MORE THAN WORDS

EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE SOMEONE THEY CAN TURN to for objective, honest and discreet advice. And, at the College, everyone does.

With a group of resource coordinators having replaced the Ombuds Office in January, staff, faculty and students all have their own designated consultant committed to listening to their concerns, educating them about the relevant College policies and communicating with various parties to resolve their conflicts — whether they be with someone on campus, an entire department or the College itself.

“I expect that the different groups will use our services in different ways and that some issues will be specific to students, some to faculty and some to staff,” says Deni Mitchell, the president’s senior executive assistant and staff resource coordinator (pictured above, left). “For staff in particular, I think we’ll see that their needs vary tremendously, but I do think a lot of people will be coming to me unsure of what the rules are — either they’re not up on policy, or they don’t know where to get the policy that pertains to them if there is a policy pertaining to them.”

But, for every staff member looking for policies on performance evaluations and medical leave, there will most likely be two more just looking for someone to listen.

“A lot of times people don’t want to take action – they just want someone to know what’s going on and how they feel about it,” says Mitchell, noting that she and the other resource coordinators can’t force people to follow their recommendations, nor can they report people for disregarding policy. “It is strictly confidential. Now, we are obligated to report criminal behavior or something that is potentially dangerous to either an individual or the institution – but, otherwise, no records are kept. It’s unofficial and informal – which makes it a great outlet for employees who need to get things off their chest, if for no other reason than to have their voices heard.”

And, while faculty members typically voice their issues to their department chair, dean or the Faculty Hearing and Grievance committees, faculty resource coordinator John Newell (pictured above, center) assumes he’ll get some visits from faculty members who aren’t comfortable with the other routes.

“This role shouldn’t interfere with the usual procedures, but I don’t mind providing a cool-headed, impartial sounding board for people when they need it,” says the dean of the Honors College, who has accumulated plenty of experience in conflict resolution over the years. “I’m familiar with talking through issues with faculty, and with students, too. The first thing is just getting them to talk about it. What is their perception of the problem? What is the reason that this is a problem? Then, from there, I get the other side’s perspective, and then try to work out a solution that everyone can live with.”

And that, ultimately, is the goal: to take all views into consideration and open up the lines of communication so that complaints and disagreements can be resolved efficiently, amicably and equitably.

“Facilitating that communication gives us a community approach to helping our students, staff and faculty,” says Marjorie Thomas, assistant vice president of student affairs and student resource coordinator (pictured above, right). “It’s also a way for us to be more aware of any recurring issues on campus so that we can address those problem areas. So, it not only serves the students, staff and faculty, but it gives us a better idea of what the community’s needs are, which allows us to better serve the members of our community in the future. And I think that’s the main reason that we are taking this approach – to help the entire community become stronger and more aware.”

After all, says Mitchell, “We just want what’s best for faculty, staff and students.”

For more information about the College Resource Coordinators — including contact information and office hours — visit cofc.edu/crc. To take advantage of the service, call or visit your resource coordinator; walk-ins are welcome during the specified office hours. Off-campus meetings can be arranged.
INTELLIGENT DESIGN: Five Scientists Strike a Chord

THEY’VE JUST BEGUN TELLING THEIR
Coney Island baby goodbye. Their faces
are animated, their eyes are wide and
their voices are blended so smoothly, so
tightly, it’s like listening to one voice – one
really cool voice. But then, delightfully, the
baritone breaks away with a low, “true love,”
and – bending his knees – the bass chimes
in with, “my honey.” And, as they continue
pleading their imminent departure to this
poor girl on Coney Island, the tenor – with
a shake of his head and a knowing glance at
the baritone – stresses that they’re “never
going to see you anymore.”

But, while there was clearly some
discord with the Coney Island gal, theive barbershop singers of the Intelligent
Design Quartet (a “quartet” of five scientists
is intelligent by design) are perfectly
harmonized – and not just in song. They
manage to visually match each vocal
nuance with movement and expression, too
– leaning in a little more when they come
together on a chord and then away from
whomever has the featured chord ever-so-
slightly. In fact, it’s as if they function as a
unit – easily and comfortably playing off one
another both on stage and off.

And mostly off. Way off. In a biology
lab on the second floor of the Rita Liddy
Hollings Center, to be exact. It’s where
the four biology professors and former
director of instrumentation in the chemistry
department have met for rehearsal every
Thursday for four years now. It all started
after the men performed together in the
College’s campuswide celebration for
Mozart’s 250th birthday.

“When that was over, I felt a void. I
missed having music in my life. I didn’t
have a musical outlet,” recalls Steve Jones,
the group’s bass, who left the chemistry
department earlier this year to work for
the National Institute of Standards and
Technology at Fort Johnson. “I’d wanted
to do barbershop for years and years, so I
contacted the guys and told them I was
thinking about putting together a group.”

“And you can’t say no to Steve,” says
biology professor and chair Jaap Hillenius,
one of the leads.

“Yes, Steve had the motivation. He was
definitely the driving force,” agrees baritone
and biology professor Brian Scholtens,
adding that they’re all glad he did. “It’s
a nice break during the week. It gives us
something to look forward to – something
fun to focus on.”

“It’s more of a lunch club than anything
else,” says the group’s second lead, Mark
Lazzaro, associate biology professor,
explaining that, after a half an hour of
rehearsing every week, the group heads to
lunch together.

“That’s right, but we don’t stop singing
just because we’re at lunch,” says tenor Rob
Dillon, associate professor of biology. “Why
should that stop us?”

“We always sing at Jack’s,” adds Lazzaro.
“They won’t let us leave without singing!”

“Oh yes – we tried to leave without
singing one time, and the waitress came
after us,” laughs Jones.

“We’ve also sung to the Italian ice lady,”
says Lazzaro.

“And at barbershops – a real barbershop
on Broad Street – and at a hat shop down
on Market,” adds Dillon. “We just go
around randomly picking victims.”

Of course, not all of their performances
come as impromptu surprises. They
routinely sing at retirement homes and
once they were even paid to perform at a
church picnic.

“That’s how we got the money for our
vests,” quips Lazzaro. “We were nothing
before that.”

“But it’s not just 50-year-old women
love us,” agrees Scholtens.

And, as much as her work – not to mention
the 112-mile bike race. She immediately knew
the only possible
take effort – but, in her mind, the only possible
move to the test in last year’s
triathlete was put to the test in last year’s
Ironman Coeur d’Alene, when she fell off her
bike and broke her clavicle in the second mile of
the race.

“After the race, I knew I couldn’t
be picking up the pieces. I just had to
approach the race in a different
way,” she says, adding that she doesn’t mind
the work – not to mention the
satisfaction.

The only thing that could possibly top
it, they say, is singing the national anthem
at a RiverDogs game, and, says Scholtens,
“that’s not even a real possibility.”

Besides, Hillenius says, “We don’t dream.
We sing.”

And, with that, he stands, walks toward
the others, and – all together – they break
into song.  

Pictured above (l–r): Jaap Hillenius, Steve Jones,
Brian Scholtens, Rob Dillon and Mark Lazzaro.
FIRST AND FOREMOST

Betty Craig Is the College Constant

AT THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON, some things never change: the activity in the Cistern Yard, the rivalry with The Citadel, the peril of the brick walkways. We’ve come to expect these things, and – for the most part – we find a certain comfort in their familiarity, their dependability. Another constant we’ve come to count on over the years: Betty Craig.

Having worked on campus longer than any other full-time employee, Craig has been a part of the College of Charleston from day one – at least as far as most of us are concerned. But, while we might not be able to remember a time when she didn’t work here, she still remembers her interview with President Ted Stern’s executive assistant, Tom Hamby.

“I took my typing test, and he hired me on the spot,” says Craig, noting that she was 22 years old at the time and that it was her first job after graduating from the University of Kentucky. “I’d just moved to town, and I didn’t know anything about Charleston or the College, really. But I wasn’t nervous at all – I felt at home immediately. Everyone made me feel welcomed from my very first day.”

That was back in 1970, when Craig was hired as the first of two faculty secretaries responsible for, among other things, typing exams on stencils, scheduling meetings and composing correspondence for the entire faculty.

“Oh, of course, there were only 87 faculty members at the time,” she says. “The College is so big now, each academic department has its own secretary. But in those days there were only two of us handling everything.”

Craig, who now serves as administrative assistant for executive administration and institutional resources in the President’s Office, first moved to the president’s suite as secretary to Larry Davis, former director of the College of Charleston Foundation, in 1972. Less than a year later, President Stern offered her a position as his executive secretary.

“I thought, I’m not going to move up in life if I just keep doing the same thing for the rest of my life,” recalls Craig, who took the job and, after President Stern retired in 1978, continued to serve as executive secretary to President Edward Collins (1978–1985) and then to President Harry Lightsey (1985–1992). But, even though her title stayed the same for 19 years, her job changed with each new administration.

“They all had different styles, so there was always some adjustment,” says Craig. “Of course, I can work with anybody, and the adjustments were not difficult at all. They were the boss, and I just followed the rules. I guess that’s how I lasted so long!”

Craig has not only lasted – she’s outlasted a total of six presidents. It was when President Alex Sanders came in 1992, however, that she moved into her current position, assisting the secretary to the Board of Trustees.

“We are constantly busy, but it’s a different kind of pressure than I had as the presidents’ secretary – not better or worse, just different,” she says, adding that she doesn’t mind the pressure one bit. “I enjoy my job – I enjoy everything I do. Let’s just say I don’t mind coming to work every day.”

And, as much as her work – not to mention the campus itself – has changed since her first day at the College, one thing has remained the same: “The people. I really love the people,” Craig says, her eyes watering with emotion.

“They are wonderful, and I’ve made some dear, dear friends through the years. The College has become my home away from home, and the people have become my family – we’re just a big, happy family.”

You can count on that.

EDITOR’S NOTE

It’s been three full years since The Portico first landed on campus, and we hope that each and every issue has brought you both pleasure and insight. This is your newsletter, and your opinions and ideas matter – and we want to hear them. Please take some time this month to visit coff.edu/theportico/readersurvey to complete a quick, anonymous survey. It’s just another chance for you to make The Portico your very own.

– Alicia Lutz

GARDENER’S PICK

Saucer Magnolia

AKA: Japanese Magnolia, Magnolia soulangiana.

ON CAMPUS: Found in front of 10 Green Way and in the southwest corner of the 20 Glebe Street yard.

DESCRIPTION: This hardy tree has bright, silvery-gray bark that provides winter interest and produces fragrant, showy, buttery white-to-pinkish purple flowers in late winter/early spring, before its broad, dark-green leaves appear. The 5-10” tulip- or goblet-shaped blooms attract bees, butterflies and birds.

TIPS: Plant in part shade/part sun on the north side of established structures or trees to delay blooms until after the possibility of frost. Transplant in spring, just before growth begins. Prune while young to develop a strong structure and desired form. Large wounds may not close well on older plants, but light pruning to the crown is tolerated after the flowering period.
MIND OVER MATTER
Siobhan Maize Will See You at the Finish Line

WHEN SIOBHAN MAIZE SETS HER SIGHTS on something, nothing can get in her way. It might take time – and you better believe it’ll take effort – but, in her mind, the only possible outcome is success. And, until then, she’s not stopping for anything. Evidently, not even for broken bones.

The triathlete was put to the test in last year’s Ironman Coeur d’Alene, when she fell off her bike and broke her clavicle in the second mile of the 112-mile bike race. She immediately knew she was badly hurt – but she also knew it simply wasn’t in her to give up.

“I’d been working for this for an entire year,” says the adjunct psychology professor, whose husband rearranged his own schedule so that she could concentrate on her training for what was her first Ironman triathlon. “I knew he wasn’t going to put up with that again any time soon. This was my one shot.”

And so – even though she couldn’t move her arm – she got back on her bike.

“I just told myself to suck it up – that I’d just ride to the next medical tent,” says Maize. “I also had silly things going through my head. I’d bought all this Coeur d’Alene stuff the day before, and I was thinking, What am I going to do with all this stuff? I can’t give it to people if I don’t finish the race. And what will I say when the kids ask how I did?”

It was enough to keep her going. Past the medical tent. Over one winding hill and cutting back to another. One mile after another.

“I was grunting and making all these noises and crying to myself. But quitting because of the pain was never an option for me,” Maize says. “I knew that if I had an injury and I didn’t finish, it would be so much worse than if I had an injury and I did finish.”

And so she persisted. Despite the pain. Despite her bicycle chain falling off. Despite hearing her bones rattle. And, despite it all, she finished the bike race with nine hours left to complete the marathon. With permission from the race’s doctors – who diagnosed her fractured collarbone at a glance – she set about walking the final 26 miles. Eventually, though, she broke into a run.

“I was so happy to be running – and to know I’d be finishing – I don’t remember the pain,” laughs Maize, who regularly runs marathons (11 total), half-marathons, 10Ks and 5Ks. “I’ve never been happier to see a finish line.”

She wasn’t too disappointed to see her total time, either: At 13:15, it was surprisingly close to her original goal of 12 hours.

“I could still feel good about that,” says Maize, who, once at the hospital, quickly realized just how much pain she was in. Only three short months later, however, she was competing in the Kiawah Island Olympic Distance Triathlon – coming in second overall female.

“I eased into it slowly,” she insists, adding that even the most intimidating goals are manageable if they’re taken step by step. “If you break it down into little goals – just little things you can focus on – you see how much you can do, and you realize it’s attainable.”

As for her own goals, Maize’s ambitions remain high: “I’d like to do a 50-mile ultra-marathon. But don’t tell my husband that!”

Not that there’s anything he could do to stop her.

ON THE MOVE

- The McNair Scholars Program has moved to the Stern Student Center, rooms 413 and 425A. “I am happy to be on the fourth floor with all the student traffic,” says the program’s coordinator, Carrie Ben-Yisrael. “It’s great for program promotion, and I have no excuse not to walk downstairs and get on the treadmill!”
  The updated contact information is 3.6755 (main phone), 3.1423 (fax) and 3.3693 (Ben-Yisrael’s direct line).
- The following sailing team’s offices have moved to the second floor of the Johnson Center (rooms 216–218): Alice Manard, director; Ward Cromwell, head coach (new phone: 3.5549); and Nick Ewenson, assistant coach (new phone: 3.3679). All other contact information remains the same. The new space includes an area to showcase the program’s many awards.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- With the bookstore now under the management of Barnes & Noble Booksellers, renovation plans are being designed this month, with the physical work scheduled to start in April.
- The above-ceiling inspection was completed, ceiling tiles were installed and the courtyard hardscaping was finished at Craig Union in January. The painting and floor preparation at the soon-to-be admissions hub will continue this month. The project is on target for a late-February completion, and will be move-in ready in March.
- The exterior renovations to Randolph Hall, Towell Library and Porters Lodge are on schedule, with windows, sashes and shutters on all three buildings continuing to be removed and repaired. Randolph Hall’s portico will undergo structural repairs in February.
HEARTSTRINGS SWEETHEART CONCERT
Music faculty Lee-Chin Siow, Natalia Khoma, Enrique Graf and Julia Harlow perform chamber music.
WHEN: Sun., Feb. 14, 4 p.m.
WHERE: Cato Center for the Arts, room 234
FEE: $25
CONTACT: For tickets, contact Marietta Juillard at 3.0935 or info@charlestonmusicfest.com

You don’t have to know much about the College to be at least vaguely aware of the Cistern. And, if you’ve spent enough time on campus, chances are you know about the small cistern in the president’s front yard, too. But you’d really have to do some digging around to stumble across the cistern tucked behind the Chi Omega House at 38 Coming. “It wasn’t what we were expecting when we started,” says Jason Yarborough, renovation and construction project manager for residence life, who was investigating what he thought was a sinkhole when he realized that the hole behind the old house led to hollowed-out cavities at least 10 feet deep. What he did next is every claustrophobic’s nightmare: squeezing through a 3-foot-wide gap and down, into the ground. What he found, however, was a surprisingly clean cistern with two 5’ x 15’ barrel-vaulted chambers, connected by a window of sorts. “I was amazed at what good condition it was in,” he says. “The stucco and bricks were all intact, and everything was really well preserved.”

“It looks like the bricks were plastered over with concrete,” observes Robert Russell, director of the master of science in historic preservation program. “Assuming that to be true, the cistern was upgraded sometime in the (probably early) 20th century. My guess is that it’s as old as the house.”

And, that’s pretty darn old. In fact, this house – known as the Scott House, circa 1770 – “is one of the oldest buildings on campus,” says adjunct history professor Robert Stockton, noting that it would not be out-of-the-ordinary for John Scott to build a cistern behind his house. “Before the city water system was established, every residence had a cistern or a well. Cisterns were preferred because the water was cleaner, and they were typically situated either under or to the rear of the house.”

Indeed, the cistern at 38 Coming expands underneath the back of the house, which is not part of the original structure. “When they extended the back, they built around the cistern, so they definitely knew it was there,” says Yarborough, who is fortunate to have come across it after all these years – especially since it will soon be hidden from sight once more. “We’ll be covering it soon – once it’s safe, we’ll put down sod and get it cleaned up back here.”

And, once again, you’d never even know it was there.

NEWSPRIJES: News You Can Use

• David Desplaces, associate professor of global commerce, received the Freedoms Foundation’s Leavemy Award for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education.
• The Global Business Resource Center’s director, Rene Mueller, and associate director, Kathryn Banks, were named co-chairs of the S.C. International Trade Coalition.
• BiblioLabs LLC has established a new scholarship program that will fund the four-year tuitions of four academically competitive S.C. students pursuing a degree in computer science.
• Donations to the College’s student-athlete scholarships may now be made by texting the word cougar to 50555 up to four times a month. Each (tax-deductible) $5 donation will appear on the donor’s next phone bill. For more information, contact Brandon Stevens at 3.6550 or stevensbs@cofc.edu.
• The equestrian team is raffling off a two-night stay and two rounds of golf at Kiawah Island. To purchase tickets ($10 each or three for $25), contact team parent Joanne Threlfall at 202.438.5942 or jmtthrelfall@aol.com.
Thanks to everyone who participated in the last photo quiz, and congratulations to Meredith Gerber, counselor in the Career Center, who was the first to guess that the object in question was the cougar image on the electronic dartboard machine in the game room in the Theodore S. Stern Student Center.

Take a look at the picture above. The object can be found on campus. Do you know what and where it is? The first person to submit the correct answer will win a tasty lunch for two at Liberty Street Fresh Food Company, compliments ofARAMARK. Good luck!

Send your submission to lutza@cofc.edu by February 15. The contest is open to all College faculty and staff. One submission per person, please.

If you could live in any part of the world at any time, where and when would you live?

ERIC THOMAS
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

“I would like to live in the year A.D. 2500, in the U.S., primarily in order to see the results of events that are happening right now. Will solar, wind and other renewable energy sources be dominant? Will we have averted the more catastrophic implications of climate change? What new forms will the world’s religions take? Will science and religion diverge even more, or will there be a deeper understanding between the two?”

KRISTEN BENNETT
Scheduling Coordinator, Registrar’s Office

“I would have to say Venice, Italy, between1450 and1600, because it was one of the only places in western Europe where women had rights regarding divorce, publication, property ownership and lineage.”

PETER PICCIONE
Associate Professor of History

“It would be Cairo from 1890 to1938. It was a melange of sophisticated creativity in an East-West melting pot, dubbed ‘Paris along the Nile,’ because of its vibrant mixture of ancient Islamic architecture with ornate French art nouveau and baroque Italianate, followed in the 1920s by German Bauhaus and in the 1930s by art deco. It was a beautiful place!”