Full of ideas

Grayson McDowell ’24 is a Bonner Scholar who’s volunteering at the Spartanburg Science Center. His contributions include a podcast for Spartanburg County’s K-12 students and a summer camp that will expose elementary and middle school students to Wofford’s campus.

A rainy day forced Grayson McDowell ’24 to change his lesson plans for 40 third graders visiting the Spartanburg Science Center during a field trip. Their time together would be focused on ecosystems, but he wouldn’t be able to lead the outdoor activities that he planned.

He quickly recognized that he could shift to teaching about sound indoors after remembering an episode of “Mr. Wizard,” where a record player was created by using a piece of paper, tape, a needle and a pencil. His familiarity with the show, which aired in the 1980s, is an example of his passion for learning and teaching science.
“It was definitely something I was doing for fun one day,” says McDowell, who often spent summers doing science experiments in his grandparents’ basement.

McDowell, a Wofford College physics major from Gaffney, South Carolina, has spearheaded initiatives to help Spartanburg County K-12 students learn science during the COVID-19 pandemic, including a podcast that he’s hosting to expose children to careers in science.

Excellence in teaching

Dr. Lori Cruze, assistant professor of biology, is Wofford’s recipient of the 2022 South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities’ Excellence in Teaching Award. The organization recognized faculty from each of its 21-member schools.

By Robert W. Dalton

Dr. Lori Cruze is always looking for ways to make things better, both in her classroom and the world around her.

Cruze is Wofford College’s recipient of the 2022 South Carolina Independent Colleges & Universities’ Excellence in Teaching Award. The organization recognized faculty from each of its 21-member schools. This is the 15th year SCICU has recognized faculty with the awards, which have rigorous guidelines and come with a $3,000 professional development grant.
“I’m honored, but also humbled because I’m surrounded by excellent teachers here at Wofford,” says Cruze, assistant professor of biology. “It means a lot to be recognized for doing what I love to do. I’m always trying to improve, taking the material and making it more digestible for the students. Every time you teach a class you find things that might work better next time if we approached it this way or did it that way.”

Cruze is teaching genetics for the first time this semester. Her courses also include biological inquiry, human physiology and comparative reproductive biology.

Best value

Wofford College continues to be recognized by The Princeton Review as one of its Best Value Colleges for 2022.

The publication recognized 209 institutions with the designation, which is based on return-on-investment (ROI) ratings. More than 650 colleges and universities were surveyed for the list.

“Wofford’s continued recognition by a prestigious publication like The Princeton Review reinforces our commitment to student success by giving attention to access, quality and emphasizing graduation within four years,” says Nayef Samhat, Wofford’s president. “Many
people across campus support these initiatives while remaining focused on finding new ways to make the student experience at Wofford even better.”

The Princeton Review evaluated more than 40 data points for institutions, including academics, affordability and career preparation. Colleges and universities are not ranked, but the publication does have seven categories of ranked lists. Wofford is No. 14 among the Top 20 Best Alumni Networks for private colleges and universities. That's a move up one spot from 2021.

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**Ethan DiBlasio ’22 named Outstanding Chemistry Major**

The Western Carolinas Local Section of the American Chemistry Society recognized Ethan DiBlasio ’22 as Wofford’s Outstanding Chemistry Major. He has participated in research projects focused on microbiology and organometallic chemistry and presented at multiple research symposiums.

DiBlasio, from Moore, South Carolina, has served as a general chemistry and organic chemistry teaching assistant and a peer tutor on campus. Outside of academics, he has served as president of the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, president of the fly-fishing club and an ambassador level scribe for ScribeAmerica. He also actively volunteers in the community. After graduation, DiBlasio will continue work as a medical scribe while applying to medical school.
Wofford’s Society of Physics is among many chapters to win a $500 Marsh White Award from the Society of Physics Students, which is part of the American Institute of Physics. The grant is intended for community outreach, and the students used the funds to conduct a physics demo day at Cleveland Academy of Leadership. The school’s STEM Club launched air rockets, traced an image of the sun using a solar viewer, designed and made paper airplanes, and experienced angular momentum with an extra-large gyroscope. Wofford students led demonstrations related to tornadoes, lightning and pressure that included a bed of nails.
Milliken Lecture Series on Sustainability and Public Health

Former state Rep. Harold Mitchell will cap a month of environment and sustainability events when he speaks at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 3, in the Jerome Johnson Richardson Theatre.

Mitchell's presentation is titled “The ReGenesis Project: Environmental Justice in Spartanburg.” Now a member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, Mitchell will speak on his experiences advocating for equity in Spartanburg and the relationship between environmental justice and public health.

His discussion is part of the Milliken Lecture Series on Sustainability and Public Health.
Save the date for Homecoming

Homecoming 2022 will be held Oct. 28-29. Keep an eye on the weekend’s webpage, which will have updates with the complete schedule, links for registration and a list of who’s coming. Classes ending in 2 and 7 will celebrate reunions.

Athletics updates

Ridgeway named 2022 SoCon Coach of the Year, Earl tabbed All-SoCon
SoCon tabs Dorighi, Vitus as Players of the Week