

Building Community through Coffee & Conversation
Wed., April 20, 2022 | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. | JFK Lobby

Speed Relating is an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to connect over free Thomas Hammer coffee and have open conversations with a variety of individuals representing diverse identities, professions, and/or interests. The featured speakers listed below will share their experiences in 10-minute, small-group conversations helping to break down barriers based on identity, profession, or other aspects of life.

SESSION ONE | 11 A.M. - 12 P.M. | COFFEE & CONVERSATION GUESTS



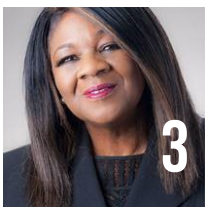
Chris Anderson - Director of Training & Innovation, Thomas Hammer Coffee Roasters [chris@hammercoffee.com]

I have worked within the Specialty Coffee Industry for 20 years, and prior to that, I worked in cosmetics in the late 90s. I was one of very few men in Spokane who sold cosmetics and I met some incredibly wonderful customers, however I also met many people who vocally expressed their distaste by seeing a man in what was viewed as a job role for females only. As uncomfortable as those unpleasant conversations were, I felt that I had an opportunity for the general public and coworkers to see that gendered job roles are a thing of the past. When I first started working in coffee, the barista role was also predominantly female. For many of my former coworkers I was the first openly gay person they had ever met. I took the chance to dispel beliefs that being gay was some type of weakness or an abomination. I hoped that I was able to some open minds and create new allies. I have always believed that my work ethic and ability to create spaces that were inclusive and respectful is the key to my success.



Dr. Melissa Bedford - Assistant Professor of Literacy, School of Education, EWU [mbedford@ewu.edu]

I am a former Title I public school teacher and current Assistant Professor of Literacy in the EWU School of Education. I graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno in 2019, where I completed my dissertation entitled, "The 3 Rs of Education: Reading, Writing, and... Robotics? Students' Literacy Development with LEGO® Robotics." In addition to teaching, I hold various leadership positions within the university and surrounding community, including being a newly elected school board director. Holding leadership roles as a multiracial woman in places where white and/or male voices are more predominant has helped me recognize the importance of not only sharing my voice, but creating spaces for other voices that have been historically marginalized.



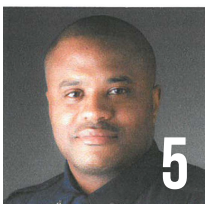
Dr. Shari Clarke - Vice President for Diversity & Senior Diversity Officer, EWU [sclarke5@ewu.edu]

I have worked diligently to provide voice and visibility to individuals who have historically been excluded from society. I respond to the needs of underrepresented populations while educating others to acquire awareness and sensitivity to the issues and challenges experienced by persons who are different from yourself. I speak as an African American, African American Woman, Mother of Black Sons, and a person whose entire life has embodied a middle-class lifestyle with a very limited degree of privilege.



Dr. Jackie Coomes - Associate Dean, CSTEM, EWU [jcoomes@ewu.edu]

I am the Associate Dean of EWU's College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. This position is a long way from my experiences as a teen mom living in poverty and as a first-generation college student at age 25. The challenges and empowerment I experienced throughout my life provide insights essential to supporting others in my current position. I aim to use my social and professional capital to empower others: students, staff, and faculty to reach their goals, contribute meaningfully to our community, and to value others' contributions. This means that although it is always a work in progress, I must be aware of my biases and their effects in all situations.



Jewell Day - Chief of Police, EWU [jday@ewu.edu]

I am in my 15th year in law enforcement and with the EWU Police Department. I am an alumnus of EWU and proud to give back by working in the field of law enforcement. I grew up military so have been exposed to many diverse cultures throughout the world for the majority of my life. I use these experiences to guide me and the staff of EWUPD in our approach to how we provide police services.



Dr. Scott Finnie - Senior Professor, Africana Studies, EWU [sfinnie@ewu.edu]

Dr. Finnie has been a member of the Africana Studies faculty since 1993. His experience of being raised in the inner city of Oakland, California during the 1960s and 1970s has greatly impact his passion for social justice in our society. Dr. Finnie has published and presented both domestically and internationally along the lines of U.S. race relations, the American Civil Rights Movement and the Dynamics of Servant Leadership. He is presently the owner of a diversity training business, "Engaging Team Concepts."



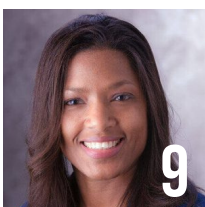
Christina Hudson - ASEWU Diversity Outreach Representative [asewudiversity@ewu.edu]

I am an AfroMexicana first-generation student and McNair scholar, double majoring in English studies and Africana studies, and minoring in religious studies. My academic journey has been very nontraditional. I grew up between Barrio Logan in San Diego, CA, and west side Long Beach, CA. I had my first job at fourteen years old and, because I had to live on my own and work support myself from fifteen years old, I dropped out of high school at the beginning of ninth grade. I began college many years later with neither a high school diploma nor a GED. After graduating with two bachelor's degrees this spring, I will begin my PhD studies in Africology and African American studies at Temple University.



Ryan Parrey, PhD - Director of Disability Studies, EWU [rparrey@ewu.edu]

As a disabled person I always notice when I get asked questions about disability on the street or, even, on campus. I like to say that these questions are dangerous, but not in the way you might think. Questions like, "what can you see?" or "what happened to you?" provide the occasion to re-think how we understand and value the place of disabled and other marginalized people in society. In order to break down barriers that these kinds of questions present, I like to turn the questions back on those asking. For instance, when I ask a person who seems to be walking with ease or who says they can see a bus three blocks away, "were you born like that?" This seems to really get them thinking about the assumptions we all make.



Angela Schwendiman, MA - Director of Africana Studies, EWU [aschwendiman@ewu.edu]

Angela Schwendiman grew up in Southern California surrounded by colleges and universities, mountains, and beaches. She graduated cum laude, went to UC Santa Barbara to study film, converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a student, served a mission in Uruguay, met and married her husband, finished her BA with 2 kids and her MA with 7 kids and was offered two positions at EWU and the community colleges before finishing her Masters. Worked at Q6 for 4 years, been at EWU for nearly 18 years. She currently holds positions as Senior Lecturer, Faculty Commons Director, and Africana Studies Director. She has 9 amazing children, 6 beautiful granddaughters, and a wonderful husband of 32 years.

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SESSION TWO | 12 P.M. - 1 P.M. | COFFEE & CONVERSATION GUESTS



Erik Budsberg, PhD - Director of Sustainability, EWU [ebudsberg@ewu.edu]

My current work focuses on how to improve all aspects of sustainability at EWU including lowering our carbon footprint, efficient use of water and energy, the campus community garden, and the prairie restoration project. In general sustainability means looking how to do things that are environmentally responsible, socially just, and economically feasible. There are many challenges in moving forward with sustainability based initiatives, but finding shared common ground with stakeholders and identifying community benefits can help to build collaborative relationships that can find solutions and overcome barriers.



Cassie Erickson - Police Officer, EWU [cerickson9@ewu.edu]

I embrace the opportunities and challenges that come with working in careers where women are the minority. Prior to my five years in law enforcement, I was a pilot for a regional airline. I changed careers after spending six years at home raising my young children. Whether taking on a traditional role or bringing distinct attributes to a male-dominated profession, I stand on my values of integrity, perseverance, and fortitude. Challenges have come my way, from co-workers to supervisors to public perception of a "woman in a man's field." Years of these experiences have strengthened my character and resolve. If you are a young (or not-so-young!) woman questioning whether you will "fit in," please come talk to me!



Nick Franco, PhD - Associate VP For Student Equity, Belonging & Voice, EWU [nfranco@ewu.edu]

Nick is a queer, nonbinary, and mixed race professional who currently serves as EWU's Associate Vice President for Student Equity, Belonging, and Voice. They have extensive DEI experience and specialize in the areas of LGBTQ+ identities, mixed race identities, cultural humility, and addressing bias in the workplace. Nick is the product of Stockton, CA, and enjoys playing volleyball, listening to audiobooks, and anything related to figure skating.



Joddie Gleason - Head Women's Basketball Coach, EWU [jgleason4@ewu.edu]

I have over 20 years of coaching experience at almost every level. I grew up as a middle child with two brothers in a small, rural community in Northern California called Colusa and attended Chico State as a Liberal Studies/Elementary Education major. I earned my BA in Liberal Studies, multiple subjects teaching credential, and Master's degree in Exercise Science all from Chico State while playing basketball and coaching there. I identify as a white, heterosexual female. Ways that I have worked to break down barriers for myself have mostly been as an athlete during a time when it was not always considered lady-like or feminine to be competitive, aggressive, or to excel in athletics. As a coach, I strive to break down barriers for the student-athletes in my program by creating an atmosphere of inclusion and helping them to be their true authentic selves. It is my mission to be a life-long learner regarding equality and inclusion and to lift up those that are underserved or overlooked. As a coach, I have also tried to break down barriers dealing with equality for women's athletics in general.



Dr. Jody Graves - Professor, Piano Studies, EWU [jgraves@ewu.edu]

Dr. Jody Graves maintains a diverse and active performing career as a distinguished concert pianist, public speaker and arts advocate. Her engagements take her across the United States and dozens of foreign countries including serving as a Cultural Ambassador for the U.S. State Department in the Middle East. She is especially interested in creating unique and contemporary ways to foster a collaborative experience between artist and performer, and is dedicated to maintaining the value of music in our schools and culture. Dr. Graves is recognized for her creative ability to engage the audience during her concerts with anecdotes, historical perspectives, stories and humor.



Sonora Hernandez - Residential Life Coordinator, EWU [hernandez17@ewu.edu]

Currently, I am in my 5th year as a Residential Life Coordinator here at EWU and am one of the advisors for the Resident Housing Association. I am a first gen, mixed Latina who found support, my voice, and my passion for helping others when I came to college and lived on campus. As a transplant from Southern CA, I have spent my 5 years here working to bring attention to the needs of BIPOC folks within the Residence Halls as well as educate fellow colleagues on what it means to serve BIPOC, more specifically, Latinx students in a predominately white area. I've presented at two regional conferences around creating a sense of "Familia" within departments and serve on The Undocumented Student Support team as well as the Hispanic Serving Institution Sub-Committee. Storytelling is a passion of mine and sharing experiences is a way to connect so the identities I hold I am comfortable speaking on are being a mixed (white/Mexican) queer woman in an interracial relationship.



Dave Millet - Director, Veteran's Resource Center, EWU [dmillet@ewu.edu]

Served 25 years in the US Army as an Infantry Officer, retiring in 2009. Last Army job was Professor of Military Science, EWU ROTC Program. I worked in the EWU Foundation for 2yrs after my military retirement and became the Director of the Veterans Resource Center in July 2012. I am married with three children and one grandson. Am a history nerd, love to read non-fiction; have over 250 books in my Kindle library. I have three nice road bikes which annoys my wife a great deal as I keep them in the house.



Okera Nsombi, PhD - Associate Professor, Africana Studies, EWU [onsombi@ewu.edu]

I lived for the first part of my life in South Carolina for 22 years and the second part in Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area for 22 years. I earned my bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from where I resided the second part of my life. I have been teaching Africana Studies courses for 21 years. I have dedicated myself to social change by working with students and community members, as well as producing relevant scholarship.



Dr. Judy Rohrer - Director of Gender, Women's, & Sexuality Studies, EWU [jrohrer2@ewu.edu]

My personal commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) and social justice on campus comes from my experiences as a financial aid/scholarship high school and college student, my lived experience as a genderqueer lesbian, my social inheritance as the daughter of one of the first Mexican American Ed.D.s (and the complicated ways that history interrelates with my whiteness), and the stories shared with me by variously marginalized students and colleagues along my academic and activist trajectories.