship of the lake to be given to the Nation along with plans for how to clean it.

It is easy to be swept up in the smoke of wildfires as I am sure we all experienced here in Buffalo last summer. Just the same it is easy to be swept up in the smoke of progress, before we celebrate the efficiency of lithium batteries we should be aware that about 85% of all lithium reserves are on or near Indigenous land worldwide. Similarly, new copper mines in the United States are being approved on Indigenous sacred sites. Although lithium and copper are necessary for solar powered batteries, cell phones, and electric cars, we must not forget Indigenous people, our wisdom, and our homes in pursuit of a goal. Much like my home mountain we must pursue our goals with thoughtful ecological strategies like those presented here today.

I am inspired to be with all of you today on this day when we come together to honor our home, the earth. I hope I can add to your sense of purpose and inspire hope that will guide your heart and mind as we continue to honor our earth, her inhabitants, and all of our relations. We must resist pessimism during this time and embrace the changes that will generate longevity for all of us. I have seen with my own eyes how a scorched mountain can become green again, how a polluted river system can become clean again, and how we can become better stewards of our home. As you leave here today I encourage you to think of next seven generations of yourself, your children, their children, and your friend's children, and let's work together to leave them a place worth living. Wado!

JOSEPH CORTEZ AND AVA FETZNER RECENTLY WON FIRST PLACE IN UB COLAB'S FOR A PURPOSE COMPETITION FOR THEIR STARTUP BUSINESS DUCCS.

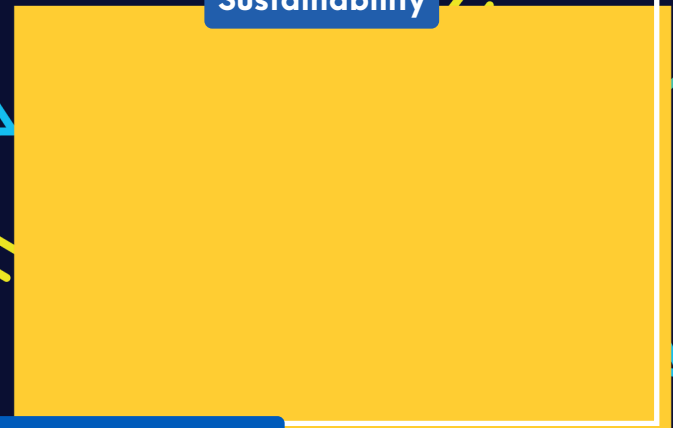
# DUCCS

Ava Fetzner, Joseph Cortez

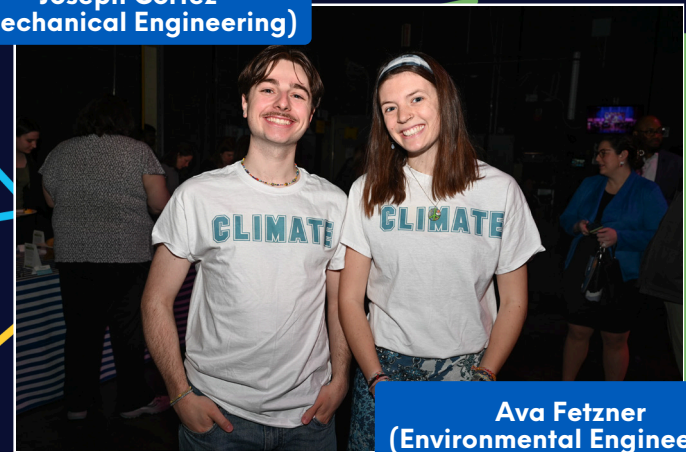
DUCCS is a new entrepreneurial venture that aims to develop a biofilter device using biochar to absorb methane and ammonia emissions from composting piles. Currently, Ava and Joseph are conducting research at UB, where they are growing algae from wastewater and studying the ability to produce biochar from this organic material. Their next steps are to continue prototyping their revolutionary Biochar Wattle and conduct emissions testing to prepare it for market use.



Dirt Utopia: Community Composting and Sustainability



Joseph Cortez  
(Mechanical Engineering)



Ava Fetzner  
(Environmental Engineering)

# 10 WAYS WE'RE CENTERING JUSTICE

at the 2024 Climate Action Plan Update



Establishing a Community Code of Conduct to Ensure all Voices are Respected

Centering Underrepresented Leaders as Speakers, Topic Experts, and Attendees

Deepening the understanding of our Native Land Acknowledgement

Prioritizing Minority and Woman Owned and Operated Vendors

Deconstructing White Supremacy, Upholding Anti-racism, and Labor Equity

Compensating speakers for their expertise that are under-resourced

Ensuring Accessibility for All

Systematically Centering Justice in UB Sustainability's Operations

Elevating Conversations about Justice across the Full Program

Valuing the Rights of Free Speech and Peaceful Protest



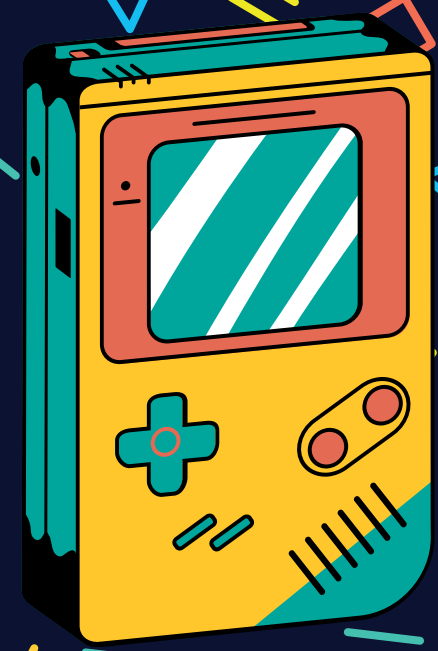
# WATCH THESE VIDEOS



Full Climate Action Plan 2024 Event



Totally Rad Climate 2024 Progress Video





The logo for the University at Buffalo Sustainability department. It features the 'UB' logo on the left, followed by a vertical line and the text 'University at Buffalo' on the top line and 'Sustainability' on the bottom line.

UB | University at Buffalo  
Sustainability

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