



The Center for Civic Engagement Observer

DEMOCRACIES
NEED ENGAGED
CITIZENS

"A different world cannot be built by indifferent people."

-Horace Mann, American education reformer

~CCE Participates in Civil Rights Day~

Building dialogue on the presidency of an African-American

By Hope Zewou

After less than two weeks of the inauguration of the first African-American President of the United States, the Center for Civic Engagement sponsored an event that addressed race and the presidency, called "What does it mean to have a Black President?"

Ryan Greene, director of the Office for Multicultural and International Student Programs, and Mike D'Innocenzo, professor of history and a civil rights advocate since before Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Hofstra University in 1965, engaged students in a dialogue about the issues surrounding a new era in American history.

Some of the students saw President Barack Obama's presidency as the notion of hope and change and others felt that Obama was showing them the courage to

(Continued on Page 2)

Upcoming Events

February 25th - Multicultural Mixer

March 18th - Faith and Community Service

April 22nd - Earth Day

Jazz brings community

By Corey Abisdid

Civil Rights Day ended with a bang—literally. Professor David Lalama led a small jazz ensemble for "Breaking the Color Barrier in Society Through Music."

The musical selections were performed by pianist David Lalama, alto saxophonist Antonio Hart, drummer Earl Williams and bassist Marcus McLaurine. Among the selections played was "Strange Fruit," originally sung by Billie Holiday. The song was meant to portray a morbid scene of a charred African-American man hanging from a tree and how it bore resemblance to a fruit.

Afterward, the alto saxophonist, Antonio,

to the era of civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s. He compared the rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr. to jazz and blues. Antonio said that he believed both



Photo by Library of Virginia Dance hall in 1956.

forms were art that took the harsh realities of life, experienced by both blacks and whites, and transmitted them in a positive way. "Music can be instrumental in creating change in

society," he said.

The band has played in many different venues and in many different countries. They said that they tend to not care about people's complexion. Professor Lalama said that, "As artists, we don't care about people's color. Either you play or you don't."

Drummer Earl Williams described his early years during the civil rights era. He recalled people being segregated on the dance floor initially, but by the time the set got going, people were dancing and the physical rope in the auditorium would fall. The music integrated not blacks and whites, but people who enjoyed music, he said.

Discussing Voting Rights for Minorities

By Christina Martin

Students came out for a discussion at the event, "Race and Voting Rights in Twenty-First Century America." Mary Anne Trasciatti, professor of communications, moderated the discussion between Hofstra Law Professor Grant Hayden and Tara Keenan Thompson of the New York Civil Liberties Union.

Hayden spoke of the necessity to remain vigilant on the issue of voting rights for youths following the election of President Barack Obama. Obama's election sparked a question of whether one would continue to see

young voters coming to the polls following the recent presidential race. Hayden pointed out that there were discrepancies in voting patterns among different parts of the country during the last election.

A provision in the Voting Rights Act allowed for the selection of certain election jurisdictions, mostly in the south, to have their election laws changed prior to taking effect in the next election, and with approval by the federal government, Hayden said. The provision was initially put into place in an attempt to stay ahead

(Continued on Page 2)

Students see era of post-racism under President Obama today

(Continued from Page 1)

work with one another, without any regard to race or skin color.

Students noted Obama's willingness to reach out to the youth and have them engaged in their community. This offers one explanation for why young people voted in record numbers in the 2008 election. It was also pointed out how Obama has conveyed in the media his willingness to consult with different ideas and point of views which the students agreed might also serve as a positive model for citizens.

The students also found that Obama's inclusiveness revolved around his global links



Photo by Michael LaFemina

Students discuss first Black president.

to places like Kenya and Indonesia. One student said Obama represents a sort of "world president" because he exhibits intentions to bring people of all races and creeds together. "He gives back the true meaning of what it is to be an American," said another. The students

agreed that they felt that the country is moving toward a post-racism era.

There was excitement to see what the future holds under President Obama, but at the same time, the students felt that it is not going to be easy for him to do all that he promised in one shot. It requires patience and time to see what results he can bring.

Professor D'Innocenzo, who also holds the Harry H. Wachtel Distinguished Teaching Professor for the study of nonviolent social change, left the students with this thought: "Rosa Parks sat so that Martin Luther King, Jr. could walk. Dr. King walked so that Obama could run."

Disenfranchised minorities need voting rights, panelists discuss

(Continued from Page 1)

of southern states which in the past typically had more stringent laws to prevent minorities from voting.

Statistics revealed that President Obama received a higher percentage of the white vote than the 2004 Democratic candidate, John Kerry; in Alabama and Louisiana, Obama received 10 percent and 14 percent of the white vote, although four years earlier, Kerry received 19 percent and 24 percent in the same states.

Tara Keenan Thompson, Ph.D., took the stage afterward and spoke of the disenfranchisement of minority voters. Minorities receive a

negative perception by the public because of the high rates of criminality amongst their populations. Dr.

"Voting is not a right handed to you, but a right you possess..."

Thompson emphasized that the relationship between race and criminality is not a causative one. Currently, there are approximately eight million Americans of voting age who are disenfranchised

due to the criminality stereotype. Of those Americans, 75 percent are racial minorities.

However, those that have criminal convictions are barred from voting in federal, state and local elections, even in cases where they are allowed to re-enter society. Thompson argued that voter re-registration and voting rights should be included in the rehabilitation process for criminal convicts. "[Voting is] not a right handed to you, but a right you possess," she said. Thompson said that revoking a person's right to vote does not serve as a deterrent for criminals and is antithetical to the rehabilitation process.

CCE brings awareness to ~Global Warming~ at National Teach-In

Discussing Obama's Green Team

By Anthony Lucci

A panel discussion was held about President Barack Obama's "green team." Hofstra University faculty participated on the panel, bringing their knowledge from the department of physics and the department of political science.

The panel led a fair assessment of how Obama's selection of his Secretary of Energy, Steven Chu, and his Assistant Secretary for Energy and Climate Change Policy, Carol Browner, would affect U.S. domestic environmental policy. The panel agreed in unison that Obama's green team is just what the environmentalist movement has been looking for.

Obama's selection of Chu as Secretary of Energy marked the first time in a number of administrations that the energy secretary was a man of science. Chu was the director of laboratory research at Berkeley University and is the first person in American history to win a Nobel Prize before being appointed to a presidential cabinet position. The panelists also brought to light Chu's administrative skills, citing his leadership positions in largely bureaucratic academic institutions.

The panel believed that Chu is also a rare appointment due to his good working relationship with the energy industry, a trait commonly missing for environmental activists. Carol Browner, was also an effective pick for Obama's administration, the panel discussed. Browner was the longest serving head of the Environmental Protection Agency with an eight-year tenure, said the panel. She is a known environmentalist who will come to be known as Obama's "climate czar," quipped a panelist.

Some of the goals the two will be working on are having one million plug-in hybrid cars on the road by 2015. The team also wants a \$7,000 tax credit for buying advanced green vehicles along with a benchmark for 10 percent of electricity to come from renewable resources by 2012, cited the panel. Among the plans is to weatherize one million homes annually, and develop and deploy clean coal technology to wean the country's dependency on foreign oil, said the panelists.

The panel transmitted a message of a "hope for change" from Obama's new "Green Team." Environmentalists should be happy with the choices, concluded the panelists.

Education as a tool to prevent global warming and its impacts

By Isabelle Goodman

Anthony Del Genio,

inaction.

Hofstra University's Environmental Priorities Committee and the Students for a Greener Hofstra joined the Center for Civic Engagement in

a scientist at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Sciences and professor at Columbia University, spoke about greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide, which

Del Genio said people will start seeing increases in a rise of heat waves, droughts in areas such as the southwestern United States, and more dramatic weather changes globally. However, he explained that sufficient evidence for global warming is gradual and cautioned that using specific events to justify the occurrence of global warming was incorrect.

He believed that human activity was a main cause for global warming, explaining that carbon emissions from automobiles and other activity has caused harm to the environment. "Our climate will respond to our actions, it just depends on what we do," he told the audience. He asked that they be responsible toward creating a better environment for the future.

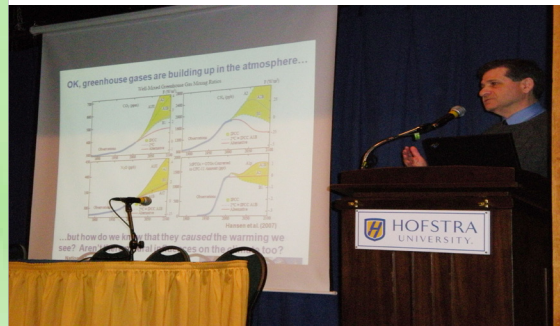


Photo by Isabelle Goodman

Anthony Del Genio of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Sciences told students the deal with global warming.

sponsoring the event, "What We Know and Don't Know About Climate Change." The event hosted a series of speakers which educated students on the current scientific understanding of global warming as well as the issue's potential consequences for the local and global community.

absorbs the radiation from the sun and heavily contributes to Earth's temperature. The warm temperatures have caused the melting of glacial ice and an overall decrease in other arctic sea ice, Del Genio explained. He predicted that by the late twenty-first century, there will be no sea ice left if there is human

Professor Insights

TURNING THE SHIP: AVERTING CLIMATE DISASTER

E. Christa Farmer, Geology Department

I really didn't think I'd be spending so much time over the past few weeks helping Hofstra University students Michael LaFemina, Steven Miller, and Katherine Gagnon put together some of the events for the National Teach-In on Global Warming.

I spent most of the month of January last year working with Honors College Dean Neil Donahue and several professors and students to hold four days of events for "Focus the Nation," a national effort to promote discussion of climate change solutions. About a hundred participants from the University, other local schools and the community came together to watch films, listen to scientists and policymakers, and question local elected officials on what they were doing to avert the dangerous effects



Photo by Hofstra University
E. Christa Farmer, Ph.D., Professor of geology

of human influence on the climate system. Those events went well, but I was exhausted by putting them together and the looming deadline of coming up for tenure in the next year or so meant that this year I was more concerned with my research and publication record than working on something similar for this year.

But then the students asked what we were going to do for the National Teach-In, a similar nation-wide effort to promote discussion of climate solutions and pressure the new presidential administration to take decisive action. There was only a month left to plan. I was tempted to say "Well, I can't help you, but good luck!" But then I started to think about why I study climate change as a paleo-climatologist in the first place.

My overall goal is to figure out how the climate system works by learning from past climatic changes in the geologic record, and my attention usually goes to fossils in ocean sediments that were deposited over the past 30,000 years. But the reason I started studying this admittedly arcane subject was that I was concerned about human perturbations of the climate system.

Amplifying the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere as much as we have in the last hundred years has some kind of effect. Hopefully, by learning how the environment adjusts to (Continued on Page 4)

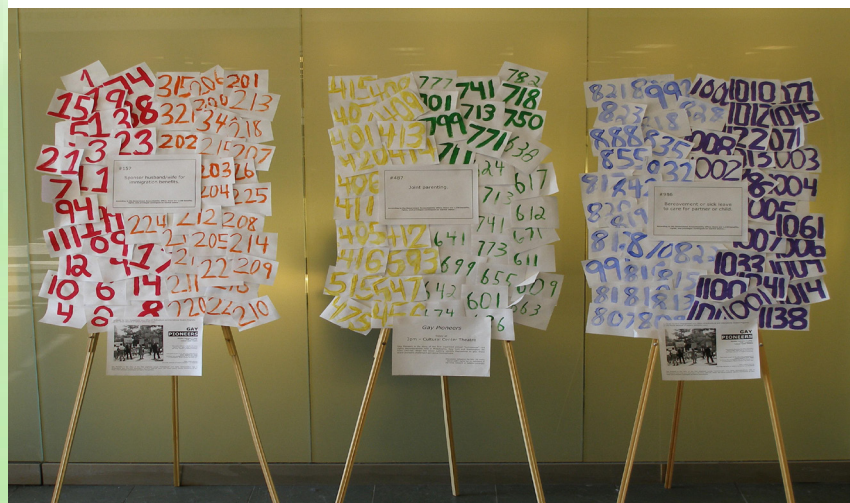


Photo by Michael LaFemina

A marriage rights installation was placed outside of X, to promote the movie for the Gay Pioneers film.

Multicultural Mixer 2009

Wednesday, February 25th

6:30 p.m. Greenhouse



with special performances by

Shake It

belly dance troupe

HU Gospel Ensemble

and

more!

win an
iPod Nano!



FEATURING

Ensalada de Pulpo

live salsa music

FREE FOOD AND DANCING!

DON'T MISS THIS EVENT.

presented by the Center for Civic Engagement, the Office of Multicultural and International Student Programs, the Division of Student Affairs, Honors College, and First Year Connections, with IMPACT and H*INT

Look out for more initiatives with students from Togo.



If you have any comments or would like to contribute to The CCE Observer, please contact Michael LaFemina at Michael.LaFemina@Gmail.com or (516) 463-7241.

Beyond the classroom: Professor explores goals for climate change

natural perturbations, such as tectonic mountain-building events and astronomical wiggles in our planet's orbit, students can have some glimpse of what might be in store for us in the near future.

In my four and a half years at Hofstra, I have often marveled at the lack of interest on the part of the general student body in questioning the atmospheric situation left to them by their elders: so how could I ignore or deflect this particular request from the students to help others learn more?

We ended up spending several hours over the course of January scheduling a room, lining up speakers, and getting out some truly minimal publicity for our events on Feb. 5 -- and still around fifty folks came to learn more. In the end, the planning did not divert too much time away from my precious research and it had left me feeling more hopeful than ever that our society will be able to "turn the ship" as one of our speakers put it.

The revision of our energy use will not be easy, but luckily there are young folks out there who won't just sit back and wait for disaster to come. They will keep asking questions about why things are the way they are, and pressuring everyone around them to help them figure out solutions.

Editor-in-Chief: Kimberly Chin
Design & Layout: Kimberly Chin
Publisher: Michael LaFemina

Writers:

Corey Absidid
Hope Azewou
Isabelle Goodman
Anthony Lucci
Christina Martin

Guest Writer:

E. Christa Farmer, Ph.D.

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Executive Director: Cynthia Bogard, Ph.D.

Please visit <http://www.hofstra.edu/cce> for more.