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Alumna 'Killin It' In the Fight Against Climate Change

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Molly Craft Johnson ('15) is Assistant Director for Sustainability Initiatives at The New School's [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#) and responsible for engaging students and supporting initiatives that bolster a campus-wide culture of sustainability. Prior to working at the Tishman Center, Molly was an Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps Fellow at Dartmouth College,

where she contributed to the College's sustainability plan. Molly holds a BA from the University of Portland and an MS in Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management from Milano.

You were just named as one of the “Women ‘Killin It’ in the Fight Against Climate Change” by The University Network. What actions to stop climate change can we take as a university community?

As a university, roughly half of The New School's carbon footprint comes from the electricity we use in our buildings, so one of the quickest ways for each of us to reduce campus emissions is to simply turn off lights and electronics, especially unused computers. Beyond that, The New School's students, faculty, and staff come from a really incredible array of backgrounds with skills in the social sciences, liberal and fine arts, management, design, and policy that can all be applied to create solutions for the climate crisis. One of the most important things to keep in mind is that climate change is not just a science issue, it's a social justice issue: the world's most vulnerable people from a socioeconomic standpoint are getting hit by the effects of climate change first and worst, and they have the fewest resources readily available to recover, rebuild, and

thrive. New Schoolers can help to change this by applying their talents and expertise to design smarter products and systems with smaller impacts on the planet and to advance equitable policy solutions.

You studied in the Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management (EPSM) program. Do you think your time at Milano prepared you to pursue this fight? If so, in what ways?

The EPSM program gave me the practical management and policy skills, along with some finance acumen, necessary to identify and assess sustainability challenges and opportunities then implement strategies and solutions to address them. What is even better, my Milano education kept issues of justice and equity at the forefront by applying an intersectional framework to questions of sustainability, which allows me to push beyond sustainability “solutions” that are really just greenwashing. I use the lessons I learned in the EPSM program to engage The New School’s 14,000 students, faculty, and staff in reflection, dialogue, and action that champions environmental justice above simple “eco-friendliness.”

You are now at the Tishman Environment and Design Center supporting a number of university

initiatives. What opportunities do you see for the university community to live sustainably day-to-day?

There are all sorts of easy choices we can all make every day – things like carrying a reusable water bottle (The New School does not sell bottled water on campus), using a fabric tote instead of plastic bags, and/or cooking with local, seasonal produce. New Schoolers can find even more ideas by taking The New School's [Sustainability Pledge](#). This year, the university is participating in the NYC Department of Environmental Protection's University Water Challenge: we have a goal to reduce our water use on campus by 5 percent. Students living in our residence halls, in particular, can help us achieve this goal by taking shorter showers, and not letting the faucet run while they brush their teeth or wash dishes. Everyone on campus can help out by reporting any leaking faucets or other fixtures to Facilities for repair. Finally, I highly recommend that all students, regardless of their major or program of study, find space in their schedule to [take a sustainability-related class](#) and learn how to apply the skills from their academic discipline to advance sustainability and environmental justice. (The Tishman Center will be launching our first class in Spring 2019: a university-

wide lecture course called “Waste and Justice.”)

Molly is one of seven women profiled who are “killin it” in their efforts to fight climate change highlighted [in this article](#).



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