

Students awarded NOLA Clean Energy fellowships

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Freeman students [Gabriella Olivieri \(MME '26\)](#) and [Juwon Ishola \(MBA '26\)](#) were recently awarded NOLA Clean Energy Fellowships to support their study of renewable energy.

For their fellowships, Olivieri and Ishola joined a cohort of students from colleges and universities across the New Orleans area for a semester-long program designed to expose participants to multiple aspects of the clean energy field. In addition to team-building activities, professional skills training and mentorship opportunities, participants also earned certification in either Leadership in Energy & Environment Design (LEED) or Solar Design, giving them a valuable professional credential to take into the workplace.

“New Orleans is one of the most vulnerable cities in the U.S. in terms of climate change and sea level rise,” Olivieri said. “That’s one of the reasons the fellowship attracted me. There’s an opportunity for equitable access to renewables and sustainables and also for resilience for underserved communities in in New Orleans.”

“Back home in Nigeria, people don’t really have equal access to electricity,” added Ishola, a native of Lagos. “Clean energy can help boost distribution, so this fellowship resonated with me. Every business needs access to power.”

The fellowships are part of the [Clean Energy Initiative \(CEI\)](#), a program of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Community Development Action Coalition (HBCU CDAC) that aims to empower the economic development of underserved communities by introducing and implementing clean energy solutions. The program’s focus on renewable energy innovations for HBCU and MSI communities is designed to facilitate energy efficiencies, job creation and business development opportunities for these targeted populations.

Olivieri had long had an interest in sustainability and renewable energy. She chose the MME program after graduating with an undergraduate degree in Sustainability Management and working three years at an environmental nonprofit in Norfolk, Virginia.

“I looked at other programs, but the MME is unique,” she said. “Being in energy country colors that hands-on experience and the fact that I could have a renewable and sustainable energy specialization really sold it for me. It was the cherry on top.”

As she approaches graduation, Olivieri is focused on pursuing analyst or consulting roles in the energy sector, where she hopes to contribute to impactful projects.

“One of the most fascinating aspects of the MME program has been discovering opportunities I hadn’t considered and uncovering strengths I didn’t know I had,” she says. “It has broadened my perspective and opened doors I never imagined.”

Drawing on his background as a flood risk analyst who used GIS technology to map flood-prone areas and identify optimal locations for solar panels and wind farms, Ishola hopes to work in either energy or the tech sector following his graduation.

“I'm looking majorly at the energy sector, focusing on project management and sustainability,” he says. “Getting to learn from industry leaders and my cohorts, getting to meet them in person – it has actually been great.”

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Gabriella Olivieri (MME '26), NOLA Clean Energy Fellowship recipient