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**Student Advocacy as a Catalyst for Sustainable and Social Change**

Joshua Filer

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Student Advocacy as a Catalyst for Sustainable and Social Change

Joshua Filer (Finance ’23)

FEBRUARY 22
12 – 1PM

Sponsored by WCU’s Office of Sustainability, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the Sustainability Council’s Scholarly and Creative Activities Committee
Abstract
2017 – Freshman in high school

- Ate 6 eggs every morning
- Denied Climate Change
- Made fun of those championing environmental and social causes
2023 – Senior in College

- Vegan For nearly five years
- Helps other students advocate for sustainable and social issues
- Runs two sustainability focused clubs
Other Involvements (past and present):

- Student Government Association
- PRME Committee
- Sustainability Council
- Sustainable Food Systems Committee
- Golden Rams Society
- Student Against Food Insecurity
Some definitions
**Student Advocacy**
Students pushing for the things they want to see in life, whether it be for themselves at University or for broader changes.

**Sustainable Change**
Sustainable change aims for actions and enterprises to cause less or no harm to the natural world and that ecosystems continue to function and generate the conditions necessary for modern societies’ quality of life to remain intact.

**Social Change**
Sociologists define social change as changes in human interactions and relationships that transform cultural and social institutions.
History of Student Advocacy

Second Wave (1840-1950)- focused on charity (Morton & Saltmarsh, 1997)

Third Wave (1950- present)- motivated by social consciousness (Rhoads, 1998)
First Wave
• First recorded student protest Harvard in 1766
• Students were served “Rancid Butter”
• Henry David Thoreau’s grandfather Asa Dunbar Proclaimed:

“Behold, our butter stinketh!—Give us, therefore, butter that stinketh not.”
Second Wave
The Story of Mary Harriman Rumsey
• Student at Barnard College in 1901
• Inspired to volunteer after hearing about the settlement movement
• Formed a coalition of female students (including the young Eleanor Roosevelt) to fundraise and do direct service at NY Settlement homes
• Formation of the JL
Third Wave
• Civil Rights Era
• Young African Americans staged a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, NC
• Inspired the sit-in movement, which often spread to college towns throughout the south
A word on Modern Advocacy

Pros
• Information can disseminate faster than ever before
• Easy to get people together for various causes

Cons
• Information can disseminate faster than ever before
• Rise of “Performative Activism/Advocacy”
• Reduced Dialogue
• Us vs Them mentality
Student Advocacy - Through my eyes
Summer 2020 – Spring 2021
Liked by Joshfiller & 11 others

To participate or run a vegan club on West Chester campus in the fall please let us know. The club advisor, Steve Mazurek, will be the main contact. Board members are needed. This club has little to no liabilities or commitments so it is super easy going. We are excited to see what Veg Out does in the future! 

Joshfiller. Sent 4 am May 8, 2023
Fall 2021
Spring 2022
The Present and future
Investing in a More Sustainable World

Using Investing to drive innovation in the plant-based and climate sector

Elysabeth Alfano
CEO of VegTech Invest

Dr. Sasha Goodman
Fund Manager of VegTech Invest

The alternative protein landscape

Plant-based
Fermentation
Cultivated

3/2/2023
5:30-7:30 PM
BPMC 101
Food Provided

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Net Impact West Chester University
Takeaways
Takeaway #1
With your advocacy build COMMUNITY
Takeaway #2
Realize the INTERSECTIONALITY of advocacy issues
Takeaway #3

ALWAYS advocate for the future YOU want to see
Takeaway # 4
Advocacy might not happen in the way YOU THINK IT WILL
Takeaway # 5
Be PATIENT with people
You Catch More Flies With Honey Than With Vinegar
Q&A
Sources

• https://www.naspa.org/blog/from-the-great-butter-rebellion-to-black-lives-matter-a-brief-history-of-student-advocacy-movements
• https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/history-student-activism-in-college/
• https://www.bmc.org/glossary/culture-transformation/performative-activism
• The greatest database of all: our lives