

2019-2020  
STUDENT PROFILES AND IMPACT

# Lawrence R. Inserra Scholarship

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM, INTERDISCIPLINARY ITALIAN STUDIES



Montclair  
State  
University





**“Larry Inserra’s vision for the new generation has effectively brought Italy to Montclair State as well as Montclair State to Italy. It has placed Italian Studies at Montclair State on the national and international map for its innovative trans-language and trans-disciplinary endeavors.”**

— Dr. Teresa Fiore, Inserra Endowed Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies

### **Building career skills and deepening passion for Italian Studies**

The vision, generosity and partnership of Lawrence R. Inserra, Jr. and the Inserra family have elevated the excellence of Italian Studies at Montclair State University. In tribute to Italian culture and in honor of his parents Theresa and Lawrence R. Inserra, Lawrence Inserra, Jr. has created a legacy through an endowed gift to name the Inserra Chair in Italian and Italian American Studies, as well as by providing ongoing scholarship support for students in the Italian program, enabling them to immerse themselves in Italian language, culture and experiences.

### **Providing life-changing internships**

The Lawrence R. Inserra Scholarship creates opportunities for competitive internships that can lead to jobs after graduation, giving students of Italian hands-on learning with an international component. Students benefit from pre-professional experiences that link the study of Italian language and culture with the business sector, working with dynamic international teams at Italian businesses and organizations, translation companies, as well as in language education and cultural programming.

The internships reflect partnerships with notable Italian organizations and companies, including the Italian Trade Agency, Choose New Jersey, Safilo, the Italian American Committee on Education (IACE) and the Sferisterio Arena in Macerata in collaboration with the local university.

Students are grateful for the amazing experiences that scholarship awards through internships have given them. Profiles of the students who are benefitting in the 2019-20 academic year follow, along with a spotlight on a graduate’s success that stemmed from your support.

The Inserra gift is invaluable as it has set the conditions to develop an established internship program that is unparalleled in Italian Studies in the United States public university system, thanks to the financial support it provides and the caliber of the companies and offices that participate in it. Every year the Italian faculty selection committee has been able to assign the internships to talented and motivated students, and to create more opportunities for an increasingly diverse group over time.

“For me, it continues to be a pleasure to serve as supervisor of the internship program in many different areas, from selecting partners to developing contracts, identifying students, overseeing their actual experience off campus, and engaging in storytelling about this program, which proves the relevance of Italian Language and Cultural Studies in today’s job market, in particular in the tri-state business ecosystem,” says Dr. Teresa Fiore.



## ALEXIS VENTRE

### Clifton, New Jersey

Taking on an impressive course load and professing a great passion for everything Italian, Alexis Ventre is double majoring in Italian and Business, Language and Culture (with a concentration in Italian) along with a dual minor in Anthropology and Pre-Law. Alexis wants to become more confident in her usage of the Italian language and to learn everything possible about Italian language, culture, art and more. “I would love to work for an Italian business based in the United States, being a liaison between American and Italian communications and relations.”

She shares that she chose Montclair State University not only because of its great Italian program, one of the 10 largest programs in the United States, but also for the diversity of the students. “I was inspired by the openness and friendliness of the students and how I could broaden my horizons and learn from others who come from different backgrounds than myself. I believe that I have become more outgoing while attending this University, which I know will benefit me along my career path.”

Alexis was selected for the Italian business internship at the Italian Trade Agency, the commercial branch of the Italian Consulate in New York City. She was involved in project management in international trade, marketing and consulting, providing information and services to Italian companies approaching the U.S. market and assisting in event organization and media relations.

“I am thrilled to have been chosen for this incredible internship ... which has allowed me to learn more about an Italian business environment and incorporate all the essential skills that I have learned throughout my college career. This internship provided me with the experience of understanding the relationship and impact that Italian companies have in the U.S., specifically the New York/New Jersey area. I am grateful to have learned about the different industries that make up the Italian-American marketing and fashion sector and how they work, coexist and influence one another.”

Alexis serves as the president of the Italian Honor Society and the vice president of the Language, Business and Culture Professional Society. She also is a member of many honor societies, such as Sigma Alpha Lambda, Lambda Alpha Delta, Society of Collegiate Scholars, Golden Key International Honor Society and The National Society of Leadership and Success.

***“Being able to receive scholarship support means very much to me and I do not take it lightly. I am grateful to Mr. Inserra for not only sponsoring the award, but allowing me to further my academic career and professional opportunities. This scholarship has truly enabled me to achieve my goals in life and continue to learn everything I possibly can about what interests me.”***



### CRISTINA LATINO Wallington, New Jersey

A double major in Italian Language, Business and Culture, and Fashion Studies, Christina Latino feels she has chosen a distinctive area of study that is needed within the New York/New Jersey area.

Selected to receive an internship at Choose New Jersey, based in Newark, she was able to apply her skills to Italian business in the specific context of New Jersey, which hosts one of the largest concentrations of Italian business headquarters in the United States. Choose New Jersey is an organization that actively attracts Italian companies to New Jersey. The internship also includes a trip to Italy as part of the New Jersey delegation's participation in Select USA.

"I love how Italian language and culture influence the success of businesses around the world because of the valued recognition of the world-renowned Made in Italy brand. I aspire to work for an Italian fashion company after graduation."

Christina especially appreciates the hands-on experiences she has been exposed to that exemplify Italian language and culture in new and modern ways. She thinks it is interesting that many businesses within the tri-state area have incorporated the Made in Italy brand into their marketing strategies, which then produces successful results. She specifically researched local technology, food science and life science incubators in New Jersey to map business development assets in the state, as well as analyzed workforce data from international and domestic businesses looking to relocate to New Jersey.

"I am so grateful to have been selected as the candidate for the prestigious internship with Choose New Jersey. As an undergraduate student pursuing a degree within the international business field, I know that this opportunity entails strengthening my writing and oral skills in the Italian language as I undertake hands-on responsibilities. I intend to benefit professionally and personally as culturally enriching programs such as this one teach how to interact and perform efficiently and effectively within the business world."

***"Receiving a scholarship for an internship means the world to me as it has been financially difficult for me. I am grateful to Mr. Inserra ... his generosity allows me to continue my undergraduate studies."***



## TERESA LEDONNE

### Mine Hill, New Jersey

An Italian major with a background in the corporate world, Teresa LeDonne believes obtaining her degree in Italian is a great way to build on and grow in her career with an international outlook.

“I am greatly passionate about the Italian language, and by studying here at Montclair State, I have been able to capitalize on my skills and fluency in the language. The professors are a great asset and continually challenge their students to grow. We are highly encouraged to practice our communication skills in Italian both inside and outside the classroom.”

Through the generosity of the Inserra Scholarship, Teresa spent four weeks working as a full-time intern in project management at Safilo USA, Inc. The New Jersey corporation, a subsidiary of SAFILO – Società Azionaria Fabbrica Italiana Lavorazione Occhiali, is a company specializing in eyewear, and has its main headquarters in Padova, Italy.

“The Inserra internship program is a wonderful opportunity for Montclair State students. I not only improved my Italian language, but I utilized my background of cross-cultural competency, and created trainings for the Human Resources department to help employees understand and improve communication between the diverse cultures.”

Teresa appreciates the many opportunities to utilize what she is learning in the classroom. She shares that the internship’s tasks in the areas of human resources and product creation were an ideal environment to use Italian in written and oral forms, and to understand the cultural implications of bringing Made in Italy products to the U.S. market.

***“I am grateful to be the recipient of one of the 2019-20 Inserra Scholarships for internships. Scholarship support has allowed me to have a wonderful opportunity utilizing my current skills and talents while growing in my competency of the Italian language.”***





### FRANCESCA OLIVERI Maywood, New Jersey

An Italian major and International Studies minor, Francesca Oliveri is the first recipient of the new Teaching Italian Abroad and Cultural Programming Internship in Narni, Italy, which launched in Summer 2019 and focuses on Italian teaching and cultural programming abroad.

This internship opportunity better prepares future language educators to become dynamic and inspiring teachers for the next generation. The internship is linked to the Italian American Committee on Education (IACE) Summer Program in Narni (Umbria, Italy), a program for middle and high school students that combines Italian language and culture classes with on-site visits as well as participation in the Narnia Music Dance Theater Festival and International Summer Training Program.

For her future career, Francesca plans on becoming an Italian professor. After graduating from Montclair State University, she would like to obtain her master's and doctoral degrees.

"The opportunity to intern with IACE has gifted me with the knowledge of what being a teacher really means. Not only was I able to learn about the intricate inner workings of running a summer program such as this, but to also gain the valuable experience of teaching students and familiarizing myself with specific cultural aspects of the region. I gained insights into creating a more reflective and interactive classroom, and best of all, I became more confident as a speaker of Italian, which will only encourage me to further study the language."

***"This immersive internship allows me to experience the classroom from the teacher's perspective and gives me the chance to enhance my Italian. I am infinitely grateful to be able to participate in this rare opportunity, and for the generosity of Mr. Inserra to help me advance my Italian studies."***

## TALIA ANTONACCI '19

### Parsippany, New Jersey



A recipient of the Lawrence R. Inserra Scholarship in 2018-2019, Talia Antonacci '19 is a testament to the powerful benefits of the undergraduate internship experience, having completed internships at the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) of New York and at Choose New Jersey (CNJ) in Princeton, which led to her securing a full-time job after graduation at CNJ.

Talia graduated with a major in Italian and a minor in Business and is now working as a marketing coordinator at CNJ, drawing on her internship experience and responsible for digital marketing initiatives, planning and execution of events, and supporting the business development team, including assistance with translation in business with Italian companies.

Her internship with CNJ enabled her to apply her skills to Italian business in the specific context of New Jersey. In her role, she supported the development of CNJ's new website and the preparation of presentation materials for a business trip to Italy. CNJ took Talia overseas

for Select USA, which covered Rome, Milan and Vicenza, and involved panels with U.S. government representatives, including the U.S. Ambassador to Italy, and businesses that have chosen to expand their operations in the U.S., and in particular New Jersey. There, she facilitated exchanges in Italian with representatives of local businesses.

Margie Piliere, the CNJ liaison, was pleased about the successful collaboration with Talia: "We had an extremely busy three days – we met with over 35 businesses in 20 minute intervals. Some spoke English, however, there were others who did not feel comfortable with English, so Talia translated for us. She was such a great help with her language skills and professionalism."

"I am so grateful to have had the unique opportunity to work with Choose NJ, where I learned so much about what our state has to offer to foreign businesses regarding our educated workforce, infrastructure, opportunity zones, tax incentives and perfect location. I was able to travel and work firsthand in encouraging and assisting Italian companies looking to expand in our state, communicate directly with these companies to provide information and assist with translating. I was thrilled to be able to use my language skills and my knowledge of both Italian and American business trends in an organic, real-life setting, after learning about them in my Italian classes about business and culture at Montclair State," Talia stated.

After the initial internship ended, Choose New Jersey kept Talia on as

a regular intern and entrusted her with more responsibilities. "If it weren't for my initial internship from Montclair State and the skills it provided, I would have never applied for the marketing coordinator job. I am proud to be an example of the outstanding possibilities that the Inserra Chair/Italian Program



and Choose New Jersey collaboration offers. This type of university-company synergy helped me reach my full potential and begin my career immediately after graduating."

The innovative approach of these internships – that are based in a broader initiative linking the study of Italian language and culture with the business sector – expose students to the complex intersection of national products and global markets while emphasizing the role of cultural awareness. Having an internship turn into a permanent job after graduation is the best outcome possible for Montclair State students, and Talia's success story is an incredible high point, made possible by generous donor support.



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



1 Normal Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07043 | [montclair.edu](http://montclair.edu)