



The Role of Higher Education in Nurturing

# SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

ALBION COLLEGE  
JUNE 6-8, 2022

## GENERAL SESSION TALKS

### **Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco**

Abdelghani El Asli: *The Design and Development of an Innovative and Environment Friendly Pilot Unit for the Transformation of Used Cooking Oils into Biodiesel in the City of Ifrane, Morocco: a collaboration between the community and the university to to build partnerships that support community long-term sustainability*

Abstract: The improper disposal of used cooking oils (UCO) in the environment represents significant health and environmental hazard in the form of harmful vapors, and the contamination of soil and water resources. This paper presents a viable solution to the inadequate management of UCOs in the city of Ifrane, Morocco (14000 inhabitants). The solution consists of a collaborative collect of the city's UCOs and their transformation into useful biodiesel. The project has been developed over the past four years between faculty, students, and local community and included multiple levels of intervention: research and development, engineering, social engagement, sensitization of locals on the environmental importance of the project, logistical planning, and economic feasibility analysis. Among the achievement of the project is an educative platform to teach and sensitize students and locals on sustainability issues. Videos were developed to raise awareness and show the successful involvement and partnership of both locals and academia in achieving the project. An economic component was conducted with locals through the advancement of a business plan in the intention to sustain and grow the project to a larger extent ladder. We showcased the Valorization of the waste transformation (glycerol) by recycling it as soap that was distributed to locals as a token of appreciation on their fruitful collaboration.

### **Albion College**

Vicki L Baker & Carrie Walling: *Knowledge Co-Creation and Dissemination: The Power of Higher-Education and Community Partnerships*

Abstract: At the heart of community engagement is the partnership between colleges/universities and the local/surrounding communities. When grounded in the foundational tenets of knowledge creation and dissemination, such partnerships result in outcomes including strengthened democratic values and civic responsibility. As communities and higher education seek to rebuild post-pandemic education, critical lessons have resulted.

During this Interactive Presentation we will feature two new initiatives at Albion College -



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The Albion College Community Collaborative (AC3) and The Human Rights Lab. At their core, each of these programs is focused on involving students in collaborative problem solving and processes of co-creation with community members with the aim of both instilling a sense of personal, professional, and public purpose through community-engaged participation.

As part of this session, attendees will be engaged as “clients” of AC3 and the Human Right Lab to experience the types of organizational, community, and societal issues addressed through collaborative knowledge creation and dissemination.

Milkessa M Gemechu: *Knowledge as a means of domination: The quest for liberal higher education in Africa*

Abstract: Modern higher education in Africa was introduced as part of a “civilizing mission” by European colonial powers mainly in the first half of the 20th century. It was widely criticized as an extension of the European knowledge structure which was meant to serve as a means of domination. This paper asks the following questions. What is the relation of higher education to Africa’s indigenous ways of knowing? Can the college education system in Ethiopia be different because Ethiopia and Liberia were not effectively colonized by European powers? By utilizing hegemonic knowledge theories for qualitative analysis and interpretation, this paper argues that higher education in Ethiopia too was and to large extent is still used as an instrument of exploitation and domination by the ruling class—the state and the church. The popular quest for liberal higher education that began in the 1960s is yet to fully succeed in Africa.

Jessica Kane: *Epistemic Justice and Community Partnerships*

Abstract: This presentation will discuss the ways that colleges and instructors can use the principles of epistemic justice to work equitably with community partners and orient students to just and sustainable community engagement work. I will give an overview of epistemic justice and how I introduce it to students, discuss several examples of community engagement work I have been involved in, and lead participants through an exercise to brainstorm what epistemic justice might look like in their own contexts.

Shanti Madhavan-Brown and Barbara Keyes: *Albion College Psychology Practicum/Internship Program*

Abstract: The Albion College Psychology Practicum/Internship program is designed to provide undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning in various fields (i.e.,



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psychology, human services, neuroscience, and/or healthcare) under the direction of an experienced professional. Placement sites are cultivated through relationships with community partners and selected based on the student's individual interests and needs. In the past, students have worked in myriad settings which all provide them with an opportunity to join a community-based organization and apply what they are learning in the classroom to a particular field setting and client/patient population. In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of the program, this presentation will discuss how sustainable collaborations between community leaders and Albion College members have led to a legacy of student engagement and professional development in Albion and surrounding communities.

## **Alma College**

Benjamin Peterson: *Music, Theater, Film, History, and Community: Lessons from the Alma College Three Nights at the Opera Project*

Abstract: In Fall 2021 Alma College combined music, theater, film, and history in an event which strengthened its bonds to the surrounding community. The event occurred over three nights and provided both entertainment and local history through the recreation of performances that occurred in or around the town's opera house—which the college renovated in 2019—between 1900 and 1920. Ultimately over two-hundred community members saw the performances live, and over 700 others viewing the performances on YouTube. The event restored the opera house to its historic place as the site where Alma College and Alma, MI meet. From the event we learned many lessons about value and complexity of bringing scholarship, entertainment, and community-building together in a single event. During this panel, we will discuss the lessons that we learned through the project and hold a broader conversation about how history and the humanities can meaningfully bring a community together.

## **American University of Nigeria**

Dr Jennifer Heaven Mike: *The Role of Universities in Transforming Society Through Direct Community Engagements and Education*

Abstract: Higher education plays a central role in nurturing the development of society, thus, the role of educational institutions in building active leaders while also catering for the development needs and challenges of society, cannot be underestimated. The discussion will center on how an educational system should be structured to ensure that every student serves as both a stimulus



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and agent of economic and human development. This development focus is in all ramifications: human, social, mental, personal, entrepreneurship, community, and national development and all courses should be structured to reflect this development orientation. This presentation will further discuss the many ways in which a university, using the practical case study of development universities, can act as active agents of socio-economic and human development in addition to training leaders to shape the world around them. In addition, this session will discuss how universities should adopt a communitarian approach to education to develop the common good in its activities and pedagogy. To directly contribute in transforming communities positively, partnership with host communities, including humanitarian efforts should be a principal focus of universities, alongside general and specialized educational programs.

## **American University in Bulgaria**

Felix Diaz: *Transforming conceptions and practices around dementia in Bulgaria*

Abstract: I present a process of collaboration I am developing with the Alzheimer Bulgaria Association, which started in July 2021. The original purpose of this initiative was to introduce professional caregivers in the country to state-of-the-art assessment and intervention techniques to support quality of life, cognitive functioning and communication in the everyday life of persons with dementia. The actual activity consists of (1) developing 10-hour seminars with social intervention and health professionals at different municipalities (July-August 2021), and (2) producing a practical guidebook for formal and informal caregivers in Bulgarian, based on the contents and results of the seminars (January-May 2022).

I will orient my discussion towards the three practical questions expressed below as ‘learning outcomes’. I will illustrate these issues by reference to specific dilemmas through my collaboration, and I will invite other participants to bring their own experience or opinion to bear on them.

## **Antioch College**

Luisa Bieri Rios: *Cooperative Education: An integrative approach to community engagement and experiential learning*

Abstract: In the 1920s, Antioch College President Arthur Morgan developed the Cooperative Education program as a “jobs program” to reduce the costs of college and combine a professional training program with a liberal arts education. Today, its impact and relevance



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allows students to take action in the world as scholar-activists, researchers, or as emerging professionals in diverse communities of practice. Our integrative pedagogical approach allows students to earn a full term of academic credit through committed, full-time community engagement locally, nationally and globally. Students can integrate their “co-op” fieldwork into a self-designed major, senior capstone and language capstone projects. In this session, I will share some of our primary principles for collaborative, reciprocal partnerships that work towards meaningful collective praxis for our students and community partners. I will also highlight lessons learned and specific success stories through our student written online journal, Antioch Engaged ([co-op.antiochcollege.edu](http://co-op.antiochcollege.edu)).

Jennifer Grubbs: *Building Community with Bars In-between*

Abstract: This paper will explore the ways in which we build community as an Inside Out course that brings campus-based students and incarcerated students together to learn. The course design, available technologies, and communication barriers, to name a few, are some of the hurdles that we work through while teaching mixed-population courses.

## **Forman Christian College:**

Nisar Ahmad : *Local-to-Global connections in the classroom: Shaping the Connected Communities*

*[A Case study of the Religious Studies Department at Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) Lahore Pakistan]*

Abstract: Forman Christian College-A first liberal Arts higher education institution in the country, is a well reputed, across the Asian higher education, for its focused quality and community benefits education. We, at the religious studies department practice to promote connectivity between the students and community leaders, government officials as well with the career-based stake holders by assigning them the diverse community engaged projects, such as: i)“littering and Climate change ”ii) “Corruption and Challenges for Prosper State” iii)“Extremism (religious, political, ethnic, etc.)”iv) “Corruption and Challenges for Prosper State ”v) “Misuse of IT and Challenges to building the Civic Youth” in the classrooms. Students enjoy group activities with their assigned themes revolves around love, harmony, respect for diversity, peace, women empowerment with focused quality teaching and learning. This practice gives them the applied social living and career principles not limited just within the classroom but as to their entire social life. The study seeks the effective learning and pieces of trainings about ways to use technology to connect with institutions around the world and develop joint



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projects that help students transition from being a student engaged with community-based work to a career with the same focus and using the same skills.

*Adeel Khalid: Education for All: Sustaining Marginalized Communities of Higher Education Institution in Pakistan*

**Abstract:** This presentation will talk cover the partnerships built between institutions of higher education in Pakistan and the existing marginalized communities that offer a unique epitome of sustaining community partnership. The paper will also unearth the underlying causes and consequences of the existing uneven developments in Pakistani society that serves as barriers for many to get access to quality education especially the marginalized communities in Pakistan. Similarly, the issue of inclusivity in education will also be addressed, while the focus of the research will be on the initiatives taken to empower marginalized communities in Pakistan and in what ways these initiatives can further be improved to better facilitate such communities to become future leaders.

For these considerations, the role and collaboration of higher education institutions will be highlighted to ameliorate the marginalized communities in the Pakistani context. Finally, the presentation will help us understand how the Pakistani education system can offer its receipts to develop a tolerant and balanced approach to make Pakistani habitants as global citizens.

*Rukhsana Zia: Sustainability of Pakistani Communities: Role of Higher Education*

**Abstract:** A group of Humanities students at our campus (FCCU) volunteered for a nine-month project to promote female empowerment - in line with SDG 5 - in two rural communities of Punjab, Pakistan. The project relied upon teamwork between scholars/ students, academics, and civil society partners within the country and across countries (the UK, and Pakistan). The project funded by the courtesy of the University of Sheffield, brought about some tangible outcomes as a spillover effect like i) encouraged our students to hone their skills to write stories about female role models of the subcontinent in English and Urdu, while our Arts students in the group illustrated them ii) interacted with a nongovernmental organization to access the rural community and to comprehend the reality that existed in the field as a context for their stories. The project resulted in a powerful learning experience for students but it exposed some basic challenges that hindered the process towards realization of ‘sustainable communities’ that should result as an outcome of such community-engaged activities. In this presentation, some of the main challenges will be highlighted and some options stated to resolve these. It is hoped that interaction with participants of the conference will add to recommendations so that Higher



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Education in developing countries can effectively and efficiently contribute to the sustainable development of the communities.

## **FLAME University**

Pankaj Jain: *Environmental Humanities: Methods and Exemplars*

Abstract: According to an eminent environmental historian Ramachandra Guha, “Intellectual seeks total, systemic change, but the task of bringing this about is always left to others.” This armchair method of scholarship began with Max Mueller and other orientalists during the British Raj and continues in neo-colonial and neo-oriental ways. These “empirical” & “scientific” methods have little or no interest in solving any issue. However, by analogy with field science, public, applied, or field researchers work on-site with all stakeholders over an extended period. These researchers are not simply writing or teaching about public problems but are engaged in projects, working alongside people as they confront real-world issues. This presentation will present several contemporary and earlier examples who exemplified their theories by demonstrating them in public life and thereby working towards solutions to burning environmental issues of their times.

## **Hope College**

Annie Dandavati: *No place like Home: Hope College, Mellon and the Community of Holland - working on a dynamic yet changing relationship*

Abstract: The Interim Director of the Mellon Grant at Hope College and the former mayor of Holland will talk about how vexing problems within the community (hit hard by Covid-19) and the College focusing on strengthening the liberal arts worked in tandem to enrich both the College and the Community. Dr. Annie Dandavati and Nancy Deboer will make a presentation talking about the logistics that was used to support a dozen plus faculty in their research and professional development together with the community and students at Hope College. The mission of Mellon and that of the College, students and the community (MCBP - Mellon Community Based Partnerships) were utilized to strengthen town-gown relations, deal with challenging problems in the community, encourage the growth and development of arts and humanities faculty and the students of Hope College. The manner in which it was done, and the lessons can be drawn and learned from the experiences of one College working with a Foundation and the community of Holland and students is the focus of this presentation.





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Richard Ray: *Bringing Higher Education to Invisible Communities*

Abstract: Hope College is partnering with Western Theological Seminary and the Michigan Department of Corrections to offer a Christian liberal arts education to men incarcerated at Muskegon Correctional Facility. The program seeks to foster the renewal of students' minds, characters, and identities, and to foster the transformation of the prison, college, seminary and West Michigan communities into places where righteousness and peace embrace. The Hope-Western Prison Education Program engages its students at MCF in an academically challenging and formational curriculum that engages students' minds, hearts, and spirits. Students enroll in coursework to earn a BA with standards as rigorous as those expected of Holland-based Hope College students. HWPEP will: (1) Extend the Hope College and Western Theological Seminary missions to those living in incarcerated environments, (2) Foster the students' holistic transformation, (3) Ease incarceration's burden on the community, and (4) Bring together people from different political, ideological and theological perspectives.

Michelle Seppala Gibbs and Dr. Steven Bouma-Prediger: *Caring for Creation and Community at Hope College*

Abstract: Hope College and the City of Holland have a strong town-gown relationship and often collaborate on projects that include students doing research for the community. Hope commits to building a sustainable world that promotes the holistic well-being of future generations and affirms the dignity of all people. By means of our curriculum and scholarly work, student life programs, the management of our campus, and our engagement with the local and global community, we educate students for a sustainable future that values the rights and opportunities of every individual, each of whom is created and loved by God. Some examples in which we work in our community are TreeSap App Development and tree inventory, K-12 Air Quality Monitoring, Global Watershed Institute, Day 1 Scientific Research Programs, The Big Read, ExploreHope Summer Camps, Children's After School Achievement and Upward Bound programs, and community educational activities such as film series and lectures.

## **International University of Grand-Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire**

Georges Gnakpa & Darlene Kilian: *Project-based Learning with Community Outreach: A University and Museum Partnership*

Abstract: Tying together undergraduate student research projects with authentic challenges within the community not only motivates students but also provides much needed resources for





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local institutions. This session documents the project-based learning assignment connecting studies of colonial African literature with the very real local manifestation of colonialism in the city of Grand Bassam, the first French colonial capitol of Cote d'Ivoire. The results of this project provided the data for a much-needed bilingual exhibition focusing on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Grand Bassam at the local Museum of Costumery – Grand Bassam. It also opened the door for multiple collaborations in the future, cementing a partnership that the university, the students, the museum, and the city of Grand Bassam all profit from.

## **Penn State University**

Zoia Pavlovskaja & Ali Kara: *Uncovering Undergraduate Students' Fair Trade Perceptions for Sustainable Future*

Abstract: Colleges and universities in the US not only offer coursework to educate their students about sustainability but also implement specific initiatives to develop and transform college campuses into sustainability centers or incubators. For instance, The Pennsylvania State University offers sustainability courses, minors, and experiential learning to educate students and public about sustainability behaviors and practices. Fair trade movement closely aligns with social responsibility and sustainability. According to Fairtrade International "Fairtrade's unique holistic approach to sustainability carefully balances the long-term economic, environmental and social conditions faced by farmers and workers." However, success of any sustainability initiatives on campus strictly depends on active participation by students and employees. Hence, understanding and predicting the sustainable consumption behaviors of students is imperative in efforts to transform college campuses to sustainability centers. This study seeks to increase our understanding of students' fair trade perceptions and consumption behaviors by examining possible antecedents of such behaviors.

## **The Philadelphia Center and Albion College**

Jeana E. Morrison: *The Importance of Equity Driven International Partnerships*

Abstract: This presentation will highlight a research collaboration between a U.S. based higher education institution and a premier university in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Doctoral student research was the catalyst for realizing a partnership that existed on paper but was never consummated with a physical visit at either campus. Using an equity based international framework (George Mwangi & Yao, 2020), this interactive session will explore the role of power differentials and loose



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agreements that often occur between international partners. As such, participants will come to understand the impact of global collaboration in regards to the benefits and challenges it can offer for student experiences in general and for research projects in particular. Together, we will brainstorm and strategize for how best to support successful equity driven international research initiatives at our home institutions.

## **The College of Wooster**

Vikki Briggs: Capitalize On Community Resources To Fund Paid Student Experiences

Abstract: Real-world experiences are the cornerstone of a student's experiential education. Unfortunately, in this time of financial challenges, there are often limited resources from the partner organization or the institution to compensate students for their work. This session will focus on how to secure funding from local foundations and donors in your community. Topics will include establishing relationships with and creating interest from local funding sources as well as coordinating with your institution's advancement department.

## **Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ**

Maria-Gabriela Garcia: *Service-learning in an engineering course: A case study*

Abstract: Service-learning is an educational approach that allows students to apply their academic skills in real-world problems through community service. During the 2018 and 2019 spring semesters, service-learning projects were introduced in an undergraduate Ergonomics course at Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). Eighty-one industrial engineering students were paired with non-profit foundations including retirement homes, kindergartens, physical rehabilitation centers, and primary schools for low-income individuals. Students collaborated with staff and clients of the partner foundations to identify and analyze ergonomic problems in the workplaces and present viable solutions for the foundation. During the semester, students completed three reflections through structured written activities with open-ended questions. The questions allowed students to reflect on their experiences. At the end of the semester, the foundation partners evaluated the students' solutions through a questionnaire (Page, 2014). Results showed, that 73.6% of all partner foundation responses were given a score of "Excellent" and 25.7% of "Good".



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Maria Dolores Lasso: *Community Outreach: International collaborations outside the classroom*

Abstract: International collaborations take place in a myriad of ways. During the last 9 years Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ and University of Michigan UM have collaborated to shorten the educational gap for children living in vulnerable conditions. This student led project has benefited hundreds of children and has allowed UM students to have a purposeful and significant experience overseas while USFQ Education students have learned to collaborate with their UM peers to create and implement meaningful learning experiences to underprivileged children in Ecuador. The positive effects of this meaningful collaboration is palpable in many ways: 1) Collaboration has lasted for 14 years allowing the project to adapt and expand in time 2) Students leaders from both universities have sustained their engagement with the project due their ownership of activities and yearly plans 3) The overseas experience of visiting students is carefully designed so that they get to learn about their destination, contribute to the betterment of the educational situation of children and collaborate with peers from a different culture 4) the organizations and children that have benefited from this collaboration appreciate that all the activities have an educational purpose and are well executed 5) Education undergraduate students from USFQ have the opportunity to develop and implement curriculum plans and social commitment in collaboration with their UM peers as they learn about the teaching and the learning process in an engaging context. As internationalization continues to expand universities should share their successful experiences as a way to invite others to also explore collaborations with different purposes. Most USFQ students collaborating in this project during last 9 years have completed graduate studies overseas and/or taught overseas and most UM students collaborating in this project have travelled back to Ecuador and overseas in pursuit of other academic or professional experiences.

Ivan Palacios: *USFQ commitment with Rural Communities Sustainability*

Abstract: Since 2016, the Universidad de San Francisco de Quito Medical School, in partnership with communities and the Ecuador's Ministry of Health (MOH), has implemented the Integrative Health Care Program in 16 rural communities spanning the Tumbaco and Los Chillos Valleys. The program incorporates both social and academic objectives through a community-based learning model. The specific objectives of the program are 1. Contribute to improving the quality of life of the rural communities served by program, especially the most vulnerable populations. 2. Strengthen the knowledge of the student in the concepts, principles, methodologies, and approaches of prevention and health promotion and their application in a practical way through different projects. 3. Provide students with a comprehensive vision of health throughout the life cycle: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age as they prepare for their community health rotation during the sixth-year clinical rotations.



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*Franklin Velasco: An outreach program with impact in the community: The creation of a 360 degree plan to certificate businesses sustainable practices*

Abstract: The present research proposal aims to develop a longitudinal study that evaluates the current sustainable practices of businesses operating in fragile ecosystems, like the one we found at the Galapagos Islands. The main objective of this project is to develop a novel framework to certify small and informal businesses as being sustainable by identifying concrete key performance indicators that fit the context and operation of these kinds of businesses. The proposed framework contemplates the development of free educational programs targeting business owners, entrepreneurs, and the community. These educational programs include the participation of local and international experts that are willing to share their knowledge and are willing to contribute in one-to-one discussions on how to improve sustainability at fragile ecosystems. This project also aims to develop a cluster of organizations and institutions to collaborate in this project for it to become a role model on how universities can engage in outreach programs that call actions to improve sustainability.