



# OLD GOLD & BLACK

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WOFFORD COLLEGE

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## Witness the cultural tapestry at Wofford through the Old Gold Gala

*SK Saggu '26*  
Managing Editor

These past few weeks have shown that now is the time to embrace unity and appreciate the abundance of culture that surrounds us everyday. The Benito Bowl was evidence for how much representation matters and how ignorance can be overcome by acknowledgement and community.

With these intentions in mind, the Old Gold Gala will be making its debut to Wofford on Feb. 26. Students, faculty members and members of the Spartanburg Community will have the opportunity to celebrate and witness the various cultures that reside among the campus walls.

Sunni Owens '26 and Laila Villeda '26, co-chairs of the Association of Multicultural Students, share their motives behind organizing this gala.

"Laila and I want to showcase the different cultures and talents of the students on campus. We realized there wasn't a space for students to broadcast that outside of choral concerts," Owens said.

The works of this multicultural gala began in the summer of 2025 when the co-chairs of AMS mentioned

the idea in one of their meetings. Reflecting on how the idea of a gala first came together, Owens shares that this program is envisioned to convey AMS's efforts of promoting inclusivity and diversity on campus.

"We thought of what our mark on campus was going to be. What were we leaving behind with our legacy? We felt that we could do it with the resources we have access to and the connections we have in the community and on campus," Owens said.

AMS has had tremendous support from behind the scenes. Dr. Bria Harper, Dr. Dwain Pruitt '95, Seth Flanagan and the Campus and Student Development Office have contributed to the program through funding and coordinating the event with contacts in the community. Jeansine Escobar has been well in contact with the talent and artworks that will be displayed at the gala.

The reception and art auction will start at 5 p.m. in the Yorke Family Portico with hors d'oeuvres. Interested buyers will be able to buy art pieces made by Lyrical Gist '26, who also has "The Garden We Grow" exhibition on display at the Rosalind Sallenger Richardson Center for the Arts until Feb. 22. Artworks by Caris

Mitchell '27, the creator behind Studio Smoothie, will also be available to purchase.

After the auction, the gala will begin at 6 p.m. in the Leonard Auditorium.

The program will start with highlighting and expressing gratitude to the founders of all the diversity council organizations.

Audience members will have the chance to see singing performances, multicultural dances, a fashion show and short films made by Wofford students.

When questioned why students should come to the gala, Owens shares that this gala is an opportunity for the Wofford community to witness the many cultures that make up our student body.

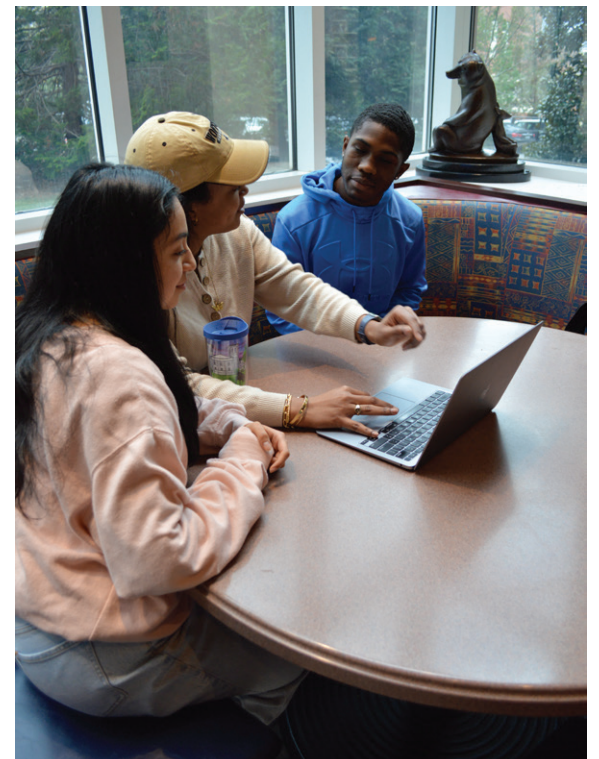
"They should come support their friends. When else would they have the opportunity to experience something like this? I think it's really important for us and our youth to educate ourselves on other cultures at school," Owens said. "I know that after we are out of the undergrad experience, we won't be given as many opportunities to do that. So we should maximize that while we can. The liberal arts experiences, some-

thing you have really once in undergrad."

Just as Owens shared, the Old Gold Gala is a great opportunity for Wofford students to celebrate the cultures their peers come from.

For many students of color performing in the gala, this may be one of the first times they are able to showcase their heritage to this extent at Wofford.

AMS hopes to see a full house on Feb. 26, with an eager audience ready to witness the cultural tapestry that resides within Wofford.



*photo by Caroline Parker*  
Sunni Owens '26, Laila Villeda '26 and Hayden Pendergrass '26 had a planning meeting for The Old Gold Gala. The gala will consist of fashions, music and dance performances.

## AI data centers in Spartanburg: should they be built?

*Lillian Galloway '29*  
Staff Writer

AI will be debated all day, every day, for countless years to come.

The nature of AI and its threat to humanity seems to be impending doom for those who identify as anti-AI.

For others, this is the frontier of our future and technology.

AI has been at Wofford for a while now since its introduction to American campus lives.

But now, it's hitting home at Spartanburg, with tech company TigerDC proposing the construction of generative AI data centers in Spartanburg County.

Based in New York, TigerDC has had involvement in Spartanburg before. In 2022, they constructed a Bitcoin mining facility on Jones Road with the help of local sponsors such as Pacolet Construction.

Their newest Spartanburg project titled, "Project Spero," proposes construction of a 400 megawatt-producing AI data center.

Their company claims its technology to be renewable with no recorded strains on local water and electrical infrastructure.

It is not known if there has been correspondence between TigerDC and Spartanburg Water or Duke Energy.

If there were to be concerns over the limitations our local infrastructure would face from the center, it has not been publicly released.

Many citizens are opposed to the construction of this data center, which is proposed to start construction in 2027.

Local petitions and groups have gone to the streets arguing with the City Council in protest of this center.

An online petition against the construction of this center and others states, "There is community concern on how these centers will affect our environment when it comes to water usage, air pollution, and how these emissions will be removed so they do not cause harm to the surrounding community."

With no public release of informa-

tion on the possible impacts, it's difficult to trust the company, as well as City Council members in favor of its construction.

The plan passed a preliminary vote last November, and its second vote was just approved Feb. 17.

It was TigerDC officials who requested the second vote to be delayed. City Council officials claimed that the plan was being reevaluated to identify the benefits of the center to the community.

One benefit publicly shared was that this center could provide fifty jobs.

This information was shared by TigerDC, and then distributed by those in favor. Data centers are not new to Spartanburg.

In spring 2025, NorthMark Strategies Inc. introduced the construction of a data center located right off of the city's limits.

In response the Sierra Club of the Upstate and Southern Environmental Law Center shared insight on the drawbacks of what this center would do to the environment.

NorthMark Strategies Inc. had no regulations regarding its air pollution emissions and could create serious harm to the local community.

It's not unheard of in recent years that these centers are demanding too much of its environment, and taking it away from locals.

The stories of people turning on their faucets and no water running is a common horror story as more centers are requiring the water for cooling.

Including that, but the stress on the electrical grid from these centers could prove to be devastating.

With populations increasing in the Upstate, it can be assumed that Duke Energy's system is already under more amounts of stress than it was originally built for.

These centers would add even more to that possible increasing stress.

"Project Spero" is designated to be built in Tyger River Industrial Park, a property designated to local industrial plants.

Approximately less than a mile away exists residential neighbor-

hoods. The possibility of no water running from their faucets and black-outs in their homes could be a reality with the center constructed nearby.

A town hall meeting on Feb. 10th hosted by District 3 Rep. Paul Abbott discussed the implications of this construction. S

peakers from all over spoke on what it could mean for the county.

Overall, the public still seems to agree on no to these data centers.

The project will go through a third and final vote by the City Council in the near future.

Updates pending.

# CAMPUS

## Insight into the Office for Civil Rights, Compliance and Community Initiatives

*Darcy Phillips '27*  
Staff Writer

Dr. Dwayne Pruitt '95, the chief equity officer and vice president for community initiatives, provided the Old Gold and Black insight into his work at Wofford College.

The Office for Civil Rights, Compliance, and Community Initiatives has three main components that work to guarantee that “all members of the community are granted the opportunity to thrive in a learning environment that’s free of discrimination”.

Pruitt explains that his office focuses on Title Six, Title Seven, and Title Nine which aim to prevent racial, workplace and gender discrimination.

If these are violated, the primary function of this office is to address those incidents. The secondary function of the office is community outreach, which Lifelong Learning falls under. The office does a lot of work to try to engage Spartanburg’s senior community.

Lastly, community initiatives, which include cultural programming and support for various events.

This work is especially important to Pruitt, who graduated from Wofford. Pruitt is a historian who specializes in French, African American and local history. Pruitt is also interested in comic books and popular culture.

He recommends the comic book “Uncle Sam” by Sam Darnall and Alex Ross. This comic book merges many of his interests and asks, “very important questions about how we understand our nation”.

When asked about why local history is important, Pruitt explains that it provides an understanding of the community we come from.

“We often fail to ask questions about who we are. We study history, we talk about great men and women ... but we don’t stop to ask, how did the place that I grew up get to be the way that it is? ... So for me, it’s just the question of trying to understand local dynamics, and to make sense of the place where I am,” Pruitt said.

This interest extends into the work Pruitt does for the Office of Civil Rights, Compliance, and Community Initiatives.

Currently the office is responsible for the sense of community survey, which seeks to understand where students feel they do not fit at Wofford. The survey seeks to address the needs of students who feel discriminated against or aspects of the Wofford community that are exclusive to certain groups.

Pruitt’s office has also planned various events for Black History Month. The college welcomes Dr. Edda Fields-Black, winner of the 2025 Pulitzer Prize in history, as its keynote

speaker for Black History Month. Dr. Fields-Black’s book “Combee: Harriet Tubman, the Combahee River Raid and Black Freedom during the Civil War,” is, as Pruitt puts it, “South Carolina history.” At the end of the month, African American artist “Black Chakra” will perform spoken word poetry.

Pruitt explains what he hopes will happen to students who attend these events and others put on by the office.

“My goal is for people to simply be in a room and hear something and say, ‘This person said this, I agree with it. I’m going to act on it or I don’t agree with it, but I’m going to be able to articulate why I don’t agree with it,’” Pruitt said.

For Pruitt, this is what a liberal arts education should be. The mission of Pruitt’s office is to “create leaders for the next generation.” Pruitt emphasizes the importance of understanding the people you aim to serve.

“You can’t lead someone whom you’re not willing to serve, and you can’t serve someone who you don’t know. So if anyone wishes to go out into the world and lead, he or she has to know who is out there, and what those people’s needs are,” Pruitt said.

This is the inspiration behind Dr. Pruitt’s hard work. Pruitt aims to hold events that are relevant to our current culture and society, in order to bring about change.

“There’s a certain degree of learned

powerlessness that defines our experience, and there’s one thing I would hope we can do at this institution, is to help people start challenging and pushing back against the idea that I’m always powerless to address real social issues.”

Pruitt is allowing for Wofford students to become the future leaders they hope to be.



**photo by Kelsey Wheeler**  
Dr. Pruitt, Chief Equity Officer and Vice President for Community Initiatives in front of Main Building.

## Isabelle Chandler crowned Miss Wofford 2026

*Ava Cox '27*  
Staff Writer

The third annual Miss Wofford Scholarship Pageant has concluded with Isabelle Chandler '27 taking the crown.

Chandler received the \$2,000 award on Sunday, Feb. 8 and could not be more excited to begin her duties.

The moment she was crowned Miss Wofford 2026 was nothing short of surreal.

Chandler shares how shocked and thrilled she was to receive the great honor of representing the college in this way.

“I was just so amazed by all the different girls in the pageant. Each and every single one was so beautiful and so graceful that I truly believed it was a toss up. I had butterflies in my stomach, and then I was crowned, and it was just so awesome,” Chandler said.

She did not share this excitement alone. Close to 20 family members, sorority sisters, fellow cheerleaders and even professors were all in attendance to support and congratulate her.

Chandler explains how meaningful it was to feel the presence of an audience so filled with love.

She hopes to emulate a similar presence in her role as Miss Wofford throughout the year.

Wofford cheerleader, Vice Chair of the Honor Council, member of the Pre-Law Society and Resident Assistant, Chandler’s various campus involvements all contribute to her win, but her heart for service rises to the top.

Inspired by Miss Wofford 2025, Addison Sapp '27, Chandler wants to give back to the Wofford community in similar ways.

She admires Sapp’s dedication to expanding Miss Wofford’s social media presence as well as her many service initiatives.

“I saw all of the great things she was doing, and how she really developed the title into more of an active role,” Chandler said.

Chandler not only hopes to implement Sapp’s strategies this year, but also seeks to leave her own mark. Having been raised by two educators, Chandler emphasizes her personal connection to empowering young students.

By showing a greater presence in the Spartanburg County public school system, Chandler hopes to provide students with ample resources and encouragement to foster a love for learning.

With the ever presence of technological information and content saturation, another one of Chandler’s personal missions this year is to be more physically present as she seeks to serve the Wofford community.

“I think that’s something that’s very important in an age where everything’s online, and everything’s on social media, to fill that very tangible and visible role,” Chandler said.

As a cheerleader, Chandler understands how meaningful attendance at Wofford events and activities really is, and she wants to serve as a model for that representation.

Additionally, she desires to spread awareness on the plethora of resources the college offers such as the

ample access to on-campus mental health and counseling services, encouraging students to find support in the caring and equipped Wellness staff if they need it.

“I want to become a very outspoken Wofford advocate and interact with students and members of the community,” Chandler said.

While her awarded scholarship is greatly valued, Chandler explains that the pageant’s meaning extends far beyond its monetary value.

She shares that the most important aspect of the pageant is the role it plays in supporting and empowering women.

“I think that the pageant does a really good job of elevating women and showing them that you can be smart and beautiful, do community service and be involved in athletics. You don’t have to fit one box,” Chandler said.

Exciting things are surely to come from Chandler’s year representing the college as Miss Wofford 2026.

Whether it is a basketball game or choral performance, she hopes to be as present on campus as she is able to and further extend that reach within the community.

A great honor and privilege, Chandler does not take her responsibilities as Miss Wofford lightly. She excitedly embraces every opportunity to give back to a community that has done so much for her.



**photo by Hailey Hirter**

Isabelle Chandler '27 is crowned this year’s Miss Wofford Pageant winner! The fourth annual Miss Wofford Pageant took place on Feb. 8 in the Jerome Johnson Richardson Theater.

# SPORTS

## Spring sports returns to campus as Wofford Athletics enters a busy season

Brooke Meltcher '27  
Staff Writer

Spring is among us: the weather is getting warmer, the birds are chirping and most importantly, spring sports are stepping into their seasons.

This time of year brings a unique excitement to Wofford Athletics, as the campus experiences an overlap between basketball postseason play and the beginning of spring competition.

With multiple teams starting their schedules, nearly every weekend until April will feature a home event where fans can come out and support their Terrier athletes.

Wofford is currently in a crossover period, with men's and women's basketball nearing post season play while softball, baseball, women's lacrosse, men's tennis, women's tennis and track begin their spring campaigns.

With so many programs competing at once, it is an especially entertaining and energetic stretch for both athletes and supporters.

"I think it's [Wofford Athletics] at an all time high of going from each season and there's always a good team to go watch and support ... we are now at a point where you pretty much pick a sport and there's just championships coming from or more competitive seasons coming from them," Wofford Head Baseball Coach, JJ Edwards said.

For spring teams, this season is an opportunity to display everything they have been building toward since the fall.

Women's lacrosse Head Coach, Jessie Aguglia, emphasized the strengths her team brings into the new year.

"We are returning all of our starting

defenders, which is great, as well as our starting midfielders ... We had a great offense last year so we are just trying to figure out our offensive identity going into this spring," Aguglia said.

While preparation and talent are key, the atmosphere surrounding spring sports plays an important role as well.

The warmer Spartanburg weather creates the perfect environment for outdoor competition across campus venues, including Russell C. King Field, Hope Field, Gibbs Stadium and the Reeves Tennis Center.

"The spring is awesome because the weather changes and people want to be outside more. With the tennis teams always playing very well, our softball team is awesome... you just have a lot of events to do and keep people busy which is just really cool," Edwards said.

Both coaches also highlighted how meaningful fan support can be, especially at a smaller school where student involvement makes a noticeable difference.

"The more support you can give to any athletics team, I think is really helpful as a small school, having student support is great for the student athletes representing the college... we do better when we have something to play for, so when fans do a good job of getting us fired up I think we rise to the occasion," Aguglia said.

As the spring season begins, Head Coaches, Jessie Aguglia and JJ Edwards, speak not only for their own programs, but for the rest of Wofford's spring sports teams in their shared pursuit of success in conference play.

When asked about goals for the season, both coaches immediately pointed toward key matchups and

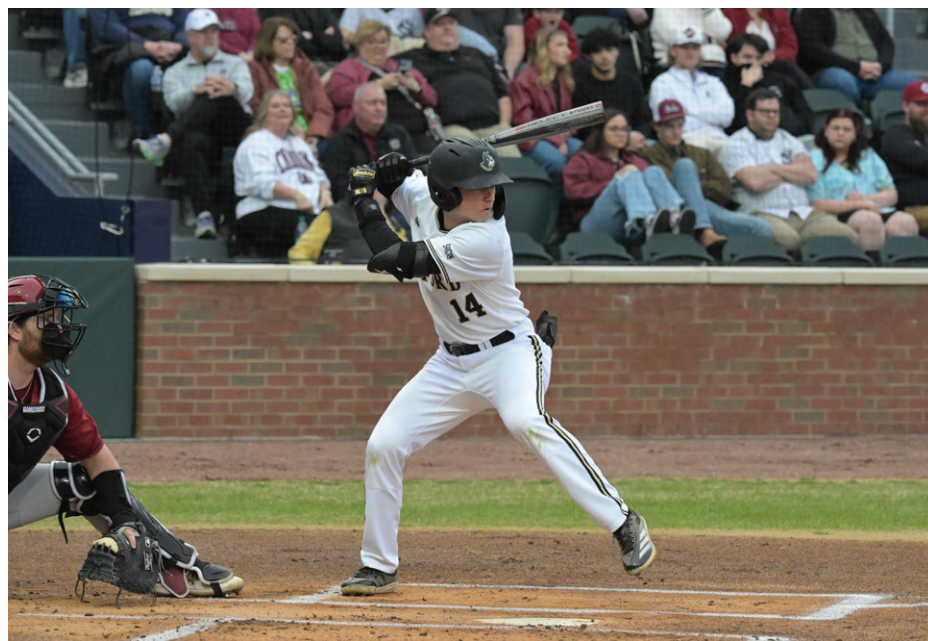
strong performances against rivals.

"I want to beat Furman," Head Coach Aguglia said.

Coach Edwards, while focused on an important season-opening matchup against Mercyhurst, also emphasized the larger goal of competing for a conference title.

"Down the road...I want to compete at a high level in the SoCon, giving ourselves a chance to win the tournament by setting ourselves up with a good seed," Edwards said.

With spring sports now underway, Wofford fans have plenty of opportunities in the coming weeks to show their support and be part of an exciting time across Terrier athletics.



photos by Mark Olencki

The Wofford baseball team faced the University of South Carolina Gamecocks at Fifth Third Park on Feb. 17, 2026. Spring season sports are in full swing at Wofford.

## Why doesn't Wofford have a men's lacrosse team?

Catherine Lesesne '26  
Staff Writer

Wofford athletics continue to be a significant draw to the college for prospective students, but over the years many students have questioned why there is not a men's lacrosse team.

The college offers a women's lacrosse program that has shown to be quite successful, with thirty-five current team members.

These student athletes include freshmen through seniors, from all areas of the country.

Wofford offers both men and women's basketball, tennis, track and field, soccer, cross country, golf and a rifle team.

Men's teams also include baseball and football. In addition to lacrosse, women teams include volleyball and softball.

With lacrosse being a popular sport for men as well as women, students are curious to know why a men's lacrosse program is not offered.

According to Brent Williamson, associate athletic director for athletic communications, serious conversations have not occurred regarding a

men's lacrosse team.

"A large number of factors go into the decision to add a sport, including but not limited to financial funding and student interest. These were factors that we used in adding our most recent sports, women's lacrosse and softball," Williamson said.

The addition of a sport involves complexities.

These two factors, along with NCAA mandates, are significant factors to consider when adding a sports team on the collegiate level.

"The college is required to operate under Title IX regulations when it comes to providing athletic opportunities," Jameica Hill, faculty athletic representative and NCAA representative, said.

The addition of a women's lacrosse team (announced in 2015) does not presume the addition of a men's team, as Williamson points out. Though the first women's season officially began less than ten years ago, the likelihood of a men's team being added in the immediate future is low. In addition to Hill, Williamson also emphasizes the importance of adhering to Title IX standards.

Title IX is a 1972 federal law that

mandates equitable treatment as well as commensurable scholarships and participation rates. Therefore, funding and student interest must align with these regulations in order for a sport to become officially recognized at a school.

"By adding a men's sport, we would also have to add another women's sport," Williamson said.

In accordance with federal Title IX standards, the following factors must be considered in order to add a college sport: budget priorities, resource allocation, student interest, national athletic trends, institution regulations, recruitment and sponsorship.

Though this is the current verdict on the potential establishment of

a men's lacrosse team, students are able to form a club team, should the interest arise.

Reach out to Wofford Athletics or the student involvement board in order to get involved and start a group.



photo by Mark Olencki

Kaitlyn Bellanca '27, Emma Stalteri '26 and Olivia Graebner '26 celebrate on Gibbs Field. The Women's Lacrosse team played the University of Cincinnati on Feb. 13.

# FROM THE PUB ROOM

## Somewhere between the queue and the stage

*Madison Bush '27*  
Staff Writer

The widespread public scrutiny of the event ticketing website Ticketmaster continues to gather steam, yet the public is left with little choice when purchasing retail value event tickets.

Ticketmaster controls nearly every aspect of the live music experience, from venues to promotions to the ticketing itself, fostering a profit-oriented monopoly.

I spent the last weeks of January and into February attempting to purchase tickets to one of 30 different Harry Styles shows at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Purchasing tickets is no longer about what dates work best or if the price is just, which it's not, but it's now a chance game for a possibility of viewing the available tickets.

There are a slew of reasons for the mayhem of attaining tickets to sports

events, concerts, and shows in the year of our lord, 2026. Compared to 30 years ago, the digitization of music has made it more attainable for everyone, meaning more people enjoy a certain artist, thus more people would want to see them in person.

Additionally, the use of digital media to advertise live events means it is not just those most attentive to certain artists trying to get tickets, but also the general public, including resellers.

This leads to an absurd amount of people trying to get tickets and generating traffic to Ticketmaster.

With this in mind, Ticketmaster's recent controversies over the chaos of attaining tickets were for tours by artists such as Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande.

Not only did Ticketmaster crash due to the traffic, but few fans were able to reach the presale while tickets were still available. Additionally, if they made it through the queue while seats were still available, the

ticket prices made tickets virtually unattainable. This is to say, the difficulty in acquiring tickets to some of the most popular artists is not solely because they are in such high demand.

For example, with 11.5 million people registered for Harry Styles New York residency, many fans found themselves behind hundreds of thousands of people despite being in the queue the moment it opened. Although the few face value tickets did consist of the minimum \$50, the majority of people were met with tickets between \$700-\$1,100 or more, due to dynamic pricing.

Dynamic pricing is one of the ways Ticketmaster and Live Nation are able to make such a large profit. While the sale for tickets is active, the price of tickets increases with the demand for the tickets.

Additionally, with the 2010 merger of Live Nation and Ticketmaster, all venues owned and operated by Live Nation are required to use Ticket-

master. Venues are able to add 25-30% to the ticket price under the guise of service fees.

Due to this merger between Ticketmaster and Live Nation, there are very few live events that use websites other than Ticketmaster to sell their seats.

The idea that venues don't all need an independent service to purchase tickets simplifies the process for venues and artists.

However, Live Nation's contracts with the majority of major venues mean those venues have to use Ticketmaster. Thus, if artists want to perform at these major venues, then they must also use Ticketmaster. The monopoly the company has on the industry is so vast that no other company can compete.

My parents introduced me to the magic of live music from a young age, so it remains a priority in my life.

I will say, I have in the past been blessed by Ticketmaster, when I got

two tickets to "Harry Styles' One Night Only in New York," in which each ticket was \$25. In contrast with that being one show, I entered the presale queue for his upcoming residency 10 different times. My place varied from hundreds of thousands to the smallest, 14,654. By the time I got through the queue, dynamic pricing was already applied to the available seats.

In an age where virtually all everyday actions can be digitized, live events act as a place of connectivity for young people.

However, with these manipulations in ticket pricing, concert prices have increased four times faster than inflation in the past thirty years.

Where once live music was attainable for young audiences, it is increasingly becoming inaccessible to the demographic it is meant to inspire.

## Running on empty? The cardio craze meets Wofford's gym

*Nola Webb '26*  
Staff Writer

The slim alleyways looming over either side of Wofford's repurposed basketball arena are where the majority of Wofford students find themselves when seeking a sweat.

The dual platforms contain the college's minimal collection of workout machines and equipment, along with a birds-eye view of the intramural activities that take place on the courts below.

As a proud hobby runner, there are cold mornings and windy afternoons where I find myself hogging one of the seven or so active treadmill machines.

However, sometimes the only cardio session one receives during a trip to Wofford's quaint little gym is through a frustrated and desperate battle with the buttons on the two treadmills that are persistently out of order.

In the past year or two, running popularity has seemingly increased by tenfold.

Every influencer you follow is spon-

sored to run an exotic marathon, selling you watches and headphones and shorts and shoes and even an app to guide what could be your new hobby. The hallmark statistic of runners worldwide used to be that less than 1% of the world's population has ever completed a marathon.

However, recently it seems that we're all within one degree of separation to someone lacing up their shoes to conquer the infamous 26.2.

With this cultural craze has come a rebrand of an often-dreaded form of exercise. Across many young cities, run clubs have become the new way to mingle, advertising themselves across social media and collaborating with various brands.

Local running routes are also busier than ever. Spartanburg's Mary Black Rail Trail, now surrounded by a cluster of new development, finds itself with ever increasing foot traffic attributable to Spartanburg's growth and the exercise habits these newcomers bring.

The best part about running as a hobby, in my opinion, is its convenience. One can run almost any-

where. But is this true for Spartanburg and Wofford?

Although home to Division 1 track and cross country teams, Wofford is uniquely lacking in an appropriately-standardized track.

This leads our athletes to outsource their workouts to nearby tracks, a seemingly undesirable but workable solution.

For the rest of the student body, there exists a small campus, one or two unique running routes downtown, and a treadmill shortage.

While these attributes are immutable facts given our location and just make jogging a little repetitive, the organization of the campus gym seems to be within someone's control.

Burdened by physical space and the high cost of the machines, I can understand why our gym has only several treadmills.

However, one will pass a horde of underutilized ellipticals on their way to the dwindling treadmill arsenal. Would it be so bold to switch a few around?

Of course, I am my own devil's ad-

vocate. Weather willing, why not run outside? I cannot begin to explain my own irrational and mood-dependent preferences for the treadmill.

Despite this argument, my question still remains if the number of machines is proportional to the growing cardio habits among our student body, to which I believe the answer to be no.

Asking students to be a little patient and wait for treadmill availability seems far from unreasonable. However, the time of Wofford students is precious. Many already whip out books and study guides on treadmills. The time-exercise trade-off is

a little too costly with so few usable machines. The gym should eagerly adapt to healthy student habits to ensure that the running craze sustains itself and is more than just a fleeting trend on our campus.



photo by Lena Strauss

Treadmills continue to be out of order in the Mungo Student Center gym. Many Wofford students use this facility as opposed to an off-campus gym.

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