

THE FELLOWSHIP

The **Molloy College Partnership for Global Justice Fellowship** is committed to the *United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals* and requires the fellow to become familiar with each of the UN goals, especially as they pertain to Long Island. The Fellowship also necessitates the fellow to select a goal and undertake a project to address that goal locally.

This semester's fellowship recipient, Nina Scanze, recognized the relationship between many of the goals and chose two: *Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production* and *Goal 14: Life Below Water* and set out to research these goals in order to educate the public and her peers at Molloy on the importance of each goal and how individual and combined actions can have a great impact in addressing issues of sustainability. Nina chose to have her fellowship project culminate in an event at the Molloy College campus where an invited guest speaker would present their organization's work and how they are tackling the goals locally, and also include a presentation of her own highlighting her research and advocating for the importance of individual action and behavior change to address solutions to these challenging issues.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



FELLOW PROFILE



NINA SCANZE **Junior** **Biology with a minor in** **Environmental Sciences**

- Vice Chair of Molloy Student Government Sustainability Committee
- Student Representative, Molloy College Laudato Si' Action Plan Committee
- Member of EARTH and NATURE club at Molloy College
- Orientation Leader and Student ambassador at Molloy
- Vice Chair for Mental Health and Wellness on Molloy Student Government
- “Green Champion” of sustainability efforts at WildPlay Element Parks Jones Beach
- Member of the National Society of Leadership and Success
- Winner of the Nassau Zone Physical Education award for leadership

IN NINA'S OWN WORDS

INTRODUCTION:

This semester I was so grateful to be awarded the honor of being the Spring 2021 recipient of **Molloy College's Partnership for Global Justice Fellowship**. As part of this fellowship, I pursued research on the United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals and the importance of environmental justice on Long Island. In particular, I researched the importance of Goal 12: "Responsible Consumption & Production" and Goal 14: "Life below Water" in accordance to society's relationship with the topic of marine conservation and pollution in our waters. I chose these Sustainable Developmental goals due to their cohesiveness in regard to their advocacy for the conservation of our beaches. Goals 12 and 14 can be applied to the topic of marine conservation in harmony due to the prevalence of waste pollution and consumer responsibility when it comes to the destruction of our ecosystems. With Long Island being my home, my personal interest in applying the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals towards Long Island stemmed from the potential

I see here as a whole. By educating the public on these goals and the ways that they contribute to the climate crisis, I hoped to spread the importance of protecting the beaches that Long Island inhabits and expand their mindset regarding their impact on the environment. I am a firm believer that the common citizen doesn't realize the true depth of the decisions they make when they aren't environmentally conscious. For instance, a motivation I had in doing my research was an experience I had at Jones Beach when I would do my habitual beach clean ups. I had noticed that the trash cans on the beach were made of chain link, which led to heavy winds blowing waste and debris out of the holes in the can and into our oceans. I was so disappointed to discover that the trash cans were made of chain link due to a poor design choice in the "shipwreck aesthetic" of the beach. It is unfortunate that most people are too ignorant to think in an environmentally conscious mindset, and I hoped to spread awareness on the consequences of our actions through my research and this fellowship.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

Since our local beaches are a main attraction of Long Island, I decided that marine conservation would be a successful topic to research in order to attract the attention of the public, especially considering that Long Island's beaches are starting to reopen

for the summer. My main goal in this fellowship was to educate the public and my peers about common detriments to marine ecosystems and their individual responsibility in marine conservation.

METHODS AND EXECUTIONS:

In order to convey this message, I first researched crucial factors regarding the climate crises' impact on marine life such as acidification, eutrophication, the overconsumption of fish and the destruction of marine ecosystems due to the fishing industry, the harmful effects of the media romanticizing sustainability and the climate crisis and several other sub-factors such as green-washing and policies regarding carbon emissions. I then compiled my research into an easily digestible PowerPoint presentation, along with an interactive component where guests could visualize the process of irresponsible consumerism and came up with the idea to host a seminar open to the student body and the public in which I educated them on my research and what I had found. I had planned on having a speaker present at this event as well, and I included a giveaway of Alba Botanica Reef-Safe and Eco-Friendly Sunscreen bottles which were to be

displayed on the tables at the seminar. I titled the seminar and the presentation "Not your Typical 'Save the Turtles talk', an Analysis of the UN's SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 14: Life Below Water in regard to the social phenomenon surrounding marine conservation and sustainability". This title seemed fitting with my intentions because I found that the average citizen believes that they are making a large impact by completing the bare minimum in reducing their carbon footprint and this misconception has led to a phenomenon of climate change activists who are utterly unaware of their ignorant consumerism. In my presentation, I discussed several lesser-known components of marine conservation such as acidification, eutrophication, issues within the fishing industry, aqua-farming, green-washing, and the truth behind recycling. An excerpt from my presentation and a picture of a slide from my presentation can be seen below:

Not your typical 'Save the Turtles' Talk



An Analysis of the UN's SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 14: Life Below Water in regard to the social phenomenon surrounding marine conservation and sustainability.

Nina Scanze

Vice Chair of MSG Sustainability Committee

Recipient of Partners for Global Justice fellowship



“The alliteration of “reduce reuse, recycle” has remained as the most common phrase of the climate crisis since the early 1970’s when Congress passed the Resource Conservation and Recovery act. Since then, the three R’s is a concept that has been drilled into our brains, with a heavy emphasis being placed on the recycling aspect. Contrary to popular opinion, the “reduce and reuse” aspects of the three R’s might be more efficient actions when it comes to preventing the climate crisis. This is because of the unreliable recycling system and the production of plastic in general. Plastics are mostly produced from the use of fossil fuels, so by the time the plastic is in your hands it has already done a significant amount of environmental damage. Additionally, a majority of the plastics that are recycled are misplaced into landfills. For example, according to data available from the Environmental Protection Agency, just 8.7 percent of the plastic that was

discarded in the U.S. in 2018 was recycled.” In fact, in New York specifically, New York governor Kathy Hochul proposed the extended producer responsibility program, which would hold production manufacturers responsible for their environmental impact, after discovering that New York’s recycling has decreased significantly over the years, with only a fifth of all waste being recycled in 2020. While these statistics might be devastating news, this doesn’t necessarily mean that recycling is a waste of time. The continuation of plastic recycling is crucial because it ensures that the focus on the climate crisis stays in circulation. The most effective way to help combat plastic pollution is to simply reuse plastic materials when possible or reduce your plastic use in total. That way, when you do recycle your plastics, you aren’t adding much to the millions of pounds of plastic waste that end up in our landfills.”

CAPACITY BUILDING, EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES:

While doing my research and planning for this event, I became extremely passionate about sustainability and environmental activism. For example, while doing my research, I inquired to Jones Beach about changing the design of their trash cans because they were a chain linked design and waste would tend to breeze right through the holes in the chain cans and pollute our oceans. Unfortunately, nothing came out of that inquiry, but it was worth advocating for change! I was also inspired to become a member of the Laudato Si’ Committee at Molloy which is in the process of creating an action plan in accordance with Pope Francis’ encyclical to make our campus more environmentally conscious. I am really looking forward to bringing a student perspective to the committee’s plan!

In addition, I decided that I wanted to take my role a step even further and apply to run in the election for the vice chair position of Sustainability Committee on Molloy Student Government! I campaigned pretty hard and won the position, which led me to take on the responsibility of hosting Molloy’s Sustainability Week! I utilized Student Government’s budget to purchase a number of giveaway items for distribution at various events, including my own seminar, information tables, a film screening, and a nature walk/beach cleanup. Giveaway items included the aforementioned sunscreens, reusable bamboo utensils and straws, sustainable pens and pencils, and a ton of environmental justice stickers!

PROJECT OUTCOMES:

I was so excited for an amazing week and I had planned on presenting my seminar during the week as well. I had emailed speakers inquiring about interest in my seminar more than a month in advance, and with April being a busy month Student Affairs provided a tentative date of April 29th. I began my search for speakers more than a month in advance of my event date, and after numerous emails to my potential presenters I did not receive a reply from anyone until April 12th. Thankfully, the reply was from my first choice of speakers, the director of the Jones Beach Energy and Nature Center. She agreed to a presentation about Jones Beach's marine conservation efforts and I informed her that our event date had now been rescheduled for April 25th. She acknowledged and understood that the event would be taking place on Molloy's Rockville Centre campus.

Unfortunately, the day before event day I received an email from the director indicating that she could no longer attend and present at my event. I was so incredibly disappointed because I had worked so hard on putting on

this seminar and I ultimately had to cancel it. I tried everything I could to reschedule the event to the following week, but with the semester coming to an end and finals week approaching it was not feasible to organize a speaker for my seminar in time.

Regrettably, the Fellowship's lead at the Sustainability Institute, Demosthenes Maratos and I made the unfortunate decision to reschedule the event for the fall 2022 semester. Despite my disappointment regarding my event, the rest of Sustainability Week was a great success, and the research I had done for the fellowship proved tremendously valuable! The Sustainability Week event I am most proud of was my nature hike and beach cleanup, which had a turnout of 20 people, who drove an hour away from campus in order to clean up the West End beach of Sunken Meadow State Park. I had educated the attendees about the importance of picking up any plastics they had found on the beach and the domino effect that pollution and waste can have on a marine ecosystem.



FUTURE PLANS AND FOLLOW-UPS:

Although I didn't end up hosting my intended event and presenting my research at the seminar, the research I completed as a part of this fellowship taught me a lot about sustainability and has given me the opportunity to educate my peers and those around me on how to decrease human contribution to the climate crisis on Long Island. That being said, I am looking forward to continuing my research over the summer and presenting it at my rescheduled event on campus in the fall! At this new and improved event, I intend on extending the length of

the event to about 2-3 hours by scheduling multiple speakers, each presenting for an average of 30 minutes. I am going to heavily advertise this event to the public in order to attract a larger audience and I also intend to involve faculty to see if they have interest in either presenting at the seminar or providing resources to assist in the creation of the speaker line up. Overall, I am hoping to take the unfortunate cancellation of the event as an opportunity to develop my research, expand my outreach and improve the quality of the event.

PERSONAL IMPACT:

While I was personally making my own small efforts prior, with the proper guidance, resources, and support that I received from this fellowship, I am confident that I have successfully harnessed the opportunity to become more mindful of my impact and assist our community in becoming one step closer to our sustainability goals. Through this fellowship and my research, I believe that I have gained the proper knowledge necessary to advance my career in Biology with a focus in Environmental Studies and I am hoping to become a larger agent of change. I would love to become a marine biologist some day and there isn't a better place to start than through improving Long Island's waters with the help of the Partnership for Global Justice fellowship. I firmly believe that I have the drive and motivation to make a difference on this island and I hope with

this opportunity I can be able to expedite and broaden the impact of my goals. I am so grateful for the avenues that this fellowship opened up for me in regard to expanding my knowledge and impact on transforming Long Island's environmental status and I will continue to use these experiences as a foundation to advocate and educate others about the protection of our planet. Through this fellowship, I have increased my passion for sustainability, and I have been able to not only implement important environmental changes into my life, but I have also been able to encourage my peers to join me in making sustainable swaps and advocating for responsible consumerism. I am so proud of the research I have completed this semester and I am incredibly excited to present my hard work to the public in hopes that they will join me on my journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

The *Sustainability Institute at Molloy College* acknowledges the generous endowment to establish the **Partnership for Global Justice Fellowship at Molloy College** and is very proud to be administering this unique opportunity for Molloy students. In its first year, this competitive fellowship generated quite a bit of interest from many worthy applicants, and in keeping with Molloy's mission, has provided a meaningful student experience while contributing directly to the identification of approaches to ending, or at least mitigating, environmentally or socially damaging decision-making on Long Island.

The
**Sustainability
Institute**
at Molloy College

