Works Toward Realizing the Dream

Five Years of Scholarship, Education, and Action at the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education

Edited by
Brandon P. Hollingshead
and Peter Blaze Corcoran
FGCU Mission

Florida Gulf Coast University continuously pursues academic excellence, practices and promotes environmental sustainability, embraces diversity, nurtures community partnerships, values public service, encourages civic responsibility, cultivates habits of lifelong learning, and keeps the advancement of knowledge and pursuit of truth as noble ideals at the heart of the university’s purpose.
Foreword

“Ours is a unique historical moment. The scope and range of human impacts on the Earth are unprecedented.”

Preamble to the Mission

So began the Preamble to the Mission of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, written in 2004 by co-chairs Mary Evelyn Tucker and David Orr. Surely, the degradation of ecosystems and the destabilization of climate systems have dramatically accelerated, even in the five short years of Center history. Tragically, sustainability seems a diminishing prospect. We also stated that this historical moment contained unprecedented “possibilities to build a secure basis for a sustainable and sustaining future.” Indeed, this early twenty-first century time has been one of increasing awareness of sustainability in the larger culture, and progress toward environmental sustainability at Florida Gulf Coast University.

The Preamble boldly declared that, “Higher education has a strategic contribution to make helping to: rediscover ancient truths, create new ideas, and equip, empower, and inspire the rising generation.” It is to this strategic contribution that we have applied our creative imagination and earnest initiative.

In the words of our mission, the Center “works toward realizing the dream of a sustainable and peaceful future for Earth through scholarship, education, and action. The Center advances understanding and achievement of the goals of environmental and sustainability education through innovative educational research methods, emergent eco-pedagogies, and educational philosophy and practice based on ethics of care and sustainability.” It is to this activity that we have dedicated our resources and hard work. This report catalogs our work; it is our accounting to the University and the local stakeholder community of activities to achieve our goals.

None of this would be possible without the substantial support of the Florida Gulf Coast University leadership. We acknowledge their administrative support—in particular support from our founding by Dean Donna Price Henry and Vice President Joe Shepard. We appreciate the guiding wisdom of our distinguished Board of Advisors, especially co-chairs Mary Evelyn Tucker and David Orr. We express our deep gratitude to our contributors, without whose support we would not be able to work toward this dream.

Peter Blaze Corcoran
Director, Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education

About the Center

“Future generations are unlikely to condone our lack of prudent concern for the integrity of the natural world that supports all life.”

Rachel Carson, Silent Spring

Rachel Carson’s work is the inspiration for the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. Her contribution to human understanding of our environment is unparalleled. Silent Spring has been called the most important book of the twentieth century—it launched the environmental movement. Rachel Carson’s contributions, most relevant to the mission of the Center, are public policy based on sound science and ethics, active participation of an ecologically literate citizenry, and appreciation of the natural world through the literary arts and environmental education.

Preamble to the Mission

Ours is a unique historical moment. The scope and range of human impacts on the Earth are unprecedented. So, too, are the possibilities to build a secure basis for a sustainable and sustaining future. Never has so much depended on our wisdom, foresight, and the quality of our thinking. Higher education has a strategic contribution to make helping to: rediscover ancient truths, create new ideas and equip, empower, and inspire the rising generation. These goals, in turn, require mobilizing the research, educational, and organizational resources of the university community. The Center, then, is designed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century boldly and creatively.

Mission

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education works toward realizing the dream of a sustainable and peaceful future for Earth through scholarship, education, and action. The Center advances understanding and achievement of the goals of environmental and sustainability education through innovative educational research methods, emergent eco-pedagogies, and educational philosophy and practice based on ethics of care and sustainability. The Center seeks to elevate the environmental mission of Florida Gulf Coast University and serve the university community, the local community of the Western Everglades and Barrier Islands, and the wider community of scholars.

Goals

I. To advance innovative educational research methodologies and pedagogies in environmental and sustainability education. This work will include developing methods for the assessment of sustainability, philosophical research, and curriculum and program development, and will take place in a variety of educational settings and geographical locations, ranging from local to global.

II. To educate for an ecologically literate citizenry and to advance civic engagement in the critical environmental issues of the Western Everglades and Barrier Islands. Key areas of emphasis will include ethics, activism, and the literary arts.

III. To provide professional development for educators in environmental education and education for sustainability. The priority audiences will include University administrators, faculty, and in-service and pre-service teachers.

IV. To provide opportunities for faculty, administrators, staff, and students from across the campus to engage in scholarly activity, teaching, and service related to environmental and sustainability education. The Center will cooperate with other FGCU Centers and Institutes to advance common interests and to achieve the University’s environmental mission.
The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education is an extraordinary effort at a very special university clearly dedicated to sustainability and to environmental education. There are not many places that combine science and social science, and in particular values and ethics. We are in one of the greatest crises that humans have ever had to face. The people of Fort Myers understand this and people across the country are beginning to understand deeply that you can’t build an economy not linked to ecology.

**Mary Evelyn Tucker**
Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University
Co-chair, CESE Board of Advisors

**History and Provenance**

The advent of Florida Gulf Coast University was fairly well publicized in higher education. There was much interest in the founding of a public university with a mission to promote environmental sustainability and to emphasize the environment where it was to be developed. The founding faculty and the founding Dean’s Council recognized the possibilities and challenges of incorporating sustainability into the university curriculum and institutional practice. One of the early marks of distinction for FGCU was the development of the course “The University Colloquium: A Sustainable Environment and Sustainability.” It is a required course for all undergraduates to carry on the institution’s commitment to environmental and sustainability.

However, as Florida Gulf Coast University grew, the dialogue and commitment to environmental sustainability drifted. Several faculty members saw the importance of creating an academic center where scholarship, teaching, curriculum development, thinking, and discussion about these issues could be nurtured and housed. The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education was created to carry on the institution’s commitment to environmental sustainability, to create a place where those conversations could take place, and to pursue research at the university level and beyond.

The Center was envisioned to support scholarship, support teaching, and help fulfill the University’s public environmental and sustainability education mission.

When we created the Center, we brought prominent leaders in the fields of environment and sustainability education to our Board of Advisors to give a national perspective to our deliberations. Our Board is co-chaired by David Orr, the guru of environmental studies in American higher education, and Mary Evelyn Tucker, who is co-chair of the Forum on Religion and Ecology and has a global perspective on the spiritual and religious dimensions of environment and sustainability. We felt that having national figures of that experience and academic distinction guiding us would be helpful for us as a young university with many young faculty.

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education was the first academic center at Florida Gulf Coast University approved at the university level. We worked very closely with President Merwin to engage in a participatory process. We held a number of planning charrettes involving local teachers, Southwest Florida community members, and FGCU faculty and administration. This participation helped us create goals that would serve the community.

The Center was formally approved in 2004. The University and the Center must be modest about our accomplishments in environment and sustainability. The current university administration, President Wilson Bradshaw, Provost Ronald Toll, Vice President Joe Shepard, Dean Donna Price Henry, and the academic leaders in all of the colleges are committed to the University’s environmental sustainability mission. We are moving quickly, especially under President Bradshaw’s leadership, to become the University we want to be.

The Center would not be what it is without the involvement of student assistants. Over the years, we have had a small group of student assistants who work between 5 and 25 hours a week for the Center. They are absolutely essential to the development of our work. All of our editorial and scholarly work results from the efforts of students and graduate students at Florida Gulf Coast University.

**Board of Advisors**

**Mary Evelyn Tucker**
Forum on Religion and Ecology, Yale University
Co-chair, Center Board of Advisors

Mary Evelyn Tucker is a Senior Lecturer and Senior Research Scholar at Yale University where she has appointments in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies as well as the Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies. She is a co-founder and co-director with John Grim of the Forum on Religion and Ecology. Together they organized a series of ten conferences on World Religions and Ecology at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard Divinity School. They are series editors for the ten volumes from the conferences distributed by Harvard University Press. She is also Research Associate at the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies at Harvard.


She is a member of the Interfaith Partnership for the Environment at the United Nations Environment Programme (unep). She served on the International Earth Charter Drafting Committee from 1997–2000 and is a member of the Earth Charter International Council. B.A. Trinity College, M.A. suny Fredonia, Ph.D. Columbia University.

**David W. Orr**
Professor and Chair, Environmental Studies, Oberlin College
Co-chair, Center Board of Advisors

David W. Orr is the Paul Sears Distinguished Professor of Environmental Studies and Politics, Special Assistant to the President of Oberlin College, and a James Marsh Professor at the University of Vermont. His career as a scholar, teacher, writer, speaker, and entrepreneur spans fields as diverse as environment and politics, environmental education, campus greenness, green building, ecological design, and climate change. He is the author of six books and co-editor of three others. *Ecological Literacy* (suny, 1992), described as a “true classic” by Garrett Hardin, is widely read and used in hundreds of colleges and universities. A second book, *Earth in Mind* (1994/2004) is praised by people as diverse as biologist E.O. Wilson and writer, poet, and farmer Wendell Berry.

In 1996 he organized the effort to design the first substantially green building on a U.S. college campus. The Adam Joseph Lewis Center was later named by the U.S. Department of Energy as “One of Thirty Milestone Buildings in the 20th Century,” and by The New York Times as the most interesting of a new generation of college and university buildings. The Lewis Center purifies all of its wastewater.
and is the first college building in the U.S. powered entirely by sunlight. But most importantly it became a laboratory in sustainability that is training some of the nation’s brightest and most dedicated students for careers in solving environmental problems. The story of that building is told in two books, The Nature of Design (Oxford, 2002) that Fritjof Capra called “brilliant,” and a second, Design on the Edge (MIT, 2006), that architect Sim van der Ryn describes as “powerful and inspiring.” Orr is also active in efforts to stop mountaintop removal in Appalachia and develop a new economy based on ecological restoration and wind energy. He is the author of Down to the Wire: Confronting Climate Collapse (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Lawrence Jay Amon
Chief Financial Officer, Ocean Conservancy, Washington, D.C.
Larry is currently the Chief Financial Officer of Ocean Conservancy, a nonprofit organization working to promote healthy and diverse ocean ecosystems. Larry was a strategic financial management consultant prior to joining the Ocean Conservancy in 2007, helping organizations design their budgeting and financial reporting processes to achieve organizational goals. Prior to establishing his consulting business, he was Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for National Wildlife Federation after serving as its Chief Financial Officer. Between these two appointments, he served as Acting President and Chief Executive Officer during a CEO search process. Larry has worked in the finance area of conservation organizations for over 30 years. He joined nwf’s staff in 1972 and has been a Certified Public Accountant since 1986.

Richard M. Clugston
Executive Director, United States office of the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad, India
Rick Clugston is the Executive Director of the United States office of the Centre for Environment Education, headquartered in Ahmedabad, India, and Project Coordinator for the Earth Charter Scholarship Project at the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at Florida Gulf Coast University. From 1991–2008, Rick was a Vice President of The Humane Society of the United States and Executive Director of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, where he also directed the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, the Sustainable Universities Assessment and Evaluation Project, and Earth Charter USA.

Dr. Clugston served on the Earth Charter International Steering Committee where he chaired the fundraising committee. He now serves on the Earth Charter International Council and on the boards of the Wolfe’s Neck Farm Foundation (Maine, USA), and the Bonne Bay Lighthouse Centre (Newfoundland, Canada). Dr. Clugston is the publisher and editor of Earth Ethics, the deputy editor of The International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education (mcb University Publications), and serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development (Sage Publications). He was a co-founder of the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership.

He received his doctorate in Higher Education from the University of Minnesota (1987), and his Master’s in Human Development from the University of Chicago (1977).

Jack Crocker
Former Interim Provost and Dean, Florida Gulf Coast University
Jack Crocker came from the University of South Florida in Tampa to Florida Gulf Coast University in 1995 as founding Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In addition to starting the College of Arts and Sciences, he served twice as interim provost, wrote the Guiding Principles for the University, co-wrote the lyrics for the alma mater, and originated the Renaissance Academy of GCCU, a lifelong learning program. A poet and fiction writer, his work has appeared in a variety of places, including the book Florida in Poetry. A collection of poems, The Last Resort, was published in February 2009 by the Texas Review Press. He has written for public television and presented readings as well as musical programs at colleges, conferences, and workshops throughout the United States. As a professor, Crocker has taught literature and creative writing at several universities and was writer-in-residence for Danville College’s summer program in Florence, Italy. Having gone to college on basketball and baseball scholarships in Mississippi, he has a doctorate in English from Texas Tech University. Currently Crocker is Vice President of Academic Affairs at the State College of Florida, Manatee/Sarasota.

Alison Hawthorne Deming
Poet, Professor, Creative Writing, University of Arizona
A direct descendant of the great American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne, poet and essayist Alison Hawthorne Deming is Professor in Creative Writing at the University of Arizona. She is the author of four poetry collections, Science and Other Poems (1994), selected by Gerald Stern for the Walt Whitman Award of the Academy of American Poets, The Monarchs: A Poem Sequence (1997), Genus Loic (2005), and Rope (2006); and three nonfiction books, Temporary Homelands (1994), The Edges of the Civilized World (1998), and Writing the Sacred Into the Real (2001). She is currently Poet-in-Residence at the Jacksonville Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

Deming received an MFA from Vermont College in

Armand Ball
Former President, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Armand Ball, a native of Louisiana, currently consults with children’s camps nationally and internationally. His professional experience relates to administering camps for church groups and the YMCA in Florida, Tennessee and Minnesota, and as CEO of the American Camp Association for 15 years. He and his wife, Beverly, co-authored the standard text on camp administration, now available in four languages. He is a founder of the International Camping Fellowship and has spoken and taught in many countries. Armand has been active in the civic and conservation life of Sanibel as past Chair of the City’s Park and Recreation Committee, board member of the non-profit for below market rate housing, Kiwanis, a state permitting program for sea turtle monitoring, and as past President of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation.

Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education is one of the great experiments in higher education in the United States. Peter Blaze Corcoran, director of the center, has been terrific at bringing resources together and bringing the University around the vision of sustainability in education. Earth is at a tipping point right now. Florida Gulf Coast University and the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education are equipping a generation of young people to be just and sustainable—to roll up their sleeves, get down to work, analyze, and solve problems that are connected to sustainability.”

David W. Orr
Professor and Chair, Environmental Studies, Oberlin College
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David W. Orr
Professor and Chair, Environmental Studies, Oberlin College
Co-chair, CESE Board of Advisors
Maxine Greene
Professor Emeritus, Teachers College, Columbia University

Maxine Greene has been at the forefront of educational philosophy for well over half a century as a teacher, lecturer, and author. She is the Founder and Director of the Center for Social Imagination, the Arts, and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University where she has been on the faculty since 1965 and is now Professor Emeritus.

Dr. Greene has lectured widely at universities and educational associations throughout the United States, and is a past President of the Philosophy of Education Society, the American Educational Studies Association, and the American Educational Research Association. She has also served on the Executive Council of the John Dewey Society, the National Council of Teachers of English, the Modern English Language Association, and the American Philosophical Association. In 1984, she was elected to the National Academy of Education and has received Educator of the Year Awards from Columbia University and Ohio State University. She is the author of six books, including *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change* (Jossey Bass Publishers, 1995); *The Dialectics of Freedom* (Teachers College Press, 1988); and *Teaching as Stranger: Educational Philosophy in the Modern Age* (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), which was awarded the 1974 Delta Gamma Kappa Award for Educational Book of the Year.

Maxine Greene holds a Ph.D. (1955) and M.A. (1949) from New York University and a B.A. from Barnard College, Columbia University (1938) in addition to nine honorary degrees from universities across the country.

Donna Price Henry
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Florida Gulf Coast University

Donna Price Henry is Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of Biology at Florida Gulf Coast University. Henry completed her undergraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania, earning her B.A. in Biological Basis of Behavior in 1982, and her graduate work at Thomas Jefferson University, earning her Ph.D. in Physiology in 1987. She was Chairman of the Department of Physical Sciences and Mathematics and Assistant Professor of Biology at Saint Thomas University in Miami, Florida, for six years before joining FGCU.

A founding faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences at FGCU in 1996, Henry developed the curriculum for the biology program. She was a member of the faculty team developing the innovative curriculum for the Interdisciplinary Core for all degree programs in the College of Arts and Sciences. Henry served as the founding director of the University’s Whitaker Center for Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education, whose mission includes fostering best practices in science and mathematics education through the use of innovative research tools, technologies, and pedagogical methods. She facilitated the development of the program for the construction of Whitaker Hall, the science, mathematics, and technology building on the FGCU campus. Henry’s leadership in science education extends far beyond the University; she is a member of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Future Scientists, and has presented papers detailing her reform efforts in undergraduate science education.

Collette M. Hopkins
Director of Education Programs, National Black Arts Festival, Atlanta

Dr. Hopkins serves as the Consulting Director of Education and Family Programs for the National Black Arts Festival. In this capacity she develops and produces a variety of education programs and experiences for educators, parents, children and youth, families, and the general public. She has inspired, motivated, and galvanized thousands of educators, students, and others into various forms of activism through her vision for community empowerment, educational inclusion, and cultural ownership.

Several of Dr. Hopkins’ most recent accomplishments include coordinating a Fulbright study abroad experience and the development of the curriculum support materials for a project funded through the National Science Foundation on the study of the people of the Seal Islands of Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. She recently served as a Scholar-in-Residence for the Faculty Resource Network of New York University. Her area of interest is teaching African presence in the Americas.

Dr. Hopkins is a strong advocate for the rights of children, especially to the right to learn in a variety of environments with an assortment of teaching materials. She understands the arts as a tool for social justice and equality. As a visionary, Dr. Hopkins has designed curricular materials, conducted workshops, and organized educational tours to Africa and countries of the African Diaspora to provide teachers with new resources and to broaden their educational experience.

Louise M. Johnson
Former Mayor, City of Sanibel, Florida

Louise Johnson, of Sanibel Island, Florida, is a long-time nature lover, environmental activist, and public servant. A former Mayor of the City of Sanibel (1985–1986), Dr. Johnson has served as Sanibel City Councilor, as well as several terms, for a total of twelve years, on the City of Sanibel Planning Commission, including the Sanibel Wildlife and early Affordable Housing committees. She was originally drawn to Sanibel Island for its leaders’ commitment to ecological principles, and its vision of environmental protection. Johnson is active in numerous organizations in the Barrier Islands, and has served in various capacities with Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (sccf). She was a member of the Foundation’s first class of nature guides, and has served on the organization’s Board of Trustees.

Dr. Johnson holds degrees from Syracuse University, including a B.A. in English and Education, a Master’s degree in Library Science, and a Doctorate of Arts. She has completed studies at Ohio State University and Bread Loaf School of English. Actively involved in the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education from its founda-
“In its first five years, the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education has taken a leadership role in helping Florida Gulf Coast University realize its mission of achieving environmental sustainability. The Center’s work on campus, in the Southwest Florida community, and beyond—including humane and sustainable food services at FGCU, lectures, and proposals for moving forward with FGCU’s Green Building Demonstration and Learning Center—is exemplary of FGCU’s birthright in sustainability.”

JOE SHEPARD Vice President, Finance and Administration, Florida Gulf Coast University, CESE Board of Advisors

June LaCombe
Environmental Artist, Curator, Maine

June LaCombe is a sculpture curator exploring through exhibitions the dialog between art and the land. Her exhibitions have included The Heart of Matter, Touchstones: Sculpture Participating with Place, Sculpture for this Animate Earth, and Where Nature and Culture Meet. She lives on a small farm in Maine.

Her professional experience reflects her interests in natural history, cultural history, and the arts. She was the Director of Environmental Education for the Maine Audubon Society from 1976–1982, overseeing nature centers, field trips, wildlife research, and teacher’s resources. She worked as the Education Director, then the Acting Director of Greater Portland Landmarks in 1984–1986, overseeing architectural history walking tours, courses, field trips, and development. Since 1987 she has worked as an arts consultant and curator exploring environmental themes through sculpture exhibitions.

LaCombe’s public service has included: director of the Maine Environmental Education Association, board chair of the Maine Conservation School, Maine College of Art trustee, Olmsted Alliance trustee, chair for advisory board of the Harraseeket Project, founding director of the Pownal Education Foundation, and member of the Portland Public Arts Committee. She organized art shows in conjunction with the academic symposium “Teaching for the Environment: The Promise of the Earth Charter,” where she explored academic themes through visual arts exhibitions.

In a doctoral Environmental Studies program at Antioch New England, June researched insights from environmental art for environmental education. This included the theory and practice of environmental education and research on the power of art to increase perceptual awareness, provide insight to our understanding of natural systems, heal the nature/culture divide, inspire participatory action, and celebrate beauty.

Andrew Rowan
Executive Vice President, The Humane Society of the United States

Andrew Rowan is Executive Vice President for operations for The Humane Society of the United States (hhsus). He also serves as Chief Executive Officer of Humane Society International, and President of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education. Dr. Rowan oversees all international programs and regional offices nationwide, domestic animal programs, wildlife and habitat protection, and all education programs. He currently serves as a member of the advisory committee on animal testing for Royal Dutch Shell, and with the National Institutes of Health ad hoc advisory committee on chimpanzee sanctuaries. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Before joining The HSSUS, Dr. Rowan served as Executive Vice President of the Tufts University Center for Animals and Public Policy (1984–1997); Chairman of the department of environmental studies at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine (1995–1997); professor, associate professor, and assistant professor in the department of environmental studies at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine (1983–1997); and founding editor of the International Journal for the Study of Animal Problems (1979–1982).

Dr. Rowan holds a doctorate in philosophy in biochemistry from Oxford University (1975). He received an M.A. from Oxford University in 1971, where he was a Rhodes Scholar, and a Bachelor of Science in chemistry and general physiology, with distinction, from Cape Town University in 1968.

Dr. Rowan will be leaving the Center’s board in 2010 after five years of service.

Jacob Scott
FGCU Alumnus, England

After moving to Florida from the United Kingdom as a college student, Jake became one of the first teaching assistants to Florida Gulf Coast University’s ground breaking Colloquium course. This course was the first environmental course required of all students graduating from a public university in the United States. Mentored by Dr. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Jake graduated FGCU in 1990 and spent time interning for the National Audubon Society’s Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and the Florida Wildlife Federation.

Since then Jake has led environmental education and outreach programs for the National Wildlife Federation across the southeast United States and led external relations programs for the UK’s Environment Agency in the northeast of England. Jake is active on environmental boards in the USA and UK and has a special interest in environmental justice and youth environmental leadership.

Joe Shepard
Vice President, Florida Gulf Coast University

Dr. Joe Shepard has provided executive leadership since 2003 as the Vice President for Administrative Services and Finance for Florida Gulf Coast University. As Chief Financial Officer of the University, he...
oversees more than twenty departments and has taken an active role in sustainable development, most recently with the planning and building of a solar energy field on campus. He also serves as the Assistant Treasurer to the University Foundation.

A founding member of the University in 1995, his initial role was in both leadership and development of the Division of Student Services where he became the chief student affairs officer prior to his current position. He is actively engaged in volunteerism and serves on numerous Boards and committees throughout Southwest Florida.

Joe received his Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics education from Northern Arizona University, holds a Master’s degree in Business Administration and International Finance from the University of North Texas, and a doctorate from Florida International University in public administration, where he specialized in public finance.

Erik Thijs Wedershoven

Student, Sciences Po Paris, France

Erik Thijs Wedershoven was elected as Youth Representative in the Government’s Delegation of the Netherlands to the United Nations (UN) General Assembly during the Night of the UN on 24 October 2004, the first open election in the Netherlands for that position. In the following two years, Erik was a member of the Dutch Government’s Delegation to the UN Millennium Summit 2005, the UN Commission for Social Development 2005 and 2006, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development 2006, and the UN General Assembly in 2004 and 2005. He was involved in drafting resolutions and policies on the national and international level, and delivered statements at the UN General Assembly and other relevant fora. Erik has also been Project Officer for the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam for two years, and continues to be an active member of the Earth Charter Youth Initiative.

In September 2006, Erik took up his studies at University College Maastricht, Maastricht University, where he spent one semester at University of California, Berkeley, in 2008. Erik received his degree on 1 July 2009 and was accepted to Sciences Po’s Master of Public Affairs, where he began his studies in September 2009. While in university, he accepted board membership of the World Population Foundation and joined the Roundtable of Worldconnectors. Erik also serves on the Board of Advisors of Plan Netherlands. Erik is fluent in Dutch, English and French. He also speaks German and Spanish. His hobbies include judo, acting, and poetry.

Terry Tempest Williams

Writer, Teacher, Activist, Utah and Wyoming

Terry Tempest Williams has been called “a citizen writer,” a writer who speaks and speaks out eloquently on behalf of an ethical stance toward life. A naturalist and fierce advocate for freedom of speech, she has consistently shown us how environmental issues are social issues that ultimately become matters of justice.

Williams has testified before Congress on women’s health issues, been a guest at the White House, has camped in the remote regions of Utah and Alaska wildernesses, and worked as “a barefoot artist” in Rwanda. Known for her impassioned and lyrical prose, Terry Tempest Williams is the author of the environmental literature classic, Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place (1991); An Unspoken Hunger: Stories from the Field (1994); Desert Quartet (1995); Leap (2000); Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert (2001); and The Open Space of Democracy (2004). Her new book, Finding Beauty in a Broken World, was published in 2008 by Pantheon Books.

In 2006, Williams received the Robert Marshall Award from The Wilderness Society, their highest honor given to an American citizen. She also received the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western American Literature Association and the Wallace Stegner Award given by The Center for the American West. She is the recipient of a Lannan Literary Fellowship and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in creative nonfiction. Terry Tempest Williams is currently the Annie Clark Tanner Scholar in Environmental Humanities at the University of Utah. Her writing has appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times, Orion Magazine, and numerous anthologies worldwide as a crucial voice for ecological consciousness and social change. She and her husband, Brooke Williams, divide their time between Castle Valley, Utah and Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Staff Leadership

Peter Blaze Corcoran

Professor of Environmental Studies and Environmental Education; Director, Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education

Peter Blaze Corcoran has been a faculty member in Human Ecology at College of the Atlantic, an Assistant Professor of Educational Studies at Swarthmore College, and an Associate Professor of Education at Bates College. He has also been a visiting professor in Australia, The Netherlands, and Fiji.

He works extensively on international environmental education, with special interest in the South Pacific Island Nations. He is a member of the Marine and Ecological Sciences Program in Environmental Education at Bates College. He also serves as a visiting professor in Australia, The Netherlands, and Fiji.

He advises the Mainstreaming Environment in Higher Education at Bates College. He is also a member of the editorial board of several scholarly journals, including the Southern African Journal of Environmental Education, Ethics, and Action; the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development; the International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education; and the Intergenerational Justice Review. He co-edited four recent books on Earth Charter scholarship and sustainability in higher education and publishes widely in scholarly journals.

Anne Hartley

Associate Professor of Ecological Sciences; Program Leader, Environmental Studies; Assistant Director, Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education

Anne Hartley is an Associate Professor in the Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences and Program Leader in Environmental Studies. She arrived at FGCU in 2007, after four years on the faculty of the Environmental Studies Department at Florida International University in Miami. Hartley’s expertise lies in the area of global change ecology. Most recently, she studied the impact of elevated atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations in Florida scrub oak forest on soil microbial processes involved in nitrogen cycling. She spent two years as a postdoctoral researcher at the Ecosystems Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, studying the impact of elevated carbon dioxide and warming on plant
growth and nutrient cycling in Swedish subarctic tundra. Hartley holds a Ph.D. in biogeochemistry from Duke University, where as a NASA Global Change Fellow, she studied environmental controls on soil nitrogen cycling in the Chihuahuan desert of New Mexico. Her work for the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education includes the development of a multidisciplinary upper-level undergraduate course on campus sustainability.

Jim Wohlpart
Professor of English and Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences; Assistant Director 2004–2006, Associate Director 2006–2008, Senior Scholar 2008–present, Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education
A. James Wohlpart, former Associate Director of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, is a Professor of English and Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. He is a founding member of the faculty at FGCU, having arrived in August 1994, three years before the university opened. Wohlpart was a recipient of several awards and citations at the University of Tennessee, where he received his doctorate in 1993. In the inaugural year of Florida Gulf Coast University, he received the XX Award (The Twenty) for his leadership in opening the new university. He has taught courses in nineteenth century United States Literature and Culture and in Environmental Literature. Working with a team of faculty and administrators, he received a $200,000 two year grant from the Pew Grant Program in Course Redesign in order to redesign a required General Education course entitled Understanding the Visual and Performing Arts. He has also received funds and grants to support several readings and workshops on campus, including grants from the Florida Humanities Council. With Peter Blaze Corcoran, he is the co-editor of A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter (University of Georgia Press, 2008). His latest publications have focused on the areas of sustainability, environmental literature, and engagement with place, including articles in the Journal of Education for Sustainable Development, South Atlantic Review, and Orion Online. He serves on the Board of the University Press of Florida, as well as the Board of the Estero Bay Buddies, a citizen support organization, and was a founding member of ECOSanibel (Earth Charter of Sanibel).

Maria F. Loffredo Roca
Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Philosophy
Senior Faculty Associate
Maria Roca is Program Leader for Communication and Interdisciplinary Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University. She holds her doctorate from New York University in Media Ecology and has been teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels for more than 30 years. She is a GreenFaith Fellow, serves as a Senior Faculty Associate of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, and is currently working on a series of eco-spiritual video parables. She co-founded the award winning Wings of Hope program, an environmental education initiative that partners college students with school children in Southwest Florida to learn about important local issues. To date this program has reached more than 100,000 children.

Neil Wilkinson
Instructor, College of Arts and Sciences
Senior Faculty Associate
Neil Wilkinson is an instructor in the Department of Marine and Ecological Sciences at Florida Gulf Coast University. He is an environmental educator with extensive classroom and field teaching experience at the elementary, middle, high, and university levels. He spends half of his time teaching a science outreach program to classes in the local school district. He acts as a liaison between FGCU, the Lee County School District’s Environmental Education Program, and the Lee County Mosquito Control District, facilitating interagency cooperative and collaborative efforts among students, faculty, and staff. He teaches environmental biology and the University Colloquium at FGCU. His professional interests include exploring methods and practices that make science relevant to students, staying current with mosquito biology and mosquito borne diseases, studying local ecology and global sustainable initiatives. He hopes to create a program that will involve FGCU students in controlling malaria in Ghana. Wilkinson is a committed instructor and believes all of his professional efforts must relate back to the needs of his students. He strives to constantly improve his teaching and feels that he succeeds not when students score well in his classes but when they go on to learn on their own more deeply about concepts and issues discussed throughout the semester. He believes students respond more to the way we behave as teachers than what we teach. His most important goal is to encourage students to work towards creating a sustainable lifestyle, community, nation, and world.
Goal I
Research in environmental and sustainability education

In order to achieve our goal of advancing innovative educational research methodologies and pedagogies, the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education maintains an active scholarly agenda. This includes philosophical research and curriculum and program development. This work takes place in a variety of educational settings and geographical locations ranging from local to global. The scholarly activity includes books, journal articles, book chapters, and presentations. Much of our research and writing is in the field of Earth Charter scholarship. The Center has established an international reputation in this field.

Institutional Environmental Sustainability Research at Florida Gulf Coast University
The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education is committed to advancing the Florida Gulf Coast University mission of environmental sustainability. We conduct research and develop educational materials related to sustainability within the institution. We believe that the Earth Charter is a valuable educational tool and an inspirational guide toward sustainability in our institutional life. We engage teaching the Earth Charter at Florida Gulf Coast University. We advise the administration in the areas of humane and sustainable food systems and campus carbon neutrality.

Humane and Sustainable Food Systems at Florida Gulf Coast University
One of the Center’s major research projects on the FGCU campus focuses on creating a more humane and sustainable university food system. The Center’s “Food Working Group” assists the university administration and campus foodservice provider Aramark in imagining an FGCU food system based on respect for agricultural workers, animals, and natural systems. Student assistants undertook the first phases of their research in cooperation with The Humane Society of the United States in Washington, D.C. The Food Working Group uses the Earth Charter as an ethical framework for its examination of campus food practices. The Center conducted a study of the centralized process of agribusiness distribution that brings food to campus dining halls and examined ways in which the University can provide students with humane, organically-grown, locally-sourced, fairly-traded foods.

Center student assistants worked with Eagle Dining to complete and update a “Study of Food Practices at Florida Gulf Coast University, including Humane and Sustainable Alternatives” during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 academic years. The food study is an ongoing research project. Eagle Dining uses our research to align their operations with the University’s environmental mission. In August 2007, Eagle Dining made the switch to cage-free chicken eggs. Recent sustainability advances include a tray-less dining system, the increased availability of fair-trade coffee and organic produce, and seafood sourcing based on the Monterey Bay seafood purchasing guidelines.

The Food Working Group used its research to draft a “Guide to Eating Humanely and Sustainably with the Earth Charter at FGCU.” When completed, this guide will offer introduction to the Earth Charter, a discussion of the environmental and human impact of industrial agriculture, and a definition of humane and sustainable food choices based on Earth Charter ethics. The guide seeks to relate the Earth Charter to individual food choices in a way that is relevant and interesting to students. In addition to defining terms such as “organic” and “fair-trade,” the final guide will include illustrations, text boxes, and sidebars that will offer food system statistics and information to readers. The guide will contain our research on local humane and sustainable foods with brief descriptions of local vendors, farmers’ markets, and farm worker organizations. The Food Working Group is exploring professional publication options for the guide. The Center will share the results of its work with the Earth Charter Initiative as part of a larger project to assemble a guide to humane and sustainable living with the Earth Charter. We intend for this guide to be broadly useful among many other institutions of higher education.

The Earth Charter Meal
As our work with food suggests, the Center seeks to be a creative conduit for the dissemination and practice of Earth Charter ethics. Toward this end, we developed a draft “Guide to Conducting an Earth Charter Meal” in summer 2007. The Center has used the Earth Charter Meal as a beginning exercise in linking Earth Charter ethics to sustainable living in our everyday food choices. The Earth Charter Meal demonstrates how we can extend in ways that support farmers and food system workers, protect the environment and public health, treat animals humanely, and provide food security for all. We have used the Earth Charter Meal at Florida Gulf Coast University as an educational methodology to bring together student leaders from a diverse range of campus groups and organizations—and to unite them around the common goal of working toward a humane and sustainable campus food system. The guide offers examples of other Earth Charter Meals conducted by Center Staff in Amsterdam, Costa Rica, and on Sanibel Island, Florida.

Book Publications

The book Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis showcases theories, principles, and practices of youth, education, and sustainable development in order to create awareness amongst educators, policy makers, nongovernmental professions, business leaders, politicians, and the general public. It captures and documents local and global education initiatives by and for young people that promote the transition to sustainability in different parts of the world. It draws the attention of policymakers and educators to the need and importance of youth participation in sustainable development as a contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter

The book A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter creates a literary language that seeks to bring to life the concepts in the Earth Charter. The works in this collection demonstrate, through the vitality of literature, the power and importance of the ethical principles of the Earth Charter. The contributions to the book are intended to awaken an understanding of the ethical nature of our current situation and to offer a rich and fertile rendering of the ways in which ethical principles connect our daily lives to wider political, economic, and social concerns. The book includes three major sections, each of which builds on the others in order to provide a holistic understanding of the Earth Charter. This includes the origins of the document, the ways in which it has been translated through the imagination, and the ways it has been used in action.

Contributors include Homero Aridjis, Rick Bass, Leonardo Boff, Alison Hawthorne Deming, Robert Michael Pyle, Janisse Ray, Steven C. Rockefeller, Jake Swamp, Scott Russell Sanders, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Terry Tempest Williams, and others.

The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World

This book provides a variety of valuable theoretical and practical resources for students, teachers, researchers, and administrators who seek to integrate sustainability in higher education. Sustainability is not only explored as both an outcome and a characteristic of our lives, but as a catalyst for educational change and institutional innovation.

African scholars Heila Lotz-Sisitka and Akpezi Ogbuigwe read from their contributions at the global launch of Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development in Abuja, Nigeria.

and thereby provides a case for increased attention and resources toward education programmes for young people worldwide. The contributors are drawn from a wide range of expertise: scholars, practitioners, and researchers in education, youth, and sustainable development; young leaders and students; experts from governments, international institutions such as the United Nations; and practitioners in civil society. A balance of representation in terms of generations, geographies, and genders was achieved: over 35 chapters from contributors on six continents represent 25 nations.


The book A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter creates a literary language that seeks to bring to life the concepts in the Earth Charter. The works in this collection demonstrate, through the vitality of literature, the power and importance of the ethical principles of the Earth Charter. The contributions to the book are intended to awaken an understanding of the ethical nature of our current situation and to offer a rich and fertile rendering of the ways in which ethical principles connect our daily lives to wider political, economic, and social concerns. The book includes three major sections, each of which builds on the others in order to provide a holistic understanding of the Earth Charter. This includes the origins of the document, the ways in which it has been translated through the imagination, and the ways it has been used in action.

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The book The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World demonstrates a rich diversity of uses of the Earth Charter and points toward its many future possibilities. Thematic essays, stories, narratives, interviews, photographs, and artwork from around the world inspired by the Earth Charter demonstrate its utility in diverse cultural contexts, including its ability to bridge the Islamic and Christian worlds and its promise in working across the divide between the northern and southern hemispheres. Acknowledging the role of early key contributors such as Mikhail Gorbachev, Maurice Strong, and Ruud Lubbers, the volume also celebrates five years of accomplishments by Earth Charter activists since its launch at the start of the new millennium.

Contributors include Wangari Maathai, Mikhail Gorbachev, Jane Goodall, Peter Blaze Corcoran, Steven C. Rockefeller, Princess Basma Bint Talal, Ruud Lubbers, Mohamed Sahnoun, Leonard Boff, Erna Wiboele, Maurice F. Strong, Federico Mayor, Hazel Henderson, Jan Pronk, and many others.

“I am pleased to have contributed to two sustainable development books edited by the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. Also, I am aware of the Center’s work on a number of Earth Charter programs; they make an important contribution in addressing the great challenges and responsibilities we have towards Earth. I thank the students and university staff for their commitment to this mission and offer congratulations on the Center’s fifth anniversary.”

RUUD LUBBERS Former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Earth Charter Commissioner
Journal Articles and Book Chapters


Weakland, Joseph P. “Progress Toward a Humane and Sustainable Food System with the Earth Charter at Florida Gulf Coast University.” Earth Ethics 14.1 (Spring 2006): 36.


Presentations


Roca, Maria. “Florida Gulf Coast University and the Center for Sustainability Education: Ecologizing the University Humanities Curriculum.” World Environmental Education Congress 5. Montreal, Canada. 12 May 2009.


“Florida Gulf Coast University’s Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education is a very, very special place for education, research, and outreach to the world citizenry. Its pedagogy exemplifies the most important priority of education for the 21st century, teaching people to become planetary citizens. Planetary citizenship means caring for the well being of all life on our biosphere, now and for future generations. A native expression of this life ethic is the Algonquin word, ‘I’naadziwin.’ The term represents the special mission, goals, and achievements of the Center.”

OANNES ARTHUR PRITZKER Ecologist, Journalist, and Educator Director, Yat Kitischee Native Center, CESE Board of Advisors


Wohlpert, A. James, and Peter Blaze Corcoran. The Challenges of Infusing Sustainability Across the Campus: The Curriculum and Campus Operations at Florida Gulf Coast University.” Presentation at Sustainable Development Education: Holistic and Integrative Educational and Management Approaches For Ensuring Sustainable Societies. Monterrey, Mexico. 9 June 2004.


Goal II

Education and civic engagement in the Western Everglades and Barrier Islands

In order to achieve the goal of ecological literacy and civic engagement in the Southwest Florida community, we have created two signature public events, the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture, which occurs in the Spring, and the Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue, which occurs in the Fall. In addition, the Center hosts other occasional public events.

Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures

In order to advance the goal of ethics, activism, and the literary arts, we created the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture, a signature event of the Center that works to bring public intellectuals to Southwest Florida to discuss issues such as sustainability, ethics, democracy, and literature.

“Working on Behalf of the Beauty and Bounty of Earth: An Earth Charter Scholars Panel”

RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURES DELIVERED BY STEVEN C. ROCKEFELLER, MARY EVELYN TUCKER, DAVID ORR, AND OTHERS

Friday, February 20, 2009, 7:00 pm
Sanibel Island Panel. Saint Michael and All Angels Church, Sanibel Island, Florida

The Spring 2009 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture was a panel of Earth Charter scholars who reflected on the Earth Charter at a critical moment of change in the US and in the world. Moderator David Orr began the evening by remarking on the social and environmental challenges of our time.

Mary Evelyn Tucker, Senior Lecturer and Senior Scholar at Yale University, rooted this moment of great peril and great promise in the history of the universe, the natural history of the planet, our cultural history, and the promise of change and renewal. Steven C. Rockefeller, Co-chair of the Earth Charter International Council, explored the philosophical and intellectual genesis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Earth Charter.

Friday, February 20, 2009, 10:00 am
Florida Gulf Coast University Panel, Academic Building 5, Fort Myers, Florida

The afternoon Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture, held at Florida Gulf Coast University, convened a panel of Earth Charter scholars from Australia, Germany, India, Mexico, and the United States. Moderated by Mary Evelyn Tucker, the panelists shared their research and experiences with the Earth Charter in religion and ethics, climate destabilization, rhetoric and action, science training, and social Justice work. Following the panel, the Earth Charter Scholars led breakout sessions for Florida Gulf Coast University students, faculty, and staff.

“For Finding Beauty in a Broken World: An Ensemble for Earth”

RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURE DELIVERED BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS AND ALISON HAWTHORNE DEMING

Friday, September 5, 2008, 5:30 pm
Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine

The 2008 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures
“Eyes to See Otherwise: The World of Homero Aridjis”

RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

DELIVERED BY HOMERO ARIDJIS

Friday, February 16, 2006, 1:30 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Whitaker Hall

Friday, February 16, 2007, 7:30 pm
Thomas A. Edison Congregational Church,
Fort Myers, Florida

Latin American writer and environmentalist Homero Aridjis delivered the 2007 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures. The lectures were constructed around readings from his recently published book of poetry, Ojos, de Otro Mirar (Eyes to See Otherwise), a collection of selected poetry from over forty years of work translated by such great poets as Lawrence Ferlinghetti, W.S. Merwin, Kenneth Rexroth, and others. The poems were read by Aridjis in Spanish and by poet and Center Advisor Alison Hawthorne Deming in English. Aridjis commented on the significance of the poems as they related to broad questions of sustainability. His remarks were translated by his wife and editor, Betty Ferber. The poems ranged over nostalgia for childhood places, love in Mexico City, natural beauty, angels, extreme darkness, and the birth of a whale sighted by God.

“Lessons from Charley, Frances, Ivan, Jeanne, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma: Environment, Polities, and Global Destabilization”

RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

DELIVERED BY DAVID W. ORR

Friday, February 16, 2006, 7:00 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Whitaker Hall
Sprint Room, Fort Myers, Florida
Friday, February 18, 2006, 7:00 pm
Saint Michael and All Angels Church, Sanibel Island, Florida

David Orr, a regular visitor to Florida Gulf Coast University and Co-chair of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, lectured on the connections between environment, politics, and climate destabilization. His remarks focused on three lessons of an incredibly destructive and active string of Gulf Coast hurricanes: first, education must adopt a holistic and integrated approach to dealing with problems; second, we must revolutionize our energy demands and consumption patterns; and third, we must actively participate in a politics that represents our highest and truest selves.

“A Barbara Kingsolver Weekend”

RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

DELIVERED BY BARBARA KINGSOVER

Friday, February 25, 2005, 7:00 pm
Schein Hall at BIG ARTS Complex,
Sanibel Island, Florida

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education and Sanibel Reads co-hosted Barbara Kingsolver’s 2005 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture on Sanibel Island. The Sanibel-Captiva community selected Kingsolver’s book Small Wonder as the 2006 “one community, one book” common reader. Kingsolver’s lecture included a reading from Small Wonder and a reflection on community and the importance of sense of place.

“Open Space of Democracy Tour with Terry Tempest Williams”

FALL 2004 RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

Monday, October 25, 2004, 10:00 am
Florida Gulf Coast University Student Union Ballroom, Fort Myers, Florida
Monday, October 25, 2004, 7:00–8:30 pm
St. Michael and All Angels Church, Sanibel Island, Florida

The Fall 2004 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures were co-hosted by the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, the Orion Society, and Florida’s Orion Grassroots Network members. Williams read from her triptych of essays in The Open Space of Democracy and reflected on the courage and patriotism that Rachel Carson demonstrated in the backlash from Silent Spring in the 1960s.

“Open Space of Democracy Student Dialogue with Terry Tempest Williams”

Sunday, October 24, 2004, 1:00–2:30 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University Student Union Ballroom, Fort Myers, Florida

When the President of Florida Gulf Coast University said Terry Tempest Williams could not speak at the 2004 Freshman Convocation and that he would cancel the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures, FGCU students stood for freedom of speech and academic freedom by inviting her to speak on campus anyway. Members of the faculty, Orion Grassroots Network members, and Center stakeholders stood by. In her talk to the students, Williams held open the space for democracy at Florida Gulf Coast University in the midst of a heated presidential election campaign. This dialogue with students inspired the Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue, a speaker series organized by and for FGCU students.

“Ethics of Sustainability: A Dialogue with Mary Evelyn Tucker and Alison Hawthorne Deming”

INAUGURAL RACHEL CARSON DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

Thursday, March 25, 2004, 7:00–9:00 pm
St. Michael and All Angels Church, Sanibel Island, Florida

Friday, March 26, 2004, 10:30 am–12:00 noon
Florida Gulf Coast University Senate Chambers, Fort Myers, Florida

The inaugural Rachel Carson Distinguished Lectures explored the following questions: How do our ethics and values guide our relationships with the natural world? What role might religion and spirituality play in creating a more sustainable world? Is it possible to have enough for everyone forever? Alison Hawthorne Deming read from original stories written for the occasion in response to these questions. These have recently been published. Mary Evelyn Tucker spoke to the questions through the perspective of faith traditions and the responsibility of religion.

Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogues

The Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue series focuses on sustainability and education for a sustainable future, including students’ roles as stewards of natural, cultural, social, and political environments. Intended to spark youth activism and inspire the intellectual climate among the FGCU and Southwest Florida communities, the initiative fosters and open space for dialogue and student ownership of that dialogue.

“Young People, Communication, and Sustainability”

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 7:00 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Student Union Ballroom
Fort Myers, Florida

The Center invited Ishmael Beah, author of A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, to join the Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue on November 4,

“Rachel Carson is a hero, a towering example within American democracy of how one person’s voice can make an extraordinary difference in both public policy and in the minds of the populace.”

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS, CESE Board of Advisors, 2004 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture
2009. The central concept of the event was “Young People, Communication, and Sustainability.” The event explored digital collaboration toward sustainability, critical engagement with consumer media, and the theme of hope, despair, and the future in environmental rhetoric. Our panelists included Arabella Daniels of the Student/Farmworker Alliance and Center Advisor Jacob Scott from the United Kingdom, who participated as the Dialogue’s first “virtual panelist” via Skype.

“Food Systems and Climate Change at Florida Gulf Coast University”
Tuesday, October 11, 2007, 7:00 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Student Union Ballroom, Fort Myers, Florida

The third Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue developed the previous year’s theme of food, ethics, and sustainability by exploring food practices within the context of carbon neutrality at Florida Gulf Coast University. The panel was moderated by student assistant Jessica Solimano. Panelists included Rick Clugston of The Humane Society of the United States, Lewis Johnson, Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Florida Gulf Coast University, and Joseph P. Weakland, Center student assistant.

“Social Justice and Human Rights in Immokalee, Florida: A Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue Panel Discussion”
Tuesday, October 18, 2005, 7:00 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Sugden Welcome Center, Fort Myers, Florida

The inaugural student dialogue focused on social justice in Immokalee, Florida. Panelists included representatives of the Coalition for Immokalee Workers, Guadalupe Center of Immokalee, Harvest for Humanity, Peace Center for at-risk girls, and the Student/Farmworker Alliance. The discussion was moderated by Faculty Associate Dr. Maria F. Roca. Center Board member Oannes Arthur Pritzker served as respondent and advisor.

“Food, Ethics, and Sustainability: A Terry Tempest Williams Student Dialogue Panel Discussion”
Tuesday, September 16, 2006, 7:00 pm
Florida Gulf Coast University, Sugden Welcome Center, Fort Myers, Florida

The conceptual direction of the discussion was toward eating humanely and sustainably, with particular attention to social justice, at Florida Gulf Coast University. Panelists represented The Humane Society of the United States, Coalition of Immokalee Workers, California Student Sustainability Coalition, and Worden Farm. Closing remarks by Oannes Arthur Pritzker, Director, Yat Kitischee Native Center.

“Whether it is their commitment to greening of our colleges and universities, participation in political mobilization for change, or direct action involving peer education, young people are already at the forefront of change.”
Gus Speth, Former Administrator, United Nations Development Programme
Foreword, Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis

Other Events

University Lecture Series: Center Senior Advisor Jim Wohlpart has co-chaired (2006) and chaired (2007) the University Lecture Series Committee. Both the Director and Associate Director worked with the Committee to bring President Mikhail Gorbachev for the Spring 2006 University Lecture held Tuesday, March 28, 2006 at 6:00 pm. The 2007 University Lecturer was Colin Powell. He spoke on Friday, March 23, 2007 at 6:00 pm in FGCU’s Alico Arena.

Center Outreach in Naples: The Center’s first outreach in the Naples community was held in conjunction with President Mikhail Gorbachev’s University Lecture on March 28, 2006. Alexander Likhotal, President of Green Cross International, spoke at the home of Board of Advisors Member Jack Crocker to a gathering of Center Advisors and staff, University officials, and members of the Naples community. Likhotal spoke on the Earth Charter, the work of Green Cross International, and previewed President Gorbachev’s University Lecture.

Julia Butterfly Hill: The Associate Director coordinated the visit of Julia Butterfly Hill to Florida Gulf Coast University. All FGCU freshmen read her book The Legacy of Luna as part of the First Year Experience. The Center was a major sponsor of this event.

Wednesday, November 2, 7:00–9:00 pm
Student Union Ballroom, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida

Thursday, November 3, 6:30–8:00 pm
Doris Corbin Auditorium, Edison College, Fort Myers, Florida

Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture

Friday, February 17, 2006
6:00 pm
Auditorium, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida

Other Events

Barbara Kingsolver

Friday, February 25, 2005
7:00 pm
Auditorium, Florida Gulf Coast University, Fort Myers, Florida

Julia Butterfly Hill: The Associate Director coordinated the visit of Julia Butterfly Hill to Florida Gulf Coast University. All FGCU freshmen read her book The Legacy of Luna as part of the First Year Experience. The Center was a major sponsor of this event.
Earth Charter Scholarship Project
In 2008 and 2009, the Center laid plans to pursue a global role in Earth Charter scholarship. In partnership with Advisor Rick Clugston and The Humane Society of the United States, the Center sought financial support from private foundations to advance its leadership role in promoting Earth Charter scholarship in the international Earth Charter movement. We received a grant from the Rockefeller Philanthropic Collaborative to convene a small group of internationally-recognized Earth Charter scholars for a residency at Florida Gulf Coast University and on Sanibel Island in February 2009. Rick Clugston also successfully applied for a $175,000 grant from the Germeshausen Foundation.

An Earth Charter Scholars Consultation took place on Sanibel Island, February 18–24, 2009. This meeting focused on understanding and strengthening the Earth Charter’s contribution to education for sustainable living in higher education. Over the twenty years that individuals and organizations have been drafting the Earth Charter and translating it into action, a wide variety of Earth Charter based educational resources have been developed. The Earth Charter scholars reviewed these educational resources to identify those of high quality, and to organize these resources and determine what additional resources should be developed. They continue to explore the best strategies for working with the almost 300 universities that have endorsed the Earth Charter and supporting the broad network of college and university scholars and educators that are using the Earth Charter in their teaching, research, and service.

The Earth Charter Scholars Consultation is a first since the Earth Charter was finalized in 2000. Many scholars participated in the development of the Earth Charter between 1987 and 2000 and many areas of scholarship have evolved in the current decade. This first gathering, however, set the scholarly agenda for Earth Charter education. Visiting participants in the consultation include Steven C. Rockefeller, Mary Evelyn Tucker, Mirian Vilela, Kiran Chhokar, Shafaa Sucar, Brandon Hollingshead, Brendan Mackey, and Michael Slaby.

Curriculum Development with the Earth Charter
We have sought to infuse the Earth Charter into the curriculum at Florida Gulf Coast University. Our efforts to bring a discussion of ethics through the Earth Charter has occurred at different levels—as a component in a course, as an organizational framework for a course, and as a unifying principle in a curriculum. The University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future, our course in environmental education and sustainable development which is a graduation requirement, includes the Earth Charter as a component to introduce students to a broad understanding of sustainability. Our first course to use the Earth Charter as an organizational framework is Environmental Literature, an interdisciplinary course in the Communication, English, and Environmental Studies programs. It considers the role of sustainability within the humanities, focusing especially on exploring an ethical perspective that promotes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, nonviolence, and peace. We read several works—philosophical, theological, and political—through the lens of the Earth Charter in order to open a space for a dialogue about ethics and values; the Earth Charter acts as a touchstone for our discussion and not as the defining ethical system for the entire class. Ultimately, through the readings and discussions in the course, each student works toward developing his or her own personal ethics of sustainability. The course includes a service learning component which enables the students to enact their ethics of sustainability, bringing them to life.

We look to consideration of the Earth Charter as a unifying principle in a curriculum. Florida Gulf Coast University focuses on the development of an “ecological perspective” and “community awareness and involvement,” two of our unique university-wide learning goals. We are in the very early stages of conceptualizing the Earth Charter as a core for a Liberal Studies major offered in our College of Arts and Sciences. This is a bold and daunting possibility presented to us as a challenge by our Dean Donna Price Henry. The incipient concept is to create an interdisciplinary, liberal arts program that considers the concept of sustainability broadly—from the perspective of the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts. A guiding concern in this curriculum might be the ethical dimension behind issues of sustainability, and the Earth Charter has been discussed as a method for engaging this discussion.

Composition and Sustainability Project
Senior Advisor Jim Wohlpart led a faculty and curriculum development project centering on teaching sustainability and an ecological perspective in Composition I classes. Faculty discussed how to educate for an ecological perspective, selected essays for inclusion in Composition I that assist in the development of an understanding of sustainability and an ecological perspective, and developed teaching materials around the selected essays. Project participants attended three workshops to share essays and to discuss and define project goals. As a result of the faculty development project, the essays were piloted in Composition I classes in the 2007–2008 academic year, and then incorporated into all sections of Composition I in the 2008–2009 academic year. This project was supported by the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Quality Enhancement Plan.

Assessment of Ecological Literacy Project
Senior Advisor Jim Wohlpart led a team of faculty in developing an assessment framework for student ecological literacy. The project included several workshops where participants discussed assessment methods and developed a writing assignment and scoring rubric. At the end of the spring 2008 semester, about 150 essays from Colloquium classes were scored by a team of Colloquium faculty. The results
of this scoring process will be used to assess efforts to teach an ecological perspective in the University Colloquium.

Memorandum of Agreement with The University of the South Pacific
The Center Director negotiated a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on behalf of FGCU administration with the Vice Chancellor of The University of the South Pacific. This process took place over several months of his fall 2007 sabbatical as Visiting Research Professor in the College of Islands and Oceans at USP. This Memorandum of Agreement has been officially signed by President Bradshaw. The Director has taken the lead on behalf of the University in negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) building on the MOA in 2008–2009. This process began with a formal meeting with the leadership of The University of the South Pacific on May 24–29, 2008.

The African, Caribbean, Pacific-European Union (ACP-EU) Cooperation Programme in Higher Education, commonly known as EDULINK, offers major multiyear grants from the European Development Fund on a competitive basis. While on sabbatical, Corcoran co-authored a proposal to build capacity for sustainability in South Pacific Island Universities. It is called “Pacific Island Network of Island Universities: Mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development.” This project is dubbed “NIU” (for Network of Island Universities). NIU means “coconut” in virtually all South Pacific Island languages. The grant was funded in January 2009. The Center will provide expertise and is one of two official associate organizations.

Faculty Associates Conversations with Visiting Scholars
The Center hosts small conversations between Center Faculty and Staff Associates and members of the Center’s Board of Advisors. Such conversations provide the opportunity for faculty to discuss matters of importance to them with members of our Board of Advisors. We believe these discussions contribute to the professional growth of faculty and staff and allow advisors to better understand the university.

Environmental and Sustainability Education in Higher Education, Lunch and Conversation with David Orr: The Center and the FGCU Quality Enhancement Plan Training Institute co-hosted a student and faculty luncheon and conversation with David Orr on Friday, February 17, 2006, 12:00–1:30 p.m. The QEP Training Institute provides development activities for faculty that are teaching courses that address the two learning outcomes—ecological perspective and community involvement. The luncheon provided attendees an opportunity to discuss the concept of sustainability in higher education with one of the leading experts in the field.

Creating Spiritual Community: A Conversation with Mary Evelyn Tucker: This was an informal conversation during the 2006 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture weekend. The discussion with Mary Evelyn centered on questions of creating spiritual community.

Faculty and Staff Associates of the Center
Faculty and staff from across Florida Gulf Coast University’s colleges have expressed an interest in serving as Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education faculty associates in research. This program has enhanced opportunities for faculty and the research capability of the Center itself. Three senior faculty associates have leadership roles in coordinating the Center’s work with FGCU faculty, students, and local public schools. As part of this program, the Center has developed a small grants competition for faculty and staff associates who are engaged in research projects and other activities that support the Center’s mission. Mini-grants have funded participation at local and international conferences, funded course development, and supported classroom instruction.

Student Associates for a Greener Environment
The Student Associates for a Greener Environment (SAGE) is a student-led branch of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. Some of its members are already student leaders in their respective campus organizations. SAGE meets once a month to discuss current activities on campus, to cross-pollinate ideas to aid the Center in making our campus more sustainable, and to brainstorm how students can organize their respective groups more efficiently. Increasingly, SAGE has recognized the need to seek out avenues of communication to the student body in order to disseminate information about the Center and its Faculty Associates and their various projects. SAGE has also worked to raise awareness about organizations that promote and encourage sustainable practices. SAGE currently uses Facebook to communicate, but is exploring a collaboration with the FGCU EagleNews, the campus student newspaper.

Goal IV
Scholarship, teaching, and service in the University

Greening the University
The Center has long held “greening the university” as a critical dimension of its work. One of our objectives is to provide advice and expertise to the Administration on a variety of projects in environmental sustainability. We believe that institutional practice is a sine qua non of education for sustainability. With David Orr, we believe that architecture is “crystallized pedagogy”—and that we learn much from the human-made systems that surround us in educational settings.

As part of this work, the Center commissioned a white paper designed to assist the Florida Gulf Coast University community in charting its path toward carbon neutrality as a Leadership Circle signatory of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment. It was prepared by Advisor Rick Clugston for presentation to President Wilson Bradshaw, Provost Ronald Toll, and Vice President Joe Shepard. We see his paper as a beginning. The Center looks forward to continued work with the Administration toward a carbon-neutral Florida Gulf Coast University campus. We hope the analysis and recommendations in this paper will be a contribution to
President Bradshaw’s climate commitment. Clugston’s white paper, “Understanding the President’s Climate Commitment: Toward a Carbon Neutral Florida Gulf Coast University,” is available for download on the Center’s website.

Green Building Demonstration and Learning Center
The Center has provided advice and expertise to the University on the Green Building. For example, Advisor Rick Clugston authored a white paper entitled “An Earth Charter Based Assessment of the Green Building Demonstration and Learning Center at Florida Gulf Coast University.” This paper provides background information: Toward a Carbon Neutral Florida Gulf Coast University.”

Partnerships with non-University Organizations
Orion Grassroots Network: Membership with OGN began in October of 2004. OGN is a network of environmental and community based organizations across the nation. OGN groups are diverse in primary interests, as efforts range from conservation to environmental education to environmental justice.

Center for Respect for Life and Environment: We worked closely with CRLF from 2004 to 2009. CRLF promoted reverence by humanity for the natural environment. Intentions of the Center were to bring awareness and concern to the environment through higher education and religious institutions. We also worked closely with University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, which was the higher education program of CRLF. This work was primarily with the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Resource Project. Funding from USFS greatly extended this work.

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF): The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation is dedicated to preserving natural resources and wildlife habitat on and around Sanibel and Captiva islands. SCCF manages over 1300 acres of land on the islands (and owns an additional 500 acres on nearby Pine Island). We engaged in discussions with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation to renegotiate the University’s Memorandum of Understanding.

ECOSanibel (Earth Charter of Sanibel): Senior Advisor Jim Wohlpard has served as a member of the Board of ECO Sanibel; the Director served as an Advisor. The Director also participated in discussions related to ECO Sanibel’s work to support the February 2009 Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture. He has become a board member and member of the leadership team that has revitalized the organization.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): The Center works with UNESCO on the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, for which UNESCO is the world coordinator. The Director is on the Reference Group for the Decade; this is the policy and advisory body for the decade. The Director attends Reference Group meetings in Paris, the most recent of which took place on November 4–6, 2009, and consults with UNESCO staff on a regular basis.

United Nations Environment Program: The Center works with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, through its Environmental Education and Training Unit. The Center Director advised UNEP on the founding of the MESA programme (Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into African Universities). His particular role has been in bringing the Earth Charter to MESA programs. He worked with program director Akpezi Ogbuigwe on a visit to the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 19–24, 2008.

“Despite significant and widespread challenges, sustainability education and awareness in Africa can unleash the enormous potential for youth to provide solutions to the problems afflicting the continent. I enthusiastically acknowledge the participation of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education in the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into African (MESA) Universities partnership. The Center’s scholarly leadership and support of young people is helping us collaborate strategically with higher education on the African continent and create what I call the possibility generation.”

Akpezi Ogbuigwe
Head of Environmental Education and Training, United Nations Environment Programme
Partnership with Green Cross International

As a result of the visit of President Mikhail Gorbachev to Florida Gulf Coast University in March 2006, FGCU was invited to host the winner of the Russian National Junior Water Prize in partnership with Green Cross International. The competition is a prestigious one involving all republics in the Russian Federation. The contest is designed to stimulate the creative activities of secondary school students and focuses on problems of drinking water, preservation of biodiversity in urban and rural water reservoirs, and studies of correlation of water related climate change.

Our guests were Alexander Bageav, a young man from the Republic of Tatarstan whose winning project focused on providing clean drinking water to his school, and Natalia Davydova, director of the Environmental Projects Consulting Institute (EPCI) in Moscow, who organized the contest and acted as Alexander’s chaperone. Both were able to explore the Florida Everglades, local environmental and historical places of interest, visit classes at the University, and interact with several FGCU faculty and staff members over the course of their stay. We feel we were able to create a set of experiences that connected Alexander’s winning project in water science to our home region of Southwest Florida. The visit was part of a negotiated Memorandum of Understanding between FGCU and Green Cross International, and the Director of the Environmental Projects Consulting Institute.

Budget

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education operates on a modest budget drawn from three funding sources. The first is year-to-year institutional support from Florida Gulf Coast University’s Education and General Funds. The Vice President for Administrative Services, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences are strong supporters of the Center. The second source of funding comes from grants awarded by outside organizations and foundations for specific research initiatives. For example, the Earth Charter Scholarship Project has been funded by private foundations, including a major inaugural grant from the Germeissen Foundation. The Humane Society of the United States has supported Center research on humane and sustainable food systems at FGCU. Other grants have been awarded to support the Center’s scholarly publications. For example, a grant to support the development of Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development was awarded from The Netherlands’ national education for sustainable development program “Learning for Sustainable Development.” The third source of funding is from that of individual contributors. These include the Center’s community fundraising efforts, primarily the annual fundraising celebrations held in conjunction with the Rachel Carson Distinguished Lecture weekend.

Our Next Five Years

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at Florida Gulf Coast University has been blessed with richness of opportunity in its first five years of activity. As Florida Gulf Coast University continues to realize its unique mission of achieving environmental sustainability, an array of local, state, national, and international opportunities exist for the Center. We believe it is important to be both rooted in the local environment and to play a role globally in carefully selected strategic areas. For example, we are active on campus in areas such as green architecture. We are also active internationally in areas such as Earth Charter scholarship.

In 2008 the Center Board of Advisors created a Strategic Planning Group to determine if the Center should undertake a major strategic planning process that would allow it to take advantage of these opportunities. The planning group included several members of the Board of Advisors, chaired by Larry Amon. Three broad areas of opportunity were identified: the Center as leader in institutional practice and technology, in curricular practice and innovation, and in becoming a global center for Earth Charter scholarship and research.

Our vision is that as the University grows, the Center will continue to be a place of vital activity that will inspire the larger University community to stay committed to and fulfill its mission of environmental sustainability. Perhaps the Center’s most critical function is in scholarly activity. Our vision is to continue to conduct and share research in the field of education for sustainable development and environmental education that will be valuable to guiding Florida Gulf Coast University. We use the metaphor of the Center being the rudder of the ship of the university as it sails to a sustainable and sustaining future. Our current University administrative leaders are exploring ever more deeply what it means to be sustainable in curriculum, in academic programs, in research and scholarship, and in all of the critical dimensions of University life. As they do so, the task of the Center is to continue to bring together the thinking, writing, and research to guide our University, and thereby other universities, in the direction of environmental sustainability.

Our Dream and Yours—How You Can Help

The Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education, following the mission as conceived in planning charrettes by stakeholders—students, faculty, community activists, local professional environmental educators, and funders—“works toward realizing the dream of a sustainable and peaceful future for Earth through scholarship, education, and action.” A sustainable future, according to Leonardo Boff, is “humankind’s ethical and cultural dream.” Students can support the Center by participating as members of Student Associates for a Greener Environment (SAGE)—or as student assistants. Those in the University academic and professional workforce can support the Center by joining the Staff and Faculty Associates. Community stakeholders can help us by supporting the Center with a gift. Our contributors range from elders and students on limited incomes to philanthropists and foundations. We have always said that we want the Center to be a place where a thousand dollars is a major gift—and it is. Contributions in any amount are welcome; they are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to CESE/FGCU. May supporting the Center be a way to realize your dreams—and ours.

The Haffenreffer family hosts the Center’s Annual Fundraising Celebration at their home on Sanibel Island.
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