



RESEARCH THAT INSPIRES ACTION

BRAND POSITIONING &
MESSAGING GUIDELINES



The University of Vermont

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document provides guidance on how to communicate the Gund Institute brand to our key audiences.

In the Brand Story section, you’ll find guidance on how to explain the “what”, “why”, and “how” of the Gund Institute.

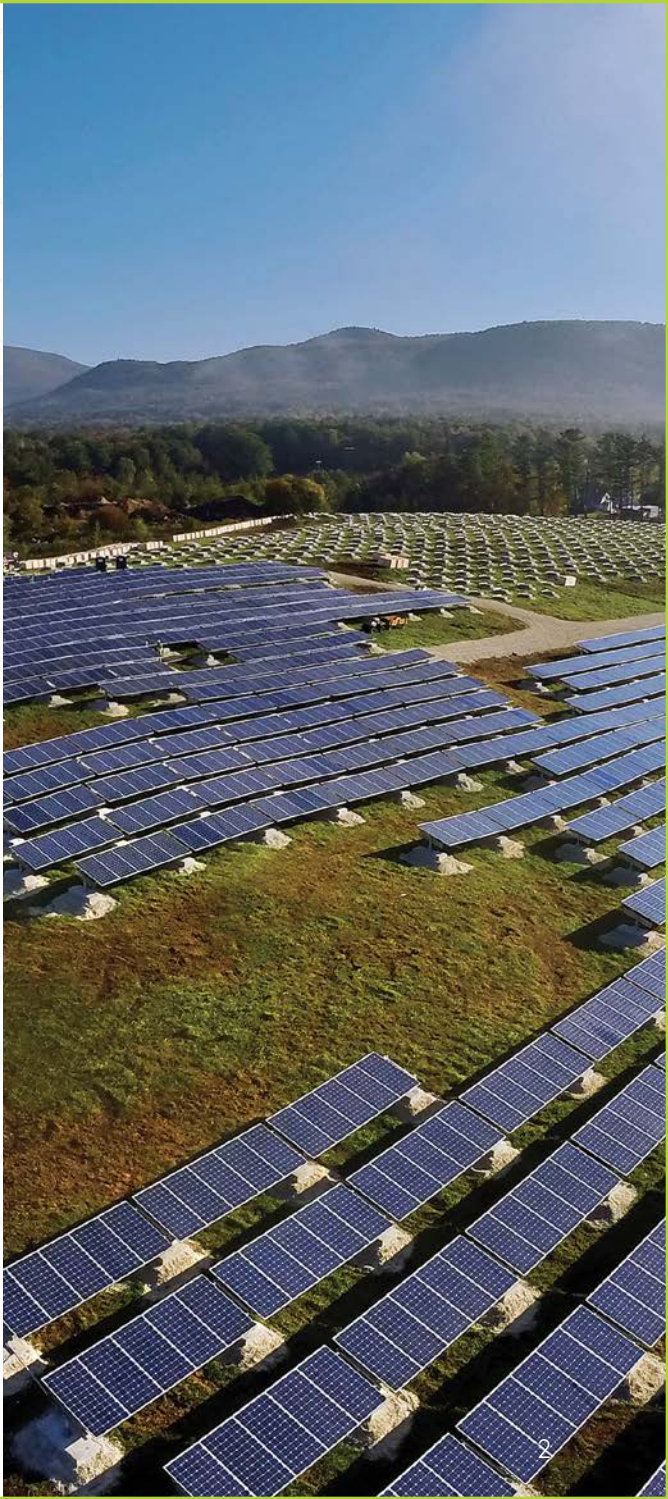
In the Brand Tools section, you’ll find examples of the brand story delivered in audience-ready messaging, plus other tools to help clarify and reinforce our brand position.

BRAND STORY

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A woman with dark hair, wearing glasses, a light blue surgical face mask, and a black leather jacket, is crouching in a forest. She is holding a vibrant red maple leaf between her fingers, examining it closely. She is also wearing a silver watch on her left wrist and a blue wristband. In the background, another person wearing a white face mask and a red and black plaid shirt is also crouching, looking down at the ground. The forest floor is covered with fallen yellow and orange leaves, and there are some small white flowers. The scene is set in a wooded area with trees and foliage in the background.

SECTION ONE
BRAND STORY

Research
isn't enough
to solve our
environmental
problems.

We need
action, too.



WHAT WE DO

WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH, WORLD-CHANGING IMPACT

The Gund Institute for Environment mobilizes scholars and decision makers to understand and tackle critical environmental challenges.

Driven by the belief that research should inspire action, we work in partnership with stakeholders from government, business and broader society.

We focus our research on five interconnected themes, each of which is essential to creating a sustainable future for people and the planet:

- Climate solutions
- Health and well-being
- Sustainable agriculture
- Resilient communities
- Equity and justice

WHY WE EXIST

THE PLANET'S BIGGEST PROBLEM IS PACE

Globally, we often know what's required to sustain a world where people and nature can thrive. The real problem is pace. To tackle global environmental challenges, we need cross-sector collaboration driving innovative solutions — and we need it now.

We envision a world where the urgency of our environmental challenges is matched with bold action. This vision inspires our nimble approach to research and our focus on partnerships that deliver real-world impact.





HOW WE WORK

SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

The Gund Institute takes an integrated approach to developing solutions for a healthy environment and a healthy society. We do this in three ways:

- **CONNECT** scholars across multiple disciplines, and with policy makers, business leaders, and communities;
- **CATALYZE** innovative ideas by funding and leading world-class research on the most pressing environmental issues;
- **SOLVE** urgent environmental problems with solutions and partnerships that inspire bold action.

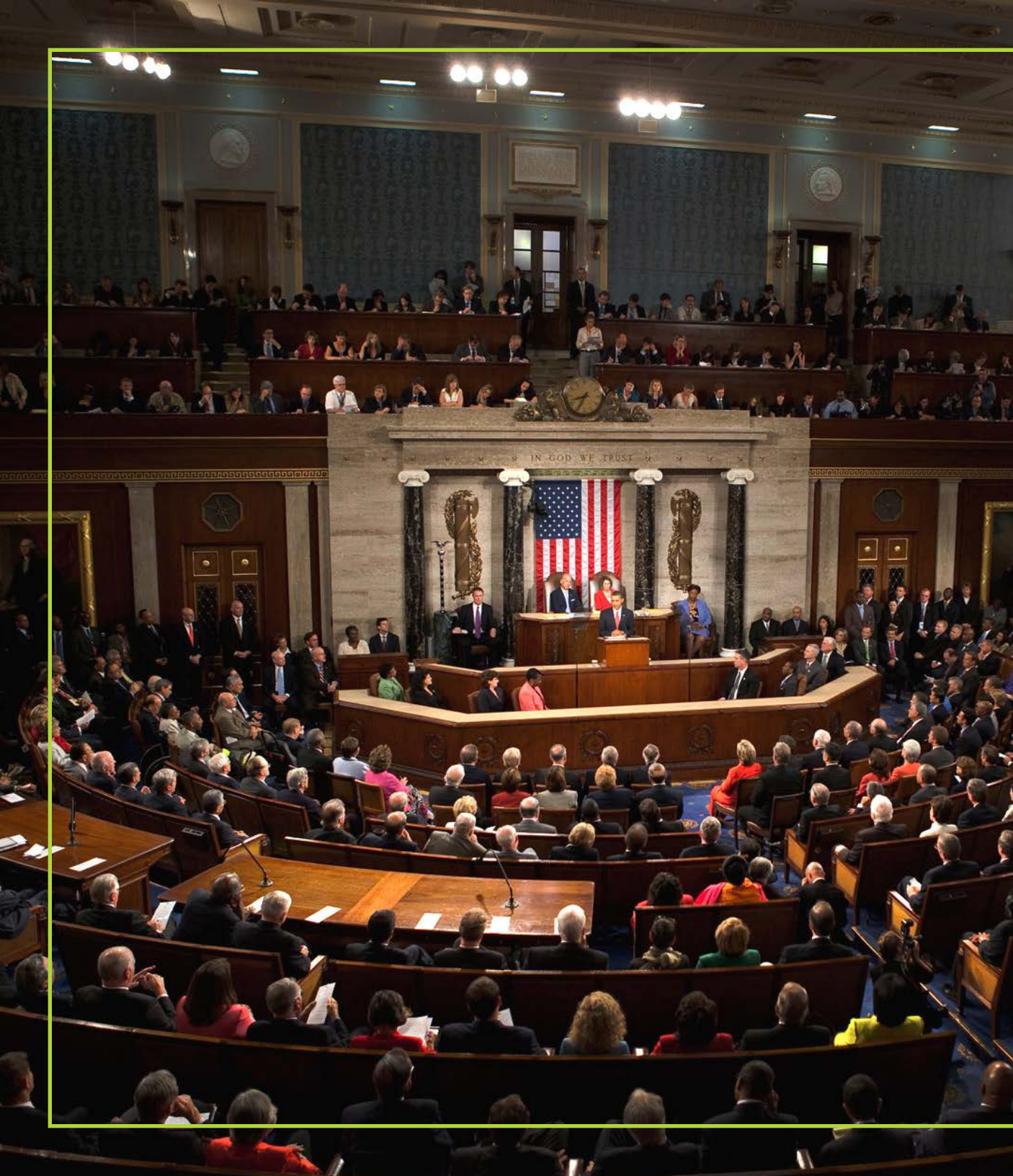
HOW WE WORK

DIVERSITY DRIVES DISCOVERY

The Gund Institute unites scholars from across the University of Vermont's academic ecosystem with a global network of leading researchers.

With expertise in the natural and social sciences, business, health, technology, engineering, and the humanities, the Gund Institute community harnesses the diverse perspectives of multiple disciplines to tackle the pressing environmental issues of our time.





HOW WE WORK

POWERED BY PARTNERSHIP

We believe that partnering with external stakeholders as research collaborators—rather than research consumers—leads to research that inspires action. By bridging the gaps between academia, government, business, and communities, we increase the potential for insight, innovation, and ultimately impact.

We're proud to count many leading global, national, and local organizations among our partners, including: **Ben & Jerry's**, **Johnson & Johnson**, **Microsoft**, the **United Nations**, the **United States Congress**, **The Nature Conservancy**, and **federal and state agencies**.



SECTION TWO BRAND TOOLS

BRAND STRATEGY

SUMMARY

BRAND TRUTH

We believe **research should inspire action.**

MISSION

Mobilize scholars and decision makers to understand and tackle critical environmental challenges.

VISION

We envision a world where the **urgency of our environmental challenges is matched with bold action.**

STRATEGY

Integrated approach to developing solutions for a healthy environment and a healthy society:

- **Connect** scholars and leaders
- **Catalyze** innovative ideas
- **Solve** urgent environmental problems

RESEARCH THEMES

Five interconnected themes:

- Climate solutions
- Health and well-being
- Sustainable agriculture
- Resilient communities
- Equity and justice

This brand summary captures the essence of the Gund Institute brand strategy. The messaging examples in this document all work to tell this brand story in the best way for their intended channels. Reach for this page whenever you need to create a new communication from scratch and would like guidance on where to start.

BOILERPLATE

THE GUND INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENT

ABOUT THE GUND INSTITUTE

The Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont is a research center dedicated to understanding and tackling the world's most critical environmental challenges. Driven by the belief that research should inspire action, the Institute takes a cross-sector approach to solving environmental issues with stakeholders from government, business, and broader society. The Institute focuses on five interconnected research themes: climate solutions, sustainable agriculture, health and well-being, equity and justice, and resilient communities. With over 200 scholars in Vermont and across the world, the Institute brings together a network of internationally recognized researchers from diverse disciplines, including the natural and social sciences, business, health, technology, engineering, and the humanities.

ABOUT UVM

Since 1791, the University of Vermont has worked to move humankind forward. Today, UVM is a Public Ivy and top 100 research university of a perfect size, large enough to offer a breadth of ideas, resources, and opportunities, yet small enough to enable close faculty-student mentorship across all levels of study, from bachelor's to M.D. programs. Here, students' educational experience and activities are enriched by our location — from the energy and innovation of Burlington to the forests, farms, and independent spirit of Vermont. UVM provides students endless ways to explore the world, challenge ideas, and dig in on the most pressing issues of our time.

Note: Our practice is to use the UVM boilerplate when appropriate. Please consult with the Office of University Communications for the latest version.

WEB COPY — THEMES

GUND RESEARCH THEMES

SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

The Gund Institute focuses on five interconnected themes, each of which is essential to creating a sustainable future for humans and the planet.

We believe that research should inspire action, which is why our themes connect directly to global policy priorities, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This alignment helps foster collaboration with policymakers and business leaders, and helps create greater impact in the world.

Gund research themes are:

- Climate solutions
- Health and well-being
- Sustainable agriculture
- Resilient communities
- Equity and justice

The connections between the themes surface powerful research questions. We tackle these questions with interdisciplinary research that harnesses many of UVM's areas of academic strength, including economics, public health, ecosystem services, complex systems, remote sensing, renewable energy systems, regenerative agriculture, and agroecology.

The Gund Institute advances these themes through all of its major activities, including Catalyst Award seed grants, recruitment of new Fellows and Affiliates, Fellowships to early career scholars, Visiting Scholars, and events.

WEB COPY — THEMES

GUND RESEARCH THEMES *Continued*

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

The undeniable urgency of climate change is being felt in communities around the globe and throughout the natural world. Gund scholars are rising to the challenge, pursuing groundbreaking research to help limit global warming and prepare for the impacts of a changed climate.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Society has long known that nature supports human lives, but the environment's full potential to influence health is only just being understood. Gund researchers are expanding the boundaries of this understanding by exploring causal links through which nature impacts the full spectrum of human health and well-being.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Food systems sit at the intersection of human and environmental health, raising vital questions about how we can feed nine billion

people while supporting ecosystems for generations to come. Gund researchers are tackling these challenges, working towards a future where agriculture — and the natural world it depends upon — can thrive.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

As the global trend towards urbanization continues, human settlements are impacting the natural world that surrounds them — and in return are under pressure from a changing climate, mass migration, and population growth. Gund scholars are working to unlock solutions that support healthy, sustainable, and resilient communities.

EQUITY AND JUSTICE

Marginalized communities are disproportionately affected by environmental problems, yet they are frequently excluded from decisions that shape the world around them. Gund researchers are searching for environmental solutions to address inequities and injustices based on socio-demographic factors including race, gender, and income.

WEB COPY — RECRUITMENT

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

MAKE IT HAPPEN HERE

The Gund Institute seeks exceptional postdoctoral researchers to work on solving the world's most critical environmental challenges.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We're seeking early-career scholars who are ready to pursue groundbreaking research that targets our interconnected research themes. Inspired by the idea that diversity drives discovery, we welcome applicants who bring diverse perspectives to their work and to the Gund community. To match the urgency of the issues we work on, we're looking for scholars who share our belief that research should inspire action.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

As a Gund Postdoctoral Fellow, you'll pursue your research as part of a diverse and action-oriented community of scholars. You'll be connected to the transdisciplinary academic ecosystem here at the University of Vermont, and to our global network of leading researchers. Located in a small, vibrant city with easy access to mountains, lakes, and forests, the Gund Institute is plugged into Vermont's innovative policy landscape — an ideal backdrop for researchers seeking to test out ideas with the potential for global scale.

FELLOWSHIP BENEFITS

These two-year positions have an annual salary of \$52,000 plus benefits and a \$5,000 per year discretionary fund for research costs and travel. Postdoctoral Fellows also benefit from professional development opportunities, including the Gund Leadership Academy.

VERBAL

20-SECOND PITCHES

FOR CORPORATE PARTNERS & FUNDERS

“The Gund Institute is a research center dedicated to tackling the world’s most critical environmental challenges. We believe one of the planet’s biggest problems is pace — it simply takes too long for innovative solutions to work their way through worlds of academia, policy, and business. Our response is to break down the silos that have kept scholars working in single disciplines, and to connect them with decision makers in broader society. This revolutionary approach leads to better understanding, more momentum — and to research that inspires action.”

FOR TALENT RECRUITMENT

“The Gund Institute at the University of Vermont is a research center dedicated to tackling the world’s most critical environmental challenges. We believe research should inspire action, so we work across academic disciplines and with partners in government, business, and broader society to advance environmental solutions for people and nature.”

VERBAL / WRITTEN

FAQ

WHY DOES THE GUND INSTITUTE SAY “RESEARCH SHOULD INSPIRE ACTION?”

The environmental challenges we work on aren’t just interesting problems to be solved — they are fundamental to the health of all people and nature. We believe the best way to ensure research inspires action is to focus on problem-oriented questions in partnership with the stakeholders who can help test, validate, and scale environmental solutions.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING PART OF UVM FOR GUND RESEARCHERS AND PARTNERS?

The rich academic ecosystem at UVM means we’re able to harness the potential of University-wide strength areas as diverse as human health, economics, energy, and agriculture. Our location in Burlington offers the benefits of a small, vibrant city with easy access to mountains, lakes, and forests. And our relationships with leaders and communities across Vermont connect us to a fertile political and business ecosystem with a reputation for developing innovative solutions related to land use, environment, and sustainability.

VERBAL / WRITTEN

FAQ

“WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF GUND RESEARCH INSPIRING REAL-WORLD ACTION?”

Gund scholars used big data approaches to create a series of breakthrough global **studies showing that children who live near forests experience better nutrition and less disease**. The research analyzed USAID data to help the agency, governments, and NGOs use environmental conservation as a public health tool, in conjunction with traditional approaches.

Gund scholars used **novel techniques to examine the impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. seafood industry** just as Congress was preparing to reauthorize additional CARES Act support. Their approach cut the time needed to gather data and meant lawmakers were able to understand the implications for fisheries.

Gund scholars are **leading the Vermont Climate Assessment**, an ambitious new study that seeks to guide statewide action under the Vermont Global Warming Solutions Act.

Gund research and **testimony on endangered wild bees contributed to the creation of a new Vermont law** banning neonic pesticides, and impacted state agency programs, including new staff positions focused on pollinator conservation. This follows the creation of the first national U.S. map of wild bee declines, led by Gund researchers.

Gund **research on payment for ecosystem services and floodplains has been cited by numerous Vermont policymakers** seeking to reduce phosphorus runoff, protect communities from floods, and improve soil quality across the state.

HEADLINES

Primary

RESEARCH THAT INSPIRES ACTION

Secondary

WORLD-CLASS RESEARCH, WORLD-CHANGING IMPACT

THE PLANET'S BIGGEST PROBLEM IS PACE

SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

DIVERSITY DRIVES DISCOVERY

POWERED BY PARTNERSHIP

MOBILIZING MINDS, INSPIRING ACTION

These headlines help highlight key parts of the Gund brand story. They can be used on promotional materials, social posts, and web content.

SOCIAL BIO



This example is written for Twitter, which is the most constrained bio format at 160 characters. For platforms with more available space, consider incorporating messaging from the “What We Do” section on p.5.

FINE-TUNING

MESSAGE EMPHASIS

Some key areas of messaging emphasis are shown below. The messages in the second column aren’t wrong — but the messages in the first column are a truer reflection of the Gund Institute brand story.

A LITTLE MORE

We **tackle**
environmental challenges

We partner
with **decision makers**

The desired outcome
is **action**

We work on
sustainable solutions

Protecting the environment
for humans

A LITTLE LESS

We address
environmental challenges

We partner
with leaders

The desired outcome
is research

We work on
sustainability solutions

Protecting the environment
from humans

BECAUSE

Where possible, we emphasize our focus on inspiring and taking action with kinetic language.

Decisions impacting the environment happen at all levels of society, not just with holders of power.

Research is the core of our work but doesn’t happen in a vacuum: we approach it with the decision makers who are responsible for — and impacted by — the implementation of solutions.

Sustainability is often seen as a function within business; our focus is broader, it’s about sustainable life on Earth for people and nature.

Humans are part of nature — and without viable natural ecosystems, our species would have no future on this planet.

FINE-TUNING

IMAGE EMPHASIS

Where possible, seek to use photographs that reinforce our focus on research that inspires action. People collaborating and taking action is generally preferable to solo shots or static portraits.

GOOD



EVEN BETTER





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The University of Vermont

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