

# Meet Our 2023/2024 Students

**FATIMAH ALJADHER**

*Concentration: Environmental Quality   Pronouns: She/her*

As a graduate with a Bachelor's in Computer Engineering and extensive experience in Project Engineering within the Transportation sector, I have developed a profound passion for promoting environmental consciousness and sustainability. Throughout my work experience, I have witnessed firsthand the detrimental impact of human activities on our planet, which has only fueled my desire to contribute towards creating a sustainable future. It is my firm belief that addressing global challenges requires a deep understanding of the critical role that sustainability plays in shaping our world. With this in mind, I am eager to participate in the MS3 program, as it will provide me with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of sustainability science and equip me with the knowledge and skills necessary to make a meaningful impact.

**CHRIS BAMBACUS**

*Concentration: Renewable Energy and Efficient Design   Pronouns: He/him*

Chris is the Director of Social and Environmental Responsibility for Aquent, a staffing agency based in Boston, MA. He is responsible for calculating the carbon footprint, leading initiatives to reduce emissions, and developing solar projects to offset carbon emissions. Chris lives in Belchertown with his partner Emily and daughters Laney and Ellie. He is a member of the Belchertown Energy and Sustainability Committee, and holds a BA in Imaging and Digital Art from the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

**ALEX BUCK**

*Concentration: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: She/her*

I graduated from UMASS in the fall of 2021 with a B.S. in Public Health and Health Sciences. My interest in public health was in food security and the relationship between nutrition and health outcomes. As I expanded my studies in my final year of school I became more interested in agriculture and botany, finding the perfect middle ground in sustainable agriculture. I hope to enter a career which intersects food quality and security and agricultural sustainability. I'm looking forward to the program and getting to know my peers!

**TRISTA DEARSTYNE**

*Concentration: Environmental Quality   Pronouns: She/her*

Trista is from Pittsfield, MA and recently graduated with a B.S. in Environmental Science and minors in Biology and Philosophy from UMass Amherst. During her undergraduate degree, she completed a Honors Thesis Manuscript with the Commonwealth Honors College relating to the topic of environmental justice and environmental racism. She enjoys learning about the social science "human" aspect behind Environmental Science and Sustainability Science. Trista also works as the Graduate Assistant in the UMass Amherst Financial Aid Office. Her future career plan is to potentially work for a non-profit organization advocating for disadvantaged communities affected by environmental degradation and supporting environmental justice movements.

**HUDA ELHOUT**

*Concentration: Renewable Energy and Efficient Design   Pronouns: She/her*

I have a B.S. in Environmental Health from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. Prior to that, my childhood was spent in Switzerland. I moved back to the US in 2020. It's a privilege to have lived in Switzerland and my home country, Lebanon. Both countries have beautiful natural scenery but a vastly different approach to environmental protection. Switzerland is very stringent whereas due to political instability and an economic crisis, Lebanon maintains outdated environmental laws with a lack of enforcement. My lived experiences abroad have solidified in me the understanding that environmental protection and sustainable development have a significant influence on quality of life. I'm excited to join the MS3 program and use the expertise I gain towards building renewable energy infrastructures that will guarantee a better future for everyone.

**CASS HAMMECKER**

*Concentration: Urban Sustainability   Pronouns: She/her*

Cassidy graduated from Siena College with a B.A. in Psychology and Environmental Studies (dual major). Noticing how her courses overlapped at Siena, Cassidy discovered a passion for studying how people interact with the environment, specifically ways to improve how the environment is treated. Just three days after graduation, Cassidy moved to Colorado for a sustainability internship with Walking Mountains Science Center, spending the next few months diverting waste and learning more about sustainability in the state. Cassidy spends her free time outside; kayaking, hiking, skiing, biking, reading, playing rugby, and continuously learning. Cassidy is looking forward to gaining more knowledge on the topics of sustainability at UMass, and dreams of opening her own center for sustainable living one day!

**SARAH HOPE**

*Concentration: Water Sustainability and Climate Change   Pronouns: She/her*

Sarah is a lifelong advocate for the environment. She graduated from Emerson College in 2020, earning a B.A. in Writing, Literature, and Publishing with a minor in Journalism. She has done work in a variety of industries, including marketing, design, agriculture, and youth work. She currently works at Boston Harbor Now and the Stone Living Lab as the Climate Education and Programs Intern, where she is spreading awareness about our changing environment in fun and creative ways, and helping to increase community access to the waterfront. Using her MS3 degree, she will continue raising awareness and increasing coastal resiliency with an intentional lens on justice and inclusion.

**GABY IMMERMAN**

*Concentration: Urban Sustainability   Pronouns: She/her*

Gaby has been teaching the Horticulture courses and running the summer internship program as the Experiential Learning Specialist at the Smith College Botanic Garden for over 20 years. A native New Yorker, she oversaw field operations for NYC's community gardening program, and accumulated a range of professional experience in both horticulture and agriculture all over the U.S. before settling down in Northampton in 1999. Gaby has served on the Board of Grow Food Northampton and played a leadership role in the development of their community farm for over a decade. She is the Co-Moderator of the Friends of the Mill River Greenway, a working group of local citizens who aim to protect the Mill River watershed, preserve its cultural artifacts, enhance its biological health, and encourage recreational activity, and also serves on the board of the Hilltown Land Trust.

**HUNZA IRFAN**

*Concentration: Dual Degree MRP/MS3   Pronouns: She/her*

Hunza holds a Bachelors degree in Computer Science with a minor in Social Development and Policy. She has worked in the digital banking and freight-tech industries in Pakistan as a product designer and UX researcher. With design at the heart of her practice, she works on co-creating solutions with the communities that she engages with. She is interested in understanding how city design impacts access to and quality of water. She also loves exploring cities on foot and documenting her experiences with public transportation. She enjoys running, cooking, and painting in her free time.

**BOB JOHNSON**

*Concentration: Environmental Quality   Pronouns: He/him*

Bob has a background in hazardous material release site assessment and remediation, and environmental compliance, auditing, and management systems. He joined the MS3 program with a strong interest in soil science and conservation and wants to pursue opportunities involving Environmental Sustainability.

**KAYLA LEW**

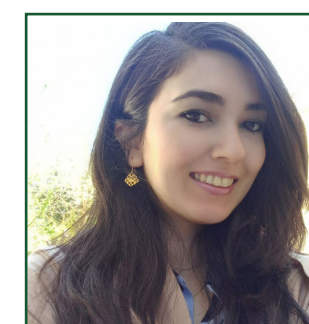
*Focus: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: She/her*

Kayla is a recent graduate of SUNY Binghamton with a B.S. in Environmental Science and a minor in Cinema. During her undergraduate studies, Kayla interned at a small-scale sustainable food farm, where she found her love for connecting with the earth and others through agricultural work. She discovered the importance of growing food as a community through visiting and learning from other farmers in upstate New York and hopes to nurture a similar sense of unity within food systems moving forward. She is looking forward to gaining more experience in the sustainability sector and creating new connections with future mentors and colleagues. In her free time, Kayla enjoys exploring new places through hiking, playing video/board games, going to concerts, and watching a plethora of movies.

**JOEY MANNION**

*Concentration: Urban Sustainability   Pronouns: He/him*

Joey is an aspiring sustainability professional at the intersection of climate and energy. Born and raised in Natick, MA, Joey graduated with a BS in Environmental and Sustainability Studies from Keene State College in 2021. Subsequently, Joey took a gap year to work in the environmental and engineering consulting industry on diverse projects ranging from soil remediation to geothermal wellfields. Joey's passion for driving an equitable energy transition was sparked by his involvement in geothermal projects, which led him to concentrate in Renewable Energy and Efficient Design. Through this, he has recently earned UMass' Offshore Wind Professional Certificate, and promoted the Certificate program's diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarship. Expected to graduate in December 2023, Joey is excited to make the most of his meal plan and remaining time as an MS3 student!

**NASIM MOEINKHAH**

*Concentration: Renewable Energy and Efficient Design   Pronouns: She/her*

Nasim has a bachelor's degree in Architecture. She came across the field of study about climate change and sustainable energies towards the end of her bachelor's degree and was immediately fascinated. Her interest was in a way that even in her professional life as an architect she tries to integrate natural solutions in building design in order to save more energy and prevent energy waste. She believes that having buildings with less energy consumption could have a good share in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Her ultimate goal is to study and work on natural solutions that cost less, which anyone can apply based on where they live. Therefore now she is joining this program to increase her academic knowledge in both renewable energies and efficient design.

**FLAVIA NAMULI**

*Concentration: Renewable Energy and Efficient Design   Pronouns: She/her*

Hello! My name is Flavia. I have a Bachelor of Science in meteorology, and I came across the field of study about renewable energy in my second year at Makerere university. It was during lock down, where we experienced a power shutdown country-wide due to mechanical disturbances caused by the heavy rains, that ignited my passion for sustainable development for the future. By joining the MS3 program at UMass, I hope to gain more and increase my academic knowledge in both renewable energy and efficient design.

**LEE ORTENBERG**

*Concentration: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: She/her*

Lee completed her undergraduate degree in a double major of Government and Sustainability with a concentration in Global Affairs and Conflict Resolution at Reichman University in Israel. Since starting MS3, Lee has jumped headfirst into exploring and engaging in policy work, environmental education, and regional planning. She has previous experience with the Association of Urban Farming of Israel, her projects mostly surrounding refugee communities and creating local food systems. She has spent time working with the renowned Permaculture project, Terra Alta, in Portugal, focusing on developing her understanding of the urban environment. She has developed multiple youth education programs, including the Boston Youth Farm Program with Boston Microgreens, and ReGreen Springfield. She hopes to transform our urban spaces through integrated systems, specifically using urban food production and green spaces as a social tool to ease the shocks of geopolitical tensions and to create new narratives and shared values for those displaced by these tensions.

**AUDREY POTASH**

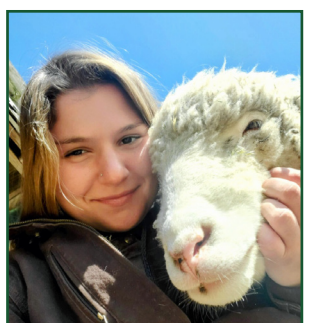
*Concentration: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: They/them*

Audrey attended the University of Puget Sound where they earned a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with an emphasis in Bioethics and a minor in Mathematics. Audrey began working on small-scale sustainable farms as an undergraduate and continued working in the fields of agriculture and food production after graduation. Subsequently, Audrey spent time working as a Fellow for the Tacoma Sunrise Movement where they found an interest in the connections between agriculture and climate activism. Audrey looks forward to developing a variety of practical skills in the field to be better equipped to advocate for a more environmentally just future.

**STEPH PURO**

*Focus: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: She/her*

Steph earned her associate's degree in Biology at Holyoke Community College, and her bachelor's degree in Animal Science at UMass Amherst. As an undergraduate student, she worked for the UMass Amherst Hadley Farm where she completed two farm and livestock management internships. After graduation, she accepted the Assistant Farm Manager position at Watson Farm in Rhode Island managing their cattle and sheep livestock programs. Here she gained an appreciation for sustainable, regenerative livestock production and the benefits of intensive rotational grazing and silvopasture. Recently she returned to the Hadley Farm as the Assistant Livestock Manager. At home she raises pastured poultry, sheep, and beef cattle. Steph is pursuing a career in sustainable farm management and education, and she is excited to expand her knowledge of sustainable practices through the MS3 program!

**MEG RZUCIDLO**

*Concentration: Environmental Quality   Pronouns: She/her*

I am from Sutton, MA and graduated from Fairfield University with a degree in Chemistry. I have always been interested in sustainability and took many classes devoted to environmental science in my undergraduate work that made me more passionate about the issue. I have spent two summers working for an industrial hygiene lab that focuses on identifying air contaminants and the dangerous particulates that can be found in certain environments. In my free time I love being outdoors, hiking, and running!

**JAKE SIFUENTES**

*Concentration: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems   Pronouns: He/him*

Jake grew up on his family farm in Western Mass before attending Boston University to study English. Post-grad he bartended for several years, became a certified sommelier and became interested in local, seasonal cuisine. He believes food sovereignty and sustainability are integral in ensuring people's well-being and freedom, as well as rebuilding their regional cultures. He enjoys boxing, reading, and spending time with his family.

