

Department of Government & International Affairs Newsletter

LIFE ON CAMPUS DURING COVID- 19

When students returned to campus in late August they were greeted by enthusiastic professors and staff and an extensive list of rules and regulations structured to help the Wofford community manage COVID-19. Initially the presence of COVID-19 could be felt everywhere. There are arrows directing traffic in Burwell Dining Hall, Zach's, and the library. It is a common sight to see students walking across campus with lawn chairs or blankets as they head to outdoor classes. Students are learning in a variety of different ways with classes in person, online, and hybrid versions with both in person and virtual aspects. There are cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer present to clean shared surfaces in classrooms or library computers and printers, and masks can be found in the entrances of most buildings. Professors have found ways to be creative using technology, microphones, or by holding office hours outside or on Zoom. Ross Campbell, a senior double majoring in Government and Humanities with a minor in Business, thinks "Wofford is doing well with adapting to COVID-19. It is very different, but the professors offer constant encouragement in a new world of adversity." (Continued on the next page)



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These regulations that were once so strange in the beginning have evolved into a new normal, and both students and faculty have adapted. As the semester has progressed, the regulations have evolved. Upperclassmen in the senior village are now able to have 2 guests following social distancing rules on their porches and in their apartments, and underclassmen can have one guest in their dorm rooms. Homecoming Week, this year known as Homestay Week, took place outdoors Saturday October 24th at the Greek Pavilion and in Gibbs Stadium as this year's Mr. Wofford and Homecoming Court were presented. Clubs and organizations are able to have socially distanced meetings and events, and students are taking advantage of the outdoor facilities the college has made available for example the tennis courts, grassy lawns, and volleyball courts. Mariam Khalil, a junior majoring in International Affairs and Spanish, says, "I think with intentionality and a positive outlook one can still find that sense of community on Wofford's campus despite the challenges of the pandemic." Mariam is from Spartanburg and is one of many students commuting from home this semester. Despite all of these changes, life at Wofford has adapted and continued onward.



Left to Right: Matthew Shouse -Mr. Wofford, Price Rainwater- Homecoming Queen, Raven Tucker- First Runner-Up, Jurnee Jones- Second Runner-Up, & Drew Reynolds -Campus Union President

DEPARTMENT TRIVIA NIGHT



On September 30th, the Department hosted a socially distant trivia night at the Pavilion. With about 24 students and several professors in attendance, teams of 3-4 students competed over their knowledge surrounding questions about the department and wacky political facts. The first and second place teams won prizes from the bookstore including Wofford lawn chairs and Tervis tumblers!

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE ELECTION

Students both on and off campus this fall are navigating the new normal brought about by COVID-19 and the challenges that arise with voter registration and requesting absentee ballots. For many students this presidential election is the first election they can vote in, and not only are they challenged with choosing a candidate, but also there are logistical challenges for out-of-town students. Talking to students about their absentee ballots demonstrates the variety of feelings surrounding the topic. Ashlyn Alexander, a senior double majoring in Government and Spanish, said that she is “nervous about filling out her absentee ballot out incorrectly because I really want my vote to count...and I am also hopeful about the number of people on campus who are taking part in this election and engaging in political discussions.” While Franny Ford, an International Affairs and French double major with a concentration in Middle East and North Africa Studies from Nashville, TN, is grateful for the opportunity to vote via absentee ballot. Other students are pondering whether or not to go home to vote in person because of their concerns about traveling during the pandemic.

The Wofford College Republicans and the Wofford College Democrats have been working together and independently to make sure students are registered, informed, and are able to request their absentee ballots if they are unable to go home to vote in person. On September 22 the two organizations hosted a registration drive for students on campus, and both organizations believe it was successful! Christian Wright, a Government major with a minor in International Affairs and President of the Wofford College Republicans, said that his organization is focusing on helping its members submit their absentee ballots and making sure that students have the information and resources they need. “These elections,” he says “set the precedents for our adult lives” and because of this voter turnout is important. Molly Wells, an English major and President of the Wofford College Democrats, emphasized the work her organization is doing both on campus and within the Spartanburg community to make sure that students and community members are informed. She believes that “there are students who are having meaningful conversations about their differences in a mature way about politics, and we are proud of Wofford, and that students are able to have those conversations with one another.” Regardless of the challenges students experience during an election season, it is obvious that Wofford students are working hard even in the midst of a global pandemic to make sure their votes count and their voices are heard.

**Election week was exhausting for students and faculty as several days passed without clear results. Although there are a variety of sentiments surrounding the results, there is a sense of relief on campus now that the election is almost over.*





Faculty Updates

In addition to adapting to the challenges that the pandemic has brought to the classroom, professors in the Government and International Affairs Department have continued to break educational and technological barriers to create learning opportunities for students both in person and online while also achieving other professional accomplishments:

Dr. Alvis has finished an article on the role of Judah in the Joseph Story in *Genesis* entitled, "To Bear the Blame for All Time." He was also cited in a brief before the Supreme Court for his work on the Executive Removal Power in a case entitled *Sela Law v Consumer Finance Protection Board*.

Dr. DeMars has been writing four articles/chapters: "NGO Stories: Narrating the Institutionalization of Cooperation and Conflict;" "Liberal Education and Political Deliberation: The Journey of Hannah Arendt;" "Sacrificial Causalities of Nuclear Weapons;" and "The Cosmopolitan Education of Hobbits."

Dr. Farrenkopf was honored last February at "An Evening on Oswald Spengler" in Richmond, Virginia. Prior to his event the Virginia House of Delegates passed a resolution *Commemorating the life and legacy of Oswald Spengler*. Here are some excerpts from the resolution: "RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That the life and legacy of Oswald Spengler be commemorated on the centennial of the appearance in English of *Decline of the West*; and, be it RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Professor John Farrenkopf, long a resident of Charlottesville now on the faculty of Wofford College, South Carolina, for his admirable contributions to scholarship on the significance of the life and writings of Oswald Spengler."

Dr. Gilbert's first publication "'Sister Citizens: Women in Syrian Rebel Governance" was published online by *Politics & Gender* this May." It considers why women's participation in local governing institutions varied over the course of the Syrian conflict and the role of the ideology and strength of armed groups in shaping opportunities for women.

Dr. Vanderhill has three recent publications: The book, *Autocracy and Resistance in the Internet Age*, which examines the role of the internet in Middle Eastern and Post-Soviet authoritarian states. The co-authored article, "Between the Bear and Dragon: Multivectorism in Kazakhstan as a Model Strategy for Secondary Powers," *International Affairs*, discusses Kazakhstan's remarkably successful foreign policy strategy, and the book chapter, "Iran and Its Neighbors: Military Assistance as Support for Authoritarianism," in *Authoritarian Gravity Centers: A Cross-Regional Study of Authoritarian Promotion and Diffusion*, (eds. Marianne Kneuer and Thomas Demmelhuber) examines Iran's support for autocratic regimes in Syria and Iraq.