

August 6, 2019

Dear Department of Creative Writing,

In the wake of Hurricane Florence and Bill McKibben's visit to UNCW, we formed 350 Wilmington, a climate activist group. This was our response to a newfound urgency to help solve the environmental crisis. We began working to catapult UNCW and Wilmington into action on climate issues through a divestment campaign, a Green New Deal petition drop, Youth Climate Strikes, op-eds, Project Drawdown community workshops, and countless meetings with our peers and fellow organizers.

The more that we have gained traction as an organization, the more we have realized that we are not doing nearly enough to get peoples' attention. We need to disrupt our daily lives. There is no point in pretending normalcy; we are not protecting the earth that our homes, schools, and lives are built upon.

We are going on strike to demand meaningful climate action during September 20th-27th, and we are asking for your participation and support.

Our introduction to Bill McKibben and 350.org through UNCW's Creative Writing Department has completely changed our lives and what we know as quintessential to our continuance as students and people. We have been inspired to express our anxieties and fears in a healthy and productive way, and with continual support from the department, we have come together as human beings in a community willing to imagine a hopeful future.

There is hope in education, and you, our guides, further our understanding of ourselves and the world. We look up to you as change-bringers and thought-provokers, the voices we need to hear when we have been silenced or unable to speak.

This strike is an international action led by Greta Thunberg, Fridays for Future, the Sunrise Movement, and US Youth Climate Strike, who called on adults in a [recent op-ed](#) to join them in their weekly Friday strikes:

“Once again our voices are being heard on the streets, but it is not just up to us. We feel a lot of adults haven't quite understood that we young people won't hold off the climate crisis ourselves. Sorry if this is inconvenient for you. But this is not a single-generation job. It's humanity's job. We young people can contribute to a larger fight and that can make a huge difference.

So this is our invitation.”

Please join us as a department in striking for the week of September 20th-27th and participate in the following events (more details to come):

- Day 1 (Sep. 20th, Fri) Walk-out // Cape Fear Die-in
- Day 2 (Sep. 21st, Sat) Community Day // Plastic Ocean Project Grand Opening and 4th Annual Native Plant Festival
- Day 3 (Sep. 22nd, Sun) Get to Know Your Local Arboretum // Sustainable Tree Canopy Workshop with Arboretum Director, Lloyd Singleton
- Day 4 (Sep. 23rd, Mon) #EarthFriendlyILM // Rewarding Earth-Friendly Businesses
- Day 5 (Sep. 24th, Tues) Workshops on the Water // Community Educational Workshops, Food and Fun
- Day 6 (Sep. 25th, Wed) Voting Day // Voting Registration, Information Stations Across ILM, etc.
- Day 7 (Sep. 26th, Thur) Art Day // Paint the Streets for Mother Earth

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- Day 8 (Sep. 27th, Fri) A Word to Mother Earth // Mini-Conference, Writing Contest, Open Mic Celebration

We are excited to join this global youth movement to bring the Climate Strike to Wilmington for a week-long, artistic learning opportunity that will include local businesses, family-friendly activities, educational events, and celebrations. The goal of the strike is to empower and build public support as well as to encourage us all to act on global warming solutions that align with our passions and everyday lives.

By doing this, we are asking for the time needed to listen to the community and figure out what it needs from us, both as writers and people. As such, we have found that our responsibilities lie in devoting service and our valuable time to the most valuable cause—our home.

Let's call this the beginning of a conversation on partnering in this movement for climate justice. We appreciate your time and look forward to collaborating with you.

Sincerely,

Noelle Powers and Lindsay Lake
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