The Resilient Advocate

January 2019

An evening of stories. Most weird. Many true.

Peterson Toscano is a self-described “quirky, queer Quaker concerned with human rights and comedy.” He’s also a story teller, and like most storytellers gets his material from his own—a bit unusual—experiences.

He says it was his unique personal journey that led him into performance art. He took to the stage after spending 17 years and more than $30,000 on three continents attempting to “de-gay” himself through gay conversion therapy. That will put some material in your story cache....

In his performances, he asks himself and his audiences unusual questions: Who are the gender outlaws in the Bible? What is a queer response to climate change? Can comedy help us better understand our most tragic losses?

Peterson’s performances offer audiences “hope and purpose in a rapidly changing world.” Who doesn’t relish a serving of hope and purpose...with a side of comedy? Wanna taste? #notjustusjustice

Peterson is a caring human rights and comedy activist. He has spent four years of his personal life in the struggle for gay rights in Uganda. An evening of stories. Most weird. Many true.

Come see Peterson Toscano at the College of Charleston on Wed., Feb. 13, 7-9 pm in ECTR 118. Free for students with CofC ID. This event is cosponsored by the SLI, the First Year Experience, and the Office of Institutional Diversity.

Director’s Note...

On January 14 at the Sottile Theater, The Hate U Give author Angie Thomas entertained and inspired a full house of students, faculty, staff and community members, calling on all of us present to “Speak up and speak out!” as advocates for social justice. I was most struck by her message of turning #TheHateUGive into #ThePowerUGive.

But the message she left with us was bigger than her advocacy for racial justice. She called us all to speak out for justice in all forms, and to speak up if we hear or see injustice in our communities.

This message fits perfectly with this year’s CoC Sustains/Solves 21st Century Problem of Social Justice and Fair Distribution. Ms. Thomas explained that just because of skin color, some humans are valued less, and disproportionately suffer from police profiling. She shared that just because of gender identity, some humans are disproportionately made to bear unequal burdens in society. Understanding how there is lack of fairness, equality, and justice in society, in economics and in access to and treatment of the environment, is a key goal of sustainability literacy. Given this, the SLI supports Ms. Thomas’s message: we can’t stay quiet and pretend we don’t see injustice. We all have voices that can help to build a more resilient community that is inclusive and fair for all, regardless of political identity, sexual identity, gender, race, class, age, ability, or nationality.

The SLI will continue this campus-wide conversation this semester through our programming. A couple of events we are really excited about are coming up in February: author Maude Barlow, who will speak about water justice; and performer Peterson Toscano, whose one man show offers a playful take on gender, sexuality, religion, and climate change. In April, students can participate in the CoC’s first Changemaker Challenge: a chance to work on defining and solving a chosen social justice problem and compete for up to $5000 toward implementing winning ideas! Read more about these and other events in this newsletter and online at sustain.cofc.edu.

—SLI director Todd LeVasseur

The Sustainability Literacy Institute (SLI) is the physical, pedagogical, virtual and institutional hub for sustainability literacy efforts at CoC. The purpose of SLI is to foster positive social, economic and environmental change by way of a sustainably literate campus community.

sustain.cofc.edu #notjustusjustice
Water is a social, economic and environmental Issue

A World Bank study from 2010 suggests that in twenty years our global demand for water will outstrip supply by 40 percent. Ouch. With no plans in place to manage water shortages, everyone will suffer when water becomes scarce, but some populations will suffer more.

In her travels and research, Canadian author and activist Maude Barlow has seen what happens when water supplies are diminished: poor and marginalized populations will suffer first and worst. Lack of access to clean water leads to food shortages, breakdown of local economies, disease, loss of biodiversity, and displacement and disruption of entire cultures.

Barlow, award winning author of a number of books focused on water issues and international water activist, will speak at the College of Charleston on Feb. 20.

“The world is facing twin water crises, one ecological, the other human,” she said. “Modern industrial society sees water as a resource for development and is mercilessly polluting and depleting existing water supplies, but water is not a commodity to be put on the open market like oil and gas, but rather a public trust and human right to be guarded and preserved for all time.”

Barlow has traveled from the UN and high level conferences to the worst slums on earth in search of solutions to water crises. Join her as she gives practical tools and examples of water sustainability projects worldwide that protect ecosystems and local communities and economics.

#wateryouthinking #notjustusjustice

Whooo Speaks for Youuu?

By Sallie Walkup ('20)

Language is one of the most powerful tools on the planet. Words can transmit and reproduce sexism and gender bias.

A 2011 study from professors Jennifer Prewitt-Frelina, T. Andrew Caswell, and Emmi Laakso found that gendering language can affect a person’s behaviors and decisions, as well as influence their self-awareness and interactions with other people.

Blogger Tara Mohr also believes sexist phrases shape a woman’s sense of place in society. Mohr told reporters that women often apologize when there is no need to apologize and use sentences like “I just want to check in” and “I just think...,” which makes women sound apologetic and defensive. She also argues adding phrases such as, “I actually disagree” makes a woman sound surprised that she can have a different viewpoint.

She continues, “most women are unconsciously using these speech habits to soften our communications, to try to ensure we don’t get labeled—as women so often do—as bitchy, aggressive, or abrasive.”

Read more at sustain.cofc.edu

2018-19: The Year of Women

This academic year marks the centennial anniversary of the first admission of women to the College of Charleston. That’s why the College is celebrating our outstanding women graduates, faculty, staff, and students.

Fun facts

• Women were first admitted to CofC on August 3, 1918.
• The first 13 women were enrolled on September 30, 1918.
• Pierrine St. Claire Smith Byrd was the first female graduate of the College of Charleston.
• In 1967, the first two black women – Carrie Nesbitt Gibbs and Angela Brown Gilchrist – were admitted to the College of Charleston.
• Today, women comprise 63 percent of the student body.
• CofC female graduates include leaders in medicine, government, education, astronomy and more.
• The first woman faculty member, Maggie Pennington, joined the College in 1962, serving not only as a biology professor, but as the College’s first, last and only dean of women.
• Today, 44 percent of the College’s rostered faculty and 56 percent of its adjunct faculty are women.

All facts from https://yearofwomen.cofc.edu/
A Hundred Lives In One

Meet the man whose days look like they are more than twenty-four hours.

By Sarah Gobato (exchange student from France)

Zachary Stephens isn’t a student like the others. At only twenty-four years of age, he has already accomplished more things than most of his peers could imagine. Zachary’s impressive time management skills are demonstrated in juggling his education, Graduate Student Association President, and Graduate Assistant (GA) for the Sustainability Literacy Institute (SLI) here at the College of Charleston.

For as long as he can remember, Zachary has always been the kind of person who likes to do a thousand things all at once. So, when he arrived at the College of Charleston for his Graduate program, he quickly decided to maximize his time at CofC by involving himself in any opportunities that were available. “It’s not that I must be the leader in everything I do,” he said. “I just want to help my community in any way that I can, and most of the time it happens to be through a leadership position.”

The creation of Sustainability Literacy Institute was the primary reason Zachary chose to apply to the College of Charleston. Once admitted, his program director, Annette Watson, informed him of an opening to be a GA with the SLI.

“When my director told me there was an open position at the SLI, I obviously applied within the hour... and I was blessed to be selected for the role,” he explained “any GA is competitive, and it’s a great chance to continue gaining professional experience while finishing school.”

It has already been over a year since the beginning of the adventure as a GA for the SLI in August 2017. “I have known since high school that I want to make a difference in society, I just needed to find my niche.” he said. While studying Environmental Sciences as an undergraduate at The University of Alabama, Zachary realized the environment and social justice are key focus points for what he wanted to help make an impact on as a professional. The SLI gives him a voice to communicate about those issues.

For the past year, he has even been developing a mobile application with an undergraduate student for the SLI to improve students’ awareness on campus sustainability efforts. “It was September 2017, and I was asking my fellow workers ‘why don’t we create a mobile app?’” The SLI had not initially planned to use a mobile application when the institute formed, but was supportive of the idea.

Asked how the mobile application would function, Zachary said, “The SLI would publish content within the app. It would be a hub of information. Even students could express themselves in a blog section or be highlighted through imagery embedded within the app coming from student artworks or photographs throughout each year related to the theme.” After the SLI approval in Spring 2018, a lot of work was still waiting to be done. “I worked on the design and how the content will be showed. For the coding part I’ve left that to our intern, Chandler Long.” he said. The final test is to get the blessing of the school. “It should come out in a couple weeks... but when exactly is a million-dollar question.” This contribution will be the largest Zachary has made for the SLI during his time as a GA.

Nowadays, his schedule is completely full. When he isn’t fulfilling his administrative functions across his positions, he keeps doing research to improve sustainability efforts and communication at the College of Charleston. I inquired, “surely using your free time to research isn’t much fun?” Zachary replied with a grin, “It’s okay, research is fun.” he said. The sentence would seem completely improbable if it came out of the mouth of any other student, but it fits with Zachary’s personality well. “I can’t change, my parents raised me to be curious,” he admits.

At the end of the academic year, Zachary will be finished with his studies and will be dedicating all of his time to his thesis work. When asked about the next step in his life, Zachary’s response is simple, “My future is wide open, but I would love to be in a corporate sustainability position.” With an amused smile, he jokingly confesses that he would even “consider accepting a job for the SLI if they would propose.”

Only one thing is clear, Zachary loves the College of Charleston and still wants to be very engaged as an alumnus after graduating. But, for now, his priority remains the launch of the mobile app in the weeks to come. All we can do is admire this mobile application and the man hidden behind it. Zachary Stephens is the proof that we can be changemakers, even while in college.

Flash:

Sustainability is hot in the job market. Our QEP has a LOT to offer!

A national search for job descriptions including the word “sustainability” revealed 170,906 job openings during the one year period during which the search was performed (QEP).

Additionally, Arizona State University investigated the demand for sustainability literate employees, and nearly all (97.5%) of the large firm executives who were interviewed “said they would value the concentration” (ASU 2011). For more information: sustain.cofc.edu. Learn more about how our QEP is preparing you to get a job after graduation at sustain.cofc.edu.
Propose a sustainability focused (SF) or sustainability related (SR) course: support the QEP and earn a stipend!

The QEP’s SLOs might be very similar to some you currently use. Why not get your SF or SR course on the books? All you have to do is:

1. use this form to propose a course: http://sustain.cofc.edu/content/resources/proposal-for-courses.pdf
2. Include one or more QEP SLOs in your syllabus
3. Assess outcomes for those SLOs with an assignment or exam question(s)

Contact Steven Jaume for more information.

QEP Faculty Exchange Program

Our QEP calls for interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving, so let’s show our students how important that is!

Sign up to give one or more guest lectures for professors in different disciplines and/or book one or more guest lectures for your own courses.

Share your discipline’s perspective on sustainability, the triple bottom line, systems thinking, or other related topics.

Go to sustain.cofc.edu for more information or contact Steve Jaume.

If you have students who have a heart for social justice and the motivation to do something about it, encourage them to participate in CoC’s first Changemaker Challenge, modeled on a global challenge to identify and solve problems of social justice around the world.

Get more information at sustain.cofc.edu. and see examples of what others have submitted at changemaker.com.

Get more information, resources and ideas for how to incorporate this campus-wide event into your classes on page 5 of this newsletter!

Faculty Certificate in Teaching Sustainability Literacy

Keep an eye out for the faculty certificate in teaching sustainability literacy, to begin in academic year 2019-2020. More information will be forthcoming later this semester!

Contact: Steve Jaume

Queer Eye for the Classroom: A Workshop with Peterson Toscano: The same workshop will be offered twice in Stern Center, room 201: Feb. 12th, 9am-10:30am and Feb 13th, 8:30am-10:00am.

Teaching and communicating through an intersectional lens provides students an opportunity to see how their lives and passions are connected to material covered in their classes—especially important for often marginalized groups. Focus will be primarily on “queering” content in the classroom including the humanities, natural sciences, climate change education, and sustainability.


Think through resilience as this concept relates to your disciplines, and relate this concept to guiding research questions in your field. Response by author Maude Barlow.

Confirmed panelists are Lancie Affonso, Computer Science; Lisa Young, ENG; Jim Ward, Art and Architectural History; Saif Mir, Supply Chain and Info. Management; Barry Stiefel, HPCP; Elise Perrault, MGMT; Barbara Beckingham, GEOL; Matt Nowlin, POLI; Vivian Appler, Theatre and Dance; Meta Van Sickle, Teacher Education; Tim Callahan, GEOL; Merrie Koester, Teacher Education.

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“We have very passionate students that want to make a difference in the world around them. This is an opportunity for them to begin work on doing so.” -Dr. David Hansen

What is the Changemaker Challenge? It’s a campus-wide event that will allow students to showcase work they are doing to understand and solve social justice issues. Students that take part will get feedback and help from all around campus and have a chance to win some money to help them get closer to making their solutions a reality.

Participating students will show their understanding of a problem through a poster session and their creativity in developing solutions through a pitch competition. Read more at sustain.cofc.edu.

It’s also an opportunity to move our campus toward participation in a global Changemaker Challenge. Check out go.cofc.edu/changemaker, which has over 30,000 sample projects from changemaker challenges all around the world. We want our students’ winning ideas on this site!

Tools, guidelines and mentoring opportunities for participating students:

Impact Gap Canvas: a problem mapping template provided to guide students in the poster research portion of the challenge. See a short video about how to use this template: www.tacklingheropreneurship.com.

The purpose of the canvas is to give students a nice, single-page document to bring together their research into understanding a problem, what solutions are being tried to solve the problem, and where the opportunities or “gaps” lie for them to potentially work on a solution.

Check out http://mapthesystem.sbs.ox.ac.uk/ for a rubric used for the global competition that could be adapted for a grading rubric in class and resources for completing the impact gap canvas, including the winning entries from recent years. You can also see the pitches teams gave.

Students will be connected with resources on and off campus for help with designing solutions and implementing winning ideas. Contact Dr. David Hansen for more information. HansenD@cofc.edu.

Problem solving workshops: hands-on workshops offered at various times during February and March to give students problem solving methods that they can use in the Changemaker Challenge work and in other problem solving endeavors. Go to sustain.cofc.edu for dates.

Students who have done some research on a social problem they wish to explore will get the most benefits from these workshops. However, any student with the desire to learn problem solving strategies is welcome.

Students attending a workshop will get an introduction to human-centered design, a form of creative problem-solving.

How can I use this challenge in my classes?

♦ Allow extra credit for students to enter the challenge. Make participation in the CC part of your course assignments. Provide information to your students about how they can take advantage of this opportunity on their own.

♦ Encourage students to form diverse working groups to tackle a social problem. We know from creativity research that a diverse group of people will generate more novel and useful solutions due to the wider pool of knowledge.

♦ Assign the Impact Gap Canvas problem mapping template as a way to have students get a better understanding of some kind social or environmental problem. This link provides a rubric and instructions for using the IGC, as well as examples: http://mapthesystem.sbs.ox.ac.uk/

♦ Have students team up to review a successful entry in the global Changemaker Challenge, do some background research to learn more about the winning organization and then lead a short class discussion, following a short presentation, about the project and what we can learn from it.

♦ Use the online Changemaker resources to highlight social issues in a certain country by examining the projects from that country (sort by location or social sector). Or explore ways people are approaching environmental challenges. Show students that participating in the Changemaker Challenge makes them a part of a global effort to make the world a better place!
Don’t miss these Upcoming SLI Events

**Sustainable Heritage: merging environmental conservation and historic preservation.** Join authors Dr. Barry Stiefel and Ms. Amalia Leifeste as they launch their book Sustainable Heritage: Merging Environmental Conservation and Historic Preservation. February 18, 3:30-4:40 ECTR 118.

**Bridging the Divide: placemaking for communities of color in the SC Lowcountry.** Feb. 5, 6:00 pm Alumni Hall (Randolph Hall Building) Keynote speaker Stephanie Johnson-Cunningham, co-founder of MuseumHue.

**Solving the World Water Crisis.** Maude Barlow. Is water a commodity to be put on the open market like oil and gas or a public trust and human right? Join her as she gives practical tools and examples of water sustainability projects worldwide that protect ecosystems and local communities and economics. Wednesday, Feb. 20th ECTR 116 3:30-5pm.

**Be a Changemaker: Creative Problem Solving Workshops** Get some outside-of-the-box problem solving skills in these active, creative problem-definition and -solution events with social entrepreneurship professor David Hansen. Bring your friends and your social justice concerns...or just bring your friends and get ideas for problems that you could work on. Dates throughout the early spring. Free. Contact Dr. Hansen at hansend@cofc.edu or check sustain.cofc.edu for more information.

**Man2Man Series** Topics vary month to month; intended to create a dialogue around the social identity of masculinity in supporting a positive and healthy campus climate. While the series is focused on masculinity and other gender identities, women are a part of this conversation, as they are integrated at every level on this campus.

Themes for spring include: The social construction of gender (2/11), Financial empowerment (3/4) and Black and brown male issues (4/1) for more information, go to sustain.cofc.edu or contact LeRoy Lewis: LewisL@cofc.edu.

**Year 3 SLI Student Art Contest** Theme is sustainable food systems; Deadline is March 19. Look for artists call with details for this year’s contest in on sustain.cofc.edu in January. Student artists can get up to $2000 to cover expenses of production, and winning pieces will be displayed at venues around campus during the fall of 2019. More information to come: sustain.cofc.edu

**Everything is Connected** (What is a queer response to climate change?). Come see Peterson Toscano at the College of Charleston on Wed., Feb. 13, 7-9 pm in ECTR 118. Free for students with CofC ID. This event is cosponsored by the SLI, the First Year Experience, and the Office of Institutional Diversity.

**Dr. Ratchford: Black athletes’ activist tradition.** Dr. Ratchford is an historian on race and activism who will speak about the interface of sports and black activism, past and present. Examples include Muhammad Ali, Tommie Smith & John Carlos, Craig Hodges, and Colin Kaepernick. Social, political, and economic injustices all intersect and relates specifically to this year’s theme of social justice and fair distribution. Discussion of the black athlete-activist tradition and racial and gender inequality within sports, including the rate of pay between women and men athletes and lack of women in leadership positions in collegiate and professional sports. Sponsored by Dr. Anthony Greene and SLI.

More information to come: check sustain.cofc.edu for updates.

**Peace Events (Rhonda Swikert)**

2.28 Dr. Najet Beiter-lecture and film on leftover food (Lauren Ravalico)

3.16 Southern Foodways and planting (MES)

4.10 Vanessa Barboni-Another tomorrow (Alexis Carrico)

4.16 Dr. Jalane Schmidt-politics of race, activism in Charlottsville

4.17-4.18 Winona LaDuke—wrap up year two and year of women