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Student Advocacy as a Catalyst for Sustainable and Social Change

Joshua Filer

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Part of the Sustainability Commons

Sustainability Research & Practice Seminar

FEBRUARY 22

12–1PM

Student Advocacy as a Catalyst for Sustainable and Social Change

Joshua Filer (Finance '23)

*Sponsored by WCU's Office of Sustainability, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs,
and the Sustainability Council's Scholarly and Creative Activities Committee*



Abstract



**SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH
and PRACTICE SEMINAR**

FEBRUARY 22, 2023
Joshua Filer
Finance '23

Student Advocacy as a Catalyst
for Sustainable and Social Change

Wednesday, 12:00 to 12:50 pm in person (255 A/B Sykes Student Union)
and in our Zoom room: <https://wcupa.zoom.us/j/98607753162>, passcode: 878376



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



First Wave (1636-1840)- self-interested riots (Ellsworth & Burns, 1970)

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

Third Wave (1950- present)- motivated by social consciousness (Rhoads, 1998)

First Wave

The Butter Rebellion



- 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 Junior League

- 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

The Greensboro Sit in



- 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



FALL 2021 WCU

VEG OUT CLUB IN NEED OF LEADERS!

Please DM if interested
president, VP, secretary and treasurer positions all open

[View insights](#) [Boost post](#)

♥️ 💬

👤👤👤 Liked by [joshfiler_](#) and 11 others

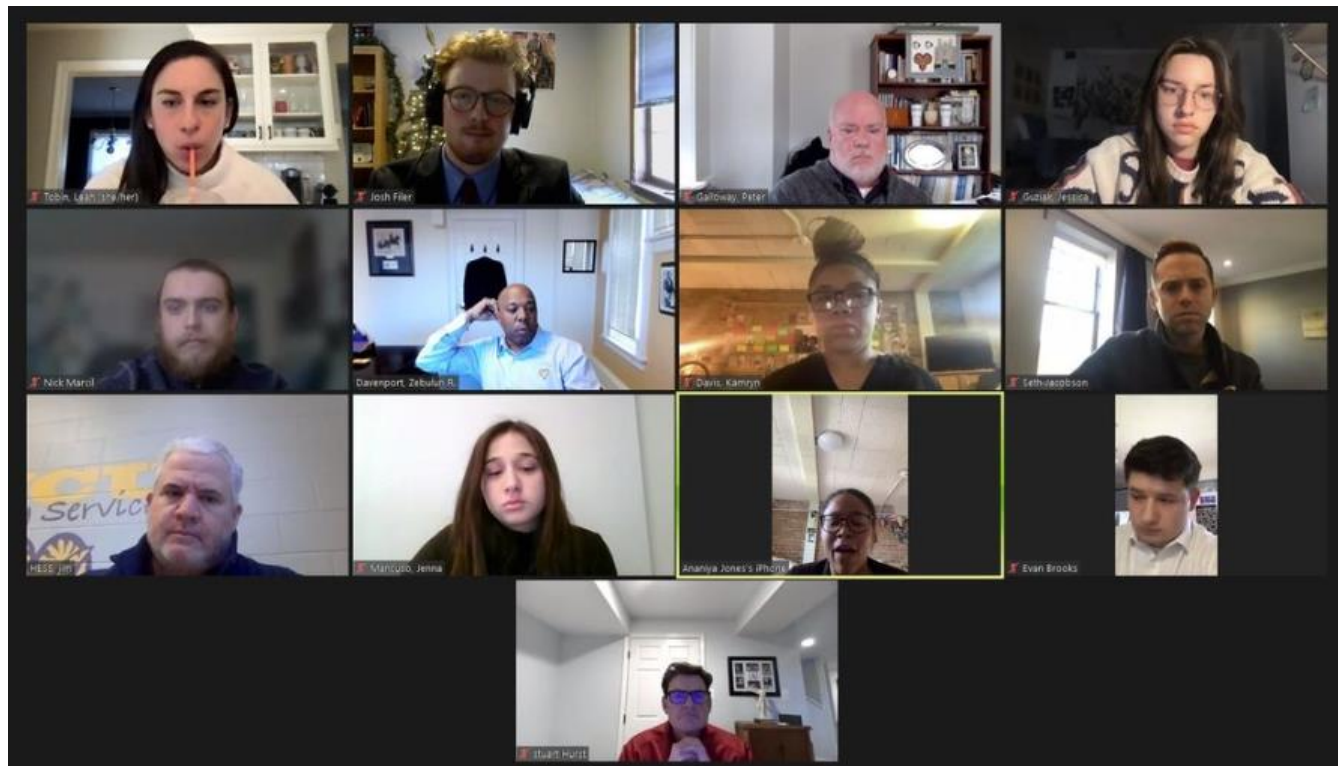
vegout_wcupa If you or anyone you know would like to participate or run a vegan club on West Chester campus in the fall please let us know. The club advisor Steve Mazurek will be the main contact going forward as all other exec board members are graduating. All materials and resources will be handed over. This club has little to no requirements or commitments so it is super easy going. We are excited to see what Veg Out does in the future!

[joshfiler_](#) sent a dm

May 8, 2021

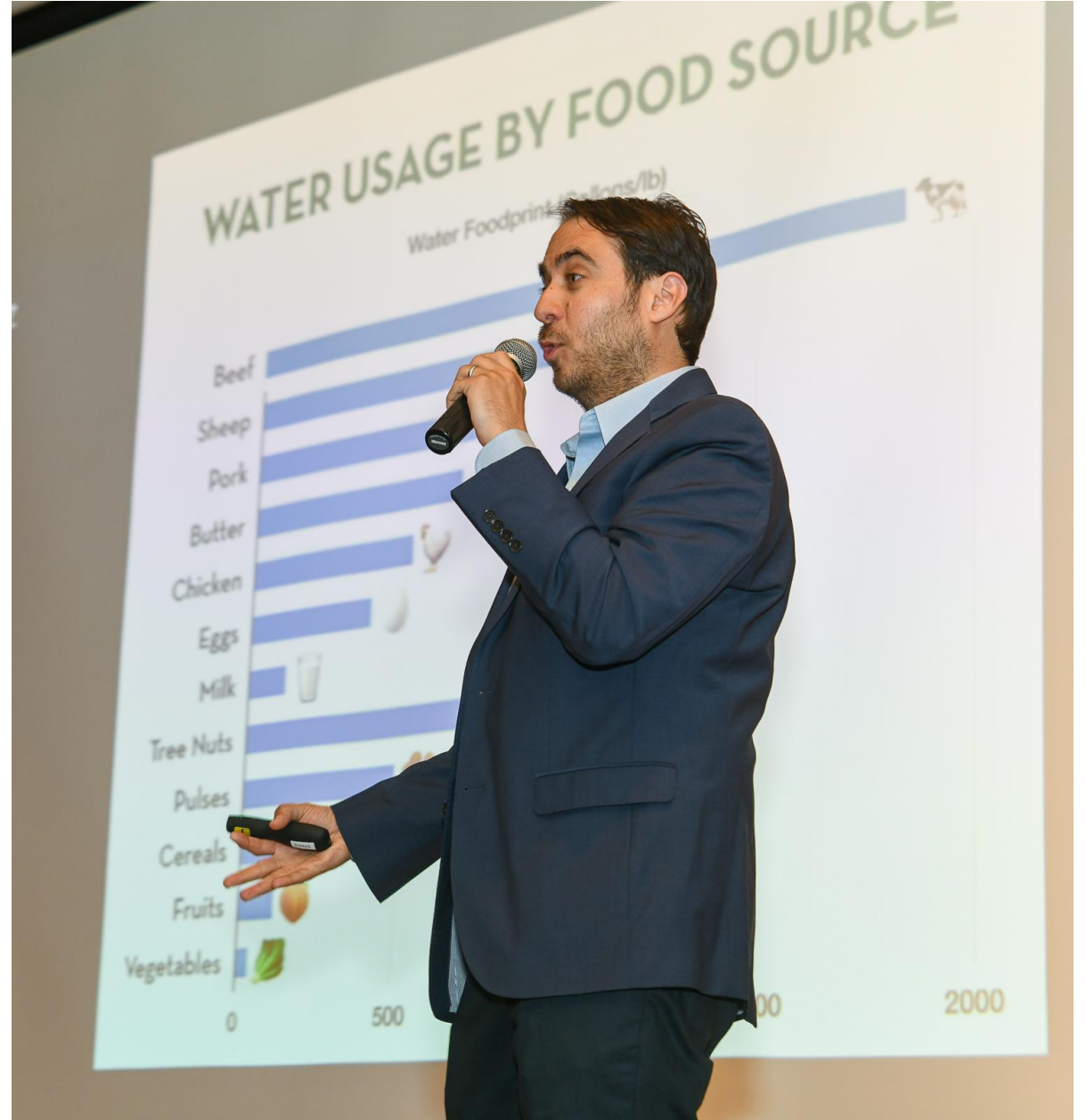
🏠 🔍 + 📺 🌱

Fall 2021



Spring 2022





Fall 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

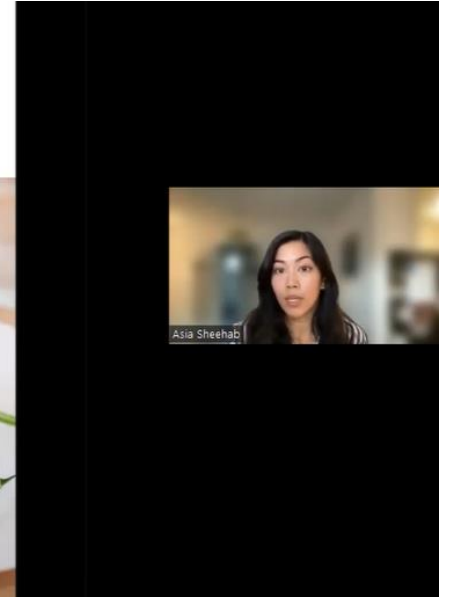
Dr. Sasha Goodman
Fund Manager of VegTech Invest

carbon neutral *without* buying credits



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

The alternative protein landscape



Takeaways



Takeaway #1
With your advocacy
build **COMMUNITY**

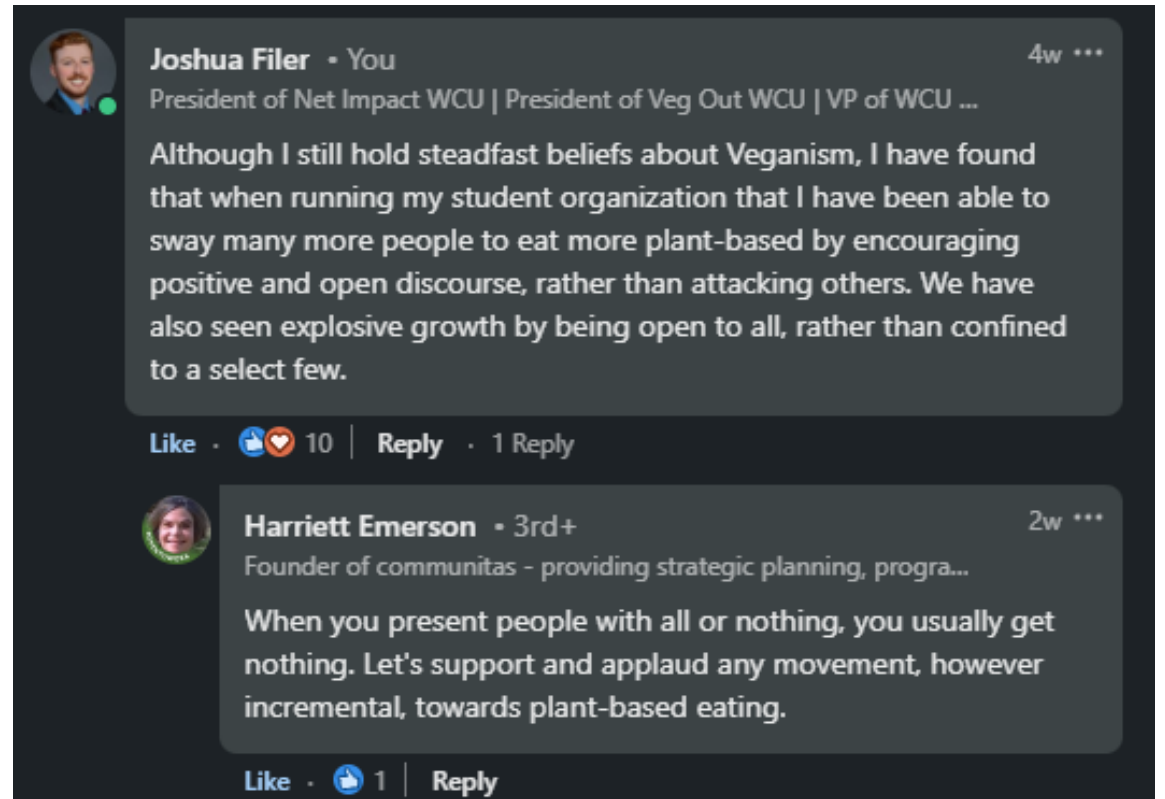
Takeaway #2
Realize the
INTERSECTIONALITY of
advocacy issues

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



The image shows a screenshot of two social media posts. The top post is from Joshua Filer, who is the President of Net Impact WCU, President of Veg Out WCU, and VP of WCU. He shares his experience of running a student organization and emphasizes the importance of positive and open discourse over attacking others. The bottom post is from Harriett Emerson, the founder of the organization 'communitas', which provides strategic planning and programs. She shares a quote about the importance of supporting and applauding any movement, even incremental ones, towards plant-based eating.

Joshua Filer · You 4w ***
President of Net Impact WCU | President of Veg Out WCU | VP of WCU ...
Although I still hold steadfast beliefs about Veganism, I have found that when running my student organization that I have been able to sway many more people to eat more plant-based by encouraging positive and open discourse, rather than attacking others. We have also seen explosive growth by being open to all, rather than confined to a select few.
Like ·  10 | Reply · 1 Reply

Harriett Emerson · 3rd+ 2w ***
Founder of communitas - providing strategic planning, progra...
When you present people with all or nothing, you usually get nothing. Let's support and applaud any movement, however incremental, towards plant-based eating.
Like ·  1 | Reply



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>
- <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/02/01/what-trump-era-protesters-can-learn-civil-rights-lunch-counter-sit-ins-christopher-schmidt-column/1078856001/>
- The greatest database of all: our lives