THE WOFFORD COLLEGE

EXPERIENCE

Assessing, adapting and assuring student success

2016 President’s Report
Dear friends and colleagues,

It’s no surprise that, as a college president, I firmly and unapologetically belong to the school of thought that believes in the intrinsic value of higher education. Education for the sake of education is a good thing in my opinion, but I also value assessment and a heaping dose of practicality.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that more than one third of the U.S. labor force changes jobs annually. Estimates indicate that by the time today’s 22-year-old graduates reach the age of 40, they will have held 11 different jobs. In addition, the bureau reports that more than 30 million Americans are employed in new jobs that did not exist in previous years. That means the purpose of higher education should be to help students develop into lifelong learners who can adapt to challenges and work with others to find solutions to problems, both small and large.

For Wofford College that means that every expectation, academic initiative, professor, program and building must be driven by student success. The college’s new five-year Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) focuses on student success. It comes out of a comprehensive, multi-year strategic visioning process continuing Wofford’s quest to be a premier, innovative and distinctive national liberal arts college defined by excellence, engagement and transformation in its commitment to prepare superior students for meaningful lives as citizens, leaders and scholars.

Our successful graduates provide proof and show us that we’re moving in the right direction, but the college also uses the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) to measure and direct progress. NSSE also allows us to compare the responses of our first-year and senior students to hundreds of thousands of college students around the country. As you’ll see in this report, Wofford offers opportunities for academic challenge, learning with peers and experiences with faculty, all based in an enriching campus environment.

Colleges and universities must prepare graduates for the 11th job as well as the first, and Wofford College does that. See for yourself.

Go, Terriers!

Nayef Samhat
11th President of Wofford College
The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Wofford’s regional accreditation body, approved the college’s Student Success QEP in the fall. Wofford’s QEP will focus on the first two years of the college experience, primarily in the form of Student Success Teams (SSTs) and a first-year seminar. Groups of eight incoming first-year students will be paired with an SST consisting of a faculty academic adviser, a professional staff guide, a personal librarian and a student orientation peer leader. Two SSTs will be placed together in a mandatory first-year success seminar (FYI 101). This credit-bearing seminar will focus on cultivating academic success, engaging and integrating students into the Wofford community and preparing students for responsible lives in a diverse, interconnected and changing world.

The National Survey for Student Engagement’s fall 2016 report once again indicates that Wofford College is among the most effective colleges in the country when it comes to providing four higher education tenets:

**ACADEMIC CHALLENGE**

**LEARNING WITH PEERS**

**EXPERIENCES WITH FACULTY**

**SUPPORTIVE CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

The report suggests that the time Wofford faculty and staff spend mentoring, teaching, encouraging and engaging students yields higher retention and graduation rates, and graduating students in four years means minimizing both debt and costs associated with lost opportunities.

“Students don’t necessarily enter college knowing what it takes to be successful learners,” says NSSE Director Alexander C. McCormick. “… if higher education is to ratchet up student learning and success, we need to help students crack the code so they can succeed in college and beyond.”

The 2016 report shows that Wofford College exceeds national averages and is providing intentional educational experiences that foster student success.
Can students apply facts, theories or methods to practical problems or new situations?

Can students connect learning to societal problems or issues?

Do students actively engage with the course material?

Can students understand and use numerical and statistical information in everyday life?

ACADEMIC CHALLENGE

FOUR ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS ARE PART OF THIS MEASURE:

HIGHER-ORDER LEARNING

While memorization has its place, Wofford expects students to engage in complex critical and creative thinking. Professors promote application, analysis, judgment and synthesis of the material studied.

REFLECTIVE AND INTEGRATIVE LEARNING

Both academic and cocurricular advisers emphasize reflection and integrative learning, encouraging students to make connections between subjects and across time and experience.

LEARNING STRATEGIES

Especially in the first two years of college, Wofford teaches students how to learn. Wofford professors take teaching undergraduates seriously and share effective learning strategies with both students and colleagues.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING

Regardless of major, Wofford students use statistical analysis to process and address real-world issues.
STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM RECEIVES HIGH-STAKES LESSON IN DUE PROCESS

Dr. Dawn McQuistion and four Wofford psychology majors recently participated in jury selection consultation for a high-profile criminal case. According to McQuistion, associate professor of psychology and one of the college’s pre-law advisers, “The point is to use scientific data to select or deselect jurors.” The experience gave students the opportunity to apply what they learned in their “Psychology and Law” class and gain real-world experience in the legal system.
LEARNING WITH PEERS

TWO ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS ARE PART OF THIS MEASURE:

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
Wofford faculty regularly assign group projects and expect students to prepare together for presentations and exams. Collaboration is also commonplace in cocurricular areas — athletics, Greek life and community-based learning, for example.

DISCUSSIONS WITH DIVERSE OTHERS
Students grow and better develop their own views when they are presented with people, situations and ideas different from their own. Wofford continues to focus on building a more diverse and inclusive student body.

Have students had opportunities to work with other students on course projects or assignments?

How often do students have discussions with others of a different race, economic background, religious belief or political view?
WOFFORD CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF AN INCLUSIVE NEW GREEK VILLAGE

In September 2016, the Stewart H. Johnson Greek Village opened as an inclusive community for fraternities, sororities and multicultural organizations. In addition to non-residential Greek housing, the Greek Village is also home to the Meadors Multicultural House.

“A student exposed to a diverse environment is automatically richer in their knowledge and perspective of the world,” says Wofford Trustee James Meadors ’81, whose family made the lead gift for the Meadors Multicultural House.

Resharia Keller ’19, president of the Association of Multicultural Students, says the house in the new, inclusive Greek Village “represents community, positive change on our campus and future opportunities for collaboration and connection we can’t even begin to imagine.”
Do students talk about career plans with faculty or work with them outside of class on projects?

Do professors share clear expectations and provide prompt, detailed feedback to students?

**EXPERIENCES WITH FACULTY**

as an indicator of student success

**TWO ENGAGEMENT INDICATORS ARE PART OF THIS MEASURE:**

**STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTION**

Relationships always have shaped the Wofford experience, and the college continually is finding ways to build trust and offer a willing supply of mentors for students so that they will one day offer the same support to others.

**EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES**

Wofford’s Center for Innovation and Learning promotes innovative teaching practices, sparking conversations, building pedagogical resources and hosting faculty-led talks and workshops.

Experiences with Faculty is expressed on a 60-point scale based on answers to questions to determine student-faculty interaction and effective teaching practices: 60=very often, 40=sometimes, 20=often, 0=never.
LEARNING TOGETHER

When Dr. Deno Trakas, Hoy Professor of Literature, approached Katherine Howell ‘17, an English and government major from Greenville, S.C., about doing summer research in the humanities, she was skeptical but trusted her mentor and said yes to applying for a South Carolina Independent Colleges and University research grant. Trakas and Howell received the grant and together researched, wrote and edited works of historical fiction.

“I think it’s wonderful and unusual,” says Trakas. “It’s unusual in my field — creative writing — to try to figure out how to collaborate because writing is somewhat of an individual thing. But we found ways to work together, to help each other, and that’s always inspiring.”
What services are offered to support the overall well-being of students?

How are diverse students supported?

How does the college promote and encourage attendance at cultural, political, social or athletics events?
Wofford students walked to class during the past year to the sounds of construction. The Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts and the Jerry Richardson Indoor Stadium have risen as two powerful symbols of the college’s commitment to the liberal arts and student success.

The center for the arts is located in the heart of the academic commons beside the Roger Milliken Science Center and across the lawn from Main Building and the Sandor Teszler Library. The indoor stadium completes the social and cocurricular hub of the campus near the new Stewart H. Johnson Greek Village, the Campus Life Building and senior housing.
The Carolina Panthers summer training camp at Wofford drew a record crowd this year, finishing with a total of nearly 135,400 visitors, a 75 percent increase from 2015’s record.

Juniors Tim Lindsey of Spartanburg, S.C., and Aleah Qureshi of Sanford, Fla., received the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship sponsored by the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to study abroad during the spring 2017 semester. Lindsey will study abroad in South Africa while Qureshi will study abroad in Ecuador.

James Scott, a 1997 graduate, was named a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for his highly acclaimed book “Target Tokyo.”

Wofford College was named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction. The college was recognized in all four categories: General Community Service, Interfaith Community Service, Economic Opportunity and Education.

Wofford received a two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to advance the study of the Middle East and North Africa. This grant will extend the college’s global reach and strong profile in international programs while preparing students to study, work and live in the MENA region. The college also received a two-year grant from the Aspen Institute Stevens Initiative to use virtual exchange between youth in the United States and the Middle East and North Africa to increase cross-cultural understanding and equip young people to participate in a global economy.

Wofford became a JED campus to enhance student well-being and boost efforts to prevent substance abuse and suicide prevention. The JED Foundation is a national nonprofit that exists to protect the emotional health of our country’s 40 million high school and college students.

The college’s chapter of Phi Beta Kappa celebrated its 75th anniversary during the year. Since 1941, more than 1,000 Wofford students have been elected to membership in the nation’s oldest and most prestigious liberal arts honor society.

George W. Singleton, the John C. Cobb Endowed Chair in the Humanities, was the 26th recipient of the prestigious John William Corrington Award for Literary Excellence. Singleton has published seven collections of short stories, two novels and a writing advice book. In 2015 he was inducted into the Fellowship of Southern Writers.

Donovan Hicks, a 2016 graduate, was selected as a member of the 2018 class of George J. Mitchell Scholars by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance. He will spend a year of postgraduate study in race, ethnicity and conflict at Trinity College in Dublin beginning in September. He recently completed a research stay at the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality and is a federal analyst at Deloitte.
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Wofford's mission is to provide superior liberal arts education that prepares its students for extraordinary and positive contributions to society. The focus of Wofford’s mission is upon fostering commitment to excellence in character, performance, leadership, service to others and lifelong learning.

Wofford College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation or any legally protected status.