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## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? REFLECTIONS FROM THE CLASS OF 2020

It would be an understatement to say that the end of the 2019-2020 academic year was challenging as both faculty and students had to navigate the uncharted waters of a global pandemic. The graduating class of 2020 missed many of the major events of Senior year at Wofford, including graduation. This class of students managed the challenging situation with grace and goodwill, leaving a lasting impression on the College. We decided to check in with some of the 2020 Government and International Affairs graduates to see what they have been up to over the past year.



"In August of this past year, I moved to Washington, D.C. to work at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). As a double-major in International Affairs and Art History at Wofford, there was a wide array of things I was interested in doing. After making connections interning in D.C. during interim and the following summer, I was able to land a job on the Press Team at DOE. I have had the opportunity to work with reporters, coordinate media events, and assist the Secretary of Energy with interviews and press conferences. Thanks to my International Affairs professors at Wofford I had the knowledge, but most importantly the confidence to succeed in the working world."

**Katherine Thordahl**

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW

## Reflections from the class of 2020 Continued



"My name is Gray Batten and I am a proud member of the Class of 2020 and a proud product of the Government Department! I look back on my time spent in the Department with a great deal of fondness and special appreciation for both Dr. Alvis and Dr. Jeffrey. Like many others, my time leading up to, and immediately after, "graduation" was especially challenging as the world seemingly stopped spinning. In September of 2020, I began working with Bonaventure, a growing real estate developer out of Alexandria, VA, as an analyst. I feel extremely fortunate to work in an environment that continually forces me to learn and develop simple solutions to sometimes complex problems. For those set to graduate this spring, I wish you all the very best. The Government Department prepared me very well for all of the hard work ahead, so rest assured that you have been in very good hands the past four years." **Gray Batten**

"After the very world-altering spring semester, I graduated Wofford with a B.A. in International Affairs and History. Currently, I am pursuing my Master of Public Administration and Policy at American University through an online program. Even before the pandemic, I sought out an online program because I planned on traveling to the Philippines. That trip has been put on hold, but I still have the flexibility now to do school from home and work (as a nanny). It's been a world-wind of a year and a half since my time at Wofford. I was abroad in the fall, so I did not get much of a "Senior year" and that was really heartbreaking. However, I've tried to make the most out of everything just like everyone else. I'm really blessed to be where I am in life and that I'm able to continue my education. After graduation, I hope to pursue an administrative career in nonprofit management or international governmental service."

**Vera Oberg**



"This year I taught social studies, language arts, and electives across the grades at an all-boys middle school. We were in-person with strict COVID-19 safety protocols but also had the ability to transition to fully virtual learning. Enforcing strict social distancing and mask guidelines with a bunch of boys who are determined to climb, tackle, and jump on anything and everything was a unique challenge that I certainly didn't envision myself facing last year as I neared graduation. However, I have found teaching to be extremely rewarding; guiding the boys through challenging topics like Reconstruction, formal essay writing, and racial disparity in the criminal justice system was not easy but their willingness to engage and take intellectual risks has impressed me to no end. They're also extremely funny: at the end of history class during one of our fully-virtual days I was saying my goodbyes when one of the students un-muted and began blasting "God Save the Queen" through his mic. After I laughed and gave him props, all the other students solemnly looked into the camera, gave me a swift military salute, and promptly logged off. The memory of 20 boys saluting me, with the British national anthem echoing in the background, as their boxes disappeared from my Meet is one that I won't soon forget." **Tom Stack**



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW

## Reflections from the class of 2020 Continued

"After "graduating" in May, I spent some time living in Charleston, SC and road tripping/ camping throughout the US before moving to Kailua, Hawai'i for three months. While in Hawai'i, I worked online for a personal injury law firm as well as a political consulting firm in Charleston, SC. I was lucky to spend the majority of my time outside - hiking, surfing, and exploring the island of O'ahu. In January, I moved to Nashville, Tennessee. I am now working as a brand assistant for cj Advertising, a marketing agency that specializes in brand strategy for personal injury law firms. I have loved learning more about both the legal profession as well as the world of marketing. It has allowed me to combine my pre-law background at Wofford with something I have always been interested in!" **Elizabeth Harrell**



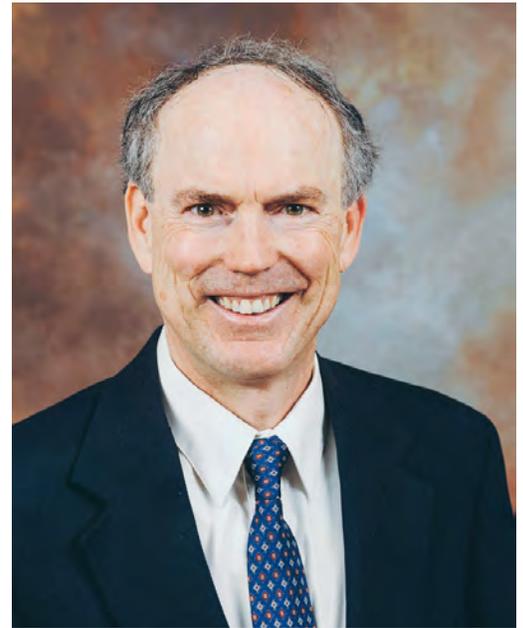
"Although 2020 came with plenty of curveballs, it came with plenty of blessings, too. After "graduating," I worked my final summer at Camp Seafarer and Camp Seagull, in which we completed a full summer with roughly 500 campers and zero known cases of Coronavirus. Fast forward a couple of months later, I am happy to say that I have a job working at a public affairs firm in Washington, D.C. I heard about the opportunity through a close Wofford alumni connection and started working remotely in December. As much as I wish that I could have had a "normal" ending to my college career, I am now even more grateful for my time spent at Wofford and learned to never take a moment for granted. I believe that everything happens for a reason and that I wouldn't be where I am today without the unique moments that lead up to it." **EC Wheatley**

"Finishing my last semester at Wofford from the neon-green bedroom of my childhood was far more difficult than I could have expected. I had only been in the U.S. for 6 weeks when we were sent home for "quarantine;" it felt like readjustment after readjustment. My hope had been to find an internship or entry-level position in the Levant (Middle East) post-graduation, but a craving for some stability led me to look for more local opportunities. I chose to complete a year of service as an Americorps VISTA in Greenville, SC. I work with Prisma Health and Mental Health America of Greenville County (a nonprofit) to identify grant opportunities, connect local organizations, and improve patient referral systems with the goal of reducing public stigma surrounding mental health and substance misuse disorders. It's been a good way to engage in work I care about and gain skills I'll need for my career while remaining close to a place and people I love during this wild COVID time." **Kendall Weaver**



# Farewell to Dr. Farrenkopf

Upon his upcoming retirement we asked Dr. Farrenkopf to reflect back on his fourteen years at Wofford. Dr. Farrenkopf attended Trinity College, a small liberal arts college in Hartford, Connecticut. He then received his master's degree from Georgetown University and his PhD at the University of Virginia. Before coming to Wofford Dr. Farrenkopf studied and did research for five years in German universities and he taught at several other universities, most notably at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. Dr. Farrenkopf stated that he came to Wofford in 2006 because of his own experiences attending and teaching at liberal arts colleges in the South made working at Wofford "attractive." The idea that he could teach a wide variety of courses added to Wofford's appeal, and "Wofford seemed like a very good fit." Dr. Farrenkopf said he enjoyed all of the classes that he taught at Wofford. His favorite class was "Spengler: The Decline of the West" because it is an interdisciplinary course that drew upon world history and politics, the philosophy of history, the German language and German studies. Dr. Farrenkopf's expertise on Spengler was recognized by the state of Virginia with an official proclamation in 2020.



Outside of the classroom, Professor Farrenkopf participated in the activities hosted by the faculty who teach Chinese and German, and he enjoyed attending the many musical concerts offered at Wofford. He has fond memories of participating in mock interviews with students, particularly for Rachel Woodlee '13 who is Wofford's the last recipient of the Rhodes Scholarship. Dr. Farrenkopf also enjoyed advising Marion Smith '07 on his "excellent honors thesis on European integration." Assisting students by interviewing them and writing letters of recommendation as they were applying to join the military services as commissioned officers is another high point of his time here at Wofford. His students have fond memories with him as well! Rik Ujaan '21 says, "Dr. Farrenkopf has been a truly wonderful professor and mentor to me. I will always fondly remember our classes, his insight, and his humor. Dr. Farrenkopf's investment in his students and their academic enrichment made him an asset to Wofford. His classes emphasized the liberal arts and imparted students with a better understanding of the world's history, our current politics, and where we are heading. Needless to say, we will miss him dearly and we are indebted to him."

When asked how Wofford has changed over the course of his time here Dr. Farrenkopf replied, "It's been beautified. It was a beautiful campus when I arrived, it's more beautiful now. We have some wonderful new buildings...We also have a wider selection of course offerings and more academic programs both in our department and campus wide. However, Wofford is also bigger, more bureaucratic, more impersonal, and is less conservative and less traditional." Dr. Farrenkopf has exciting plans to look forward to in his retirement! He plans to write books, do some teaching, give academic talks, study foreign languages, learn new things, socialize, exercise, and travel. However, he will miss "first and foremost my students and the intellectual excitement of the classroom and developing close relationships with students through advising and mentoring. I will miss many colleagues and fellow staff members, and I will especially miss our ever-helpful Ms. Joyce Blackwell and the memorable parties at the home of Rob and Christina Jeffrey, two of Wofford's outstanding professors." Dr. Jeffrey feels similar and said, "John Farrenkopf was and is learned and scholarly, as well as a great and entertaining teacher. His historical mastery and careful mind played a huge part in the liberal education our Department has offered our students for many years. I'll miss my friend the "Iron Chancellor" in these halls." Though he has mixed feelings about retirement, he has enjoyed his time here and believes that it is "time to move on and explore new opportunities." We will miss Dr. Farrenkopf greatly. We are thankful for the perspectives he brought to the department, and we look forward to seeing what he does next.

# Note From The Chair

It is an exciting time for the Government and International Affairs Department as we are experiencing some major transitions! As the earlier article noted, our long-time colleague, Dr. John Farrenkopf is retiring in May. We greatly appreciate all of Dr. Farrenkopf's contributions to the department over the last fourteen years. Despite retiring, we hope that Dr. Farrenkopf will still visit the department and Wofford! We are very happy to announce that we have hired our current visiting assistant professor, Dr. Vicki Gilbert, on a tenure-track line as the new International Affairs assistant professor. During her two years working as a visiting assistant professor, Dr. Gilbert has impressed students and faculty with her innovative and enthusiastic teaching. Dr. Gilbert also brings valuable expertise on the Middle East, civil war, and nationalism to our department.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, I will be on sabbatical and Dr. David Alvis will be department chair. While on sabbatical, I will be working with the Center for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This unique opportunity is possible because the Council on Foreign Relations' International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Relations Scholars. We have hired Dr. Christine Bianco to teach while I am on sabbatical. Dr. Bianco recently completed her doctoral program in International Relations at Florida International University. We are glad to have Dr. Bianco at Wofford next year and look forward to her sharing her expertise on international law and Latin America.

We are very proud of all of our students, especially our graduating seniors! Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, they have excelled in their classes and moved forward with post-graduation plans. Our seniors are heading to multiple different graduate programs at well regarded institutions, such as the University of Alabama, Elon University, and the University of Cambridge. We have many graduates heading off to law school, especially at the University of South Carolina. Other graduates will be exploring exciting job opportunities such as teaching English in Spain, working at the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Germany, and heading to Capitol Hill. Congratulations to all of our graduates!

## Government and International Affairs Graduates

Ashlyn Alexander  
Patrick Allen  
Spencer Blackwell  
Grace Bossolini  
Coleman Bryant  
Ross Campbell  
Hayley Clinkinbeard  
James Davidson  
Parker Davis  
Jacob Dippold  
Jordan Edwards  
Anna Grace Ellett  
Sadie Fink  
John Fisher

Franny Ford  
Wade Furnas  
Andrew Haley  
Olivia Hampton  
William Heflin  
Ashlyn Hilburn  
Alexandria Hill  
Chaplain Hughes  
Jurnee Jones-Holcombe  
Lelia Jones  
Jack Jopling  
Suhong Lee  
Henry Lesene  
Gianna Malloy

Morgan McCrary  
Matthew Newton  
Landon Nutt  
Tyrus Peoples  
Anna Pitney  
Peyton Pratt  
Madeline Samson  
Georgia Seay  
Megan Smith  
Hugo Stack  
Emma Stevenson  
Olivia Suggs  
Molly Sykes  
Rik Ujaan

Elizabeth Ward  
Jake Woo  
Math Wynne

