10 ways to make a difference at UMaine

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One of the many amazing things about the college of our hearts always is its endless opportunities to make an impact, whether it be on this campus, in the state of Maine, for the United States or on a global scale. The best way to get involved is to collaborate with some of the amazing service, activist or political student clubs. With so many options, meetings and events it’s hard to know where to begin. Here are 10 organizations that are a great place to start.

Apply for student government positions. This is a terrific way to meet dedicated students and utilize your power and voice in matters that directly impact the student body. Student government oversees financial affairs, student organizations, legal services, student entertainment, student senate and a host of other committees. Applications for student senate can be completed online through the UMaine website. Many times positions go unfilled, so even if you don’t think you’re the best candidate, you may have more of a shot than you think.

Get involved with political clubs. Our school has clubs for both Democrats and Republicans, which host guest speakers every semester. Maine Gov. Paul LePage just hosted a town hall planned by the UMaine College Republicans, and Attorney General Janet Mills visited campus courtesy of the UMaine College Democrats not too long ago. No matter your political affiliation, you’ll find passionate political advocates in both groups.

Attend a Partners for Word Health meeting. They meet every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Coe Room of the Memorial Union, and plan four medical missions every year. As a national non-profit, their website lists their goal as “collect unused medical supplies from local medical facilities and distribute them to countries in need, effectively limiting the negative impact on our environment; to send local medical personnel on medical missions to developing countries; [and] to educate our local community about global health issues.”

Make new friends through Best Buddies. This group is all about fostering compassionate one-on-one relationships between students and local people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For those who want to get involved, stop by the Coe Room on Thursdays from 6 to 9 p.m. to meet some new friendly faces.

Learn more about environmental conservation from the Green Team. Their purpose on the UMaine organizations webpage is defined as ‘increasing awareness, creating action, and taking action with regard to efficiency and sustainability on campus and in the community.’ They have led national campaigns as well as small scale efforts to encourage students on campus to lead greener lifestyles. Join them weekly on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in Little Hall Room 205.

Volunteer with a service sorority like Gamma Sigma Sigma. Not only are they the only service-based gender-inclusive sorority on campus, they are accepting of all interested parties, no need to worry about rushing. Each member completes at least 25 service hours per semester, so if you have a passion for community service and want to make lasting friendships, check out their Facebook page for more details.

Change the conversation around mental health at an Active Minds meeting. With the goal of de-stigmatizing mental health on college campuses through education and awareness, each meeting is partially devoted to discussion and takes place every Thursday from 7 to 8 p.m. in the Lown Room of the Union. The group also puts on events throughout the semester and tables regularly.

Raise money for cancer patients and families with Colleges Against Cancer. They host the annual Relay for Life to fundraise for the American Cancer Society, which is a fun-filled event that makes an impact in our community. Like both their official and UMaine Facebook pages to stay up to date. Some of their current focuses include relief work for Syria’s civil war and advocating for indigenous people around the world.

Learn about human rights with Amnesty International. With their annual Write for Rights campaigns and the upcoming Social Justice Social, Amnesty is a great place to start for people who want to make a global impact. Like both their official and UMaine Facebook pages to stay up to date. Some of their current focuses include relief work for Syria’s civil war and advocating for indigenous people around the world.

Support racial justice with the Black Student Union. Although Maine is one of the least diverse states, we still have a flourishing black activism community on this campus that aims to combat anti-black racism in our state and our nation at large. Throughout the month of February, Black Student Union hosted an array of events that emphasized celebrating the diverse history and accomplishments of African American citizens. Weekly meetings take place on Fridays at 3 p.m. in the Office of Multicultural Student Life.
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