

2025 Student Ambassadorships

Center for Integrative Learning

The Ambassadorship in Diversity: Jay Glass ('25)

Inspiring Future Healthcare Leaders Through the Stories of BIPOC Medical Professionals



How might we create an enduring, inspirational resource featuring BIPOC medical professionals that guides and encourages underrepresented students to pursue STEM and healthcare careers?

The underrepresentation of minoritized groups in healthcare perpetuates disparities in access, trust, and outcomes for underserved communities. This project aims to address this issue by creating a digital archive of video interviews with BIPOC medical professionals, showcasing their academic journeys, challenges, and successes. These stories will serve as a resource to inspire and guide underrepresented students to pursue careers in STEM and healthcare. The video archive will be permanently hosted on the SUNY Geneseo website via Knight Scholar and integrated into recruitment and

mentorship initiatives, supporting students on their academic and professional pathways, while fostering diversity and representation in healthcare.

Community Advocates Endowed Ambassadorship in Community Engagement: Naia Peery ('27), Abigail Miller ('25), Annika Hurley ('26), Joshua Lefkowitz ('27)



Geneseo Community Tree Walk

How might we provide the Geneseo community with equitable access to environmental education through a self-guided tree walk in “The Grove” on Wadsworth Library land?

Throughout Geneseo, environmental education is a privilege that not all community members have the opportunity to access. We hope to address this problem by providing a free and accessible ecological experience, benefiting the Geneseo community by fostering a deeper understanding of the environment that surrounds us. Specifically, through the creation of a tree walk on “The Grove” property belonging to Wadsworth Library. We will identify trees in this plot and create a quarter-mile loop trail, with plaques identifying the trees and providing QR codes with ecological information. These plaques will complement the library’s outdoor displays regarding Indigenous ecological stories. This project will serve as a pilot for creating tree walks in other locations, such as Highland Park, further enriching community engagement with nature.

Eddie Lee '76 Ambassadorship for First Generation Students: Solangel Almonte ('27)

Addressing Sexual Education Disparities in the Dominican Republic

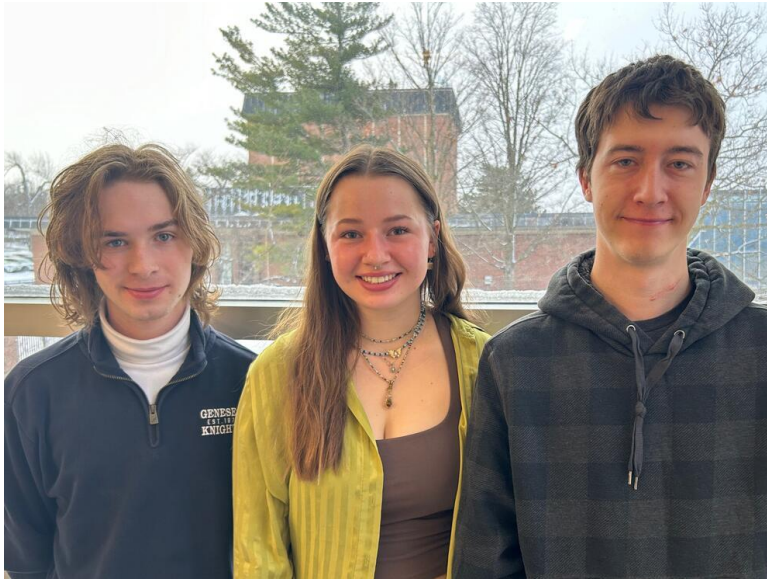


How might we provide access to sexual and reproductive health education for young women in the Dominican Republic in order to improve women’s health?

In the Dominican Republic, women are impacted by the lack of sexual education, with topics like family planning and reproductive health often considered taboo. This leaves many young women uninformed, leading to early pregnancies and poor health outcomes. To address this, I will travel to the Dominican Republic to conduct sexual educational seminars focused on empowering young women, teenagers, and families. These sessions will cover women’s health, reproductive rights, contraception, and STD/STI prevention, aiming to foster informed choices and break cycles of miseducation.

Eddie Lee '76 Ambassadorship in Sustainability: Colin Doherty ('26), Sarah Strobel ('27), Dante Herbel ('26)

Green Pup: A Pilot Program for Composting Dog Waste in the Geneseo Dog Park



How might we reduce the negative environmental impact of dog feces using composting in dog parks?

Dog feces are harmful: they emit methane, a potent greenhouse gas contributing significantly to climate change, if not disposed of properly and is about 28 times more potent a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Furthermore, plastic bags for dog waste are not biodegradable. For our

ambassadorship, we will investigate and address the unsustainable disposal of dog waste, an increasing environmental issue in the United States. Our project will install a dog waste composter in a local Geneseo dog park, Highland Park. This project will also explore how composting dog feces reduces environmental impacts and increases sustainability in public spaces. We aim to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of composting dog waste, while engaging the community.

Edward Pettinella '73 Endowed Ambassadorship in Business: Jamari Williams ('26)



Pathways to Prosperity: Building Financial Wellness in Rochester

How might we make financial literacy education accessible, engaging, and practical for people in the urban communities of Rochester?

This project seeks to address the critical need for financial literacy education in Rochester, where pervasive poverty affects nearly 28% of the community and nearly half of all children in the community. This reflects the economic challenges faced by many in the area where the lack of financial literacy inhibits residents' ability to make informed decisions about saving, budgeting, investing, and spending,

contributing to intergenerational cycles of poverty. Through a comprehensive event-based approach, the project will engage community members with expert-led panel discussions and connections to local financial resources. By partnering with financial institutions, local leaders, and organizations, the initiative aims to promote financial wellness and empower the Rochester community with practical, actionable financial education.

Frank Vafier '74 Ambassadorship in Leadership: Aleigha Morrison ('25), Lincoln Hempstead ('26), EmmaGrace Humbert ('26), Lucy DeWispelaere ('28), Leah Mathis ('25)

SUNY Geneseo Native Ecosystem Restoration Project



How might our campus landscaping better provide ecosystem services via (a) planting native species, and (b) reducing exotic or invasive plant species?

Decorative landscaping often brings exotic (non-native) or invasive plants to ecosystems where they do not belong, which can cause negative impacts or even kill native plants and animals that rely on a strong, traditional ecosystem. Our ambassadorship

project will address the significantly high proportion of exotic or invasive plants on our campus that may cause or are already causing harm to local plants, animals, and overall structure and stability of our ecosystem. We will directly improve our campus' ecological impact by planting more native plants intentionally. We will research local native ecosystems, learning what the landscape looks like naturally and what plants are best suited for the conditions of western New York. Through collaboration with Geneseo's Grounds and Facilities team, as well as experts in local native plants, we will cultivate a native plant garden on campus that supports local pollinators and provides beneficial ecosystem services.

Frank Vafier '74 Ambassadorship in Leadership: Griffin Lyons ('26)

An Afrocentric Understanding of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Black Communities of the US and Ireland



How do racialized inequalities and dominant social understandings of race create barriers in accessing HIV/AIDS education and testing for African immigrant and Black populations living in majority white nations, including the United States and Ireland?

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to disproportionately impact people of African descent, including in predominantly white nations. With my ambassadorship, I will conduct research aimed at reframing the history of the HIV/AIDS crisis and highlighting the marginalized experiences of Black and African individuals affected by the epidemic. In order to do so, I will create a cross-cultural ethnography using sociological research methods and analysis. In doing so, I plan to take an Afrocentric approach to ensure that I center

the lived experiences of the Black individuals affected by HIV/AIDS in the US and Ireland, as well as their perspective on how to implement efficient prevention methods in the community. I will examine the past and present efforts undertaken by the Black community to help their own members become more aware of the risks of HIV and increase testing within their community.

James Houston '80 Ambassadorship in Innovation: Sonya Lyalikov ('26)

The Home Away from Home Program: Improving Care for Neurodegenerative Diseases



How might we promote neural health and improve care for individuals with memory illnesses, while alleviating caregiver emotional strain?

Over 55 million people worldwide experience memory related illnesses, with the number projected to reach 139 million by 2050. Alzheimer's, Dementia, and TBI manifest as gradual memory loss, often leading to emotional suffering on loved ones. The Home Away from Home program in Geneseo provides memory-impaired seniors space for cognitively stimulating activities, while offering caregivers no-cost respite. Research suggests activities like music therapy and virtual reality can promote neuroplasticity,

thereby delaying neurodegeneration, reducing anxiety, and improving morale. This ambassadorship seeks to implement enhanced activities, including music therapy and the use of virtual reality headsets, and marketing campaigns to extend the program's impact, ultimately aiming to bring more comfort to those impacted by neurodegenerative diseases.

John A. '87 and MaryGrace '84 Gleason Ambassadorship in Student Affairs: Delaney Livermore ('25)

Revitalizing New York's Dairy Industry: Analyzing and proposing policy amendments to cultivate sustainable growth



What are some legislative amendments that could alter/address policies that hinder dairy farmers' ability to grow and thrive?

Through this ambassadorship, I aim to do research that bridges the gap between state government officials and dairy farmers. My research will identify the root cause of various policy-related barriers in the industry, propose new and sustainable solutions, and work to dismantle distrust among farmers and policy-makers. I will analyze the effectiveness of agricultural policies in NYS by conducting quantitative and qualitative analyses, including sending short surveys to dairy farmers throughout NYS and interviewing up to 25 farmers from various farm sites throughout the state. I will also be meeting with legislators and other elected officials in an effort to build a trusting relationship between governmental actors and dairy farmers.