Advocating for the Environment

Sean Mahar ’02, director of government relations and communications for Audubon New York, spends his days working on advancing legislation and measures to protect the Long Island Sound, as well as innovative projects like the creation of a new educational video game for kids where they have to lead a flock of birds through their migration. He also rides his bike to work on days when the weather cooperates, to make a personal contribution in the fight against global warming. Even a rainy morning doesn’t dampen his passion for nature.

“Siena taught me that we have a responsibility to make our world a better place to live,” Sean said. “I am fortunate to have a job that allows me to advocate for the continued improvement in the quality of life for New Yorkers.”

As an undergraduate student, Sean worked with Dr. Larry Woolbright, professor of biology, as they conducted research in Puerto Rico and at the Saratoga National Battlefield monitoring frog populations. These ongoing research projects are tracking the ways frogs respond to habitat disturbance (in Puerto Rico) and the ways amphibians use and move about various habitats (at the Saratoga Battlefield). For Sean, these experiences, coupled with an Environmental Policy course and an internship at Audubon New York, allowed him to find his dream job.

“Dr. Woolbright believed in me and provided me with numerous opportunities to expand my horizons,” Sean said. “He has a strong interest in protecting our environment and now I am fortunate to be able to advocate for stronger conservation policy using data from the research that scientists like him are conducting.”

Sean also gives back to his alma mater by hosting Siena interns during the academic year and hopes “they will enjoy their experience and find everything in a job that they hope for... like I have.”

Sean Mahar ’02 gives Siena interns like Sarah Larsen ’08 (left) the opportunity to work with government officials at the Capitol in Albany, N.Y.

Above: Sean credits Dr. Larry Woolbright, professor of biology, for sparking his interest in environmental policy.