

# REVOLUTIONIZING TOMORROW

ENVISIONING  
WORLD  
COLLECTIVE



A  
OF  
LIBERATION



**26TH ANNUAL BUILDING BRIDGES CONFERENCE**

March 6, 2021 | Gustavus Adolphus College



**BUILDING BRIDGES**

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

# WELCOME

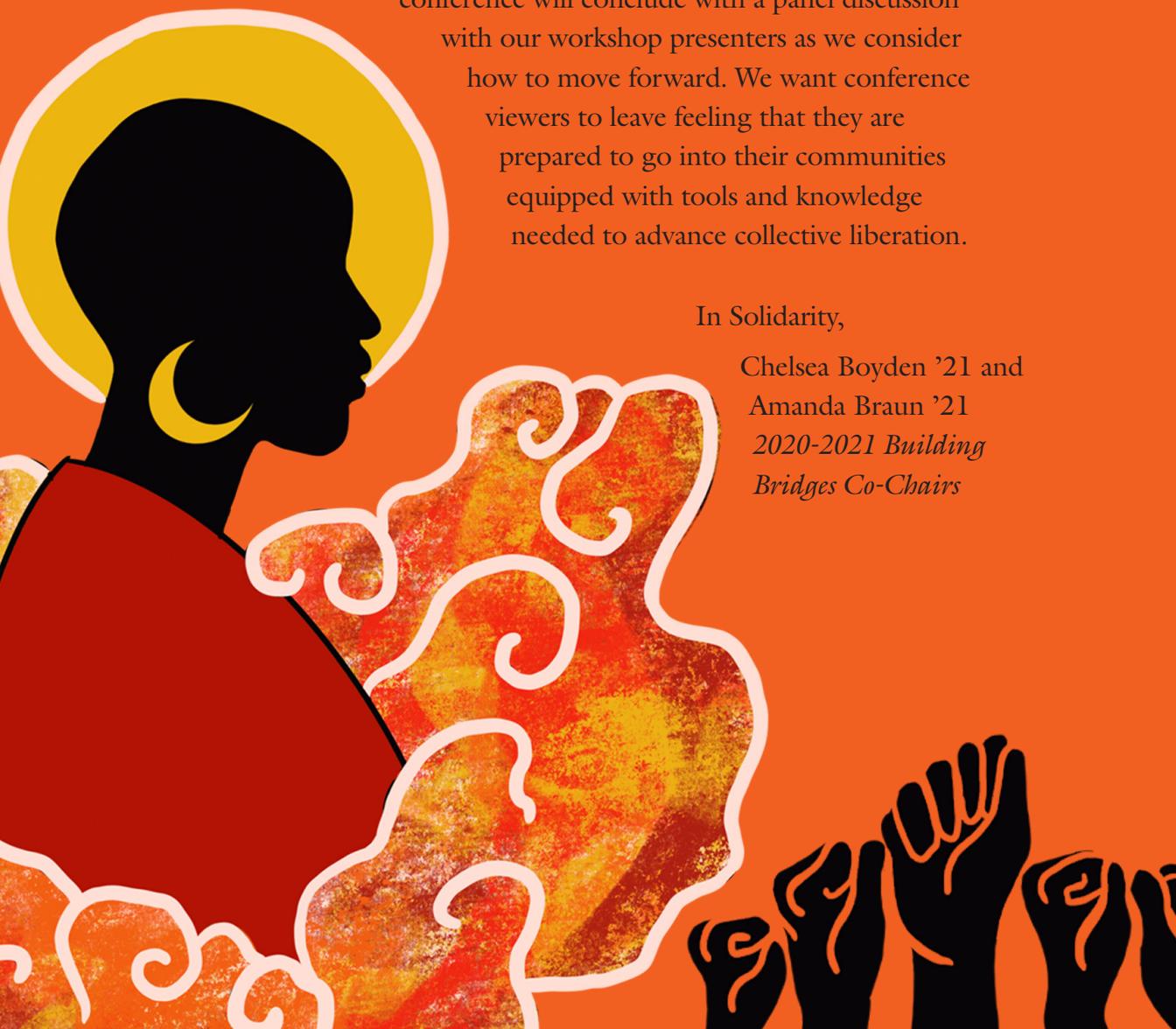
to the 26th Annual Building Bridges Conference: **Revolutionizing Tomorrow: Envisioning a World of Collective Liberation.**

This year's conference will provide attendees a chance to explore what could be if we all recognize the interconnectedness of our fight for liberation. The goal of the conference is to center radical joy and healing in times of suffering in a seemingly broken world.

While this year's conference will look different due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we still look forward to engaging in these important conversations. Our conference will include a highlighted address from **Olakemi**, a spiritual adviser whose platform is centered on collective liberation, and a question-and-answer session with **Opal Tometi**, one of the co-founders of Black Lives Matter. In addition, there will also be workshops provided by local activists and organizations, as well as art pieces collected from the Gustavus community. The conference will conclude with a panel discussion with our workshop presenters as we consider how to move forward. We want conference viewers to leave feeling that they are prepared to go into their communities equipped with tools and knowledge needed to advance collective liberation.

In Solidarity,

Chelsea Boyden '21 and  
Amanda Braun '21  
*2020-2021 Building  
Bridges Co-Chairs*



## 26TH ANNUAL BUILDING BRIDGES CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

*(Schedule subject to change.)*

10 a.m.	<b>Opening Remarks and Performances</b>
10:30 a.m.	<b>Morning Keynote and Q&amp;A: Olakemi</b>
12 p.m.	<b>Lunch - Interactive Piece: Food Justice</b>
12:30 p.m.	<b>Workshop Session: Tre Tellor</b>
12:50 p.m.	<b>Action Piece 1</b>
1 p.m.	<b>Afternoon Q&amp;A: Opal Tometi</b>
2 p.m.	<b>Action Piece 2</b>
2:10 p.m.	<b>Workshop Session: Tahmyrah Lytle</b>
2:30 p.m.	<b>Action Piece 3</b>
2:40 p.m.	<b>Workshop Session: Bloomington Anti Racist Coalition (BARC)</b>
3 p.m.	<b>Panel Discussion and Closing Remarks</b>

Each event will be streamed from the same joining link. Visit the registration section of our website for more information about how to obtain the link.

[gustavus.edu/diversity/buildingbridges](https://gustavus.edu/diversity/buildingbridges)

# HIGHLIGHTED SPEAKERS



## **Olakemi** (They/Them)

Olakemi (Kemi) is a spiritual adviser, creative, psychic medium, and astrologer.

While spirituality may assume the use of divination and reaching beyond the realm of physical phenomena, Kemi believes spirituality to also be a healing process of self awareness, unpacking trauma, and delving into health and wellness. Through their words, Kemi invites people to analyze self and devote to a path of spiritual wellness.

As an aborisa of the Isese Ifa (ee-shay-shay) African Traditional Religion, Kemi

encourages people to practice the spiritual traditions and indigenous practices of one's ancestors. Kemi believes healing and betterment of self to be the main purpose of spirituality. Subscribing to the spiritual traditions of one's ancestors allows people to draw closer and heal oneself.

Whether it's teaching a live class, writing on social media, or dedicating time to specific advising groups, Kemi mentors others on their spiritual journey by spreading wisdom, insights, intuitive and clairvoyant messages. Through their teachings as well as their spirit-driven creations, Kemi hopes to reach various communities to provide enlightenment and healing to all groups.



## **Opal Tometi** (She/Her)

Heralded as a feminist freedom fighter in the U.S. and now a global icon, Opal Tometi is one of the most influential human rights leaders of our time. As one of the three women co-founders of the Black Lives Matter movement, her name is etched in American history. For years, the award-winning advocate, strategist, and writer has used her voice to ensure that race, immigration, and gender justice remain at the forefront of global conversations.

Before BLM, Opal spent eight years as Executive Director at the Black Alliance for

Just Immigration (BAJI), an organization that helps Black immigrant communities mobilize and advocate for social and economic justice. Assuming her role as the first woman director at age 27, Opal worked on the reunification of families in the wake of the Haitian earthquake in 2010 and boldly challenged unjust deportations. She went on to speak on behalf of immigrants to the United Nations, at congressional briefings, at the Atlantic Ideas Summit, Harvard and Yale Universities, on the TED stage, and over 100 more stages around the globe.

In the wake of the devastating acquittal of Trayvon Martin's killer, Tometi initiated the Black Lives Matter online infrastructure in 2013, ensuring that millions of people could participate in a movement for inclusive democracy. Now, seven years later, with the momentum BLM has gained in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, with the COVID-19 pandemic, and as people all over the world reconcile their social consciousness with the reality of our present suffering, Opal has set her movement sights on an even bigger struggle: unifying the global Black community.



# FEATURED PERFORMANCES



## 8:20 Dance Company Hunger of the Pine by Alt-J

8:20 Dance Company was founded by Gustavus dance honors and theatre alumna Madelyn Burnham '19. This company's mission is to evoke the audience with curiosity and create a space where the

dancers and viewers are connected with each other. By combining both theatre and dance, 8:20 Dance Company strives to present work that the audience will be able to connect with on a more personal level. The subtle movements and constant kinesthetic flow within the bodies of the dancers creates an environment in which all can attempt to create their own stories.



## LineUs Improv Comedy Troupe

*Maryn Cella '21 (President), Holly Fitterer '21, Liam Carr '21, Jack Fischer '21, Martha Scherschligt '21, Carrie Bather '21, Sam Albright '22, Audrey Ochtrup-DeKeyrel '22, Dessa Thomas '22, Thomas Sullivan '23, Eliza Scherschligt '23, Anna Marie Riner '24, Kayla Malmgren '24*

Founded in 2003, LineUs is Gustavus Adolphus College's premier (and only) improv comedy troupe. The organization performs roughly once a month, providing Gustavus students with a fun and free event for a weekend evening. They mainly perform short-form improv, with goals to venture into long form in the near future. They are excited to be collaborating with Building Bridges this year, and are grateful for the opportunity to frame improv comedy in the context of collective liberation.

# WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Workshop sessions are designed to help further the understanding of the conference theme and bring in new perspectives on the general topic. This year, workshops are led by young activists who are doing "on the ground" work in their communities to advance justice and collective liberation.



**Tre Tellor (He/Him)** is currently in his third year at Augsburg University studying sociology and theology and hopes to attend seminary to become a Lutheran pastor. Through experiencing protests, organizing, and participating in direct action, Tre has slowly come to merge his anti-capitalist and anti-state politics with his Christian faith and uses both to make his praxis more effective and holistic.



**Tahmyrah Lytle (They/Them)** is an Afro-Latine, nonbinary musician, writer, restaurateur, and activist. When they aren't cooking, reading Marxist theory, or facilitating classes on understanding capitalism online, they're writing silly songs on their ukulele and caring for their family. They believe in bringing joy to their community through uplifting local art, culture, music, and comedy, as well as educating others on how to dismantle oppressive structures and build next systems.



## Bloomington Anti Racist Coalition (BARC)

is a group of current and former Bloomington students advocating for anti-racist changes in their school district. BARC looks forward to radical and measurable change in curriculums, resources, and student punishments.



# ACTION PIECES

Action pieces are created to present visual interpretations of different segments of the conference theme. This year, the goal of the action pieces is to engage artists from a wide array of platforms, highlighting expressions of collective liberation through art.

## Human Rights in the World of Science

*Dr. Darsa Donelan*

## Gustavus Women's A Cappella (GWAC)

*Nina Cried Power by Hozier*

*Julia Jacobs '21, Zoë Zarth '23, Jocelyn Jaimez '21, Lydia Kalenze '21, Zoe Schuck '23, Nora Mohamed '21, Rachel Soukup '22, Gabby Lavan '23, and Megan Morris '21*

Gustavus Women's A Cappella (GWAC) was founded in 2017 and is an inclusive musical ensemble that exists to promote gender equality and women's work in music. Our group encourages community discussion around important topics including but not limited to: female empowerment, reproductive rights, gender identity and equality, and mental health stigma. GWAC's goal as an ensemble is to not only provide musical enjoyment for the community, but to also inform and advocate for women in music and beyond.

## Spoken Word and Art Piece

*Annalise Schaaf '23 and Cyan Spicer '22*

## Vocal Performance

*Glory by John Legend*

*Caleb Gampson '21*

## Dance Performance

*I Won't Complain by Benjamin Clementine*

*Amanda Braun '21, Kristie Olson '21, and DeAnna Giles '21*

## Gustavus Social Justice Choir

*Alex Bretoi '23, Brie Busblack '22, Lexi Combs '24, Sydney Dimapelis '24, Hari Gumz '24, Emily Haugen '23, Dana Howell '23, Lydia Kalenze '21, Jacob Korver '23, Reidun Kubisa '21, Izzy La Marca '22, Carter Leanard '24, Grace Matson '22, Sophie Norman '24, Will Riitters '23, Anna Marie Riner '24, Julia Stathopoulos '22, Sandesh Sukbram '21, Thomas Sullivan '23, and Nathan Thompson '21.*

Conducted by *Dr. Elisabeth Cherland*

## Food Justice Piece

*Mad Chase '23, Amanda Braun '21, Chelsea Boyden '21, and James Miller '21*

# CONFERENCE PANEL

Concluding the conference will be a panel consisting of the workshop presenters and three Gustavus faculty members. The panel will provide opportunities for conference attendees to ask specific questions to each panel participant or pose a general question related to the conference theme. The panel is facilitated by James Miller '21.

**Dr. Misti Nicole Harper**, Visiting Assistant Professor in History

**Dr. Thia Cooper**, Professor in Religion; Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies; and Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean Studies

**Dr. Joaquín Villanueva**, Associate Professor in Geography and Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies.

## Conference Facilitators



**Hiwot Sugebo '21 (She/Her)** is a senior environmental studies and peace, justice, and conflict studies student with public health and geography minors. As an international student from Ethiopia, Hiwot is proud to have received a Gustavus education through the global perspective she brings in her classes. To complement her interdisciplinary education, Hiwot strives to apply concepts and methods from her classes into promoting intentional and sustainable change within the Gustavus community. Her commitment to learning has solidified her passions and commitment in advocating for social justice and celebration of the beautifully diverse communities she belongs to at Gustavus and beyond. Hiwot is service oriented, advocates for students' rights, and works to celebrate and promote the underrepresented communities at Gustavus, and her love for her communities shines through the multiple organizations she is proud to have been involved in. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, spending quality time with her friends, and watching movies!



**Tyra A. Banks '21 (She/Her)** is a senior biology pre-medicine and classics double major at Gustavus. Having accumulated a wealth of knowledge from both majors, she aspires to be a physician with plans of attending medical school post-Gustavus. Aside from excellence and hard work in the classroom, she also displays those characteristics as a track and field athlete and as a student leader within various student organizations. When she is not in the classroom or on the track, she enjoys spending time with her pals and her family, spreading joy, and making memories.



**James Miller '21 (He/Him)** is a senior biology and geography major who is interested in food systems and community-driven initiatives, especially those led by young people, that seek to address inequity in the landscape. This is his fourth year involved with Building Bridges, having served as co-chair of last year's conference. During his time at Gustavus, he has gained skills in facilitation through the Public Deliberation and Dialogue program and looks forward to interacting with the panelists in this setting.

# CONFERENCE ARTWORK

As a completely student-run conference and organization, Building Bridges commissioned a Gustavus student to create the art that would be used in the conference's marketing materials.

## A Note from the Artist



Hello! My name is Audrey Ochtrup-DeKeyrel, and this year I had the opportunity to create the artwork for this year's Building Bridges Conference. I am a junior environmental studies and geography major, so nearly all my academic energy is dedicated to studying the intersections of injustice, societal structures, and the impacts of those factors on humans and the biosphere. When I'm not busy being a student, I am an artist. Art has continually been my primary means of expression, catharsis, and joy. Through both my studies and my lived experiences, I have realized that in a draining, unjust, capitalistic system, doing anything that fills your cup or brings you joy is a radical act. This year's conference is centered on the ways we can collectively liberate ourselves from a system that serves a few elite, and I am honored to have contributed through the very practice that I feel radically liberates me daily.

**Audrey Ochtrup-DeKeyrel '22** (She/Her)

# PRODUCTION TEAMS



**Carolina (Carrie) Bather '21** (She/Her) is a senior communication studies major and gender, women, and sexuality studies minor. She is one of the videographers of this year's conference. Outside of her studies, Carrie is a Gustie Greeter, a member of the Gustavus Choir, a member of LeGACy A Cappella, and a member of LineUs Improv. Carrie is also the videography intern and study away adviser for the Center for International and Cultural Education (CICE).



**Looney Bin Productions** is incredibly excited to be a part of this year's Building Bridges Conference. A small group of six (left to right), Jon Listul, Preston Hanstad, Nicholas Hagen, Nate Habben, Henry Dammeyer, and Teddy Vitale, have come together over the years to create content ranging from comedy sketches like Finding Bigfoot to campus events such as "Festival of St. Lucia." All driven by a passion of creativity and art, they are anxious to see what is in store. Whether it is music, photography, filmmaking, commercials, or scout camp in Wisconsin, this crew is up for any opportunity. For this conference, the group filmed the Gustavus Women's A Cappella Group, Social Justice Choir, and a dance ensemble.

# ABOUT BUILDING BRIDGES

**Building Bridges** is a student organization at Gustavus Adolphus College that focuses on educating and informing community members on issues relating to social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Building Bridges' signature event is the annual Building Bridges Conference, which takes place every spring. The conference is completely organized and run by students who choose the focus of each year's conference. Building Bridges members work all year to not only educate and bring awareness, but also to give attendees the tools to be active and engaged with these social justice issues. The conference aims to educate the community through highlighted speakers, a series of workshops and additional art pieces. Past topics have included: Climate Justice (2020), Immigration (2019), Mental Health (2018), Grassroots Movements (2017), and The War on Drugs (2016).

# CONFERENCE COMMITTEE



## Co-Chairs

**Chelsea Boyden '21** and **Amanda Braun '21**

## Advisers

**James Miller '21**, **Thomas Flunker**, and **Rev. Dr. Siri Erickson**

## Executive Board

**Ellie Hartmann '23**, *Finance Director*, **Megan Hensel '22**, *Graphic Design*, **Alicia Johnson '21**, *Public Relations*, **Ashley Ley '23**, *Secretary*, **Haley Lukes '23**, *Logistics Chair*, **James Miller '21**, *On-Campus Media*, **Grace Tobin '21**, *Public Relations*, and **Geena Zebrasky '23**, *DLC Representative*

## Co-Captains

**Mad Chase '23**, *Action Piece*, **Maddy Himmer '23**, *Action Piece*, **Taite Stevens Aldrich '23**, *Action Piece*, **Kaitlyn Doolittle '23**, *Communication and Promotion*, **Emily Haugen '23**, *Communication and Promotion*, **Geena Zebrasky '23**, *Events*, and **Ainsley Cox '24**, *Workshops*

## General Committee

**Delaney Bluhm '23**, **Lauren Buss '23**, **Emilie Chapdelaine '24**, **David Eide '23**, **Emily Falk '22**, **Olivia Falk '24**, **Lydia Kalenze '21**, **Sage Kiefer '23**, **Jack Milford '22**, **Audrey Ochtrup-DeKeyrel '22**, **Anna Marie Riner '24**, **Julia Stathopoulos '22**, and **Catrina Toebe '22**

**THANK YOU** for attending  
the 26th annual Building Bridges  
Conference. We look forward to  
your continued participation and  
support in the years to come!

The 26th annual Building Bridges Conference is sponsored by the  
Building Bridges Committee, the Center for Inclusive Excellence, and  
Gustavus Adolphus College.

