

SJC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN URBAN SUSTAINABILITY 2023

INSTRUCTOR PROFILES

5 Modules - 2 Sessions Each Module

- Sustainability and Resiliency / Systems Thinking
- Environmental Justice / Eco Justice
- Emissions & Emissions Reduction / Transition to Renewables
- Urban Ecology & Green Infrastructure Perspectives
- Waste Streams

Welcome & Introduction - Tues March 14th

Course Facilitator – Debra Italiano / Founder & Chair, Sustainable JC



[Debra Italiano](#)
[Sustainable Jersey City](#)
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Deb Italiano, Founder & Chair of Sustainable Jersey City (SJC), is also the President and a member of the Board of Directors for Sustainable Jersey City (SJC), an education non-profit established in 2011 focused on sustainable community, resiliency and climate action planning. She is passionate about urban sustainability and the power of community networks. She has spearheaded SJC's non-profit mission since 2011, which is committed to developing a broad platform for community engagement, bringing resources to stakeholder groups for green neighborhood initiatives and structuring a framework for ongoing civic leadership and sustainability focused educational opportunities.

Deb is a LEED AP, and Managing Principal of Merintra Co., LLC, a strategic business and market development consulting firm based in Jersey City that she founded in 2003. Prior to founding Merintra she spent 15 years on Wall Street leading large scale change initiatives related to governance and strategy alignment for both Morgan Stanley and JP Morgan Chase. She received her BS from Pace University in New York City.

Module 1 – Sustainability / Resiliency / Systems Thinking - 2 Sessions (6 hours)

Instructor - Ashwani Vasishth

Session Dates: March 14th & March 21st

Sessions 1 & 2 - Taking a Systems Approach to Urban Sustainability & Resiliency Planning



**Ashwani Vasishth, SJC Board Member
Sustainability Professor
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Ashwani Vasishth is Professor in Sustainability, Convener of the undergraduate Sustainability Program (BA) as well as the Environmental Studies Program (BA). He is Director of the Center for Sustainability at Ramapo College of New Jersey. He is past-President of the New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability (NJHEPS). He has also part of the South India Study Abroad as well as the Peru Study Abroad Convening Groups. His pedagogy is focused on Education for Sustainability (EfS) from within a transdisciplinary framework, and from within the context of a globalizing Sustainable Development paradigm.

He has research interests in an evolutionary ecosystem approach, urban ecology, systems thinking and mental models.

He received his PhD from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, in Ecological Planning, and his Masters Degree from MIT, Cambridge, in International Development. He has an undergraduate degree in Architecture from India, with a focus on vernacular shelter systems and disaster resilience.

MODULE 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE / ECO JUSTICE

Instructors – David Larrabee & Ashwani Vasishth

Session Dates: March 28th & April 4th

Session 3 – Understanding Environmental and Eco Justice Concepts and Frameworks

Session 4 – Local Perspectives on Environmental Justice



David Larrabee, SJC Board Member

SJC Eco Ambassador Team Lead

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David Larrabee's work attempts to bring theology, science, and economics into dialog around the social justice implications of our unhealthy relationship to the planet. This includes the implications of both individual and collective lifestyles on both the planet and those most at risk from environmental harm. His passion started at Cornell as a member of the Eco-Justice task force, where he earned a PhD in applied physics. While working in industry David obtained his Master of Business Administration. Returning to academia David obtained the rank of professor of physics. He retired from East Stroudsburg University after earning a MA in systematic theology to work on environmental justice issues full time. David lives in NJ with his wife Carolyn Carney.

MODULE 3 - EMISSIONS & EMISSIONS REDUCTION / TRANSITION TO RENEWABLES

Instructors: David Larrabee & Chris Reid

Session Dates – April 11th & April 18th

Session 5 – Emissions Introduction and Overview + Emissions Redux Opportunities

Session 6 – Introduction to the NJ Energy Industry + Transition to Renewables



Chris Reid

Associate Director of Workforce Development

Solar Landscape

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Christopher Reid is currently the Associate Director of Workforce Development for Solar Landscape. He holds a master's degree in Sustainability Management from Stevens Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in Public Health from Rutgers University - New Brunswick. Before working for Solar

Landscape, he worked for Tesla Inc. in various roles across their Sales, Delivery and Service Departments for 4.5 years. In his current role as Associate Director of Workforce Development, he helps to provide quality education and training opportunities for many individuals within our local communities.

MODULE 4 – URBAN ECOLOGY & GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PERSPECTIVES

Instructors: Susan Kaplan, George Vallone, Alex Ciorlian Session Dates – April 25th & May 2nd

Session 7 – Urban Ecology: Beyond Green Infrastructure Session Date – April 25th



Susan D. Kaplan
USGBC Senior Fellow
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Susan Kaplan is a LEED Fellow with over 30 years of experience in sustainability. She came to sustainability from a background in landscape architecture and environmental science, which has led Ms. Kaplan to work on developing collaborative, integrated solutions for moving buildings, sites, neighborhoods and cities towards true sustainability and equity.

Through Ms. Kaplan's consulting firm, BuildingWrx, she has recently addressed the question of how to create a broader sustainability platform for projects, one that is not limited to one rating system or one approach, and one that addresses issues of resiliency, equity and health and well-being

Susan Kaplan was recently honored to be designated a USGBC Sr. Fellow to help drive a social equity framework for USGBC/GBCI. Ms. Kaplan currently serves as a member of USGBC's LEED for Cities and Communities Working Group and has recently served on the NAACP's initiative – Centering Equity in the Sustainable Building Sector and as a member of the International WELL Building Institute's WELL Community Advisory.

Ms. Kaplan has a long history of sustainability, beginning with work at the Battery Park City Authority, where she was the founding Director of Sustainable Development. In that position, she oversaw the development of the green guidelines for the Authority for both new and existing residential and commercial buildings in lower Manhattan. As a result of the Authority's groundbreaking program, five million square feet of early sustainable buildings and open space were created.

Ms. Kaplan is a founding chair of the USGBC's Social Equity Working Group. As such, she has helped create LEED Pilot Credits that reward community involvement, reward selection of materials that have a more sustainable supply chain, and projects that pay living wages to construction and maintenance workers.

Session 8 – Developer Perspectives on Green Infrastructure & Greener Buildings

Session Date – May 2nd



George Vallone MBA, CRE – President

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As President of The Hoboken Brownstone Company (HBC) -- a multi-faceted real estate development firm active along New Jersey's Hudson River "Gold Coast", **George Vallone** has compiled extensive experience in urban housing through a socially conscious approach to development. HBC is now embarking on its most innovative project yet, the redevelopment of a fifteen-acre Brownfield site in downtown Jersey City into a new mixed-use transit-oriented neighborhood containing over 2,000 apartments. This mixed-use project will transform a contaminated post-industrial wasteland into a vibrant new neighborhood with shopping, dining, entertainment venues.

Mr. Vallone is past President of the New Jersey Builder's Association (NJBA) and a founder and first Chairman of NJBA's Mixed-Use Developers Affiliate ("MXD"), the members of which are responsible for the construction of more than 75% of all rental housing built in NJ. He also serves as Co-Chair of the Green Infrastructure Task Force, a partnership between NJBA and NF Future, a non-profit organization that focuses on Smart Growth Principals and Environmental public-policy issues. His leadership created the ["Developers Guide to Green Infrastructure"](#) which has received national attention and has been adopted by the NJ DEP as their Best Management Practices guide on how to use Green Infrastructure for storm water management. Also, as Chairman of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Capital Markets Partnership (CMP), Mr. Vallone helped negotiate a partnership with the US Green Building Council (USGBC) to deploy CMP's RELi Standard to certify the level of resilient design for buildings, infrastructure, and communities. He has been named to the USGBC / CMP Steering Committee that will soon launch the RELi program internationally to decrease the risk of damage from extreme climate- change related weather events.

Mr. Vallone is a sought-after lecturer and possesses a BA in Accounting from Gettysburg College and an MBA in International Finance from Fordham University.

Session 8 - Community Led Design-Install Green Infrastructure Projects,

Session Date - May 2nd



Alex Ciorlian

Program Associate

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program

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Alex Ciorlian is a program associate at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, specializing in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning and Design to implement green infrastructure practices in rural and urban areas. As a member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, he has participated in numerous conferences that discuss current topics within the profession. He continues to work on projects providing education on native plants, stormwater management design, and spread awareness to communities all throughout New Jersey.

Module 5 – WASTE STREAMS

Session 9 – Global Economic Perspectives

Session 10 – Local / Regional Perspectives

Instructor – David Larrabee

Session Dates – May 2nd & May 9th