



**MOLLOY
UNIVERSITY**

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Mission

Molloy University, an independent, Catholic University rooted in the Dominican tradition of study, spirituality, service, and community, is committed to academic excellence with respect for each person. Through transformative education, Molloy promotes a lifelong search for truth and the development of ethical leadership.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Through academic excellence, our values and guiding virtues, leadership, and collaboration, Molloy University strives to identify barriers to equity and inclusivity for members of our community. Molloy University will actively work to dismantle all structures of oppression so that all students, faculty, staff, and administrators are recognized and honored as integral to the success of the institution.

The University is committed to embodying a welcoming and supportive environment in keeping with our Catholic and Dominican heritage and mission defined by an understanding that our community draws strength from our differences. Molloy seeks to nurture attitudes and behaviors that promote global awareness, inclusive sensibilities, and respect for individuals' diverse experiences as informed by race, religion, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, (dis)ability, ideology, and other expressions of human difference and allow for respectful dialogue (disputatio) on issues of importance. As part of this commitment, Molloy denounces all forms of bigotry and bias.

Consistent with the above declaration and Catholic and Dominican values, Molloy asks every member of the community to recognize their responsibility to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and active dismantling of structural oppression. Recognizing that our institution has work to do to achieve our goals, all members of the Molloy University community are collectively responsible for actively:

- promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all planning, policy, decision-making, procedural, administrative, and academic operations throughout the University.
- standing up against any behavior or action that is diversity-intolerant, exclusionary, and/or discriminatory.
- promoting a campus environment that continuously works for greater equity through leveling access of opportunity for all.



Land Acknowledgment

We pause to acknowledge that Molloy University is located on lands once home to Indigenous Peoples, including the Lenape, the Montaukett Indian Nation, and Indigenous Peoples who resided in the Massapequa, Merrick, and Rockaway territories. We recognize the long and complex history that has brought us to these lands, and we seek to understand the ongoing impact of settler colonialism and its influence on the cultures and heritages of Indigenous Peoples. We remember and acknowledge our connections to Indigenous Peoples and appreciate the opportunity to live and learn on this land. We honor Indigenous Peoples of the past, today, and generations to come.

Table of Contents

06	Message from the President
07	Message from the Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion
08	Molloy Opens Center for Multicultural & Intercultural Affairs
10	Student Organizations Host Over 60 DEI Events During the Year
13	Kisha Chandler Recognized for Outstanding Leadership in Education and Equity
14	Reflect! Celebrate! Act! — 2025 MLK Jr. Day of Service at Molloy
18	New and Continuing Initiatives
22	Girl Scouts of Nassau County Honor Rebecca Martinez
24	The Evolving Story of Jewish Life at Molloy University
26	Celebrating AAPI Heritage Through Art and Cultural Engagement
28	New and Continuing Initiatives
34	Molloy Opens Military and Veterans Student Lounge in Public Square
38	New and Continuing Initiatives
42	Strengthening the STEM Pipeline Through Partnership and Purpose
44	Dr. Mitchell Recognized with Two Regional Awards
46	New and Continuing Initiatives
50	6th Annual “Unity through Diversity: Celebrating All Abilities in the Arts”

Accessibility

For a more accessible version of this report, please contact mi@molloy.edu.



Message from the President

At Molloy University, our Catholic, Dominican mission compels us to see the inherent dignity in every person, to pursue justice with compassion, and to foster a community that provides opportunities for all individuals. The values that ground our institution—community, service, study, and spirituality—are not just guiding principles; they are calls to action. Nowhere is this more evident than in our continuing efforts to create a supportive and nurturing environment on our campus for a community of learners from all backgrounds.

This year's annual report of our activities to further mission integration activities captures the spirit and substance of our calling. It reflects the many ways our community has engaged with the vital work of building a more just and compassionate campus.

Highlights from this year include the powerful MLK Day of Service, where our students, faculty, and staff came together in acts of solidarity and service. We also celebrated the opening of the Military and Veteran Student Lounge, a space of respect and welcome for those who have served our nation. And our Center for Multicultural and Intercultural Affairs continues to be a vibrant hub for education, dialogue, and celebration across cultures and identities.

These efforts—and so many more represented in this report—reflect a deep commitment to living out our mission not only in word, but through action. They are reminders that our work to support the community we serve is a core expression of who we are as a Catholic and Dominican institution.

As we look ahead, we do so with hope, resolve, and a clear sense of purpose. May this report inspire continued reflection, collaboration, and courageous action as we strive to embody the fullness of our mission in every corner of our community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Lentini". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James P. Lentini, D.M.A.
President, Molloy University



Message from the Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion

Dear members of the Molloy community and friends,

As we reflect on the past academic year within this report, the work of diversity, equity and inclusion remains essential. While challenges to the values that underpin our founding mission are abundant, the present moment calls us to lean more deeply into our Dominican ideals with clarity, courage, and conviction.

I firmly believe our commitment to building a campus where every student, faculty member, and staff member is seen, supported, and empowered to thrive has never been stronger, but there is still much work to do. Rooted in our shared Values and Guiding Virtues and sustained by the strength of our community, we continue to create spaces for thought-provoking dialogue, embrace difference as a source of strength, and strive to make justice and belonging daily realities.

This report offers just a peek into the meaningful work happening across campus—from classroom innovations and cultural programs to structural shifts that advance the mission first set forth by the Sisters of St. Dominic of Amityville in 1955. These efforts reflect a shared responsibility and collective belief that the diversity of experiences, perspectives, and backgrounds at Molloy is not only a strength—it is a gift.

Thank you to all who pursue this work with intention, integrity, and hope. It is one of my greatest honors to walk alongside you in this journey.

In community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DJ Mitchell'.

Donald "DJ" Mitchell Jr., Ph.D. (he/him/his)
Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion



Molloy Opens Center for Multicultural & Intercultural Affairs

On October 21, 2024, Molloy opened the doors to its new **Center for Multicultural & Intercultural Affairs**, marking a significant milestone in the institution's ongoing commitment to student belonging. The celebration began with a reception and ribbon-cutting ceremony, welcoming students, faculty, staff, and community members into the newly dedicated space.

The Center, housed under the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, serves as the University's primary hub for multicultural and intercultural student programming. Designed to be both a resource and a refuge, it supports Molloy's increasingly diverse student body by fostering cultural exchange, community building, and cross-cultural understanding.

"This space was created to reflect and respond to who our students are today," said Dr. Donald "DJ" Mitchell, Jr., vice

president for mission integration and inclusion. "Multicultural Centers began to emerge in the 1960s and 70s during the Civil Rights Movement, as colleges began to diversify following the end of Jim Crow segregation. Molloy, founded in 1955 as a Catholic, Dominican women's college, didn't originally have the same need. But as you look around our campus today, our students represent the rich diversity of the world."

Indeed, 2024 marked a historic shift for the University





when it achieved Hispanic-Serving Institution status—an official recognition of the changing demographics and growing representation on Molloy's campus. "Our mission has always centered on truth, community, and service," Mitchell continued. "The Center allows us to live out that mission in new ways, by ensuring that all students feel seen, valued, and supported as they pursue their education at Molloy."

Beyond serving students, the Center plays an important outward-facing role in advancing the University's long-standing commitment to inclusive excellence. It aims to build stronger cultural literacy across campus and bolster external awareness of Molloy's mission-driven work in diversity, equity, and inclusion. In fact, the Center has garnered nearly \$30,000 in donor support since its opening with a lead gift from John D. Cameron, Jr.

The opening celebration closed with a live performance at the Madison Theatre. Renowned Ghanaian jazz pianist and composer Victor Dey Jr. and friends delivered a concert that brought the day full circle—connecting cultures, generations, and musical traditions in an expression of

multiculturalism and community.

As the Center begins its journey, it stands as a tangible representation of Molloy's dedication to creating a welcoming and affirming environment for all students—rooted in the University's Dominican Catholic heritage and guided by its bold vision for the future.





Student Organizations Host Over 60 DEI Events During the Year

The 2024–25 academic year was another strong one for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming at Molloy University. Student organizations remained steadfast in their commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment. Programming throughout the year celebrated cultural heritage and religious traditions while promoting cross-cultural learning and community connection.





Many of the most well-attended and positively received events were led by student cultural organizations, which offered over 60 DEI events during the year. Highlights included Molloy Hillel's Shabbat celebration, the South Asian Student Association's Mock Shaadi, the African American Caribbean Organization's *For the Culture* party, the Molloy Asian Student Association's *Squid Games*, the Molloy Muslim Student Association's Iftar, and *Culture Fest*—a collaborative effort by Molloy Student Government, the Campus Activities Board, and MolloyLife Media.

These events exemplify Molloy University's commitment to cultivating an inclusive campus where students from diverse backgrounds can proudly share their cultures and traditions, while encouraging others to learn, engage, and form meaningful community connections.

Molloy's student organizations continue to play a vital role in supporting students with shared identities and creating opportunities for cultural education. The impact of their efforts is evident not only in event participation but also in the lasting relationships and community bonds that continue to flourish across campus.

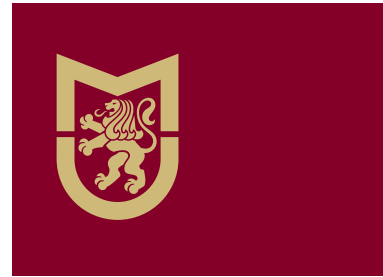


Our student-led DEI events are often headed by the following clubs and organizations:

- **African American Caribbean Organization**
- **Best Buddies**
- **Club Italia**
- **InterVarsity Christian Fellowship**
- **Latin America Student Organization**
- **Leadership, Education, and Awareness of Disabilities Club**
- **Molloy Asian Student Association**
- **Molloy Hillel**
- **Molloy Lion Steppers**
- **AAMN Molloy Men in Nursing**
- **Molloy Muslim Student Association**
- **Neurodivergent Journal Club**
- **South Asian Student Association**
- **SPECTRUM Club**



Kisha Chandler Recognized for Outstanding Leadership in Education and Equity



In 2025, Kisha Chandler, director of the LHVCCUC LSAMP Program at Molloy, received two distinguished honors celebrating her commitment to advancing equity in education.

She was named Education Leader of the Year by the Latina Business Network of New York, Inc. at the Herencia y Esperanza Gala. The event recognized individuals whose leadership has positively impacted Latino communities and advanced educational opportunity and empowerment across Long Island. She also received a citation from Nassau County Executive

Bruce Blakeman in recognition of this honor.

Chandler was also awarded the Bartolomé de las Casas Award at Molloy's 2025 President's Award Ceremony. The award honors individuals who exemplify a deep commitment to social justice, inclusion, and advocacy for marginalized communities—values central to Molloy's mission.





Reflect! Celebrate! Act!—2025 MLK Jr. Day of Service at Molloy

On Monday, January 20, 2025, Molloy held its Seventh Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, embodying the theme *Reflect! Celebrate! Act!* by transforming the holiday into a meaningful day of learning, community, and service. Despite snowy conditions, nearly 130 attendees—including local high school students—gathered on campus to honor Dr. King’s legacy through meaningful engagement.



The event began with reflection, led by Dr. Lisa Zakiya Newland, professor and chair of the Department of Social Work. Her keynote, *“Cultivating Call and Response for Service and Social Action,”* called on attendees to embrace service as a lifelong commitment to justice.

Following the keynote, the celebration continued with a mini resource fair and a diverse set of hands-on service workshops, including Smile Bags, Literacy Care Packages, Hands-Only CPR, NARCAN Training, and Skilled Nursing & Rehab Center Care Packages. Guests also explored the Long Island Black Artists Association presentation and exhibit,

which added an enriching cultural dimension to the day.

Attendees expressed deep appreciation in their feedback, praising Dr. Newland’s message, the spirit of community engagement, and the chance to participate in meaningful acts of service. Participants valued the opportunity to learn practical skills, support underserved communities, and connect with others through shared purpose.

The day concluded with a community buffet lunch, music, and a raffle featuring a bright red Coca-Cola bicycle. Generous support from Liberty Coca-Cola, JP Morgan Chase,



members of the Nassau Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the Molloy community helped bring the event to life.

Angela Zimmerman, director of development and alumni relations, has been involved in the Day of Service since its inception. Reflecting on her continued commitment, she shared, “The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is more than a moment—it’s a movement. It reminds us that the most powerful way to honor Dr. King’s legacy is through action, compassion, and community. These values also align well with the Dominican charism we have been entrusted with at Molloy University. I have been involved in this initiative at Molloy since its beginnings and continue to do so because choosing service as a way of life, every day, is something I deeply believe in.”

The success of the day is largely due to Jacqueline Williams, executive assistant for mission integration and inclusion. Williams co-chairs the day and manages most of the logistics. “We strive to inspire our volunteers to take action in improving our local communities as we honor Dr. King’s legacy. It’s been amazing to witness the growth of the MLK Day of Service throughout the last seven years, made possible by the generosity and dedication of so many,”

shared Williams.

With an overall satisfaction rating of 4.89 out of 5, the 2025 MLK Day of Service stood as a testament to Molloy’s ongoing commitment to social justice, equity, and service. The event invited all in attendance to *Reflect* on Dr. King’s teachings, *Celebrate* the power of community, and *Act* in service to others—reinforcing that the holiday is not a day off, but a day on.





2024-2025 MLK Day of Service Committee

- › Donald “DJ” Mitchell, Jr., Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion, Co-Chair
- › Jacqueline Williams, Executive Assistant, Mission Integration and Inclusion, Co-Chair
- › Carolyne Ali-Khan, Associate Professor, Education
- › Susan Alimonti, Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders
- › Marcia Caton, Associate Professor, Nursing
- › Daiana Cepin, Undergraduate Coordinator, School of Business
- › Lorraine Emeghebo, Associate Professor, Nursing
- › Charnette Ferril-Krummenacker, Adjunct Faculty, Nursing
- › Karen Johnson, Job Coach, Healthcare Workforce Development
- › Elizabeth Mandracchia, Communications and Events Coordinator, School of Arts & Sciences
- › Michael Malinowski, Campus Minister, Campus Ministries
- › Michelle Martin, Director, Mission and Ministry
- › Max Renner, Assistant Professor, Digital Humanities and New Media
- › Michael Rosino, Assistant Professor, Sociology
- › Fran Wisnewski, Associate Professor of Education
- › Angela Zimmerman, Director, Development & Alumni Relations



Dr. Lisa Newland, Professor and Chair of Social Work, delivers the MLK Day of Service Keynote Address



NEW AND CONTINUING INITIATIVES

Acting Justly and With Kindness in All Our Endeavors



In celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month 2024, the Department of Languages and Cultures hosted *Empowering Hispanic Voices: A Presentation and Round Table Discussion on Leadership and Representation*. The event featured keynote speaker Gabriela Castillo, Esq., deputy counsel for the Minority Caucus of the Nassau County Legislature, who was introduced by Dr. Susana Rubio, professor of Hispanic studies. Castillo spoke about her work in local government and her advocacy within the Hispanic community on Long Island, emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and representation. A roundtable discussion followed, featuring Castillo; Marcos Navarrete, vice president of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO); Dr. Enrique Martínez-Bogo, professor and chair of the Department of Languages and Cultures; Dr. Luis Landrón, professor of Hispanic studies; and Tierina Peña, financial wellbeing coach serving Latino communities in New York City. The event was co-sponsored by LASO and the Siena Center for Social Justice.

► The Office of International Education has introduced new initiatives to broaden equity and access to global learning opportunities for both students and faculty. These include joining the SUNY Collaborative Online International Learning Global Network to support faculty in developing virtual exchange programs; implementing a new process

for submitting, prioritizing, and selecting short-term, faculty-led, course-aligned international programs in collaboration with the Deans and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; and revising both student and faculty travel policies and handbooks to ensure greater transparency and inclusivity.

► In collaboration with faculty from the Department of English and the Department of Mathematics & Computer Science, the School of Arts & Sciences has continued its transition away from remedial coursework by implementing more equitable, credit-bearing corequisite courses in math and English composition. Based on the CUNY model, these courses embed academic supports directly into credit-bearing classes, eliminating the need for students to complete non-credit remedial prerequisites. Additionally, the school has expanded access to free, intensive immersion refresher courses in math and English offered during summer and winter intersessions, providing students with alternative pathways to meet proficiency and succeed in credit-bearing coursework.

► Molloy University's School of Nursing & Health Sciences leads a biannual medical outreach mission to underserved communities in Jamaica, West Indies. This global health initiative offers free medical, nursing, and pharmacy services, while immersing students and faculty in culturally responsive care. The outreach promotes health equity and cross-cultural understanding, directly aligning with the University's commitment to global citizenship and service.

► The Educational Leadership for Diverse Learning Communities (Ed.D.) program continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to DEI through its scholarly programming and student research. Events during the 2024–25 academic year included a community forum on supporting im/migrant students' mental health, a virtual fireside chat on equity-minded leadership featuring Dr. John Coverdale, and a leadership panel with local superintendents focused on navigating change in diverse school systems. Notably, 17 students completed dissertations that reflect DEI-centered inquiry, with topics such as Black parent engagement, culturally responsive teaching, DEI

practitioners' experiences in independent schools, and school belonging among Black and first-generation college students. These efforts underscore the program's mission to prepare equity-focused leaders equipped to transform educational institutions and communities.


► The Mentoring Latinas program, led by the Office of Experiential Learning & Community Engagement, supported 20 high school students from Freeport and Roosevelt during the 2024–2025 academic year. Paired with 10 Molloy student mentors, participants met weekly to explore college and career pathways. Coordinated by a graduate assistant, the program featured sessions with Molloy's STAP and TRIO programs, Financial Aid, and the Mother Cabrini Workforce Development Initiative, with additional support from Ocean Financial Credit Union, which led a financial literacy workshop. Each year, the program hosts a Latina professional to share her journey. This year's speaker was Helen Liriano, vice president of finance & administration at Long Island Cares, whose participation was facilitated by Kisha Chandler, director of the LHVCCUC LSAMP Program. The year concluded with a Broadway trip to see Buena Vista Social Club and a celebration for graduating seniors, where—for the first time—a Mentoring Latinas Scholarship, funded by Ocean Financial, was awarded to a participant enrolling at Molloy.

► The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) at Molloy University hosted nine student-centered events in Fall 2024 and eleven in Spring 2025, supporting academic success and professional development. The program proudly celebrated the graduation of eighteen seniors.

► Dr. Suzanne Sorel, professor of music therapy, served as the coordinator of the Music Therapy Equity and Inclusion



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The Leaders for Racial Justice Program supported a cohort of 12 students who engaged in a series of training sessions during the fall semester, facilitated by three trained student leaders."

Collective, a group committed to promoting inclusive practices within music therapy education and professional development. In support of identity-based dialogue and support networks, Dr. Sorel also coordinated the Music Therapy Affinity Groups for the academic year. Finally, Dr. Sorel organized and facilitated the "Musicking & Reflecting" event, a space for students and faculty to engage in communal music-making and critical reflection on issues related to equity, social justice, and inclusion.

► As part of its DEI-informed mental health programming, the Student Counseling Center (SCC) delivered a Summer Workshop Series focused on culturally responsive psychoeducation for first-year students—a population identified as vulnerable through the SCC's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Suicide Prevention grant. Topics included keeping healthy in college, stress management and mindfulness, healthy relationships and boundaries, and managing transitions and homesickness. Each virtual session addressed how intersecting identities and lived experiences can shape health and wellness needs. In addition, SCC hosted Pre-Season Snacks and Crafts, a five-part series for student-athletes that promoted mental health awareness and created direct connections with campus clinicians to encourage help-seeking behaviors. Another key initiative, Say Suicide for RAs, equipped resident advisors with skills to identify at-risk students and respond to mental health concerns through a lens attentive to the impact of identity and experience. These programs collectively supported campus inclusion by enhancing access to mental health resources for students from diverse and vulnerable populations.

► The Long Island ESOL Symposium, Equity for Multilingual Learners Through Collaboration and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, was held virtually on January 27, 2025. Organized by the School of Education and Human Services (SOEHS) TESOL Department in collaboration with NYS TESOL,

Long Island R-BERN, and numerous school districts, the symposium brought together educators and professionals serving multilingual learners from Pre-K through adult education. Montserrat Garibay, assistant deputy secretary and director for the Office of English Language Acquisition and senior advisor for labor relations at the U.S. Department of Education, delivered the keynote address. Drawing from her own experiences as a multilingual learner, Ms. Garibay shared how her identity shaped her personal and professional journey and encouraged educators to challenge students while celebrating their linguistic and cultural assets. What began as a small local event has grown into an international gathering, drawing over 200 participants from across New York State, the tri-state area, and states including Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Tennessee, Ohio, Virginia, South Carolina, and Florida—as well as international attendees from Italy, Brazil, Argentina, China, Kenya, Morocco, Turkey, and Trinidad. The symposium continues to serve as a significant platform for advancing equity and culturally sustaining practices in the education of multilingual learners.

► The Leaders for Racial Justice Program supported a cohort of 12 students who engaged in a series of training sessions during the fall semester, facilitated by three trained student leaders. The program provided participants with tools for dialogue, allyship, and anti-racist leadership grounded in Molloy's mission of truth, respect, and social justice. Upon completing the training, the cohort organized the "Voices for All" event, which fostered a campus-wide conversation about accessing DEI support and cultivating inclusive spaces at Molloy.

► Dr. Chandler Patton Miranda, assistant professor of education, chaired the Education Summit, a faculty-led initiative composed of 15 members from the Schools of Education and Human Services and Arts and Sciences. This year, the summit convened over 150 educators, social workers, mental health professionals, school counselors,

and administrators. Centered on the theme “Cultivating Compassion: Collaborative Approaches to Supporting Im/migrant Students’ Mental Health in Long Island and NYC Schools,” the event explored strategies to foster care, collaboration, and well-being for im/migrant students and their families.

► The Molloy University chapter of the National Student Speech-Language and Hearing Association (NSSLHA) is composed of undergraduate speech-language pathology and audiology majors. The chapter earned Bronze status from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association for its efforts. In Fall 2024, members raised funds through a multicultural bake sale to support the NSSLHA scholarship and a charity walk for individuals with communication disorders. They also hosted a Scholastic Book Fair to benefit Molloy’s Communication Sciences and Disorders (CDS) DEIA Scholarship and volunteered during Winter Fun Day, which included story time and character photo opportunities for local children. In Spring 2025, NSSLHA collaborated with Molloy Student Government to plan and execute a successful raffle fundraiser for Bethany House, an organization supporting women and children experiencing homelessness. Additionally, NSSLHA members volunteered at the Fourth Annual CSD Convention and hosted a peer-led panel to support SLPA majors navigating the graduate school application process.

► The formation and leadership of Molloy University Men in Nursing aims to foster diversity within the nursing profession. This initiative connects students to the University’s four pillars—community, service, study, and spirituality—through mentorship, outreach projects, and leadership development. It also challenges gender stereotypes in healthcare and creates a supportive space for nursing students.

► Dr. Orsolya Varkonyi, assistant professor of clinical mental health counseling, made significant contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion through 14 DEI-focused presentations at the national, institutional, and professional levels during the 2024–2025 academic year. She facilitated three nationwide webinars aimed at equipping counselor educators with culturally responsive strategies to support diverse student populations, including immigrant-origin and marginalized learners. At Molloy, she led three interactive workshops focused on multicultural counseling, trauma-informed practices, and equity in student support services. In addition, Dr. Varkonyi presented at five national conferences, advancing scholarship on the wellness needs of immigrant and Latina college learners, the impact of race-based trauma, and systemic inequities in higher education. Her work consistently emphasized intersectionality, advocacy, and culturally affirming approaches, positioning her as a leader in DEI efforts within counselor education.

► The Faculty Professional Center, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Blended and Online Learning, hosted a series of workshops throughout the academic year to support inclusive and accessible pedagogy. Workshops included *Crafting Inclusive Learning: A Proactive Approach to Digital Accessibility*, led by Laurie Hallick, instructional designer, which introduced key digital accessibility principles and strategies for creating inclusive course content. Dr. Kate Myers-Coffman, adjunct faculty, facilitated *Designing Inclusive Syllabi Part I: The Why*, which explored anti-oppressive frameworks for syllabus development and examined how bias and systemic inequities show up in academic materials. *Antibleism and Access at Molloy*, facilitated by Dr. Hia Datta, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, addressed ableist structures in higher education and provided tools and guidance to help faculty foster more inclusive classroom practices. *Accessible Course Design: Implementing Universal Design for Learning*, led by Dr. Mary Ryder, instructional designer, focused on incorporating Universal Design for Learning strategies to enhance accessibility in online courses. These workshops reflect Molloy University’s commitment to advancing equity through faculty development in inclusive teaching practices.





Girl Scouts of Nassau County Honor Rebecca Martinez

Rebecca Martinez, assistant director of career services, was honored with the Impact Award by the Girl Scouts of Nassau County.

The award recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership and commitment to empowering youth in the community. Martinez's work in career development and mentorship has made a meaningful

impact on students at Molloy and beyond. She was recognized at a special awards ceremony, which included community leaders and advocates for girls' empowerment.





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The Evolving Story of Jewish Life at Molloy University

By Leora (Keehn) Linder, Class of 2024



Jewish life on college campuses plays a vital role in fostering cultural continuity, identity, and interfaith understanding during a formative time in students' lives.

Molloy's commitment to Jewish representation and dialogue dates to 1968, when Rabbi Tanenbaum—known for his scholarship on Jewish-Christian relations—delivered a lecture titled *Religion in a Period of Upheaval* to an audience of over 300 people. Just a few years later, in 1971, the Jewish Chautauqua Society donated a substantial collection of Jewish literature to Molloy. Presented by Rabbi Philmore Berger and Mr. Emil Honig of Temple Avodah in Oceanside, New York, the gift was meant to promote understanding of Jewish faith and traditions among Christian students on campus.

Throughout the 1970s, Molloy made significant strides

in promoting interfaith education. The introduction of the Paschal Seder Supper served as a symbolic and educational event that illuminated the historic connection between the Jewish Passover Seder and the Last Supper. These annual dinners, attended by more than 150 students, created a shared space for Jewish and Christian students to celebrate and reflect together.

During this same period, Molloy reached another milestone with the appointment of its first Jewish professor. Rabbi George Lieberman's course offered students an opportunity to explore Jewish history, religion, and contemporary Jewish life—broadening the academic and

spiritual horizons on campus.

Jewish life continued to flourish in the 1990s. In 1999, the Center for Christian-Jewish Studies was founded with the mission to deepen interfaith dialogue and understanding through seminars, book reviews, panel discussions, and lectures. This center became a beacon of interreligious engagement on Long Island and contributed lasting resources to the university's intellectual and spiritual archives.

As the Center phased out in later years, Jewish life on campus saw a decline. But in 2012, a group of students from the Nursing and Music Education departments revived Jewish engagement by founding Molloy Hillel. Part of the world's largest and most inclusive Jewish campus organization, Hillel provided a safe and welcoming space for Jewish students, while also inviting the broader campus community to learn about Jewish traditions and culture. As these students graduated, Hillel activity declined, and for a time, Jewish events disappeared from the campus landscape.

In 2020, a new chapter began. By 2022, Jewish students at Molloy received approval to reestablish Hillel, marking a significant renewal of Jewish life at the university. With support from the Division of Student Affairs and leadership from Rabbi Dave Siegel, who oversees Hillels throughout Nassau County, Molloy Hillel began to grow once again.

This revitalization brought with it a host of meaningful programs and opportunities. Events such as Yom HaShoah memorials, Challah bakes, Shabbat meals, cultural fairs, bake sales, and learning fellowships reconnected the campus with Jewish traditions. The group also partnered with the Interfaith Center, hosted panels with diverse religious leaders, and participated in interfaith conferences to promote coexistence and collaboration among student leaders of different faith backgrounds.

Today, Jewish life and Hillel continue to thrive at Molloy University, with aspirations to grow further and remain a source of education, celebration, and community for all who wish to participate.





Celebrating AAPI Heritage Through Art and Cultural Engagement



In May 2025, Dr. Hwa Young Caruso, professor of art, represented Molloy's Art Department in the Group Art Exhibition: Celebration of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, held at Babylon Town Hall. The event was sponsored by the United Asian American Alliance and hosted in partnership with the Asian American Task Force of Long Island and the Town of Babylon.

As part of this cultural diversity initiative, Dr. Caruso showcased her artwork alongside fellow artists in recognition of AAPI contributions to the arts and society. In acknowledgment of her participation and service to the

community, she received a *Certificate of Special Recognition* from Babylon Town Supervisor Richard Schaffer and a *New York State Assembly Citation* from Assemblyman Khaleel M. Anderson.



Monday - Thurs
8am - 10pm
Friday
8am - 8pm
Saturday



NEW AND CONTINUING INITIATIVES

Transforming Our Communities

From January to March 2025, the School of Arts & Sciences hosted *"Our Creative Journey,"* an art exhibition showcasing the work of the Long Island Black Artists Association, celebrating Black artistic expression and cultural heritage. On February 3, the English Department and the African American Caribbean Organization co-sponsored the annual African American Read-In, fostering literary appreciation and dialogue around African American authors. In alignment with Black History Month, Professor Max Renner hosted students from Baldwin High School on February 28 for an interactive experience with the vMLK exhibit, which recreated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches using virtual reality technology to deepen historical understanding and civic reflection.



Latino/a/e/x Affinity Group

► Molloy University's Lung Force Leadership Team—comprising nursing and respiratory care faculty and students—advanced health equity through asthma awareness and lung health education in 2024–2025. Led by faculty members Dr. Loren Dempsey, assistant professor of nursing, Dr. Geraldine Moore, professor of nursing, Dr. Heather Reens, assistant professor of nursing, Megan Ventrello, instructor of nursing, and Elaina Bongiovanni, clinical instructor of respiratory care, the team included student leaders from the Molloy Nursing Student Association: Jiana Babu, Lily Gosin, Victoria LoGiudice, Catherine Reilly, and Lindsey Stevenson. The team provided asthma education and lung health training to underserved communities, presented a research poster at the National Student Nurse Conference, and participated in the American Lung Association's Lung Force Walk. Their outreach also earned them the 2025 Community Service Award from Molloy Student Government.

► The Office of Admissions advanced Molloy University's DEI goals through a series of initiatives. Highlights include the launch of Mia, an AI recruiter that offers 24/7 multilingual admissions support in a bias-free environment, and participation in Niche's Direct Admissions program. The team conducted 51 on-site admissions events, nine college application workshops, and three college panels, as well as five targeted visits to community-based organizations serving underrepresented students. Admissions also facilitated two major college fairs at Molloy and participated in 61 additional fairs across the region, including Empower My Hood and Spanish-language financial aid workshops.

► In February 2025, the Cardiovascular Technology Club hosted two events that highlighted health equity and cultural competency in medical practice. The Heart Diversity event featured speakers from the Nursing Department and student presentations exploring disparities in diagnosing and treating patients from diverse backgrounds. The program emphasized how race, ethnicity, and cultural

identity can impact cardiovascular care and outcomes. Additionally, in honor of Black History Month, the club organized an event recognizing Black medical professionals and the challenges they have historically faced in the field. The discussion centered on the resilience and contributions of Black practitioners, offering students insight into both past and present struggles for equity in healthcare. (Picture 15b)

► The Office of Student Success and Assessment sponsored the second annual Student Success Book Discussion, a monthly gathering that brought together employees from across academic schools and administrative departments. Participants read and discussed *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk* by Tia Brown McNair, engaging in thoughtful dialogue about leveraging DEI data to guide institutional decision-making and enhance student success. The series fostered cross-campus collaboration and idea sharing, all centered on improving outcomes for students. Building on the momentum of this initiative, the third annual discussion will continue in the upcoming academic year with *Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier* by Arthur C. Brooks and Oprah Winfrey.

► Sister Alice Byrnes, professor of English and communication, incorporated DEI-focused programming into her Children's Literature courses by inviting author Bill Kiley to present on his book *Hope and Freckles: On Their Journey in Search of a New Forest*, a children's story that explores the experiences of refugees and the challenges they face in adapting to new environments. Additionally, Sister Alice collaborated with the Heritage Calendar Committee to organize an interactive presentation titled "Black Lives Matter: Reflections from Children's Picture Books," in recognition of African American History Month.

► Molloy's Community Care mobile clinic brings students from clinical mental health counseling, communication sciences and disorders, education, music therapy, nursing, and social work into Long Island communities who face

The Office of Student Success and Assessment sponsored the second annual Student Success Book Discussion, a monthly gathering that brought together employees from across academic schools and administrative departments."



barriers to accessing traditional care to provide no-cost health and wellness screenings, education, and referrals. More than 2,000 community members received support from this project in 2024.

► Dr. Andrea Morgan-Eason, associate professor of nursing, and Dr. Jeanne Kimpel, assistant professor of sociology and anthropology, served as co-chairs of the Heritage Month Calendar Committee for the 2024–2025 academic year, leading a cross-campus effort that resulted in more than 15 events celebrating diverse cultures and perspectives. In the fall, the committee partnered with departments and student organizations to present Hispanic Heritage Month programming on Latino identity and Afro-Latino experiences; Native American Heritage Month, featuring a seminar on the Cheyenne in the Red River War by artist and historian George Curtis Levi; LGBTQ+ History Month, with sessions on gender, sexuality, healthcare, and safe spaces; and Disability Awareness Month, which included a workshop titled Rest, Repair, and Disability by Dr. Jennifer Scuro, associate professor of philosophy, and a neurodiversity documentary presented by Dr. Erin Reilly, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders, along with the Neurodiversity Club. Building on this momentum, spring programming included a dynamic Black History Month lineup with a children's literature workshop from the Department of English and a roundtable discussion on African American faculty experiences facilitated by Dr. Linda Silva Thompson, dean of student success and assessment. Women's History Month featured Money Moves: Women Making Their Mark

in Finance, a panel organized by Kisha Chandler, director of the LHVCCUC LSAMP Program. Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month offered Voices of Identity: A Celebration of Self-Expression, presented by the AAPI Committee. The year concluded with Allyship in Action, a workshop addressing anti-LGBTQ+ bias, reinforcing the committee's deep commitment to education, reflection, and inclusive engagement across the Molloy community.

► The Latino/a/e/x Affinity Group (LAG) hosted a series of events throughout the year that celebrated cultural identity, promoted community-building, and supported the broader goals of equity and inclusion. During Hispanic Heritage Month, in collaboration with the Siena Center for Social Justice, LAG held a film screening and discussion with director Magdalena Albizu. Her documentary explored cultural prejudices and unconscious biases surrounding Blackness, challenging false narratives and addressing colorism, colonial legacies, and the empowerment of Afro-Latina identity. In honor of Día de los Muertos, LAG Secretary Theresa Eaves, clinical counselor and project coordinator of the GLS Suicide Prevention Grant, led a culturally relevant self-care discussion and art activity, and the group also visited El Museo del Barrio to participate in cultural events celebrating the holiday. To celebrate the Christmas season, LAG organized a community potluck where members of the Molloy community shared traditional foods from their countries of origin. The year concluded with a festive end-of-year gathering at Papa Gallo, bringing together staff from across the University.

► In 2021, Molloy University's Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program was awarded a four-year, \$1.17 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to strengthen the behavioral health workforce serving vulnerable children and youth. Led by Dr. Laura Kestemberg, associate professor of clinical mental health counseling, the "C5: Changing Communities through Compassionate Counseling Children and Youth Program" has provided \$10,000 stipends to 74 CMHC graduate students, supports faculty and clinical site facilitators, and offers professional development for students in the Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Program. The initiative has expanded training partnerships across six New York counties—Bronx, Kings, Nassau, New York, Queens, and Suffolk—while increasing access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed care. New internship placements in the Freeport and Hicksville school districts allowed students to work directly with Black and Latino children, lead psychoeducation workshops, and support social-emotional learning. A free virtual workshop series further extends impact by engaging students, faculty, clinical supervisors, and community partners in learning from expert clinicians to better serve medically underserved populations.

► Dr. Michael Marino, assistant professor of chemistry, completed a course called "Fostering a Culture of Belonging" from the Association of College and University Educators. Fostering a Culture of Belonging is a four-module course in which instructors, staff, and leaders gain proven strategies to create a more equitable and just environment and promote a sense of belonging for students and colleagues. He also worked on several research projects for the 2024 CSTEP Summer Research Program.

► The Student Counseling Center (SCC), in collaboration with Ocean Financial, hosted a Financial Wellness workshop focused on budgeting and scam awareness. This initiative aimed to provide students with accessible financial literacy tools and guidance, recognizing the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds of the student body. By addressing financial wellness as a key component of overall well-being, the workshop supported SCC's broader efforts to promote equity and inclusion through culturally responsive programming.

► Dr. Noelle Cutter, associate professor of biology and director of First Year Experience (FYE), actively integrates DEI across her teaching in FYE, Honors, and General Education courses. In the FYE curriculum, DEI is deeply embedded, particularly in Module 11, which encourages critical reflection through in-class dialogue and DEI-centered activities. Earlier modules, such as those focusing on motivation, resilience, and emotional intelligence, support inclusive learning by promoting understanding of diverse perspectives. These

themes are further reinforced during First Year Social Hours through informal discussions and community-building exercises that foster empathy, active listening, and respectful engagement. In Honors, Dr. Cutter introduces students to environmental justice through the perspectives of Indigenous communities, women, and other historically marginalized groups. Students explore frameworks such as the Iroquois Seventh Generation Principle, examine the advocacy work of Winona LaDuke, and analyze the environmental burdens experienced by communities of color and low-income communities. Similarly, in the course "Rights of Nature," DEI is woven throughout the curriculum by centering marginalized voices and examining environmental justice from non-anthropocentric perspectives. Students engage with Indigenous ecological knowledge, legal personhood for natural entities, and complete reflective essays and biomapping projects that highlight the intersection of race, culture, and access to resources in environmental activism.

► Under the Mother Cabrini Healthcare Workforce Development grant, Molloy purchased virtual reality goggles and software to allow students to learn more about health inequity issues and how to address them. Faculty from social work, nursing, clinical mental health counseling, communication sciences and disorders, and respiratory therapy have been trained. The project was piloted with a small group in the spring.

► Dr. Debra R. Hanna, professor of nursing, presented a poster titled "When the Evidence is Missing: Using Evidence-based Research to Improve Health Equity" at the Sigma Theta Tau Epsilon Kappa Research Conference, held in Bronx, NY, in April 2025. Her presentation highlighted the critical need for inclusive, evidence-based approaches in addressing gaps that impact health equity.



2024-2025 Educational and Professional Development Opportunities Offered and Supported by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

21 Day Equity Challenge designed by the Employee Training and Development Committee of the DEI Committee in partnership with the United Way of Long Island

Anti-ableism and Access at Molloy organized by Dr. Hia Datta, associate professor and program director for Molloy's Undergraduate and Ph.D. Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders and DEI faculty fellow, and co-sponsored by the Faculty Professional Center

Association of College and University Educators' Learning Lab offered by the Council for Independent Colleges' Belong Network

Authentic & Actionable Allyship presented by Dr. Mary "MJ" McConner, Inclusive Excellence Consulting, LLC, as part of Human Resources' Equity Advocate Program

Becoming Equity Advocates During Searches and in the Workplace presented by Dr. Donald "DJ" Mitchell, Jr., vice president for mission integration and inclusion, as part of Human Resources' Equity Advocate Program

Communicating about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Effectively in Challenging Times offered by the Council for Independent Colleges' Belong Network

Designing Inclusive Syllabi Part I: The Why presented by Dr. Kate Myers-Coffman, adjunct faculty in music therapy, and co-sponsored by the Faculty Professional Center

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Molloy University for New Student Orientations and Residential Advisors presented by Dr. DJ Mitchell

Feeling Welcome: Connecting Through Conversations offered by the Council for Independent Colleges' Belong Network

Fostering a Culture of Belonging Microcredential offered by the Council for Independent Colleges' Belong Network

Implicit Bias presented by Dr. DJ Mitchell as part of Human Resources' Equity Advocate Program

The Three Es of Teaching with AI: Ethics, Equity, and Empowerment offered by the Council for Independent Colleges' Belong Network

What are attendees saying about Molloy's sessions?

- **100% of participants agreed the presenters were knowledgeable**
- **97% of participants thought their time was well spent**
- **96% of participants would recommend the sessions to a colleague**
- **95% of participants indicated they would apply what they learned in the sessions**





Molloy Opens Military and Veteran Student Lounge

On December 2, 2024, Molloy proudly unveiled the new Military and Veteran Student Lounge—a dedicated, first-of-its-kind space on campus designed to support the unique needs of student veterans. Located in the heart of the Public Square, the lounge has become a destination for military and veteran students, offering a welcoming environment for connection, reflection, and support.

This significant milestone reflects Molloy's ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of belonging, inclusion, and student success. As the student population continues to grow more diverse in experience and background, so too does the University's responsibility to provide spaces that recognize and honor those journeys. The creation of the lounge was made possible through thoughtful cross-campus collaboration among the Divisions of Student Affairs, Mission Integration and Inclusion, and Enrollment Management.

"The opening of the Military and Veteran Student Lounge has been a wonderful addition to the Molloy campus and has been utilized daily by student veterans," said Dr. Janine Biscari, vice president for student affairs and the primary facilitator of the lounge's development. "This dedicated space provides vital support for those who have served."





The ribbon-cutting ceremony drew a strong showing of campus leaders, local dignitaries, and community advocates. Honored guests included retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Jacqueline Gordon, Nassau County Director of Veteran Affairs Ralph Esposito, and Dr. Samin Sharma of Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital—all of whom commended the University's efforts to create a space that recognizes and responds to the unique contributions and challenges of military-affiliated students.

The lounge was thoughtfully designed to meet both the social and practical needs of student veterans. It fosters a sense of camaraderie and shared experience while serving as a resource hub where students can access and exchange information relevant to their academic and personal success.

This initiative aligns with Molloy's mission-driven values and underscores the University's broader dedication to providing inclusive spaces that honor the lived experiences of all members of the campus community.

As the Military and Veteran Student Lounge continues to evolve in its role, it stands as a powerful testament to what

can be achieved through intentional design, community partnership, and a deep respect for those who have served.



Molloy's DEI Committee

DEI Committee Membership and Charge

The DEI Committee is composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students. While there is no set number of committee members, diverse representation across Molloy's various schools and departments is essential during committee selection. After a university-wide nomination and application process, the Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion selects committee members in consultation with the President's Cabinet. Terms last up to two academic years. The Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion chairs or co-chairs the Committee. Co-chairs may be appointed by the Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion after committee formation.

The DEI Committee is responsible for advising the Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion and supporting, developing, and making recommendations to the Molloy community and its Governance Committees concerning university-wide DEI initiatives, planning, policies, and procedures.

2024-2025 DEI Committee

Donald "DJ" Mitchell, Jr., Vice President for Mission Integration and Inclusion, Co-Chair

Max Renner, Assistant Professor, Communication and New Media, Co-Chair

Melanie Arvanitis, Undergraduate Student, Psychology and Art

Brian Bajzek, Assistant Professor, Theology and Religious Studies

Smirna Yoc Bautista, Undergraduate Student, Accounting

Kritika Bedi, Undergraduate Student, Political Science and Philosophy

Rosa Berland, Adjunct Faculty, Art

Susan Bloom, Associate Librarian and Head of Instructional Services, JET Library

Kathy Brunet, Assistant Director, Center for Access and Disability

Daiana Cepin, Undergraduate Coordinator, School of Business

Carlos Dos Santos, Associate Director, Residence Life

Theresa Eaves, Clinical Counselor and Project Coordinator of the GLS Suicide Prevention Grant, Student Counseling Center

Lorraine Emeghebo, Associate Professor, Nursing

Betyne Farrell, Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership for Diverse Learners

Anna George, Associate Professor, Nursing
Tashia Green, Senior Assistant Registrar, Registrar's Office
Hyokyeong Lee, Assistant Professor, Mathematics and Computer Science
Amy Meyers, Professor, Social Work
Chandler Miranda, Assistant Professor, Education
S. Maureen Muir, Administrative Coordinator, Campus Ministries
Danielle Ortiz, Administrative Assistant, Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Jeannine Perrin, Administrative Assistant, The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy
Stella Pinzon-Goon, Program Coordinator, CSTEP
Erin Reilly, Assistant Professor, Communication Sciences and Disorders
Allison Roda, Associate Professor, Education
Michele Romandetto, Equity and Title IX Specialist, Human Resources
Stephanie Sage, Doctoral Student, Education
Layla Saied, Undergraduate Student, Music
Jason Schoen, Instructional Designer, Blended and Online Learning
Amy Smith, Graduate Student, Business Administration
Jorge Sosa, Professor, Music
Cindy Thomas, Faculty Affairs and Budget Specialist, Academic Affairs
Elizabeth Vidaurre, Associate Professor, Mathematics and Computer Science
Denae Wheeler, Master's Student, Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Special thanks to Jacqueline Williams, Executive Assistant for Mission Integration and Inclusion for her assistance throughout the year.

During the year, the DEI Committee made contributions to and participated in the following University efforts:

- **21 Day Equity Challenge**
- **University's Accessibility Website Revised**
- **DEI Grants**
- **Digital Accessibility Report Implementation Plan Progress**
- **Employee Training and Development**
- **Reviewed Academic Department DEI Statement**
- **Participated in University educational conversations with Kisha Chandler, Director, LHVCCUC LSAMP Program, Willie Everett, TRIO Program Coordinator, and Elissa Sharp, Assistant Provost for Planning and Strategic Analysis**



NEW AND CONTINUING INITIATIVES

Searching for Truth; Open to Each Other's Truth

Dr. Chandler Miranda, assistant professor of education, was selected as one of six new fellows for the American Educational Research Association's Fellowship Program on the Study of Deeper Learning. Supported by a two-year, \$35,000 grant, her research project—*"Deeper Learning for English Learners Through Identity Engagement"*—examines how deeper learning practices can be leveraged to support English learners by centering their identities and experiences. The fellowship runs through 2026 and reflects Dr. Miranda's ongoing commitment to equity-focused research and inclusive educational practices.



Dr. Freida Pemberton's, Professor of Nursing, Book Signing

► Dr. Kaitlin Brooks, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders, received a Human Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) grant under the Maternal Health Research Network for Minority Serving Institutions – Research Awards Program, in collaboration with colleagues from Mercy University, with Molloy University serving as a subawardee. Awarded in September 2023, the five-year grant—titled *Hispanic Mothers of New York Research Training Center (HiMNY-RTC)*—totals \$2,050,858, with \$212,743 allocated to Molloy. Dr. Brooks serves as co-principal investigator and community-based organization liaison for the project. The HiMNY-RTC aims to build research capacity focused on mental health and health disparities among Hispanic mothers while developing student scholars and delivering evidence-based community solutions through initiatives such as Molloy's Community Care Mobile Clinic.


► Dr. Andrea Honigsfeld, professor of education, was selected as an English language specialist for the U.S. Department of State.

► The Psychology Department was the first at Molloy to undergo a DEI audit through the DEI Faculty Fellowship program. The department collaborated with Dr. Kimberly Engels, associate professor of psychology and DEI faculty fellow, to assess courses with the broadest student reach, including General Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, and Developmental Psychology. Faculty reviewed course materials, readings, videos, and assignments to identify and highlight DEI inclusion. Dr. Engels then reviewed the materials with the department and provided recommendations for expanding DEI-related content in each course. As a result, the department now maintains an online library of DEI resources for a range of Psychology courses.

► The Black Equity Alliance Affinity Group (BEAAG) advanced its mission of promoting equity, inclusion, and the celebration of Black excellence through a dynamic slate of programming during the 2024–2025 academic year. Key events included a collaborative Welcome Back Event focused on shared leadership and strategic planning; a Veterans Day Tribute that encouraged community support; and a Holiday Celebration that fostered connection and camaraderie. BEAAG hosted a powerful Black History Month Program themed “Honoring Achievements, Embracing Diversity,” featuring interactive trivia, a segment on the History of Stepping, and a keynote presentation by DJ Mitchell, vice president for mission integration and inclusion, titled “*No Struggle, No Progress: Mapping the DEI Movement Through Black History in the United States.*” Faculty reflections emphasized resilience and cultural pride, adding depth to the program. In April, the group led a Legacy Tour of Harlem, offering participants a rich exploration of the neighborhood's historical and cultural landmarks. In May, BEAAG celebrated Dr. Freida Pemberton, professor of nursing and president of BEAAG, for her scholarly milestone with a campus-wide book signing for her newly published textbook, *Health Informatics and Program Creation: Taking Action Beyond the EHR*. The year concluded with a gathering at Dunns River Lounge, reaffirming BEAAG's ongoing commitment to academic excellence, cultural celebration, and inclusive community engagement.

► Held from January 2–11, 2025, the Experience El Salvador Service Trip was facilitated by the Office of Mission and Ministry in collaboration with the Sisters of St. Dominic and Dominican University New York. This international immersion included four Molloy students, three Dominican University students, and five Molloy alumni, who traveled to La Union, El Salvador. Participants led day camps for children in

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As part of its commitment to supporting vulnerable student populations, the Student Counseling Center (SCC) conducted psychoeducational workshops for all First Year Student (FST) Orientation classes during the 2024–2025 academic year.”

the remote communities of Sol Naciente, Once, and San Francisco. Through their work and interactions, they gained a deeper understanding of economic injustice and its impact on rural Salvadoran communities.

► The Office of Blended and Online Learning (BOL) advanced digital equity and inclusion by supporting faculty and students in hybrid and online learning environments through a robust series of workshops, courses, and resources focused on accessibility. BOL promoted awareness and usage of the Ally tool in Canvas, ensuring students are equipped with digital accessibility resources. To support faculty, BOL facilitated workshops including “Crafting Inclusive Learning: A Proactive Approach to Digital Accessibility” and “Accessible Course Design: Implementing Universal Design,” both of which centered on inclusive, student-focused course development. Professional development offerings included “Learning for All,” a course on Universal Design for Learning, and “Accessibility 101,” a self-paced course open to faculty, staff, and students. To further recognize and encourage accessibility leadership, BOL launched the Digital Accessibility for Educators Badge, a microcredential honoring faculty who demonstrate excellence in creating accessible course content. These efforts culminated in the faculty showcase, “Recognizing Excellence: Celebrating Faculty Achievements in Quality and Accessible Online Courses,” spotlighting the university’s commitment to inclusive digital learning.

► Dr. Jennifer Elliott, associate professor of psychology, collaborated with Dr. Kimberly Engels, associate professor of philosophy, to complete a DEI audit of two psychology courses. The audit focused on assessing and enhancing the integration of diversity-related topics within the curriculum. Additionally, Dr. Elliott is a member of the Working Mothers Affinity Group Committee, participated in the 21 Day Equity Challenge, and completed DEI Advocate training, making herself available to support inclusive hiring practices on faculty search committees.

► As part of its commitment to supporting vulnerable student populations, the Student Counseling Center (SCC) conducted psychoeducational workshops for all First Year Student (FST) Orientation classes during the 2024–2025 academic year. These sessions aimed to increase awareness of mental health and wellness resources available on campus, while helping students develop foundational skills to manage their mental health and well-being. The workshops also emphasized the role of intersectional identities and lived experiences in shaping mental health outcomes. First-year students, identified as a vulnerable population through the SCC’s SAMHSA Suicide Prevention grant, were a central focus of this initiative to promote early engagement and support.

► Wear Green and Be Seen is an annual campus-wide event hosted in partnership by the Health and Wellness Department, Athletics, and the American Suicide Foundation. The event engages students, athletes, and employees in psychoeducational games and activities designed to raise awareness about mental health and build suicide prevention skills. By combining interactive learning with visible community support, the event promotes mental wellness and reinforces Molloy’s commitment to a caring and inclusive campus environment.

► From July 20–27, 2024, the Office of Mission and Ministry coordinated the Appalachia Service Trip, an immersive experience in Mingo County, West Virginia. The program engaged 11 students and eight alumni in partnership with the Big Laurel Learning Center to lead a four-day sleepover camp for pre-teen and teenage boys living in intergenerational poverty. Designed to offer positive mentorship and exposure to higher education, the trip also invited participants to explore the intersection of poverty, privilege, and systemic inequality through daily reflection and meaningful community engagement.



► Preservice teachers engaged fourth-grade students at St. Brigid/Our Lady of Hope Regional School in interactive STEM challenges and math activities designed to support understanding of fraction concepts. The initiative reached a diverse student population and fostered early interest in STEM through culturally responsive and hands-on learning experiences.

► The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy proudly co-hosted its first Winter Sing-Along in collaboration with Molloy University's Heritage Month Disability Awareness Committee. The celebration began with a special performance at Molloy's annual President's Christmas Party, where The Rebecca Center's Lots O'Stuff group and Molloy's CAP21 students delivered a heartfelt rendition of "Jingle Bell Rock," emphasizing inclusion and connection. The festivities continued in the Hays Theatre, where participants from the Rebecca Center performed both group numbers and a solo feature, joined by group performances from Molloy's MOST (Molloy Opportunity for Successful Transition) program. The audience, which included families, the Molloy community, and residents, was encouraged to join in with lyric sheets for 12 holiday-themed songs, creating an atmosphere of warmth and joy. The evening also featured hot chocolate, cookies, and art activities, reinforcing the power of music and the arts to bring people together in celebration and inclusiveness.

► The Office of Experiential Learning & Community Engagement placed 55 Molloy students in community work-study positions across Long Island during the 2024–2025 academic year, contributing over 6,400 hours of service in nonprofit and educational settings. Placement sites included organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Long Island Children's Museum, and Bethany House, where nursing students provided tutoring and supported residents preparing for the New York State Certified Nurse Aide exam. Students select placements that align with their academic interests and career goals, gaining practical experience in areas such as youth development, nonprofit operations, and community engagement. To reduce barriers to participation, transportation stipends were introduced in Fall 2024.

► In collaboration with the Glory Health Initiative, Molloy faculty and students conducted a community-based medical outreach in Hempstead, NY. This local initiative provided free screenings, health education, and resource navigation services to underserved populations. It reflected the university's efforts to bridge health disparities and support communities disproportionately impacted by social determinants of health.



Strengthening the STEM Pipeline Through Partnership and Purpose

During the 2024-2025 academic year, the Lower Hudson Valley Catholic Colleges and Universities Consortium Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LHVCCUC LSAMP) marked the successful completion of its first year, thanks to a \$3.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). Molloy leads this seven-member alliance, which is part of a broader consortium of ten private Catholic colleges and universities across New York State.



The participating institutions include Molloy University, Manhattan University, Mount Saint Mary College, St. Francis College, St. John's University, St. Joseph's University New York, and St. Thomas Aquinas College. Together, these institutions are committed to transforming the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) landscape.

"This partnership and collaboration among seven Catholic universities is unique, creative, and noteworthy," said President James Lentini. "The multifaceted goal of the grant is to support students in STEM. This is important and valuable for the communities and populations we serve. It is good for the region."

The LSAMP program supports student success by

building a new generation of STEM discoverers and professionals. It takes a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to student development, focusing on retention, academic achievement, and long-term success. Central to the alliance's efforts is a framework grounded in fostering a strong sense of belonging—ensuring students feel connected, valued, and supported by faculty, staff, and peers alike.

"We are truly excited about this opportunity for our students and our institutions," said Donald "DJ" Mitchell, Jr., vice president for mission integration and inclusion, who led the grant effort over a two-year period. "While educating students in STEM is undeniably important, being able to

support them at institutions that care for their heads, hearts, and hands—guided by our Catholic traditions—is particularly special. That’s what we envisioned when we pulled the LHVCCUC together for this proposal, and we’re delighted that our vision is now a reality.”

Following a national search, Kisha Chandler—a valued member of the Molloy community—was appointed the inaugural director, bringing extensive experience and leadership to the initiative. “Leading the LHVCCUC LSAMP program is an incredibly fulfilling experience and privilege. What I find most rewarding is connecting with students—whether through conversations about their goals, celebrating their achievements, or engaging with them at educational and social events. The progress we’ve seen speaks volumes about the program’s immediate impact, and it brings a deep sense of pride to me and my colleagues,” shared Chandler.

Among the program’s first graduates was Doriah Thomas, who earned her biology degree from Molloy in 2025. “My LSAMP experience has been nothing but amazing,” said Thomas. “Having Kisha Chandler as my advisor was a truly impactful part of my academic journey. She was supportive and knowledgeable, and she also took the time to understand my goals and guide me with care and encouragement. Her mentorship helped me grow both academically and personally, and I’m incredibly grateful for the confidence she helped me build as I pursued research

and professional opportunities.” As part of her experience, Thomas conducted breast cancer research with Dr. Noelle Cutter, associate professor of biology and director of First Year Experience. Thomas’s work in the lab earned her the *Rising Star Award*, presented by Molloy’s Faculty Scholarship & Academic Advancement Committee.

“Given that the LHVCCUC alliance includes private Catholic Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and emerging MSIs within a geographically diverse region, the program could serve as a model for how similar institutions can strengthen STEM pathways for students,” said President Lentini. “The alliance will also help further establish our region as a hub for STEM academics and workforce development.”

Through collaboration, innovation, and shared mission, the LHVCCUC LSAMP program is helping to shape a more inclusive and impactful future for STEM education—one student, one institution, and one partnership at a time.





Dr. Mitchell Recognized with Two Regional Awards



Dr. Donald “DJ” Mitchell, Jr., vice president for mission integration and inclusion at Molloy University, received two prestigious regional honors in 2025.

Mitchell was named a Long Island Business News (LIBN) 2025 Impact and Inclusion Honoree, a distinction awarded to professionals who demonstrate exceptional leadership in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Honorees were selected based on their documented professional achievements and civic engagement. He was formally recognized at the LIBN Impact and Inclusion Awards & Summit: *Fostering Belonging in the Workplace*, held in March 2025.

Additionally, Mitchell was among a select group of men

recognized at the Moxie Mentoring Foundation’s 2025 MoXY Awards Nine & Dine event. This honor celebrates men and companies whose outstanding support of women in the workplace is transforming organizations and industries. The MoXY Awards emphasize the critical role of allyship and mentorship in women’s professional advancement. Held at Cold Spring Country Club, the celebration included a golf outing and dinner reception that brought together regional leaders committed to equity and empowerment.





NEW AND CONTINUING INITIATIVES

Reflectively Listening to Ourselves, Our God and to the Signs of the Times in Our Contemporary World



This year, the Center for Multicultural and Intercultural Affairs hosted a series of impactful events that advanced dialogue, inclusion, and cultural awareness across campus. Highlights included the unveiling of a land acknowledgment plaque honoring Indigenous communities, a Spiritual and Religious Diversity activity and discussion, and a fireside chat with Mrs. Naginder Singh titled “Tapestry of Experience – Living a Culturally Conscious Life.” The Center also partnered with the Latin American Student Organization to host a soccer viewing party. Beyond programming, the Center serves as a welcoming space where students can engage in conversations on social and religious topics, prepare for class, or simply take a moment to recharge.

► The CONNECT team—Dr. Erin Reilly, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders; Dr. Jaime Vitrano, assistant professor of psychology; Dr. Audra Cerruto, associate professor of education; Susan Alimonti, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders; Dr. Jenny LaMonica, assistant professor of art; Cari Rose-Tomo, director of the Center for Access and Disability (Access); and Leigh Weilandics, administrative assistant for Access—successfully led the third annual, two-week CONNECT Summer Transition Program for neurodivergent students in July 2024, welcoming a cohort of 11 participants. In fall 2024, the team launched the first full-year CONNECT program with a cohort of five students, who attended Molloy University either full-time or part-time while taking credit-bearing courses and participating in the CONNECT Lab, which supports executive functioning and socialization. The CONNECT program—a student-centered initiative for neurodivergent students—has now completed three successful summer sessions and one academic-year cohort.

► Dr. Anna George, associate professor of nursing, was recognized for her leadership and advocacy in advancing equity and representation within the nursing profession. She received a Certificate of Recognition from the Indian Nurses Association of New York (INANY) for her podium presentation during Nurse Practitioner Week. Her presentation, titled “Anti-Asian Hate and Bias,” addressed the discrimination faced by Asian communities and offered strategies for promoting cultural sensitivity in healthcare settings. Dr. George also served as President of INANY during the 2023–2024 term and was honored for her service at the Nurses Day Celebration in May 2025. That same day, she received a New York State Assembly Citation from Assemblywoman Michaelle C. Solages in recognition of her exemplary leadership as Chair of the INANY Advisory Board. The citation highlighted her commitment to nursing excellence and to supporting the professional development of nurses across New York State.


► Dr. Jaime Vitrano, assistant professor of psychology and a member of the CONNECT team, hosted a group of approximately 20 neurodivergent students and staff from Hostos Community College in September 2024. During the

visit, Molloy’s CONNECT students, faculty, and staff led a campus tour, shared lunch with the guests, and facilitated an inclusive art activity led by Dr. Jenny LaMonica, assistant professor of art. Additionally, as faculty advisor to the Psychology Club, Dr. Vitrano helped organize and lead two de-stress events for the Molloy student body. The first event offered students the opportunity to engage in therapeutic painting, while the second focused on self-care and mental health awareness, culminating in a donation to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

► The School of Arts & Sciences (SoAS) has implemented several policies and structures to promote equity for students and faculty. These include the establishment of school-wide by-laws for shared governance through a newly formed SoAS Faculty Council; a policy ensuring that American Sign Language courses fulfill the second language requirement in the General Education Program for all SoAS degrees; and a policy requiring the equitable rotation of internship and capstone course assignments among all full-time faculty interested in teaching those courses within their academic departments.

► The Department of Social Work designed and implemented two engaged learning experiences that reflect its commitment to Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI). In Fall 2024, social work students participated in the ADEI Awareness Ride, an interactive experience that explored nine local communities through an ADEI lens. Students observed various environmental indicators—such as housing, transportation, and public services—and examined their impact on the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. In Spring 2025, students took part in a Human Rights and Social Justice Teach-In, a communal learning experience framed around social work values, views, and voice. Guest speakers included Nassau County Legislator and Attorney Carrie Solages, who addressed immigration policy; Sergio Argueta, Assistant Principal at Freeport High School and Founder of STRONG Youth, Inc., who emphasized coalition building and advocacy; and Molloy’s Sistas in Action—Dr. Michelle Chamblin, professor of education Dr. Janice Kelly, professor of

The Department of Social Work designed and implemented two engaged learning experiences that reflect its commitment to Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.”



Funded by The New York Community Trust, the Rising Star Academy launched as a year-round initiative, enrolling 18 fourth-grade students from the Freeport School District.”

communication and chair of interdisciplinary studies, Dr. Lisa Zakiya Newland, professor and chair of social work, and Linda Silva Thompson, dean of student success and assessment—who presented the 3C Model as a tool for engaging in anti-racism practice. Dr. Kelly also led a session on critical thinking and media literacy. Both events were well-received and described as uplifting, meaningful, and impactful by students and participants.

► Community Wellness Wednesdays is a series of interactive tabling events that center diversity, equity, and inclusion within a broad spectrum of wellness topics. Each session offers students relevant resources and strategies on issues such as relationship health, stress management, maintaining wellness during the winter months, navigating difficult dialogues, spirituality, and assertive expression. The initiative aims to create a supportive environment where wellness is addressed through the lens of cultural and identity-based experiences.

► Dr. Lisa Peluso, assistant professor of education, and Dr. Francine Wisniewski, associate professor of education, presented a workshop titled “Exploring Culturally Responsive Math Activities” at the Long Island Math Conference in March 2025. The session examined the cultural nature of mathematics and provided educators with tools to identify and implement culturally responsive approaches. Attendees explored strategies for teaching mathematics in grades 3 through 5 that honor students’ diverse backgrounds and promote equity in math instruction.

► Dr. Lorraine Emeghebo, associate professor of nursing, serves as an Equity Advocate for faculty search committees, promoting equitable hiring practices. She co-facilitated a student trip to Guyana, providing cross-cultural learning experiences, and is leading a book drive for nursing students in that country. As part of her ongoing commitment to equity, she completed the 21-Day Equity Challenge, actively mentors students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and serves on the CSTEP Advisory Board.

► Stephanie Povalitis, coordinator of pre-college experiences, played a key role in advancing Molloy University’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals through targeted outreach and programming for students from underrepresented communities. In collaboration with the St. Thomas Aquinas and TRIO programs, she invited students from Uniondale High School to participate in Molloy’s First-Generation Day celebration, while also coordinating visits for students from Richmond Hill High School in Queens to attend two Braver Angels Debates, in partnership with the Honors Program and the School of Arts and Sciences. Throughout the academic year, she welcomed students from more than 30 high schools—including Smithtown West, Hempstead, Wyandanch, Baldwin, Urban Assembly School of Music & Art, Holy Trinity, Queens Metropolitan, and Valley Stream North—providing early exposure to higher education opportunities for many historically underrepresented and underserved students. Building on these efforts, she partnered with the Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program to host a campus event in February 2025 and collaborated with the Mentoring Latinas and Rising Stars programs to offer campus tours and college-readiness resources for students and their families.

► The Office of Experiential Learning & Community Engagement operated both the Rising Star Summer Camp and the newly launched Rising Star Academy during the 2024–2025 academic year. In Summer 2024, the camp served 90 students from the Roosevelt Union Free School District and Evergreen Charter School, offering academic enrichment and hands-on STEAM programming. Funded by The New York Community Trust, the Rising Star Academy launched as a year-round initiative, enrolling 18 fourth-grade students from the Freeport School District. Molloy faculty led interactive summer STEAM workshops, including chemistry and biology sessions coordinated by Dr. Jodi Evans, professor of biology and chair of biology, chemistry and environmental science, LEGO-based coding activities led by Dr. Madeline Craig, associate professor of education, and tech labs with virtual reality, 3D printing, and drones facilitated by community partner Morrison Mentors. The Mother Cabrini Mobile Community Clinic also provided health and wellness

education. This year also marked the launch of the Rising Star Leadership Scholarship, awarded to five Molloy students based on financial need and program involvement. Funded through the same grant, the scholarship supports tuition for students engaged in school outreach, mentoring, and sustained service across two summers and one academic year.

► Brianna McIntee, a TRIO student with a GPA above 3.4, actively engaged in co-curricular and community activities throughout the 2024–2025 academic year. She participated in clubs such as Lead Club, Psychology Club, Girls Club, and Art Club, and served as a resident assistant and new student orientation volunteer. Brianna helped organize inclusive events including karaoke night with education alumni, sensory room activities, and art-based outings, and took part in campus experiences like ziplining and Goat and Alpaca Day hosted by the Education Club.

► Fresh Check Day was a Mental Health and Wellness Fair designed to engage students in psychoeducation around mental health, wellness, and the impact of intersecting identities and lived experiences on individual and community well-being. The event featured interactive activities and reflection opportunities, while also bringing together a range of on- and off-campus partners to promote available support services to Molloy students and the broader campus community.

► Thrive, held weekly on Thursdays, provided a welcoming space for group discussions on a range of topics, accompanied by pizza and garlic knots. Facilitated by Health and Wellness Interns and occasionally Theresa Eaves, Clinical Counselor and Project Coordinator of the GLS Suicide Prevention Grant, the group addressed a variety of themes throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, including Relationships and Social Anxiety, Imposter Syndrome, Hispanic History Month, Election Stress, Sober Curiosity, Grief, Conflict Resolution, Body Image, Inclusion and Identity, Fears and Phobias, Black History Month, Women's History Month, NARCAN Training and discussion, and AAPI History Month. Additional sessions focused on topics more specifically related to mental health and wellness.

► Podcasts and Play Dough is an interactive tabling series that uses audio content to engage students in culturally responsive psychoeducation during nationally recognized heritage months such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, and AAPI Heritage Month. The podcasts feature content created by individuals who represent the cultures and identities being celebrated. While listening, participants are given playdough to sculpt, providing a creative outlet that promotes stress reduction and mindfulness. This program fosters cultural appreciation and mental wellness in an inclusive and engaging format.





6th Annual “Unity through Diversity: Celebrating All Abilities in the Arts”

In its sixth year, *Unity through Diversity: Celebrating All Abilities in the Arts*, welcomed more than 500 guests in a vibrant celebration of neurodiversity and creative expression. This signature event, hosted by The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy University (TRC), continues to serve as a leading example of how the arts can create inclusive spaces where all individuals—regardless of ability—can be seen, heard and celebrated.



What began as a vision to create a platform for authentic expression of neurodivergent individuals has grown into a powerful community movement. This year’s event elevated neurodivergent voices and talents through music, art, and collaboration, reaffirming our belief that music is not only a form of expression, but also a pathway to connection, empowerment, and equity.

At the core of the event is a deep commitment to community-based collaboration. This year’s art gallery

featured stunning works from individuals affiliated with TRC, Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, The Nicholas Center, Hewlett-Woodmere Union Free School District, and Freeport Union Free School District. These contributions served as a visual narrative of self-expression, with each piece reflecting the artists’ unique experiences and perspectives.

The event also highlighted the contributions of neurodivergent-led organizations and initiatives. Participating



partners included The Molloy University (MU) Community Care Mobile Clinic, the MU L.E.A.D. Club, the MU ACCESS and CONNECT Programs, and The Nicholas Center, Positive Community Connections, Front Porch Market by Backyard Players, Elf Emma, Custom Shells by Andrew Wells, and and Keychains by Mary Grace—each offering resources and insights into their work supporting neurodiverse individuals and communities.

A hallmark of this year's event was the continued commitment to empowering neurodivergent individuals through leadership roles. Serving as co-hosts, Rebecca Center alumnus Jeffrey Kautz and Molloy University student CJ Allen brought authenticity, charisma, and passion to the stage—setting the tone for an evening filled with dynamic performances and meaningful dialogue.

Musical performances included members of the Lots O' Stuff band (TRC); the MOST program; Molloy student musicians; the Backyard Players; Born 2 Sing in the Backyard; Cerebral Palsy of Nassau County; and Mrs. English's first grade class from the Hewlett-Woodmere School District.

These performances showcased the incredible range of talent within our community and reflected the joyful, inclusive spirit of the evening. An interpreter sponsored by the Division of Mission Integration and Inclusion was present throughout the performance portion of the event, ensuring that Deaf and hard-of-hearing audience members could fully engage with the experience and participate equally in artistic events.

TRC was honored by the participation of Molloy University's leadership— President Lentini, Dana Lentini, Provost Michelle Piskulich, and Vice President of Mission Integration and Inclusion DJ Mitchell—who contributed their musical talents to the celebration. TRC also welcomed Legislator Scott Davis and Assemblywoman Judy Griffin as event attendees.

As TRC continues to grow, this annual event invites everyone to take action—by listening more deeply, collaborating more intentionally, and building a world where every individual's creativity and humanity are honored.



2024-2025 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Grant Program

Sponsored by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the DEI Grant Program allows Molloy administrators, faculty, staff, and students to request financial support for DEI initiatives. During the 2024-2025 academic year, seven grants were awarded:

Grant Proposal: *AABHE Membership*

Recipient: Dr. Lisa Newland, Professor and Chair, Social Work

Amount: \$200

Grant Proposal: *Behind the Mask: Breaking the Silence Around Men's Mental Health Webinar*

Recipient: Dr. Janince Kelly, Professor of Communication and Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies

Amount: \$100

Grant Proposal: *Book Signing Event*

Recipient: Dr. Randy Pellew, Assistant Professor, Nursing

Amount: \$300

Grant Proposal: *Celebrating Nurses Week, our Diversity, and our Commitment to Health Equity*

Recipient: Dr. Ethel Ulrich, Associate Dean, Barbara H. Hagan School of Nursing and Health Sciences

Amount: \$300

Grant Proposal: *First Generation Luncheon*

Recipient: Alani Banks, Administrative Assistant, St. Thomas Aquinas Program

Amount: \$300

Grant Proposal: *Doctoral Student Monthly Meet and Greet Researcher Presentations*

Recipient: Dr. Jennifer Mannino, Professor and Director of the Ph.D. in Nursing Program

Amount: \$300

Grant Proposal: *St. John's University - ACEI 2025 Summer Conference*

Recipient: Tashia Green, Senior Assistant Registrar, Registrar

Amount: \$100

2024-2025 DEI Annual Report

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