Friends Association for Higher Education's Quaker Leadings in Higher Education series presents:

Student Speak:

The Spiritual and Moral Basis for Valiant Accountability on our Campuses

Tuesday, April 30, 2024
7:30-9 pm, eastern
On Zoom

As we prepare for our annual FAHE gathering – Valiant for the Truth – June 3-6 at Malone University we heard students from communities too rarely heard on our campuses respond to these queries

- What are the moral, spiritual supports for your witness?
- To what extent have those supports come from your college?
- In what ways do moral supports for truth telling need strengthening on our campuses?

Welcome

Jacci Stuckey, Professor of History at Malone University welcomed us to this event and to consider registering for the gathering at Malone University. Both are inspired by this quotation from the letter to ministers George Fox wrote in 1656 while he was in Cornwall's South Gate Prison

> Let all nations hear the word by sound or writing. Spare no place, spare not tongue nor pen, but be obedient to the Lord God and go through the world and be valiant for the Truth upon earth; tread and trample all that is contrary under. Keep in the wisdom of God that spreads over all the earth, the wisdom of the creation, that is pure. Live in it; that is the word of the Lord God to you all, do not abuse it; and keep down and low; and take heed of false joys that will change.

Panel Introductions

Moderator: Esther "Little Dove" John (Harvard 1974, Harvard Graduate School of Education 1978) in 1983 walked solo across the country to the United Nations for the cause of world peace, social justice and environmental protection. She started a peace academy, worked as a mental health counselor, performed professionally on the flute and started an organization that places musicians in hospitals to perform at bedside for patients. In 1987 she participated in the US-Soviet Peace Walk from Leningrad to Moscow with 200 Americans and 200 Soviet citizens. She worked in radio as a public affairs director, taught education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at Antioch University Seattle and taught psychology at Seattle Central Community College. She was site manager of Northwest Indian College at Muckleshoot and now is writing the memoirs of her 1983 peace walk. She attends North Seattle Friends Church

Noa Gilbert (they/them) is a student, activist, and educator from Omaha, Nebraska. They are currently studying Growth and Structure of Cities and Political Science at Haverford College, where they serve on the Jewish Student Union board.

In Nebraska, Noa led synagogue and school groups in protesting anti-trans and anti-abortion legislation at the state legislature, as well as organized and supported a series of walkouts in Omaha-area high schools protesting anti-trans legislation.
At Haverford, Noa is a leader in the Jewish Student Union, which co-sponsored the Haverford Plenary resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza. In their work, they seek to envision a more peaceful and just future.

Sonora Roberta Grimsted was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest in Olympia, Washington. Her undergraduate degree is in cognitive science from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She is currently a graduate student pursuing a Master's of Divinity at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee.
Her research focuses on otherness in media, including populations such as people with mental illness and people in the LGBTQ+ community. Sonora's research combines a quantitative approach from her background in computational linguistics with qualitative analysis. She is also pursuing a vocation in hospital chaplaincy.
Sonora is a young adult Friend who previously attended and was assistant clerk for Montreal Monthly Meeting. She now attends Nashville Friends Meeting.
In her spare time, Sonora loves to crochet, read, and hang out with friends in nature.

As a former college drop-out, Ami Mejia is currently completing her degree at Guilford College.
Part of her dropping out in Fall of 2019 was due to a strong anti-professionalization and anti-capitalist analysis. She was peer-mentored by several student organizers on campus during her first few years which also happened to be during the Trump Administration.
She co-led the Amnesty International chapter at Guilford during these years and became more radicalized through her peers; eventually dropping bureaucratic peace-making altogether. Since then, she has led rallies, popular education workshops, and when politically convenient, she hasinfiltrated institutions to learn more about them.
She returned to school in order to survive late-stage capitalism, and has been completing a degree in data science; challenging dominant culture.

Ariza Nanji is passionate about thpower of relationship building. As the visionary behind Global Virtual School, Ariza founded Global Virtual School, a virtual English language institution, growing it to educate thousands of students across Central and South Asia. Now, at Swarthmore College, Ariza was awarded as a Lang Opportunity Scholar to develop and grow the Good Energy Collaborative - an organization focused on the green energy transition, providing community education on the connections between environmental justice issues and efforts to expand community-designed workforce development opportunities in Chester and Philadelphia. Ariza is also deeply committed to her faith as a Shia Ismaili Muslim, actively involved in national and international community initiatives aimed at increasing education access and strengthening the relationship between faith and education.

Sussie Ndanyi is a current scholar in Master of Divinity studies at the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond Indiana. Her extensive experience in ecumenical settings enables her to be a voice of the voiceless.
Sussie is inspired daily by The United Society of Friends Women (USFW) who have grounded her spirituality.

Sussie carries a ministry of administration in faith-based organization with attention to Governance leadership driven response. In 2011-2021, She served as the first female General Secretary in Nairobi Yearly Meeting and continues to be curious about decision making spaces that have no female representation especially in religious settings.
She is a sojourning member at West Richmond Friends and her home meeting is Langata Local Church of Nairobi Yearly Meeting, in Kenya.

Rachel Overstreet is a senior at the University of South Dakota. She began her journey in activism at 14, organizing her town's March For Our Lives protest. In college, she was the President of Tiospaye Student Council, which represents Native American students at USD. During her time as president, she lobbied her school's administration and student government for increased funding and representation of Native students. She also led protests and demonstrations against a state-wide effort to abolish Diversity Centers on South Dakota campuses. For the last two years, she has focused on lobbying Congress to pass national Truth and Reconciliation legislation, working with the Friends Committee on National Legislation. She became involved with Quaker advocacy and witness her sophomore year.

Responses to the Queries

What are the moral, spiritual supports for your witness? – start of video

To what extent have those supports come from your college? – 24:00 minutes into video

In what ways do moral supports for truth telling need strengthening on our campuses? – 57:00 minutes