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WOFFORD COLLEGE

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Take me out to the ball game: Reflection on students' engagement with the community

Darcy Phillips '27
Staff Writer

America's favorite pastime has arrived in Spartanburg; will Wofford students support it?

The Hub City Spartanburgers, a minor league baseball team, began their first season this past spring. The team is a part of the South Atlantic League, joining other local teams like the Asheville Tourists and Greenville Drive. Currently in their 2025 season, the Spartanburgers boast 64 wins and 66 losses.

However, it is not the matter of wins or losses that brings people to Fifth Third Park, the baseball field located in downtown Spartanburg. It is the brisk evening breeze, the crunchy popcorn, cool beer and laughter of children that draw people to the field. The Spartanburgers games aim to foster a greater sense of community by partnering with local businesses and highlighting Spartanburg talent.

It is not just the broad Spartanburg community that enjoys the Spartanburgers games, but the Wofford community as well. Since the season began, Wofford students have posted images of them and their friends attending the games on social media. Earlier this month, the Spartanburg-

ers hosted a Wofford College night with students getting free tickets to attend.

Though on a Tuesday night, the game saw high attendance of Wofford students. Many posed with the mascot, lounged in the grass and sipped giant lemonades. Students seemed less interested in the actual game playing and more excited about who they knew from school that also attended the game. Lively conversations were had, pictures were taken and the evening passed quickly.

After that night the question is: will this community involvement from Wofford students continue? Or will students instead retreat into the confines of the lawns on campus?

This phenomenon, mentioned in conversation, but rarely defined, is the "Wofford Bubble." The elusive term seemingly means that there is an imaginary boundary between Wofford College and the surrounding Spartanburg community. Though Wofford students may engage in some ways, for example with internships or volunteer work, this participation is generally lacking, resulting in few "roots put deeply in the ground".

The "Wofford Bubble" is usually regarded negatively yet also under-

stood as "just how things are". The effect of the bubble is that not only does the Spartanburg community see Wofford and its students as being separate, but also students are not able to fully enjoy their college experience.

Is this a fair understanding of the relationship between Wofford and the Spartanburg community? Evidence seems to support that in fact, the relationship between Wofford students and Spartanburg is strengthening. A recent example being the "Yard Party" at Fr8Yard downtown. This was an event put on in collaboration with Fr8Yard and Wofford's Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Other examples include the Northside Living Learning Communities and senior bar crawls to local bars and breweries downtown.

The student turnout at Spartanburgers games all season long, especially for Wofford College Night, is a positive indicator of the efforts made by Wofford students, if even unintentionally, to engage with Spartanburg.

As the Spartanburgers season comes to an end, Wofford students

must look for a new way to engage with the community. This relationship is vital to not only making Wofford feel like a home away from home, but also the Spartanburg community in which it resides. It is in the students' hands whether to change this harmful reputation or not.



photo by Mark Olencki

Sofia Lathbury '26, Lilly Habart '26, Hailey Hirter '26 and Erin Adams '26 attended the Spartanburgers game on Aug. 22. Wofford students attend Spartanburgers games regularly.

Constitution Day Lecture covers cancel culture following tragedies in America

Catherine Lesesne '26
Staff Writer

Judge James C. Ho of the United States Court of Appeals for the fifth circuit recently presented a talk titled "Cancel Culture and the Constitution" at Wofford. Followed by an introduction from J. Mark Hayes, this lecture was part of the annual Linton R. Dunson Constitution Day Lecture series.

During the event held in Leonard Auditorium, Judge Ho discussed the concerns of America's culture, recent national events and how they tie into the modern phenomena of "cancel culture."

Judge Ho began by providing background on the foundation of America's most highly-regarded document, the U.S. Constitution. Rather than valuing what the document protects, he argued that too many Americans are actually devaluing

it, and losing their willingness and freedom to hold peaceful discourse among individuals with differing political and cultural opinions.

"America is successful because we're so different ... we have not forgotten how to agree, but rather how to disagree," Ho said.

Ho's message of unity followed multiple illicit recent events, making the event's timing quite apt for the nation. The lecture took place on Sept. 11, the 24-year commemoration of the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon in New York City.

The same week as Ho's lecture, reports were released of the murder of Iryna Zarutka, a 23-year-old Ukrainian refugee. The young woman was stabbed while riding the Charlotte light rail on Aug. 22.

On Sept. 10, Evergreen High School in Colorado encountered a mass shooting, leaving multiple students injured. The same day, right-

wing conservative commentator and Turning Point USA founder, Charlie Kirk, was assassinated at Utah Valley University. Kirk was known for expressing his political and spiritual opinions and debating college students at their campuses. The week's events gained massive media attention and left a deep heaviness around educational institutions nationwide.

"Free speech is not designed for easy speech. It is designed to challenge groupthink ... My fear is that people have lost faith that free speech works," Ho said.

"We're becoming more divisive and more polarized, when we need to remind ourselves of what we have in common," Dr. J. David Alvis, associate professor of government and international affairs, said. "What we have in common is a constitution that makes it possible for us to disagree and take different positions, but still at the same time remain

one people capable of endeavoring themselves. The speech was a particularly helpful reminder of not only what makes it possible for us to argue, but also what unifies us."

In his speech, Ho highlighted the Constitution as a framework for political policies and civil discourse. He encouraged the audience to follow Kirk's model to support this framework -- that citizens should not only engage in discourse with those they disagree with, but genuinely look forward to it.

"Those who disagreed with the speaker should come to the front of the line," Ho said, in reference to Kirk's teachings.

"Our topic today meant a lot because we're living in a tumultuous time and it's important to talk about the Constitution in a way that should promote civil disagreement. It really spoke to me ... It's important to encourage disagreement in a healthy

way," Laurie Ann McGee '26, president of the Pre-Law Society, said.

Alvis kindly remembers and thanks Linton Dunson for inspiring this event. He is grateful for the fund that supports the Constitution Day lecture series. He extends his gratitude to Josh Whitley, a member of Wofford's Board of Trustees, for his efforts in supporting the event.

"The most important thing about a liberal arts education is not just what it teaches you, but that it also teaches you humility by constantly forcing you to question yourself. If you really embrace a serious liberal arts education, it helps you deal with the differences we encounter in life thoughtfully and critically, rather than violently ... We adopt our positions because we want our country to be better. That's the common ground," Alvis said.

COMMENTARY

Artificial intelligence in the medical field: apps now competing for jobs

Madison Tolomea '26 & Caroline Kennemur '26
Editor in Chief & Staff Writer

With the unpredictability of artificial intelligence and its future, some people have begun to worry about their future career plans. Rylee Ashley '28 experienced first hand how implementing AI in the workplace can lead to a frightening future.

After working for Spartanburg Regional Hospital for 10 months, Ashley was informed that she would be let go due to recent AI developments. She was told over the phone that at the end of August, her employment as a medical scribe would be terminated.

"Everyone that I worked with in the ER received the same call," Ashley said. "They said they would try and find alternative places for us to apply to, but there aren't any local hospitals that need emergency room scribes anymore."

Ashley's duties as a medical scribe included going into patient rooms in the ER with the doctors and documenting patient information, such as symptoms and medical history. Ashley, along with many other medical scribes, thoroughly enjoyed her job and the experience she got from working firsthand with patients.

This was not completely out of the blue. Ashley noticed that the doctors began to use AI technology during her employment and had a feel-

ing that this change would occur at some point, but not so soon. She was not a fan of the utilization of AI before, and is less of a fan now that she's been personally affected. She does not believe that AI should be able to replace all of the requirements that are expected of doctors.

"I think someone still needs to be there to check over the information," Ashley said. "It could be a liability if the app crashes and does things wrong, you can put people's lives at risk."

Ashley and her coworkers are not the only people to experience this. She mentioned all hospitals under the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare system underwent the same changes. This includes Pelham, Mary Black, Union and Cherokee medical systems.

The system that was implemented is an app downloaded onto a doctor's phone which records all the patient information and takes notes during a medical visit. The doctors are then supposed to go over those notes on each chart to ensure they are correct. The use of AI can be more cost effective than paying real people real salaries and there are less people in the ER, which saves space.

However, some doctors, at Spartanburg Regional specifically, seem to be less than fans of the app because it cannot pick up on a sarcastic tone or irrelevant information, which could lead to messy charts with ramblings.

Further, some patients prefer to do their own charts or have a medical scribe take down the information, but they do not have that ability anymore at local Spartanburg hospitals. However, not all departments will be using artificial intelligence. Nurses in particular will still be in high demand due to the one on one care and comfort they provide patients that AI cannot replicate yet.

Though she was just a scribe, Ashley mentioned that other medical specialties are seeing the harmful effects of AI as well as some departments, like radiology, are trying to take similar steps toward the world of AI.

"I think AI could take over hospitals in certain areas. I know radiology is in the process of trying to get AI to read x-rays and scans like that which eliminates a whole medical subfield. These people (x-ray technicians) went to medical school for eight plus years just for a computer to take their job," Ashley said. "It's scary."

While nothing is known for certain about the advancement of AI and how it could impact jobs, Ashley mentioned how scary it is to see changes starting now and worries for her future.

She plans on attending medical school after graduation and believes that her scribe job was a good way to get a foot in the door for medical experience and patient hours. Now



photo by Mark Olencki

Rylee Ashley '28, pictured conducting undergraduate research in the science lab, is grappling with losing her job as a medical scribe to AI.

she believes it's going to be harder to find an internship or other medical field job that doesn't require prior certification and won't be stolen by artificial intelligence.

Many report on the harmful effects of AI on art-based jobs, but it could be important to remember that every field could be impacted. The future of AI is truly unknown.

The evolving role of artificial intelligence in classrooms

Nola Webb '26
Staff Writer

As classes have commenced for the 2025-26 academic year, Wofford students have acclimated themselves to the expectations and workloads for their fall semester classes. However, the staple clause on artificial intelligence present in many syllabi seems to be realigning to include, rather than discourage, the use of such generative technologies.

Where the majority of courses in previous semesters have threatened major consequences and immediate Honor Council action for AI usage on assignments, several Wofford professors are becoming more accepting of AI in the classroom, with some even taking measures to weave it into their curriculum. In the wake of this drastic switch in the narrative of AI use, students may be left wondering what this could look like in the classroom.

The Wofford Honor Code categorizes the "unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence to create content that is submitted as one's own," as plagiarism, yet this careful wording allows for the approved use of AI in other ways which could even be guided or suggested by professors.

Associate Professor of English Dr. Kimberly Hall is one of the leading voices on the topic of AI in Wofford classrooms. As covered in a fall 2023 issue of *The Old Gold & Black*, Hall

was responsible for the initiatives of Wofford's AI Working Group, a student-faculty team which explored how best, if at all, to incorporate AI into a college curriculum and lifestyle.

Hall proclaims that AI has much to offer that is not academically dishonest; she suggested that students can build "personalized learning agents" within Microsoft's AI assistant, Copilot, to consult for more refined searches by feeding them their course materials. She argued that tools of this nature could facilitate personalized learning and problem solving when professors or tutors may not be accessible.

Some of the other points mentioned across the Wofford AI Working Group's open discussion in 2023 were how AI tools can complement a liberal arts education specifically. Elon University's "AI Guide for

Students" released this year includes such advice for students, suggesting how to use AI for creative and numerical work while also cautioning students that it cannot fully replace

we want (students) to have because if you don't have them, you can't evaluate the output that AI gives you," Hall said.

However, the intentions of educators like Hall cannot mitigate the reach of AI or control how students choose to use it in an analytical sense. Since the initial year-long session held by Wofford's AI Working Group, AI resources like ChatGPT have irreversibly advanced. Much of this change in AI policy at Wofford seems to recognize that its use and popularity is largely outside of anyone's control and raises questions on how to prepare students to encounter AI in the professional world.

As AI inevitably invades the workplace, the task of educators and institutions is now to ensure that their students have skills that AI cannot replicate and are able to function in

tandem with the tool.

This responsibility to create career-readiness conflicts on the ethics of colleges encouraging AI. Data centers to support these technologies noticeably deteriorate the water supplies and environments of surrounding communities. Is it responsible for any college to incorporate rather than condemn AI because of these tradeoffs?

This concern is more relevant than ever at Wofford, as Spartanburg is poised to gain its own data center. According to the Post & Courier, NorthMark Strategies has plans to build one of these supercomputers on Pine Street.

AI use at any university remains a complex and nuanced issue, primarily because of how new and ever-changing the technology is for students and professors alike.

"I don't even think we can ever get ahead of (AI)," Hall said. "I think we're like 'How do we learn to live with this?' What is the reality of higher education when this is everywhere?"

At the very least, the conversation on ethical and academically equitable AI use remains open at Wofford. Hall assures that Wofford's discussion-based approach to education will never fundamentally change. However, it is still worth engaging with the different social, environmental and academic impacts of this issue.

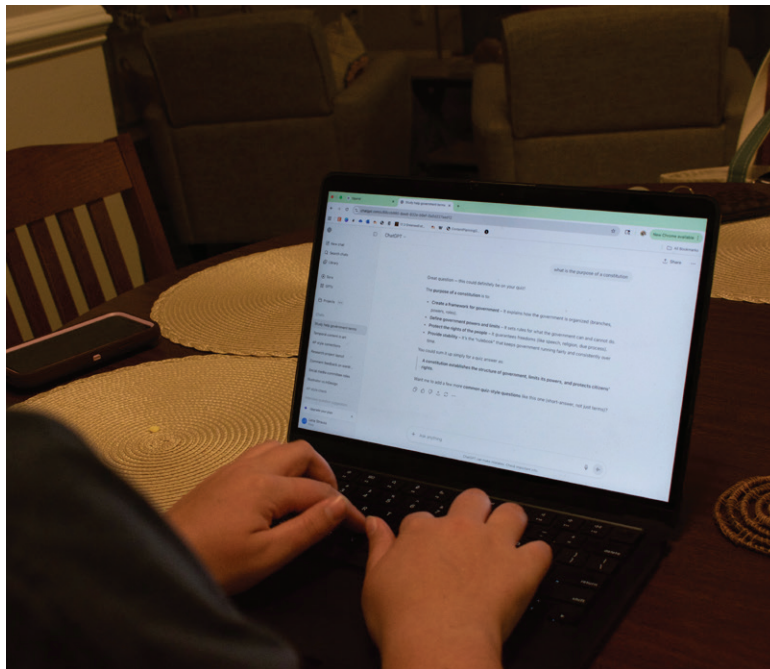


photo by Lena Strauss '26

Lillian Smith '26, pictured working in her Senior Village apartment, uses AI as a study tool to prepare for upcoming exams.

their own thinking.

"Struggling with 'What is my idea? How do I put it into words? What is the best way to organize this information?' -- those are the skills that

PERSPECTIVES

Will the streak continue: Women's lacrosse from a newcomer's perspective

Lillian Galloway '29
Staff Writer

As spring transitioned to a hot summer, a historic win against Winthrop University occurred at Gibbs Stadium. The women's lacrosse 2025 season showcased impressive athletes, skillsmanship and craft. Four

team members were recognized by the Big South All-Conference, in particular, Bria Foley '25 as Co-Offensive Player of the Year alongside Anna Roser of Furman.

Other highlighted members include Olivia Graebener '28 and Brooke Meltcher '27. The 2024 season ended with seven wins total

from the schedule, but on Saturday April 26, 2025, with a score of 15-9, women's lacrosse won, breaking the record for a single-season with eight wins. Then, going into the Big South quarterfinals on April 29, another win was secured, making nine wins the number to beat.

There could be multiple explana-

tions for the success of the program last year: new assistant coach, star players or great work ethic. Major players and leaders on the team graduated in May, and as the pre-season began for the 2026 season quickly approached with the start of classes, the future success of WLAX was up for debate.

Six new members make up the team's freshmen class, including Sarah Carter Nowery, Megan Donahue, Martha Smith, Sara Fenwick, Morgan Siglin and Caroline Anton. Though all are notable additions, Morgan Siglin's awards and high school career show possibilities for an exciting season. Playing at midfield, she was named a USA Lacrosse All-American, holding the state record for 246 goals and 330 points.

Being a fresh face on this team means being responsible and proactive, and "(it's) a rite of passage in a way," Caroline Anton '29, a goalie for the team, said.

"My team matters to me more than any stat book or saves...it's my job to be an extra set of eyes for my defenders and a presence they can trust," Anton said.

She wants to be the best leader she can be on and off the field during her time at Wofford. As incoming fresh eyes to the team, she is able

to observe what makes this team noteworthy, from their stats to their dynamics.

"The team culture here is something really special. (We aren't) just competitive just for the sake of winning, (we're) competing for each other," Anton said. "I've been playing lacrosse my whole life and never been on a team quite like this."

At 4 A.M. on Thursday, Sept. 11, women's lacrosse joined the ROTC sponsored Memorial Ruck. Carlie Cutinella '26 is a member of Wofford's ROTC, and in a show of support for their teammate, the whole group joined her.

"Most importantly (we) support each other as friends, not just teammates ... that's where I think the success comes from," Anton said.

As the Big South tournament schedule begins in spring, the question is will the success continue from the 2025 season? These athlete's careers and bonds are to be commemorated regardless.

"Last year's success was only a symptom of what's to come, the sky's the limit for this group and I'm excited to be a part of it," Anton said.

Wofford women's lacrosse will be hosting a game at the turf field by Jerry Richardson Indoor Stadium on Oct. 5.



photo by
Caroline
Parker
'26

Lacrosse team practices in the mornings to prepare for their upcoming Fall Ball game against Liberty on 9/27.

The summer everyone picked Clark

SK Saggu '26
Managing Editor

This summer was not just about experiencing unpredictable weather, it also included many pop culture moments that became monumental trends.

From Love Island's viral "I pick Clark" moment to the release of the new Superman movie, the name Clark seemed to be everywhere, making Clark the accidental mascot of summer television and film.

Of the many people who saw the new Superman movie, Dr. Dwain Pruitt, chief equity officer and vice president for community initiatives, saw an opportunity to do pop culture programming at Wofford.

As a comic historian, Pruitt thought the timing of the Superman movie was ideal to talk about superheroes in the context of human experiences.

"Comic books are uniquely American mythology and they draw very heavily on the experience of second generation Jewish Americans, who were trying to become heroes in the rise of Hollywood," Pruitt said.

Pruitt explained that Superman, created in 1938 by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, both sons of Jewish immigrants, became a symbol of the immigrant experience itself: navigating two identities while searching for acceptance in a larger community.

Beyond the colorful panels, comics can serve as academic material. Pruitt has taught eight classes on superheroes as topics at Wofford.

"Everything can be studied historically. It's like the world that created it, and the moment in which certain characters are created," Pruitt said.



photo via DC Studios

"You can use that character to talk about historical changes."

Pruitt's perspective highlights why comics are more than just books filled with drawings; they allow the reader to connect with the struggles, hopes and victories of the characters that feel personal and comforting.

"Superheroes are a very intimate part of the American imagination,

and so they tell us a lot about ourselves," Pruitt said.

Building on these ideas, Pruitt invited Danny Fingerioth, an esteemed comic book writer and editor, to Wofford on Sept. 15 to discuss his book, *Disguised as Clark Kent: Jews, Comics, and the Creation of the Superhero*.

The talk explored how superheroes, like Superman, reflect cultural identity, social change and the experiences of Jewish creators in shaping some of America's most iconic characters.

When asked about the importance of connecting to pop culture as students, Pruitt expressed that comics are a form of history books that should be consumed carefully.

"We consume media uncritically. We see things and don't ask ourselves the very basic questions about the values that inform us about this time period," Pruitt said. "I think we all have to learn to consume media critically."

By inviting Danny Fingerioth to campus, Pruitt hoped to spark conversations about identity, representation and the role superheroes play in shaping collective imagination.

At Wofford, this event reminded students that pop culture is not just about entertainment, but a lens for understanding history, society and even ourselves.

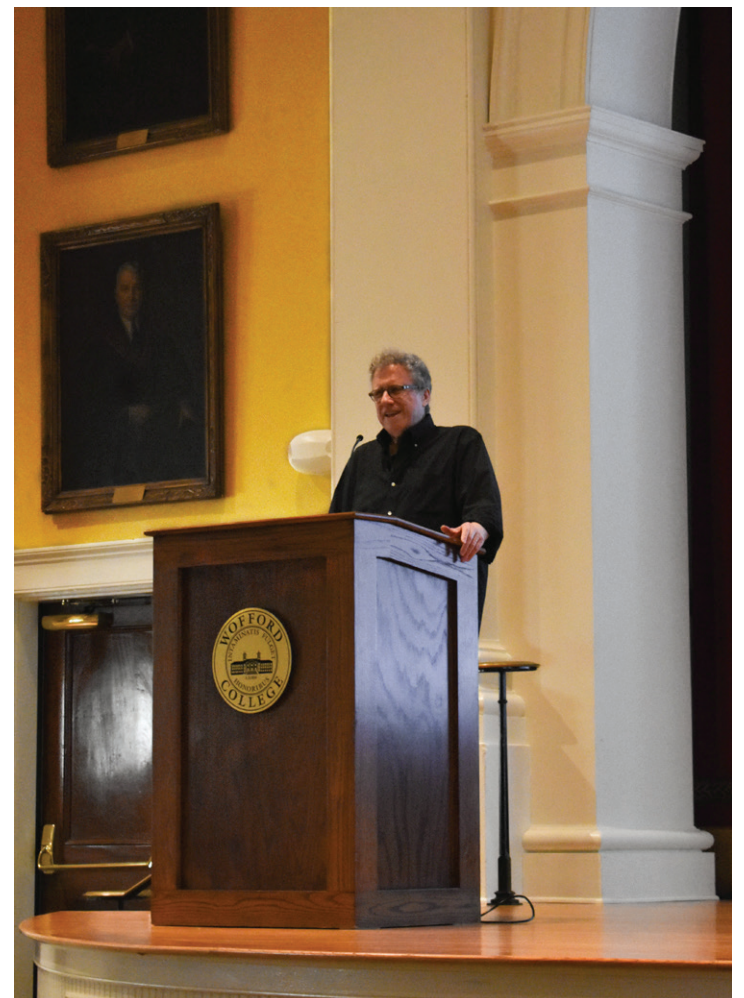


photo by Lena Strauss '26

Guest speaker Danny Fingerioth delivers a talk on the thematically Jewish content in DC Comics. Both students and professors at Wofford were in attendance.

FROM THE PUB ROOM

A letter from the Editor

Madison Tolomea '26
Editor in Chief

Dear reader, I'm so thrilled that you decided to pick up our first issue! Hopefully you enjoyed what you saw, and you'll continue reading. Personally, I could not be prouder of this issue my staff and I have put together.

A little bit about me, I am serving as your Editor in Chief for the 2025-26 school year.

I took over this position unexpectedly in January. I was grateful to have the former editor still on staff to help me with anything I need. But this year, it's all on me.

While that pressure does scare me,

I'm also excited to make executive decisions and ultimately let my writers and photographers have creative control over their work.

What some deemed as "too controversial" in the past, I want my writers to feel excited to act as real journalists and have fun with this job.

Ultimately, that is my main goal this year, to have fun. I am a senior, so this year is filled with "lasts". Instead of focusing on the underlying dread that comes with graduation and figuring out life after college, I'm going to focus on how fun I can make these next 11 issues.

I want to write about what people care about, what people are talking about.

I want the controversy and the gossip because that means people are talking and reading our paper and not just using it as placemats for messy painting or oysters.

While most editors wouldn't wish for these things, a big goal of mine is Wofford engagement. I am proud of every story and picture we publish, and I want the Wofford community to be proud too.

Our staff is composed of people who excel at what they do. We had a record hiring year and are excited to welcome six new hires.

Our photography staff added Lena Strauss '26 and Ellie Warren '26. Both Lena and Ellie are heavily involved on campus but are excited to

have a creative outlet with OG&B.

The writing team had the most new additions with Caroline Kennemur '26, Darcy Phillips '27 and Lilian Galloway '29.

Most of our staff writers from last year are enjoying semesters abroad, so we'll be excited for their return, but I think Caroline, Darcy and Lili are more than capable of holding down the fort in the meantime. I hope you enjoyed their articles for the first issue and can recognize the quality of their writing.

Finally, McNally Sowell '26 has been hired as our Marketing Coordinator, a mix of our previous business manager and social media specialist position. McNally is perfect for this

job as she brings a creativity and professionalism to the paper that we truly needed.

Finally, I'm proud of our staff from last school year as our paper was named #22 in College Newspapers by the Princeton Review.

This rating would not be possible without those still on staff and those who have graduated. I give props to Katie Kirk '25 for her dedication to the paper and unwavering support throughout the year.

I welcome back all of our previous staff; I'm excited to work with you this year and see what we accomplish.

Come to Granada with me!

Abby Taylor '27
Staff Writer

Hey, hey! For those of you who might not know me, I'm Abby, one of the staff writers for the *Old Gold & Black*, and I'm currently studying abroad this semester in Granada, Spain.

Now, typically staffers for the OG&B wouldn't be working during their time abroad, but I thought it would be a fun idea to bring y'all along with me a little during this semester away from Wofford.

Study abroad rarely goes completely smoothly for anyone, and I ran into some trouble before I even left the United States. My flight out of JFK to Madrid got delayed by two hours mere minutes before I got to the airport, which meant I was going to miss my connecting flight from Madrid to Granada.

I felt lucky when I went to check in at the desk to check my bag and try to figure out getting from Madrid to Granada and I was told that the airline had already rebooked the flight from Madrid to Granada to one I would be able to make.

When I got to Granada, I was stunned by the city's beauty. Not only is the architecture beautiful, with

grand cathedrals and mosques, but the mountains in the background wherever you turn make Granada an idyllic place to study abroad.

I was nervous to meet my host family, feeling unsure about my Spanish skills that I would need to communicate with them and wondering if I would be a good fit for their family. All my fears washed away the moment I walked into the apartment building where my family lives.

My host parents greeted me with the biggest hugs and helped me get my bags up to their apartment, where I was able to choose which room I wanted to stay in for the next four months. And I was relieved when I was able to understand what they were saying and could express myself to them as well.

I had lunch with my host family before going to meet some of the other people in my program for a quick tour of Granada led by our peer advisors, who are University of Granada students hired by IES Granada to help out students in the transition to studying in Spain.

We ended the tour by getting tapas together, after which most of the IES students decided to go back to their housing to go to bed after a long few days of traveling. Always one for a

rally though, I decided to stay out for a bit longer with the peer advisors and a few others to go for more tapas.

Tapas are small plates of food that are bought or given when you buy a drink at a restaurant or bar while in Spain. Granada is likely the best place in Spain to be in for tapas, since it's one of the few, if not the only, cities in the country that has free tapas when you buy a drink.

The past week and a half in Granada has been dedicated to orientation to IES and the city, which has consisted of many meetings with IES staff, language courses to refresh our memories after the summer, a day trip to the beach and many, many tours around Granada.

One thing that I wasn't ready for as part of our orientation was how much time we were going to spend touring the city, and the fact that most of the places we have been walking are uphill. I'm most definitely not built for this type of cardio, but the gorgeous views have definitely been worth it.

Through the orientation, I've also met so many amazing people in the program that I'm so excited to spend the next four months with. The people in these study abroad programs

can help make or break the experience, and I definitely think they will help make it amazing.

That's all I have for now, but I'm ex-

cited to bring you all along for when classes start and when I start traveling around Spain and other countries in Europe. Hasta luego!



photo provided by Abigail Taylor '27
Abigail Taylor '27 is studying abroad in Granada, Spain this semester. Taylor is excited to experience a wide variety of culture and thought throughout her time in Spain.

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