FY19 Year of Women Messaging

Celebrating the 100th anniversary of the year that women were admitted to CofC (1918), FY19 messaging will share compelling stories about the contributions and achievements of women students, faculty, staff and alumni in addition to commemorating black women’s admittance to the College in 1967. Communications will also leverage International Women’s Day (March 8, 2019).

Facts and Statistics

- In 2017, the College of Charleston Master in Business Administration program was ranked No. 8 in the nation for MBA programs with the most women. [https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/the-short-list-grad-school/articles/2017-04-11/10-business-schools-with-the-most-women](https://www.usnews.com/education/best-graduate-schools/the-short-list-grad-school/articles/2017-04-11/10-business-schools-with-the-most-women)

Forging the Way for Women Since 1918

- White women were first admitted to the College of Charleston under President Harrison Randolph (1897–1945) on August 3, 1918, and were enrolled on September 30, 1918.
  - Two previous requests in 1894 and 1903 had been declined.
- For 100 years, the College of Charleston has cultivated exemplary women leaders across disciplines. CofC not only affords students across gender, race and economic lines the opportunity to gain the skills and insight to succeed in their chosen fields, its liberal arts approach also offers them the broader context and the critical thinking to address the challenges of their day.

Academic Programming

- Women-centric Studies
  - The College’s Women’s and Gender Studies Program was launched in 1984 with a minor in women’s studies aimed at correcting gender bias in the conduct and content of academic knowledge. In 2010 the academic major was established.
  - The Women’s and Gender Studies Program regularly hosts events, including Yes, I’m a Feminist!, an annual fundraiser for the Alison Piepmeier Scholarship. The event connects students and faculty with supportive community members and leverages progressive support in Charleston for students engaged in critical research and activism. In 2017, more than 100 donors contributed more than $16,000 to the program. [http://today.cofc.edu/2017/02/21/yes-im-a-feminist/](http://today.cofc.edu/2017/02/21/yes-im-a-feminist/)
Feminism in Motion is a new annual event that aims to celebrate student scholars’ work on gender and gender-focused projects. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/04/09/womens-and-gender-studies/

Women in Business
- The School of Business is committed to advancing opportunities for women in the business sector.
- Established in 2018, the Women in Business Club is a student organization housed in the School of Business that encourages and empowers female students by promoting leadership, philanthropy and relationships in order to achieve their career goals. The club provides a basis for women to network within their desired field of interest and voice their opinions within the business community. www.cofcwib.com
- With the goal of inspiring entrepreneurs and raising awareness of the potential for innovation and economic expansion for women by women, the College of Charleston School of Business’ Center for Entrepreneurship and the Office of Economic Development holds the Celebrating Women Entrepreneurs Summit with students, faculty, staff and members of the business community in attendance. http://today.cofc.edu/2016/03/08/celebrating-women-entrepreneurs-summit-comes-to-college-of-charleston/

Faculty and Staff
- In 1918, Emma Gibbes became the first director of women students at the College. She escorted the women to the library.
- Elmina Eason 1928, was an adjunct professor of education at the College of Charleston. She was the first alumna to teach at the College.
- In 1962, Maggie Pennington became the first full-time female faculty member. She taught biology until 1977 and was the first, last and only dean of women from 1967 to 1972.
- Rose Hamm Rowland came to the College of Charleston as a mathematics professor in 1975. She then served as director of the Governor’s School and the Honors Program from 1988 to 1999, during which time the Honors Program saw tremendous growth. She received the Distinguished Advising Award in 1997.
- Women in Leadership Roles:
  - Patricia Williams Lessane, executive director of the College’s Avery Center for African American History and Culture, 2000–present was recognized among leaders from 10 different industries at the YWCA’s What Women Bring Conference in Charleston.
  - Women have long held academic leadership roles at the College of Charleston, among them are Trisha Folds-Bennett, dean of the Honors College; Valerie Morris, dean of the School of the Arts; Frances Welch, dean of the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance; Jocelyn Evans, associate dean of the School of Business; and Marcia Snyder, assistant dean of student learning and accreditation in the School of Business.
  - Cass Runyon, associate professor of geology, serves as the statewide director of the NASA South Carolina Space Grant Consortium, a grant and fellowship project meant to promote NASA education.
• Women at the Helm: Leslie Sautter, associate professor of geology, leads students on annual cruises to map parts of the ocean floor through the College’s BEAMS (Benthic Acoustic Mapping and Survey) Program. [http://today.cofc.edu/2017/04/21/ocean-research-beams-36870/]

• Women Powering Research:
  o Research stations at the College of Charleston Dixie Plantation provide students with numerous opportunities for environmental research and historical discovery. One example is the ornithology course taught by Melissa Hughes, associate chair of the biology department. [http://today.cofc.edu/2016/06/20/course-of-nature-dixie-research-station/]
    [http://today.cofc.edu/2015/12/10/research-stations-open-dixie-plantation/]
  o Research by associate professor of management and marketing Elise Perrault found that gender diversification plays an important role for a company’s boards of advisers and that female perspectives may contribute to the firm’s increased performance with investors. Perrault found that gender diversification enhances workflow and improves trust, especially for external stakeholders.
  o Psychology professor Jennifer Wilhelm landed a $432,000 National Institutes of Health grant enabling her and seven students to continue refining their understanding of how peripheral nerves regenerate. The goal is to determine better surgical interventions, better rehabilitation outcomes via physical therapy and better pharmaceutical options. [http://today.cofc.edu/2016/09/29/professor-wins-federal-grant-to-study-nerve-regeneration/]
  o Philosophy professor Deborah Boyle is at the forefront of an international movement to revive and study the writings of women in early modern philosophy. She has written a book about Margaret Cavendish and will soon publish an edition of the writings of Lady Mary Shepherd. Both women were active participants in early modern philosophy, but their contributions were neglected and even forgotten after philosophy became professionalized and re-masculinized in the 19th and 20th centuries.
  o Communication assistant professor Jenna Abetz’s research program examines the construction and negotiation of identity, particularly during times of relational transition and contestation. Her work has included explorations of communication in emerging adulthood, dual-career couples and mother-daughter relationships.
  o Communication assistant professor Beth Sundstrom is the director of the Women’s Health Research Team, which is investigating health issues specific to women and adolescent girls, promoting interdisciplinary research collaboration and communicating research findings and health-related information to empower women and girls in the Charleston community, South Carolina and beyond. In 2018, Beth Sundstrom received a Fulbright grant to research women’s reproductive justice in Ireland. [http://today.cofc.edu/2018/07/26/professor-to-research-womens-reproductive-justice-in-ireland/]
  o In 2017, Rene Mueller, marketing professor and director of the Global Business Resource Center in the School of Business, was awarded a Fulbright grant to teach marketing and international business at the Management Center Innsbruck, University of Applied Sciences in Innsbruck, Austria. [http://today.cofc.edu/2017/03/21/fulbright-grant-cofc-rene-mueller/]

• Women Inspiring Others:
Associate professor of communication Merissa Ferrara teaches the Wired & Inspired capstone course, availing of resources like TED and Upworthy that help students dive deep into a single, meaningful project meant to uplift and inspire their friends.  [http://today.cofc.edu/2017/04/26/wired-inspired-communication-cofc/](http://today.cofc.edu/2017/04/26/wired-inspired-communication-cofc/)

The **UPLIFT (Using Play, Love, Inspiration and Friendship as Therapy)** program was conceived by Anna Lonon, a visiting instructor of English, to help children who have a parent diagnosed with cancer. UPLIFT is student led, with more than 60 student volunteers who handle everything from fundraising campaigns to event planning. The graduate students in the College’s Child Life Program train the volunteers. [http://today.cofc.edu/2017/06/02/cofc-uplift-lonon-foundation/](http://today.cofc.edu/2017/06/02/cofc-uplift-lonon-foundation/)

- **Women at the Forefront:**
  - Xenia Mountrouidou, assistant professor of computer science, is integrating cybersecurity into the undergraduate computer science program with a three-year $300,000 National Science Foundation grant. She is engaging College of Charleston students early in her new [Cybersecurity Research Lab](http://today.cofc.edu/2016/10/21/ethical-hacker-cybersecurity/) to prepare them for the ever-evolving and ever-important field of cybersecurity.
  - Psychology professor Rhonda Swickert brought an entirely new field of research and practice to the College. She developed the Mindfulness Initiative at the College, founded the Meditation Club, created two new courses in Positive Psychology (one introductory and one advanced) and played a role in the Peace Initiative that was held in March 2018. [http://psychology.cofc.edu/peace-initiative/index.php](http://psychology.cofc.edu/peace-initiative/index.php)

- **Women at the Top:** Devon Hanahan 1987, senior instructor of Hispanic studies, was named the top professor in the country by the popular website RateMyProfessors.com in 2016. She has been ranked No. 2 on the site twice before and has been in the Top 10 several times. [http://today.cofc.edu/2016/09/15/students-rank-cofcs-devon-hanahan-top-professor-in-u-s/](http://today.cofc.edu/2016/09/15/students-rank-cofcs-devon-hanahan-top-professor-in-u-s/)

**Students**

- **New Roads in Film and Media:** Honors College student and computer science major Elaina Cole was one of 30 students nationwide to be invited to present research at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. [http://today.cofc.edu/2016/06/17/elaina-cole/](http://today.cofc.edu/2016/06/17/elaina-cole/)

- **Female-focused Social Justice:** Courtney Hicks, a communication major and licensed cosmetologist, formed Collegiate Curls in 2016 to help minority women feel more comfortable in their own skin and embrace their natural hair texture. The group not only discusses hair care, volunteer opportunities, social justice initiatives and events at the College, but has inspired and helped establish sectors on college campuses nationwide. [http://today.cofc.edu/2018/01/08/collegiate-curls-2/](http://today.cofc.edu/2018/01/08/collegiate-curls-2/)

- **Women’s Empowerment:** Adult learners and nontraditional students at the College of Charleston can earn their degree in a myriad of ways. Cathy Keaton returned to earn her bachelor’s degree – a lifelong goal – after leaving Charleston Southern University, then Baptist College, in 1969. Before transferring as a degree-seeking student, she initially enrolled in the College’s senior citizen program. Classes can be audited or taken in
pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree.
http://admissions.cofc.edu/applyingtothecollege/non-degreeprograms/seniorcitizens.php

- Fulbright Winner: Spanish and communication double major Camila Bailey recently won a Fulbright to teach English in Malaysia.
- General Mills Award Winner: Katie Stagliano, founder of the nonprofit Katie’s Krops, was awarded $50,000 from General Mills to support her 10-year-old nonprofit aimed at empowering children ages 9-16 to create vegetable gardens and donate the harvests of fresh produce to people in need. Today there are 100 Katie’s Krops gardens across the country. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/06/11/katies-krops-feeding-better-futures-general-mills-scholars-program/
- Marketing major Carlie Christenson, inventor of Boob-eez, ImpactX (formerly iCAT) participant and recipient of the 2015 Student Entrepreneur of the Year Award, has honed her entrepreneurial skills at the College of Charleston and is now focusing on changing the world through social entrepreneurship. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/04/03/carlie-christenson-boob-eez/
- At the second annual Celebrating Women Entrepreneurs Summit, College of Charleston students pitched innovative ideas for attaining the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal of achieving gender equality and empowerment for an award of $1,000. ImpactX (formerly iCAT) participants Shefali Emmanuel and KimberMarie Faircloth won for their venture, AnonimiT, a blind-hire human resources software built with the mission to cut down on unconscious bias in the early stages of the hiring process. http://sb.cofc.edu/centers/centerforentrepreneurship/celebrating-women-entrepreneurs-summit/index.php
- Lauren Furey 2019 (business administration/hospitality and tourism management) runs her own personal chef business called Now We’re Cookin’! where she creates menus for private events, drops off everyday meals and hosts inspiring cooking lessons. She has also secured scholarships from Charleston’s female-only culinary club Les Dames d’Escoffier International. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/11/02/business-and-hospitality/

Alumni

- Firsts
  - Pierrine Smith 1922 was the first female graduate of the College of Charleston. Out of 70 students, including 13 women, to enter the College in 1918, only seven graduated – six men and one woman.
    - When she graduated, there was no women’s ring, so her fiancé, George Byrd 1921, had a miniature of his ring made for her. The design is what is used for class rings today. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/03/10/cofc-alumna-pierrine-st-clair-smith-byrd/
  - Patricia Carter 1937 was the first College of Charleston female graduate to become a doctor. She was also the first female OBGYN in Charleston and the first female physician on the Roper St. Francis Board.
  - Betty Metze Condon 1949 was one of the first female bankers in Charleston.
  - Ruth Williams Cupp 1949 was the first woman admitted to the Charleston County Bar Association.
  - Martha Kelly Kanapaux 1960 was the first female principal of Academic Magnet.
Arlinda Locklear 1973 is a nationally recognized attorney on tribal land claims and treaty rights issues. She is the first Native American woman to appear before the U.S. Supreme Court (and has done so twice). [website link]

Jennifer J. Miller 1984 (business administration) made history in 2017 when she became Charleston County Council's first female county administrator.

- **Women in the Military:**
  - Caroline Eason Newman 1941 served as a captain the in WAC in New Guinea.
  - Jean Matthews Freeman 1945 served as a plane spotter during WWII.

- **Women in Hollywood:** Florencia Di Concillo 2001 has composed original soundtracks for more than 20 feature films and documentaries, including Ava (which was shown at Cannes International Film Festival) and Angry Inuk (winner of the People’s Choice Award at Canada’s Top Ten Film Festival). [website link]

- **Woman in the Stars:** Tabatha Boyajian 2003 is a groundbreaking astrophysicist and bears the distinction of being the only female scientist with a star named for her – Tabby’s Star or KIC 8462852. [website link]

- **Growing Sustainability:** College of Charleston alumna Susan von Frank 2003 (biology) started GrowJourney, a “seeds of the month club” that sends members five new packets of seasonally selected, certified organic heirloom gardening seeds each month. [website link]

- **Agents of Change:** College of Charleston alumna Lt. Cmdr. Stephanie Felder 2004 (psychology) is a U.S. Public Health Services commissioned corp officer stationed at the Center for Mental Health Services at the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration. She serves as a national spokesperson and advocate for homeless veterans, juveniles at risk and the mentally ill. She has appeared on CNN, NBC Nightly News and NPR.

- **Alumni Philanthropists:** Three College of Charleston geology alumni are leading a grassroots effort to support travel for field research experiences and conferences for current students. Michael Passarelo 2008, Emily Sekula 2005 and Karen Black 2010 collectively pledged to establish an endowed fund through personal donations and matching gifts from employers like ExxonMobil. The endowment is expected to exceed $600,000. [website link]

- **Entrepreneurism:** Katie Tumbleston 2008 (political science) and 2013 (Master of Public Administration), launched the NannyPod app, which aims to simplify the sitter search for parents. [website link]

- **Fashion Retail Leaders:** Lulie Martin Wallace 2009 designs fabric and commercial pieces sold in retail outlets such as Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie. [website link]

- **Thinking Local:** To address disparities in Charleston’s food economy, Lindsey Barrow 2010 (philosophy) and Kate DeWitt 2011 (political science) started Lowcountry Street Grocery, putting produce on a bus and parking it in areas that lack access to fresh produce. [website link]

- **Nonprofit Enterprise:**
  - Starting her senior year, Honors College graduate Samantha Sammis 2011 (religious studies and sociology), has been involved with the youth of Charleston's
East Side. She started by playing basketball with the neighborhood’s children and has since moved into the neighborhood and built a nonprofit organization called Loving America Street, which focuses on assets-based community development and provides the neighborhood with community activities and events. She has also opened a laundermat there. [link]

- Paying it Forward: Kaitlin McWhorter 2014 (exercise science), launched the Hope Haven orphanage shelter in San Pedro, Belize. [link]
- When she was a junior at the College of Charleston, Emily Hoisington 2016 (early childhood education) encouraged 100 other CofC students to support the nonprofit she started, Charleston Hope, by providing basic necessities, academic support and community relationships to local Title 1 elementary schools. [link]
- Fulbright Scholar: Honors College graduate Eden Katz 2016 (international studies and public health) received a Fulbright scholarship to study the efficacy of NGO programming aimed at reducing the prevalence of early and forced marriage in Uganda’s conflict zones.
- Digital Visionary: As a sophomore, Nia Strothers 2017 (communication) and current master of communication candidate, launched her online business, Reflections Hair Boutique, which sells Strothers’ own line of luxury wigs and hair extensions. The November before she graduated, she created Social Savvy, a social media consulting service aimed at helping small businesses effectively manage their social media accounts to create a meaningful online presence. [link]
- Countering Cyberbullies: Emily Torchiana 2017 (psychology) is a mental health speaker who travels to schools and conferences to talk about her personal experiences with cyberbullying and suicide prevention. She is also the founder and president of The Invisible Illness Inc., a nonprofit that provides a platform for individuals with mental illnesses to share their stories and connect with others. In summer 2017, she received the Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Award for Public Service at the Jefferson Awards Foundation’s National Gala. [link]
- Changing the Cityscape: While students at the College of Charleston, South Carolina Teaching Fellows Ridgeland Welch 2018 and Aly Lain 2018 worked for two years to get an historic marker in honor of the birthplace of Septima P. Clark, creator of the “citizenship school” model, which promoted literacy and political education among black adults. [link]
- Creative Thinking: Dana Dickie 2010 (arts management/economics) uses the creative thinking she learned at CofC to bankroll Nashville’s biggest names. [link]
- Women in Real Estate: Patricia Ricketts Scarafile 1966 is the CEO of Carolina One.
- Women in Medicine:
Hulda Wohltmann 1944 served as a pediatrician at St. Louis Hospital and MUSC. She is renowned for her diabetes research.

Mary Eileen Leonard 1945 served as the head of medical technology at MUSC.

Stephanie Wheeler 2003 conducts research on understanding and improving cancer care quality, access, equity and value. She is an expert in and teaches economic, epidemiologic and systems modeling to support better health care decisions. 
https://alumni.cofc.edu/about/alumni-awards/distinguished-alumni-award

Women in Government:
- Eugenia Balzano Fritz 1948 worked for the NSA and was fluent in seven languages.
- Representative Sylleste Davis 1983 worked at Santee Cooper and was elected to the State House in 2016 to represent District 100.
- Kate Cockerham 2018 (women’s and gender studies and history) helped write the Cities for Convention on Eliminating all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) resolution that the Charleston City Council passed on February 26, 2018. This measure commits Charleston to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, and to the United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women Cities for the CEDAW campaign.

Women in the News: Caroline Kenny 2015 (Honors College, communication and political science) is a digital producer for CNN Politics, where she writes, reports and supports the day-to-day production of the network’s political content across all platforms.

Woman Taking Action: Kallie Golicher 2018 (marketing) started Sexual Assault Awareness Week on campus in an effort to present the on-campus resources available for students struggling with encounters of sexual violence. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/05/11/allison-camp/

Woman in Culinary:
- Anna Shillinglaw Hampton 2000 (French/international business) is a New York City-based food stylist whose work has been featured in editorial spreads including Southern Living, Epicurious and Real Simple, as well as advertisements for Panera Bread, Gerber and Blue Apron. In 2016, Hampton released her first cookbook, Grain Bowls. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/07/31/food-stylist-charleston/
- In 2012, Maureen Porzio 2010 (MBA 2011) started Porzio’s, a company that makes handcrafted pizza and pasta sauces that are free of sugar, corn syrup and gluten. The sauces are now sold in seven farmers markets and over 25 retail stores. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/03/01/charleston-food-wine-culinary/
- Danetra Richardson 2012 (hospitality and tourism management) started her own specialty online dessert shop, Swank Desserts, in 2015 after writing a business plan for a local dessert lounge in her senior capstone course. http://today.cofc.edu/2016/06/06/swank-desserts-wedding-cakes/
- School of Business alums Ruchi Mistry 2012 and Tom McFall 2012 started Huriyali, a sustainable, health-oriented restaurant and café that serves nutritious and fresh cold-pressed juices, smoothies, sandwiches and salads. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/03/01/charleston-food-wine-culinary/
The women’s golf team has claimed two CAA championships – 2014 and 2015 – and have been runners-up twice.

Women’s golfer Laura Fuenfstueck 2017 (finance) earned CAA Player of the Year three years in a row - 2015, 2016 and 2017. http://today.cofc.edu/2014/03/21/great-match/

The Women’s Sailing Team came in second at this year’s Sperry Women’s National Championship.

Philanthropy

To honor Charleston’s Pollitzer family and specifically Carrie Pollitzer, who chaired the petition committee of the Charleston City Federation of Women’s Clubs that successfully advocated for the admission of women to the College of Charleston in 1918, the College designated an existing undergraduate scholarship as the Pollitzer Centennial Scholarship on March 8, 2018.

Kristen Faretra Bowden 1995, who lived in College Lodge for four of her five years as a CofC student, established the 402 Scholarship in celebration of College Lodge. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/11/24/college-lodge-scholarship/

Susie Beatty 1986 set up the Big Cat Scholarship to support Cougar student-athletes maintaining a 2.5 GPA or higher. http://today.cofc.edu/2016/11/02/susi-beatty-scholarship/

Chanele Jackson 1987 has given to the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance, the College of Charleston Fund and the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) on an annual basis for more than 15 years. She also made a planned gift toward ECDC tuition for a child of a single mother who is also a first-generation college student. http://today.cofc.edu/2015/01/13/scholarship-recipient-pays-forward/

Businesswoman, community leader and philanthropist Linda Ketner, established the Ketner Emerging Leaders Scholarships in 1990 to provide financial assistance to students interested in women’s and gender studies as well as social justice, public service and civil leadership. Recipients are required to devote at least 34 hours per semester to activism. http://today.cofc.edu/2015/01/08/ketner-scholarships-inspire-students-become-agents-change/

Katie Levi donated not only the Birds of America facsimile, but also several linear feet of family papers to Special Collections. http://today.cofc.edu/2018/06/26/birds-of-america-audubon-cofc-library/

Hilda Debaker established the Rene and Hilda Debaker Endowed Scholarship, a legacy commitment to the College for students of Charleston County. http://today.cofc.edu/2017/06/16/charleston-county-scholarship-hilda-debaker/

Anecdotes

“The traditional way of life at the College of Charleston still retained old mores and customs, as seen in the experience of residential women accepted in fall 1963 who would not be accommodated at 4 Green Street. These women were housed on the third floor of the gym and were required to eat at Craig Union cafeteria, which was several blocks away. In the mornings they put on the skirts and blouses or demure dresses they would wear all day because they were told “ladies do not wear pants on campus even at
breakfast.” On the weekends, they packed fifteen girls into Peggy Bridge’s grandmother’s car and went to the beach, or they went to Freida’s for pizza burgers, to the pool hall on George Street, or to LaBrasca’s, where they knew that, if they sat downstairs and ordered tea on Sunday, they would be served a mixed drink in a beer stein.”

— A History of the College of Charleston, by Nan Morrison

- The Alpha Nu chapter of Delta Delta Delta came to the College in 1931. The sorority purchased a house at 16 Glebe Street in 1956, making it the first sorority to own its own building.
- The Co-Ed Club, founded in 1927, was the first club for women. It functioned much like a sorority and was eventually replaced by sororities.
- The Scribblers, founded in 1929; the Pierian Literary Society, founded in 1931; and the Quill Club, founded in 1932, were literary clubs for women.
- A cheerleading squad was formed in 1920.