

One City. One Campus. *One Community.*

The Port of Oswego Authority: Where We May Not Always Look

By Francesca Spica, Creative Writing Major

When eating grains, such as corn and soybeans, we often don't think about where they come from, or question whether they are safe to eat. But SUNY Oswego is part of an initiative that ensures we don't have to worry, supporting work being done right at the Oswego Port Authority, just a five-minute drive from the SUNY Oswego Campus. SUNY Oswego's Agricultural Testing and Analysis Lab, launched in collaboration with the Port of Oswego Authority (POA) in 2022, can store up to 22,000 metric tons of grain. In addition, the site hosts SUNY Oswego student interns who are being paid to operate the lab and are earning valuable experience in the field. The interns' majors range from chemistry and biochemistry to biology and zoology.

When arriving at the Port, the beautiful view is surprising, a view different from what you see on campus. On a clear day, it nearly seems that Lake Ontario and the sky are one. Staring at this blue heaven feels peaceful, especially when standing in the key pillar of the Oswego community.

SUNY Oswego Alum Julia Van Ness is a perfect example of how the SUNY Oswego campus has bridged the relationship between the city and the Port Authority. Van Ness learned of the job opportunity through her advisor and then took a tour of the Port and met Cleane Medeiros, her current site supervisor. When Van Ness found herself working here, she immediately realized that this opportunity is not only a job or an internship, but a career path. Her favorite part of this job is how organized and structured the Port is, especially the woman who works at the front, providing her helpful information from a huge spreadsheet that helps the Port work smoothly. Van Ness also had an important tip to future and current students: talk to your advisor. They provide such important information about internship opportunities, on and off campus, if it wasn't for Van Ness' advisor, she would have never found this incredible opportunity.

Medeiros herself provided me with insight into the Port, and even guided me through its history. The Port's Grain Export Center was funded by the New York State Department of Transportation through a \$15 million dollar grant. This facility is advanced and has incredible technology for interning students to work with, such as a system that can unload 35,000 pounds of grain in less than a minute. Moreover, they are known as one of the most productive ports, where they lead in both domestic and international shipping. One of the most important things about this partnership is that interning students are able to gain valuable experience in the grain analysis field, and are able to get paid as well. Van Ness adds that this job is a great resume builder and people have even reached out to her due to her experience at the Port.

Van Ness knows that testing these seeds is not only important for farmers, but the work done here at the Port Authority is crucial to the entire City of Oswego as well. The SUNY Oswego campus has provided similar opportunities to students, providing them new ways to connect with the community as a whole. Van Ness and Medeiros are just one example of how the campus and the community of Oswego are connected. Their important work should not go unnoticed: they are essential both to Oswego's food safety and to its sense of community.



The Port of Oswego Authority and SUNY Oswego

Julia Van Ness, Chemistry Major

Cleane Medeiros, The Port of Oswego Authority