



University of New Hampshire: A Paradigm of Sustainability

Project Name: University of New Hampshire

Project Location: Durham, NH

Project Size: Ongoing (Hundreds of Bedroom Sets)

Building Type: University Residence Halls

Project Team: UNH & DCI

Product List: Desks, Beds, Wardrobes, Chests, Chairs

BACKSTORY

The [University of New Hampshire](#) (UNH) is a public research university located in Manchester, NH. Founded in 1866 as part of the University System of New Hampshire (USNH), UNH boasts 12,864 undergraduates and 2,500 graduate students.

When it comes to sustainability, UNH is a national leader among universities. It was among the 15 highest scoring schools on the College Sustainability [Report Card](#), with the Sustainable Endowments [Institute](#) awarding it a grade of "A-".

In 2012, UNH was named the 6th "coolest school" in the country by Sierra magazine for its efforts in sustainability and climate change." The Princeton Review, from 2008-2016, has recognized UNH on its Green [Honor Roll](#), which ranks the top 50 schools in the field of sustainability.



According to [Wikipedia](#), "With the UNH Sustainability Institute, UNH possesses the oldest endowed sustainability program in higher education in the U.S. and has been integrating sustainability across the university's curriculum, operations, research and engagement since the office was founded in 1997."

Here are just a few highlights demonstrating why UNH is a [sustainability standout](#).

- **Powered by Trash:** In 2009, UNH became the first university to use landfill gas as a primary source of fuel. Today, landfill gas provides a whopping 85% of all campus energy at UNH through a unique collaboration with--of all places--a dump. Through a unique partnership with Waste Management of New Hampshire Inc., UNH pipes the enriched and purified gas from a Rochester, NH landfill to their campus via the ECOline. ECOline is the actual pipe system that transfers methane gas from the Rochester landfill to UNH for use in electricity and heat production.
- **The Frialator Oil Fleet:** UNH has the largest fleet of buses and cars in the state of New Hampshire and it runs on biodiesel. The EcoCat fleet boasts some of the

cleanest diesel vehicles on the road and many of them run on the frialator byproducts (think french fry oil) of Dining Services and other UNH buildings.

- **EPA Award:** In 2006, the university was the first in the country to receive the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR rating for residence halls Congreve, Lord, and McLaughlin. Only a year later, UNH was awarded five more for residence halls Randall/Hitchcock, Sawyer, and Jessie Doe, for buildings P, Q and R of the Woodside Apartment Complex, and for administrative building Taylor Hall.
- **LEED Gold:** Several campus building were renovated over the last 10 years to receive LEED Gold and Silver certification.

PROCESS & APPROACH



Over 25 years ago, DCI partnered with UNH to install solid hardwood furniture in their residence halls. Since that time, we've embarked on several projects with UNH. With their lauded focus on sustainability, UNH is a natural partner with DCI.

A lot of the schools we work with have a strong sustainability commitment, but there is one aspect of this partnership which

distinguishes UNH as a true environmental leader and innovator.

What is that one thing? It's UNH's commitment to upcycling.

Buy Back

Recently UNH approached us with an interesting proposition. They wanted to replace furniture that we had installed in their residence halls over 25 years ago and asked if we wanted to take back the original furniture.

Because DCI primarily uses solid hardwood construction—in contrast to chip-core, MDF, plywood, Laminate and other laminate materials comprised of veneer and substrate—nearly all of it is reusable.

So we agreed to take back the furniture at no cost (in fact we paid them a small sum) to ensure that nothing ended up in the landfill.

Then we worked with the UNH team to take the furniture out of the building, load it, and bring it back up to the DCI factory for the next stage in its life cycle.

Upcycling

At DCI, we love to upcycle as much as possible because it's good for the environment and it makes economic sense. Here's how Wikipedia defines [upcycling](#):

Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless and/or unwanted products into new materials or products of better quality or for better environmental value.



How did we upcycle the furniture from UNH?

1. **First**, we recycled all the metal components in the furniture--runners and screws.
2. **Then** we broke down all the solid wood component including drawer fronts, case sides, wardrobe shelves and bottoms, and any larger hardwood components.
3. **Finally**, we were able to upcycle all this by re-manufacturing the wood components, stripping them down into fixed width strips, and then using those strips for internal hardwood components like corner blocks, cleats, and drawer rails.

DCI is currently contracted by the entire UNH system to build solid hardwood furniture for residence halls at all their universities.



And now, through this unique sustainability partnership, DCI furnishes the UNH residence halls with brand new solid furniture that is fortified with upcycled internal components from furniture that we installed on their campus over 25 years ago.

In fact, over the last 3 years we have taken back well over 500 desks, chests, and assorted tables. You can [download this PDF](#) to see how we break down the furniture into reusable and recyclable component parts.

DCI and UNH have maintained this virtuous (up)cycle of sustainability for the last 5 years and we are contracted to continue it for the next decade.

To set up an order today or to talk with one of our representatives, you can write to us here or call: (800) 552-8286.

You can also learn more about our industry-leading FSC CoC [certification](#), our [MAS certification](#), and our green materials [sourcing](#), sustainable [manufacturing](#), and our unique zero waste Vertical Integration [Process \(VIP\)](#).

Download the DCI Sustainability overview [here](#).

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