



PLANET BLUE STUDENT LEADERS

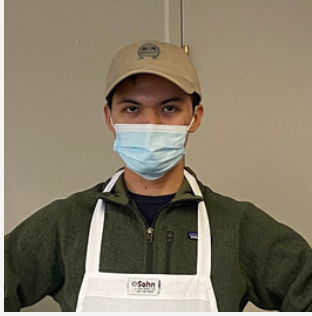


2022–2023 Annual Report

Meet the Team!



Carinna Baird



Hugo He



Rena Kaur McRoy



Lindsay Gooch



Grace Barron



Leah Driehorst



Bea Kaskie



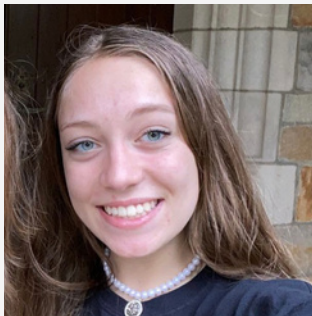
Jonah Hurley



Katja Foreman-Braunschweig



Zoe Knaus



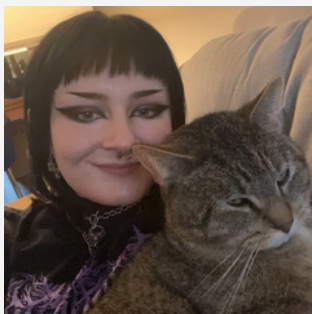
Melissa Oz



Bailee Duke



Sarah Shaw-Nichols

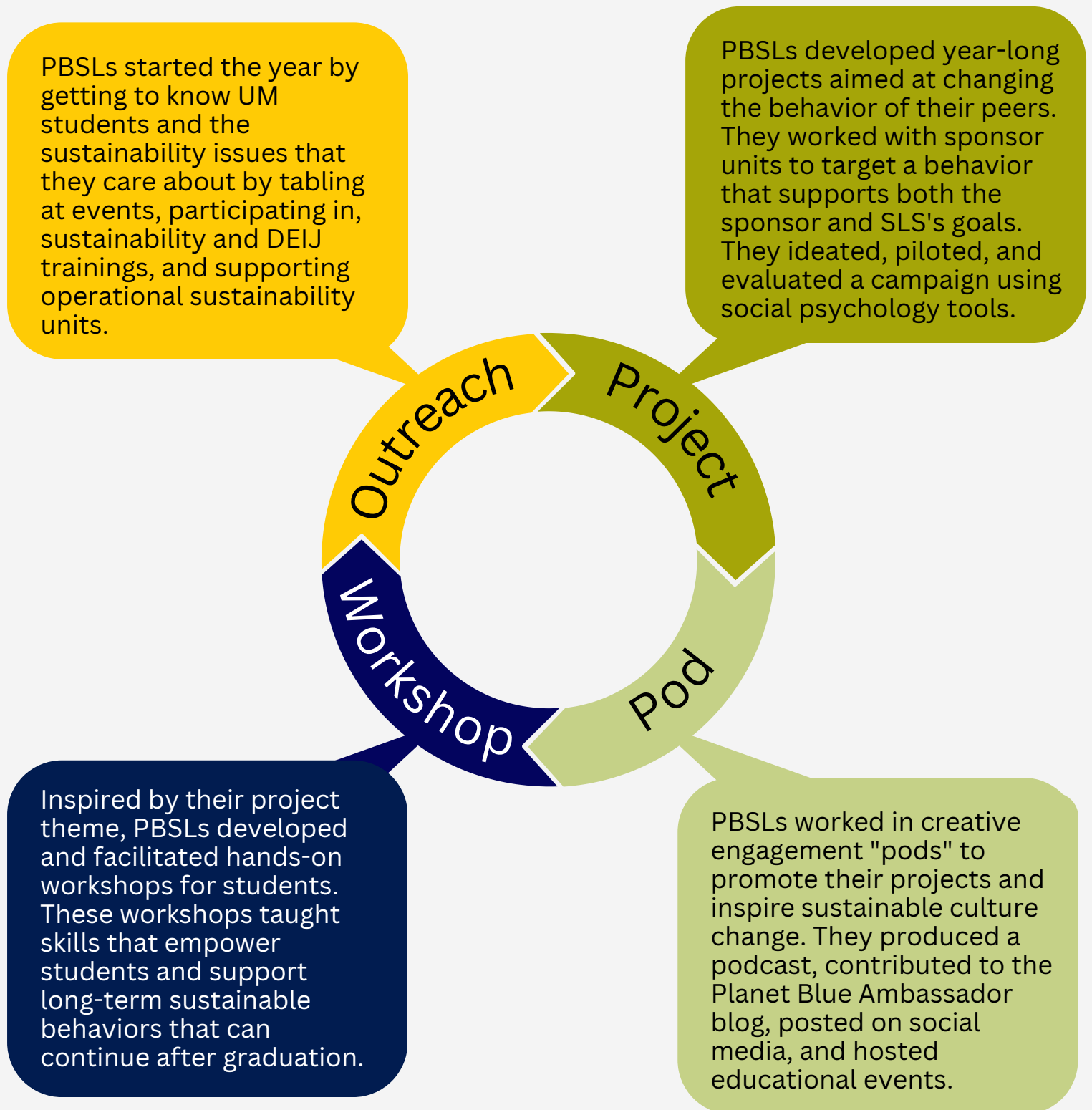


Anna Pohlman



Leah Kidder

Planet Blue Student Leaders (PBSLs) work part-time in Student Life Sustainability as peer educators to promote sustainable living behaviors. Throughout the year, PBSLs participate in weekly cohort-based dialogues and workshops to develop leadership skills to effectively engage peers and promote a culture of sustainability on campus.



Project: Student Organizations

Leah Driehost, Anna Pohlman, and Zoe Knaus

Sponsors: Santone Pope-White and Scott Fletcher,
Center for Campus Involvement



Problem: Hundreds of student organizations at U-M purchase supplies each year. Of these supplies, many are purchased for a specific event and are only used once or rarely after purchase. A campus-wide survey showed that the non-food items most commonly purchased by U-M student organizations are swag/merch, tech tools, and marketing/art supplies.

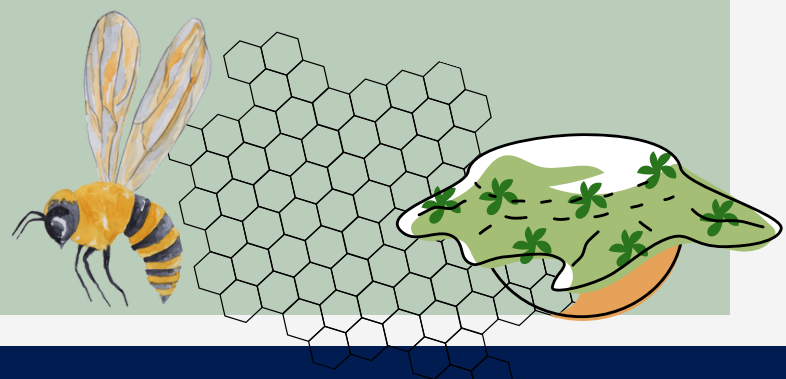
Intervention: Piloting a student org resource library out of the Center for Campus Involvement front desk. Groups could borrow commonly-used supplies like HDMI cords, adapters, markers, long-arm staples, paint, and Bluetooth speakers. PBSLs tabled in the IdeaHub to market the new program. Although interest was high, the use of materials was minimal during the seven-week pilot.

Recommendations

- Expand the resource hub and relocate it to the IdeaHub or another more visible location within the Union.
- Potentially make similar supplies available at Pierpont or other North Campus site.
- Couple this expansion with a robust marketing campaign that begins in the Fall and is included in OrgLead, advisor training, and other forms of student org leader training.
- Add a clause to student org constitutions outlining the policy for returning borrowed items.
- Consider also adding optional language to constitutions about committing to sustainable purchasing and behaviors.

Workshop

Because food came up in our survey as the most purchased item by student organizations, we wanted to do something creative to address single-use plastic waste from food. To promote the practice of reuse and waste reduction, our team hosted a beeswax wrap workshop as a fun activity where students made their own reusable food wraps.



Project: Residential Dining

Katja Foreman-Braunschweig, Lindsay Gooch,
Bea Kaskie, and Grace Barron
Sponsors: Keith Soster & Mike Dorer, M-Dining



Problem: MDining offers many socially and environmentally sustainable options in dining halls. Students are more likely to use the dining halls if they feel comfortable and at home. We learned that some students with meal plans don't dine in residence halls because of the mess left behind by other diners. Our project focused on encouraging students to clean up after themselves in dining halls to make the spaces more palatable to potential diners. In the long term, these behaviors contribute to a culture of social sustainability, respect for workers, and community care.

Intervention: Our pilot in East Quad Dining Hall had three components: carts with cleaning supplies in two locations in the dining hall to make cleaning more convenient; print communication near the cleaning supplies to draw attention to their use; and prompts on tables to remind students to use the supplies. It was unclear how effective our initial intervention was, but we believe with more time to evaluate, there would be an observable change in student behaviors.



Recommendations

- Several highly visible and convenient cleaning stations with sanitation wipes, paper towels and cleaning supplies in all dining halls with prominent
- Signage on the cleaning stations indicating that these supplies are for diners to use.
- Digital signs and posters of students cleaning up after themselves to establish a social norm.
- Attention-grabbing stickers on all tables reminding students to bus and wipe down their tables.
- Additional reminders near dish return and exit doors

Soap Making Workshop

We hosted a from-scratch soap-making workshop to encourage cleanliness and foster social sustainability. This workshop brought students together to learn a new skill of soap-making that they can continue to learn and develop as fun and sustainable practice.



Project: On Campus Housing



Sarah Shaw-Nichols, Bailee Duke, Jonah Hurley, and Melissa Oz
Sponsor: Amir Baghdadchi, University Housing Administration

Problem: Overconsumption and unsustainable disposal of clothing by students contributes to plastic waste, use of energy & water, and the production of fast fashion. Students *want* to shop at thrift stores and hand down clothes they no longer wear, but have difficulty doing so without a car.



Intervention: We encouraged students living in Bursley and East Quad to consult the "buyerarchy of need" (above) when searching for new clothes. We used a number of strategies:

- Donation bins in participating dorms
- Clothing swap events for residences - with the added benefit of building community in each hall
- A clothing upcycling/mending workshop
- PBSL Instagram posts and stories to communicate the event and highlight thrifted fashion
- Additional marketing through UM Housing social media and other channels of resident communication

Recommendations

- Permanent donation bins in community centers at every dorm.
- Monthly donation swap in rotating dorms throughout the school year.
- Team of student employees who run swaps and check donation bins weekly.
- Education about fast fashion's negative impacts through Student Life and Housing communication channels
- Education, spaces, and resources for creative upcycling and the *buyerarchy of needs*, similar to the Creative Suite in West Quad

Upcycling Workshop:

We taught students skills to prolong the life of their clothes or alter swapped clothes to their liking. We focused on quick and accessible upcycling techniques like t-shirt cropping. At our workshop, we provided:

- Sewing kits
- Scissors
- Buttons and clasps
- Elastic
- Patch fabric



Project: Off Campus Housing



Rena McRoy, Hugo He, Carinna Baird, Leah Kidder

Sponsors: Mark Simmonds & Zoë Sernyak, Beyond the Diag

Problem: Students who cook for themselves **waste food** due to lack of experience and know-how to prolong its life, especially when it comes to fresh produce. There are many simple and inexpensive recipes that students can prepare at home to extend the shelf life of perishable food.

Intervention: We hosted a pickling workshop and provided free pickling kits, recipes, and instructions in the hope that by social diffusion, students would learn and adopt sustainable food preservation habits, ultimately leading to less food waste. We offered Blue Bucks rewards to students who taught their friends food preservation techniques. Later in the term, we handed out additional pickling kits at the Maize and Blue Cupboard.



Results

- Workshop Attendees: 7
- Students trained by workshop attendees: 15
- Free Kits Dispersed: 74
- Total number of students provided with resources and skills: 96

Recommendations:

- Provide continuous access to free pickling kits at the Maize and Blue Cupboard.
- Offer workshops that teach students skills to prolong the use of fresh foods that often go to waste through pickling. Later, expand workshops to highlight preservation techniques (eg repurposing leftovers, making breadcrumbs).
- Target all students, not just those living off-campus.

This project will promote a culture of shared community and sustainability through preparing food together while saving students money on food costs.

Student Engagement

PBSL Podcast

Carinna Bair, Lindsay Gooch, Sarah Shaw-Nichols, Zoe Knaus

Topics: sustainability on the ballot, how sustainability became so individualistic, eco-tourism celebrity greenwashing, and more.

The podcast had its first episode about eco-feminism on WCBN.



PBSL Events

Bea Kaskie, Jonah Hurley, Leah Driehorst, Rena McRoy

- Two holiday trivia nights with questions about everything sustainability, from conservation to university composting.
- Craft night: activities included turning old t-shirts into new fabrics and felting dryer balls & more
- Total attendance: 95+ students



PBSL Blog Posts

Anna Pohlman, Bailee Duke, Katja Foreman-Braunschweig, Leah Kidder

- Authored 12 posts for the Planet Blue Ambassador Blog
- Topics included a guide to sustainability clubs on campus, an eco critique of *The Last of Us*, and sustainability in the bathroom.
- Posts reached 800+ readers

PBSL Social Media

Grace Barron, Hugo He, Melissa Oz

- Launched @umich_pbsl Instagram
- Celebrated second-hand fashionistas on PBSL team on TikTok and Instagram
- Took over @umichstudents account to promote EarthFest
- Showcased workshops by each PBSL team

PBSL was a wonderful way to learn more about sustainability on campus, my personal passions within the field, and be supported by such an amazing community. It truly showed me more about the value that climate action not only brings to our community, but my own life and career as well!

Lindsay Gooch
Sophomore, Program in the
Environment / International Studies



The highlight of my year was tabling at HarvestFest with other PBSLs. Even though we got caught in the rain, it was super fun to connect with students about sustainability! Being able to engage with our community about the things we're passionate about has been such an amazing experience.

Bailee Duke
Sophomore, Environmental Engineering

I was a member of the DEIJ team. Early in the year, we led a workshop about the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing. Later in the semester, we hosted a wellness break emphasizing the importance of self-care and reflection while organizing community action. We hope that these two initiatives advanced PBSL's priorities to develop just leadership skills that fundamentally center community care.

Bea Kaskie
First-year, Program in the Environment / Earth & Environmental Sciences

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend a big THANK YOU to everyone who has supported our team this year:

Thank you to our Pod Advisors who provided expertise and mentorship and supported our creative endeavors in pod creations:

Kelly Jones - Blog Pod Advisor

Neeka Salmasi - Podcast Pod Advisor

Cat Diggs - Program & Events Pod Advisor

Bella Lowe - Communications Pod Advisor



A special thank you to our Project Sponsors who collaborated with us in developing projects that promoted sustainable behaviors across campus:

- Amir Baghdadchi, Senior Associate Director, University Housing Administration
- Keith Soster, Director of Student Engagement for Michigan Dining
- Michael Dorer, General Manager for East Quad Dining Hall
- Santone Pope-White, Administrative Assistant for the Center of Campus Involvement
- Scott Fletcher, Grad Intern for Student Development through the Center for Campus Involvement
- Mark Simmonds, Program Manager for Beyond the Diag
- Zoe Sernyak, Grad Intern for Beyond the Diag

A very special thank you to PBSL Lead Facilitator Emily Freeland



STUDENT LIFE
SUSTAINABILITY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Planet Blue Student Leaders

541 Thompson St

West Quad G240

Ann Arbor, MI 48109 USA

sustainability.umich.edu/pbsl

planetbluestudentleader@umich.edu