



EVENT PRESS RELEASE

RISE Travel Institute holds 3rd Annual Student Conference in partnership with Johnson and Wales University on February 1, 2024

NEW YORK, January 22, 2024 - [RISE Travel Institute](#), a travel education non-profit offering online educational programs in sustainable travel, is holding its 3rd Annual Student Conference in partnership with the [Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies, College of Hospitality Management at Johnson and Wales University](#) on Thursday, February 1, 2024, to spur urgent conversations around unjust systems and unsustainable practices in global tourism.

The RISE Travel Institute Student Conference is an annual event where students from the [Flagship Certificate Program in Sustainability and Anti-Oppression in Travel](#) present their capstone projects to the community.

The conference is from 9:30am - 4pm EST. Attendees are welcome to join in-person at the SEEM Lab on the Johnson & Wales University Providence Campus at 261 Pine Street Providence, RI 02903. The event will also be offered online via Zoom for those who cannot attend physically.

This year, the conference will commence with opening remarks from Dr. Vincie Ho, Executive Director of RISE Travel Institute, and Michael Sabitoni, Chairperson of the Department for International Travel/Tourism Studies at Johnson & Wales University. Subsequently, there will be a presentation of RISE's 2023 impact report. To mark the beginning of our presentations, Wesley Espinosa, Executive Director at the Centre for Responsible Travel (CREST), will deliver a keynote address that dives into the importance of taking an equitable approach to destination management and challenging our concepts of community. The morning session will feature presentations by students from Johnson and Wales University and other organizations. In the afternoon, other RISE Flagship graduates—comprising seasoned tourism professionals and graduate students specializing in sustainability—will lead presentations.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with RISE Travel Institute to host the 3rd RISE Annual Student Conference,” said JWU Associate Professor Tiffany Rhodes. “Our students’ participation in the

conference provides them the opportunity to showcase their innovative work while stimulating their ability to think far and wide as they navigate their future in the travel and tourism industry.”

During the ten sessions of the RISE Flagship Certificate Program, students interacted with academics and industry experts in tourism, social justice, animal protection, and climate change, cultivating an understanding of the different sustainability frameworks and how to approach sustainable travel holistically.

As the culmination of a comprehensive, decolonial, systems- and research-based education on sustainable travel, the conference offers students the opportunity to share their reflections and initiatives around making the travel and tourism industry more just, sustainable, and inclusive. This year, the capstone presentations will cover diverse topics, including spiritual tourism, voluntourism, dark tourism, community-based tourism, over-tourism, tourism leakage, guest code of conduct, and more. These presentations will draw examples from various regions, such as the Ecuadorian Amazon, Easter Island, Italy, Ireland, the Maldives, sub-Saharan Africa, and beyond.

While speaking on the success of last year’s conference, Dr. Vincie Ho, Executive Director at RISE Travel Institute, shared, “It was an exciting moment to witness our alumni, comprising both seasoned and aspiring tourism professionals, critically examining unsustainable and unjust systems within the global tourism industry and proposing recommendations for making travel and tourism more sustainable, equitable and inclusive. The concept behind our student conference is not only to celebrate the impact of our Flagship Program but also to create space for critical conversations on sustainability and justice, bridging the gap between academia and the travel industry. We are so thrilled that this year’s partnership with the Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies, College of Hospitality Management at Johnson and Wales University helps to make that possible.”

Event registration link: <https://bit.ly/3ud7VIA>

Contact information: info@risetravelinstitute.org

About the organizer:

[RISE Travel Institute](#) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission to inspire responsible, impactful, sustainable, and ethical travel through education. The organization offers online educational programs in sustainable travel for university students, tourism professionals and travelers of all ages, Experiential Journeys, and awards tuition grants and travel scholarships. RISE is the winner of the 2022 Bessie Award in the Social Impact category, and a finalist for the 2022 UNWTO Awake Tourism Challenge “Tourism Education” category, and has been listed as a “Top Startup” by UNWTO.

About the event partner:

Johnson and Wales University’s Department for International Travel and Tourism Studies provides students with a broad-based foundation in the current fundamentals of tourism development and hospitality management. Housed in the university’s [College of Hospitality Management](#), the curriculum prepares students to work in all facets of the exciting, fast-paced tourism and hospitality industry.