
October 31, 2025

**Monroe University Celebrates Caribbean Independence Days with
Vibrant Campus Event for International Students**

New Rochelle, NY -- Monroe University's Dining Lab venue on the New Rochelle campus came alive with color, music, and a sense of community on October 31st, as students, faculty, and staff gathered to commemorate the independence days of Sint Maarten, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, and St. Vincent & The Grenadines. The lively celebration was a testament to Monroe's commitment to honoring the diverse cultures that enrich the University's global community.

This event was presented as part of Monroe University's International Initiative, launched in 2023 by President Marc Jerome to strengthen the University's commitment to cultivating a true sense of community and belonging for students whose own homes lie hundreds -- if not thousands -- of miles away across the globe.

With more than 135 countries represented across Monroe's diverse student body of more than 9,000 students, the event served as a powerful reminder of the University's international identity and its unwavering commitment to cultivating a strong sense of community among students from all corners of the globe.

The University was proud to welcome distinguished guests from the Caribbean to the event. In attendance were Mr. Randy McIntosh, Consular General of St. Vincent & the Grenadines, and his wife, Mrs. Seymone McIntosh; Ms. Sherll Mason and Mr. Atiba Williams, Diaspora Representatives for St. Vincent & the Grenadines; Mr. Kenyo Baly, Music Artist and Cultural Ambassador for St. Maarten; and Dr. Day, Diaspora Liaison for Antigua & Barbuda. Their presence added a significant layer of recognition, emphasizing the importance of celebrating the rich histories and cultures represented within the Monroe community.

The event featured captivating performances from students and staff representing each of the Caribbean nations, including original songs, dances, and spoken word. The event also offered a rich culinary experience, with traditional dishes providing attendees a "taste of home" that evoked both nostalgia and pride.

Joeane Laurent, Dean of the University's First-Year Experience program on the New Rochelle campus, has played a key leadership role in the International Initiative since its inception. She was instrumental in pulling today's event together, as was Tara George, a member of Monroe's Health & Wellness team.

Reflecting on the experience, George said, "It was such a rewarding experience to work with the students and bring a taste of our culture to Monroe University. The highlight for me was the evening before the event, when we came together with fellow Sint Maarteners to set up our display table. Seeing our ideas come to life was inspiring, and it brought a deeper sense of unity not only among us but also with the other islands represented."

George emphasized the importance of such gatherings for international students, particularly those far from home. She noted: "Something as simple as having a conversation in your native tongue or sharing a meal that feels familiar makes a world of difference for students who are far away from their families and communities."

The event's emcee, Showanna Arthurs, a Criminal Justice major and Psychology minor from Sint Maarten, also reflected on the joy of bringing the celebration to life.

"Working with the different countries to create such a beautiful presentation was an incredible experience," said Arthurs. "The Caribbean is a melting pot of cultures, and to celebrate alongside the other nations really hit close to home. The speeches, performances, and of course, the food, all came together to create a true Caribbean celebration."

The event was a resounding success, serving as a vibrant and meaningful reminder of the power of cultural celebration and the strength of community. It underscored the importance of unity, pride, and shared heritage, while highlighting Monroe University's commitment to fostering a global and inclusive learning environment.

ABOUT MONROE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1933, Monroe University is a recognized leader in urban and international education. The University is proud of its innovative programs to increase college access, affordability, and completion outcomes, especially among first-generation students, and for the national recognition it receives for its strong impact on graduates' social mobility.

Monroe educates more than 9,000 students each year, offering Certificate, Associate, Bachelor's, and Master's degree programs from New York campuses in the Bronx and New Rochelle, as well as in the Caribbean nation of Saint Lucia. Students may also pursue degree programs through Monroe Online. Programs are offered through Schools of Allied Health Professions, Business and Accounting, Criminal and Social Justice, Education, Hospitality Management, Information Technology, and Nursing, as well as through its King Graduate School. Liberal arts and continuing education programs are also available. For more information and admissions criteria, please visit <http://www.monroeu.edu>.